REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 29 January - 1 February 2013
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Twentieth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa reached the following conclusions:

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 36TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 68TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>The Coordinating Committee:</th>
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<td>• agreed to consider the need for development of a regional standard for processed cheese (para. 11);</td>
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<td>• agreed that there was justification for the establishment of a new Codex Committee for Spices, Aromatic Plants and their Formulations (para. 14);</td>
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<td>• considered the Draft Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 and made a number of comments and suggestions (paras 19-33); and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• unanimously agreed that Cameroon should be re-appointed as Regional Coordinator for Africa (paras 70-79).</td>
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**OTHER MATTERS**

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<td>• expressed appreciation to FAO and WHO for their work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice (para. 42) and the support provided through the Codex Trust Fund (para. 49);</td>
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<td>• expressed its support for the activities to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Codex (para. 18);</td>
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<td>• exchanged information on national food control systems, use of Codex standards at national and regional level and nutritional issues in the region (paras 60-69);</td>
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<td>• agreed to develop a new strategic plan for CCAFRICA (2014 – 2019) (paras 80-83);</td>
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<td>• agreed to identify and rank products suitable for a Codex standard (regional or international) (paras 84-85); and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• agreed that the Coordinator, Cameroon, would prepare a revised proposal for Guidelines for the submission of candidatures from Africa for positions of responsibility at the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies (para. 87).</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa held its Twentieth Session in Yaoundé, from 29 January to 1 February 2013, by courtesy of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon. The Session was chaired by Mr Médé Moungui, Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO, Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon. The Session was attended by 134 delegates and observers representing 35 Member Countries, 5 Observer Members from outside the region, and 5 international organizations. A complete list of participants is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr Boniface Charles Buto à Ngon, General Manager, Standards and Quality Agency, Cameroon, highlighted the role of the Coordinator for the Region and expressed appreciation to Ghana for their excellent work as Coordinator for Africa until 2011. He stressed the need to ensure effective participation of African countries in Codex and noted the capacity building activities carried out in this area in the region, especially the FAO TCP project to support the national Codex committees in Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic and CCAFRICA coordination in Cameroon, and the importance of regional cooperation and of economic integration in the perspective of sustainable development.

3. Mr Philémon Yang, Prime Minister, opened the session on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul Biya, and highlighted the decision of the African Union (AU) to establish a regional food safety authority and rapid alert system. He pointed out that a round table on issues related to food standards and food safety would be held in conjunction with the session, as part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of Codex. Mr Yang recalled that agriculture was an essential component of development in Cameroon and also noted that standards would be necessary in order to ensure the safety of new technologies.

4. Mrs Maria Helena Semedo, Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Representative for Africa, stressed that in the context of globalization, climate change and the evolution of food production systems, food security could be achieved for the poor and vulnerable populations through social protection mechanisms, potable water access and nutrition education for consumers, as well as adequate food safety policies. Mrs Semedo noted that Coordinating Committees represented an excellent opportunity for countries to address common issues and to establish a regional network to implement food safety policies, and reasserted the commitment of FAO to support member countries in the region, as reflected in the recent TCP involving Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

5. The Committee agreed to consider the following items under Agenda Item 7 – Other Business
   - The elaboration of regional standards in CCAFRICA.
   - Guidelines for the submission of candidatures from Africa for positions of responsibility at the CAC and its subsidiary bodies.
   - The proposal from the Observer from IFPRI to provide information on biofortication by conventional means.

6. It was agreed that the discussion paper on the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 would be considered in conjunction with Agenda Item 4(a). With these amendments, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session.
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2a)

Proposed draft Standard on Processed Cheese

7. The Committee recalled that the Commission had agreed to discontinue work on the development of a standard for processed cheese and following further discussion, had agreed to request Coordinating Committees to discuss the need for such a standard.

8. Some delegations did not support further work in this regard, taking into account the considerable efforts of the Committee on Milk and Milk Products to develop such a standard and noting that there was no real indication for a need for such a standard. It was further noted that if there were problems at regional level that consideration could be given to the development of a regional standard.

9. Some other delegations expressed support for such a standard, especially noting that there was wide trade in such products and that there were safety concerns that would need to be addressed.

10. It was clarified that safety concerns could be addressed through relevant horizontal standards and not necessarily through a single standard for processed cheese. It was further explained that the CAC had requested the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter to request members to identify gaps in the safety and quality provisions of Codex texts that would justify new work on processed cheese and describe the scope of any new work to be considered to address these gaps. The Committee was informed that the Circular Letter, CL 2012/24 CAC, was issued in August 2012 and that the due date for comments is 28 February 2013.

11. The Committee therefore agreed it would consider the need for development of a regional standard and to encourage members to reply to the CL so that the CAC could be provided with sufficient information to assist it in its decision.

Proposal for establishment of a subsidiary body of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

12. The Committee recalled that the Commission had considered a proposal from India for the establishment of a Committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and had agreed to ask the Coordinating Committees for their views on this proposal.

13. The Delegation of India introduced the rationale for the proposal presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/2-Add.1: a large range of widely different national standards existed for spices and related products; the lack of harmonized standards could result in barriers to trade; and the main producers of spices were in developing countries. As regards the scope, the standards should cover different forms (whole and processed) and include only quality provisions as food safety aspects were covered by general committees; and reference would be made to relevant Codex texts. ISO standards covered only a limited range of spices specifications and more comprehensive work could be accomplished in an intergovernmental organisation, while taking into account current ISO standards. Although spices were of plant origin, they could not be considered by the two existing committees responsible for fruit and vegetables. The Delegation indicated that the wide range of products covered would not make it possible for a time limited task force to complete the work, and also outlined the mechanism and time schedule of the proposed committee.

14. The Committee thanked India for the presentation and agreed that there was justification for the establishment of a committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and supported it being hosted by India. The Committee however noted the concerns of some delegations that they might face difficulties in attending meetings in India and proposed that, should the committee be established, consideration should be given to co-hosting. The Committee noted the offer of Nigeria to co-host the Committee.

\[2\] CX/AFRICA 13/20/2; CX/AFRICA 13/20/2-Add.1,CRD 1 (Comments of Kenya).
Fiftieth Anniversary of Codex

15. Mrs Awilo Ochieng-Pernet, Codex Vice-chairperson and Chairperson of the 50\textsuperscript{th} Codex Anniversary Organising Committee informed the Coordinating Committee about the preparations that are underway in view of the celebrations of the Codex Golden Jubilee and she also highlighted the fact that the Directors-General of FAO and WHO had confirmed their participation in the high-level opening ceremony of the 36\textsuperscript{th} Session of the CAC that will take place in Rome on 1 July 2013. She recalled some of the objectives for marking the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary, i.e., (1) to celebrate the key CAC achievements since its foundation; (2) to consider emerging issues and future challenges that Codex will be facing and to envisage how the CAC could address them; and (3) to increase awareness about Codex. Mrs Ochieng-Pernet stressed the fact that the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the CAC was a unique opportunity for Codex Members to raise awareness amongst policy makers and other codex stakeholders about the importance of Codex food safety and quality work throughout 2013. While emphasizing that the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary celebrations should be owned by the entire Codex community, Mrs Ochieng-Pernet appealed to all Members of the CCAFRICA to initiate and/or participate in 50\textsuperscript{th} Codex Anniversary activities at national and regional levels. She congratulated the Coordinator of CCAFRICA for organizing a Codex 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Round-table entitled “Food Standards and Food Safety Challenges and Stakes for Africa” during the CCAFRICA session.

16. The Committee strongly recommended that the Directors-General of FAO and WHO instruct their national representatives to actively create awareness among national authorities to commemorate the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of Codex.

17. The Codex Secretariat further informed the Committee on progress with regard to activities for the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary and that there would be a specific visual identity developed for this purpose. The Committee was also informed that there was high-level support in both FAO and WHO for the activities to celebrate the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary; that regional officers of both organisations were aware of the activities; and that this information in turn would be filtered down to the FAO and WHO representatives at national level.

18. The Committee thanked the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission for the update and expressed its support to the activities to celebrate the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of Codex.

DRAFT CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019 (Agenda Item 2b)\textsuperscript{3}

19. The Committee recalled the process followed in the development of the Draft Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019 since its last session and the decisions of the 67\textsuperscript{th} Executive Committee and 35\textsuperscript{th} Commission (2012) concerning further steps. Coordinating Committees had been invited to focus on the work plan and the activities presented in the revised draft prepared by the Sub-Committee established by the CCEXEC.

20. Dr Samuel Godefroy, Vice-Chairperson of the Commission and Chairperson of the CCEXEC Sub-Committee, recalled that a compilation of comments, including how the comments were addressed in preparing the revision, was provided in CX/AFRICA 13/20/3-Add.1, and highlighted the main aspects of the revised text. In view of the agreement reached by the Executive Committee, minimal changes had been made to the Introduction, Strategic Vision, Core Values, Strategic Goals and Objectives. In order to address a number of comments related to factors influencing Codex work, a new section on “Drivers for Change” was inserted, and the revision was focused on the Strategic Goals, activities and indicators which had not been previously discussed by the CCEXEC. The Vice-Chairperson therefore invited delegations to comment on these latter aspects in order to provide guidance to the Sub-Committee, taking into account that the text was not final and that some adjustments would be needed on the indicators and responsible parties.

21. The Committee expressed its thanks to Dr Godefroy and to the Sub-Committee for the excellent progress achieved in the development of the new Strategic Plan.

\textsuperscript{3} CX/AFRICA 13/20/3, CX/AFRICA 13/20/3-Add.1.
General comments

22. Some delegations pointed out that prior to the development of the new Strategic Plan, an evaluation of the achievements of the current Plan should be conducted and in particular, how the various activities had been carried out at the regional level for aspects relating to capacity building, which were especially important for the African Region. It was also proposed that the relevance of the current objectives and activities should be carefully considered before deciding which elements should be retained, deleted or added in view of the lessons learnt in the implementation process. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be continuity between the current and future Strategic Plans and that several current objectives and activities were adequate and should be retained.

23. The Committee recalled that the implementation of the current Strategic Plan was a standing item on the agendas of the CCEXEC and the Commission and that compliance with the indicators for each objective were regularly reviewed.

24. The Committee agreed that consideration of the lessons learnt in the implementation of the current Strategic Plan, including any gaps, should be taken into account in further development of the document by the CCEXEC Sub-Committee.

Drivers for change

25. The Committee noted some concerns with the wording of the section on “Drivers for Change”, which could be interpreted as allowing consideration of other aspects such as fair trade in relation to labour conditions or gender issues. It was however recalled that all elements in the Strategic Plan should remain in the framework of the Codex mandate and the Committee agreed to retain the current text.

Strategic Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues

26. Following a proposal to refer specifically to nutrition in the title of Goal 1, it was recalled that “food issues” include nutrition and all areas covered by the Codex mandate, and that as agreed in previous discussions the objectives should be concise, with the understanding that all objectives and activities were considered in the framework of the Codex mandate. It was proposed to specify the timeline for completing standards under Objective 1.1 as the term “in a timely manner” but the current text was retained as it was noted that efficient work management was specifically addressed under Goal 4.

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards

27. Under Objective 2.3: Increase scientific input from developing countries, some delegations pointed out that the obstacles to developing country input were not clearly defined, whether this related to the lack of expertise, infrastructure, and lack of participation or data submission. The Representative of FAO clarified that the main issue on which capacity building was required was data generation. The Committee stressed the importance of Objective 2.3.3 on ensuring participation of experts from developing countries in the work of Codex.

Strategic Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members

28. In Activity 3.1.2, the Committee noted a proposal to refer to hosting rather than co-hosting but it was noted that the official terminology referred to host countries for permanent arrangements while co-hosting was encouraged for the purposes of capacity building.

29. As regards Activities 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 it was recalled that the Trust Fund would still be in operation during the period covered by the Strategic Plan, which explained the reference to its funding in Activity 3.1.4, while planning for a successor initiative was addressed by Activity 3.1.3, and it was agreed that the sequence of the activities may be reconsidered.

30. The Committee agreed that the Trust Fund should not be discontinued abruptly and that careful consideration should be given to the next steps for a successor initiative.
Strategic Goal 4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices

31. The Committee recalled that this Goal was intended to improve working procedures. Some delegations expressed the view that it was not clear how the region could contribute to this objective, what was the purpose of these activities and how activity 4.1.1 in particular would be implemented. The Committee did not make any specific recommendation at this stage and noted that the complexity of the subject would require further consideration by countries in the region.

32. One delegation expressed the view that 4.1.4 on the distribution of documents was not necessary as a specific activity since this aspect required a few adjustments but was generally satisfactory. The Committee however agreed to retain it as it had been regularly put forward in earlier discussions.

33. The Vice-Chairperson thanked the Committee for its contribution and indicated that the CCEXEC Sub-Committee would organize a physical meeting to revise the Strategic Plan based on the input received from the Coordinating Committees, and that the resulting document would be considered by the 36th Commission, through the 68th CCEXEC.

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3a))

34. The Representative of FAO introduced documents CX/AFRICA/13/20/4, CX/AFRICA/13/20/4 Add 1 and CRD 6 on Codex related capacity building activities performed by FAO.

35. In particular the attention of delegates was drawn to the risk-based imported food control activities having been performed in Africa that paved the way for the new FAO guidance on this issue. The new work on the multicriteria decision analysis approach applied to food control policy and decision-making was introduced.

36. The priorities of work for the region in the coming biennium were also highlighted, among which, support to national and regional legislative and regulatory frameworks for food safety; support to national Codex processes; risk based food control programmes (including food inspection and import control); and emergency preparedness plans support to food safety management along value chains and consumers education. Data collection as basis for sound food safety policies and control programmes also need to be further enhanced.

37. The Representative informed the Committee that the WHO has been partnering with member states in the African region in a number of key programme areas aimed at enhancing capacity for Food safety and nutrition as well as with a number of organisations in the region to strengthen capacities and harmonize indicators for nutrition surveillance. The Representative drew the attention of the meeting to the activities carried out by WHO in the region, amongst others, the integration of nutrition and food safety indicators into infectious diseases surveillance and response programmes; the Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN) Workshops; and support to countries in the implementation of norms, standards and guidelines and strategies to improve infant feeding especially in children with mothers living with HIV/AIDS.

38. The Observer of the African Union informed the Committee that following the recommendations of African Codex Contacts Points and the CCAFRICA, the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) supports the effective participation of African delegates to eight prioritized Codex committees. The Observer explained that AU organizes annual meetings of Codex Contact Points; supports physical meetings of African experts (four experts) to prepare scientific arguments on proposed Codex standards which are submitted to Codex Contact Points through the Coordinator for Africa for reference during the national consultations before the submission of their comments or positions to the Codex Secretariat; and participation of two experts in these eight Codex committee sessions.

4 CX/AFRICA 13/20/4; CX/AFRICA 13/20/4-Add.1, CRD 6 (Summary report of the FAO/WHO Pre-CCAFRICA Workshop).
39. The Observer further informed the Committee that the African Union Commission (AUC), through AU-IBAR, convened the First Continental Workshop to discuss the mechanisms and procedures for putting in place a system for ensuring the safety and quality of food produced and traded on the African continent. The Workshop also considered the importance of establishing a system for alerting all AU Member States of any ensuing food safety concerns.

40. The Workshop concluded and recommended that there is a need to urgently consider and adopt the establishment of an AU Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism (AU-FSMCM) incorporating an Africa-wide Rapid Food and Feed Alert Mechanism (ARFFAM), in the lines of the AU-IBAR and Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU/IAPSC).

41. A follow-up workshop is planned for March 2013 in order to agree on the missions, functions and structure of African Union Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed at the African Union Commission.

42. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO, WHO and the AU-IBAR for their support in building capacity in the region.

FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX (Agenda Item 3b))


44. In these documents delegates’ attention was called to:

- The creation of the new Group 4 aimed at providing additional support to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States who had completed their normal course of support from the Codex Trust Fund.
- The work that had been done to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and to use this to provide annual monitoring reports to Codex Member States.
- The full list of Codex training activities supported by the Codex Trust Fund in 2011 and planned for 2012 at the time of writing. The Representative called attention to the pre-CCAFRICA workshop, which was organized by FAO and WHO immediately preceding CCAFRICA on “National Food Control Systems”. Forty-nine participants had been supported by the Trust Fund to participate in the workshop and to stay on for CCAFRICA. Further information on the workshop was available in CRD 6. The Committee was informed that information on all FAO and WHO workshops to be supported by the CTF in 2013 would be made available to Codex Members at the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- The promising results and learning that were gained from the pilot project to enhance participation in the early development of Codex texts and promote exchange among more experienced and less experienced countries. Participants from African countries had been involved in this initiative. Full information was available in CAC/35/INF/10.

45. The Representative concluded by saying that WHO, FAO and the Codex Trust Fund would be pleased to receive any comments that members of the Committee would like to make on the documents before them, or any other issues regarding the Codex Trust Fund.

46. One delegation highlighted that it would be important to assess the impact of the Codex Trust Fund. The delegation also highlighted that one Codex Trust Fund donor country was contributing USD10 000 per year to the CTF and called on member states of the African region to consider making a contribution to the Trust Fund.

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5 CX/AFRICA 13/20/5; CRD 6 (Summary report of the FAO/WHO Pre-CCAFRICA Workshop).
47. The Representative of WHO responded by calling attention to the assessment of outcomes that was being monitored in the Codex Trust Fund monitoring report. She also informed the committee that an assessment of impact of Codex Trust Fund activities would be an important component of the end of project evaluation that should take place in 2014.

48. The Representative further thanked the delegation for highlighting the importance of developing country contributions to the Trust Fund. Such a contribution from the African region would send a very strong message to Codex member states in other regions.

49. The Committee thanked the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund for all the support provided since its inception and welcomed the inclusion of many countries of the region in Group 4 which gave two years extra support to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. The Committee was looking forward to further developments and results from the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and to discussions in 2015 on a possible successor initiative to the Codex Trust Fund.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCAFRICA (Agenda Item 4a)\(^6\)

50. The Committee recalled that previous sessions of the Committee had agreed on a number of priority activities for the implementation of the strategic plan.

51. The Delegation of Cameroon as coordinator introduced the report of the status of implementation of the strategic plan as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/6, and noted that the Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013 focused primarily on communication between CCAFRICA members and other Codex bodies, on active and effective participation of the African continent in Codex work, and on cooperation for participation in Codex work; and the use of Codex outputs to improve food safety in Africa.

52. The Delegation highlighted those activities that had been:

- Effectively implemented: (i) the activities undertaken to improve active and effective participation of all countries in Codex; (ii) promotion and strengthening of NCCs and CCPs; (iii) use of technical and scientific expertise of member countries of the region; (iv) continuity and sustainability of CCAFRICA activities; and (v) technical cooperation;
- Those that were ongoing (activities related to communication); and
- Those that had not been accomplished (effective and active participation of all countries of the region; use of available scientific and technical expertise; identification and prioritization of regional needs in matters of food safety, e.g. regional standards).

53. It was noted that from a global perspective, implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan had established an active and effective presence of Africa in the work of Codex, while several challenges remain.

54. Delegations expressed their appreciation to the Delegation of Cameroon for the report and further expressed their satisfaction with progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, however several concerns or issues were highlighted:

- The approach taken for the current TCP covering 3 Central African Countries (see activity 3.1, CX/AFRICA 13/20/6) to be extended to other countries in the region;
- Need for more sensitization at the highest level of the importance of Codex to consumer health protection and trade; and the possibility of engaging the regional economic communities (RECs) and the AU to achieve this. It was noted that with the AU as an observer within CCAFRICA, it would be useful for the AU Commission to highlight issues related to food safety and Codex at the council of ministers and it would be useful for the AU to facilitate participation of the coordinator in such meetings. It was further

\(^6\) CX/AFRICA 13/20/6; CX/AFRICA 13/20/6-Add.1 (replies from Botswana, Central African Republic, Morocco and Zimbabwe), CRD 3 (reply from Mali), CRD 4 (reply from Uganda), CRD 5 (reply from Ghana), CRD 7 (reply from Nigeria).
noted that the proposed Food Safety Authority for Africa could improve coordination and help to establish a risk assessment body;

- Poor communication, in particular the fact that a well developed and functioning website was no longer active; that information was not received by Contact Points; and the availability of documents in official languages of the region other than English. Proposals were made to find a more permanent host for the CCAFRICA website either through the FAO or WHO regional offices or AU-IBAR since problems would always arise when a new coordinator was appointed.

55. It was clarified that efforts were made by AU-IBAR and the coordinator to ensure that all documents are made available in both English and French and to make them available to all contact points; and that efforts were ongoing to solve the technical problems related to the website. The Committee noted the continued willingness of AU-IBAR to host the CCAFRICA website on a more permanent basis.

56. In relation to engaging of RECs in Codex work, the Representative of FAO underlined that FAO was keen on working with RECs and their members to bring regional focus and dimension on Codex discussions. Not all RECs were equally engaged so far and it was a priority for FAO to increase this collaboration.

57. The Chairperson further clarified that the TCP project was a pilot project whose approach would need to be scaled up in future. Discussions were ongoing with the FAO regional representative and AU-IBAR to find ways to extend this type of support to other countries in the central African region as well as other regions of Africa.

58. The Chairperson concluded that the Committee welcomed the activities as presented by Cameroon and was appreciative of the work and all activities either completed or ongoing. He also concluded that further capacity building and participation in Codex should be pursued and in this regard welcomed the partnerships with FAO, WHO, AU-IBAR, the US Codex Office, EU and other parties; awareness should be raised at the highest level to increase the profile of Codex and noted the establishment of the African Food Safety Authority; and that in relation to communication, specific attention needs to be paid to get the website for CCAFRICA fully operational.

59. The Committee encouraged AU-IBAR and the coordinator to ensure that documents were made available in English and French to all contact points.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION, USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AND PARTICIPATION IN CODEX AND IN FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES ON SCIENTIFIC ADVICE (Agenda Item 4b))

60. The Committee was informed of the updates in food control systems, consumer participation, use of Codex standards, participation in Codex work and the work of FAO/WHO activities on scientific advice.

Food Control Systems

61. The Committee noted that several initiatives were underway in several countries to improve on their food control systems. These include (i) updating and developing of national legislation; (ii) reorganization of the food control system, or establishment and improvement of coordination through the establishment of national food safety committees or SPS committees; and (iii) improvement of inspection services. It was noted that several of these initiatives were undertaken with support from FAO, AU-IBAR, EU and USA, amongst others. It was, however, noted that for legislation to be effective, human and other resources were necessary and that capacity building needed to be continued. A challenge remained in creating awareness among policy makers. It was further noted that there was a need to develop expertise in the field of risk assessments. In addition, laboratory

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7 CL 2012/26-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 13/20/7 (comments of Central African Republic, Mauritius and Zimbabwe), CRD 3 (comments of Mali), CRD 4 (comments of Uganda), CRD 5 (comments of Ghana), CRD 8 (comments of South Africa).
infrastructure needed to be improved and a proposal was made to consider partnerships at regional level in this regard and to put in place regional reference laboratories.

Participation in Codex and update of Codex standards

62. The Committee noted the improved and effective participation in Codex work by members of the region. Some delegations highlighted the fact that they were also actively contributing to the work of Codex by leading electronic Working Groups or by being members of Working Groups. It was also noted that some countries in the region had actively participated in the mentoring project, funded by the CTF, for the development of the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods.

63. The Committee further noted that many countries in the region were harmonizing their standards with those of Codex.

FAO/WHO Scientific Advice

64. The Representative of FAO having taken into account some of the written replies concerning participation of experts in FAO/WHO scientific advice clarified the mechanisms for experts to participate in scientific advice bodies. It was noted that while participation is on the basis of competencies, this is also strongly linked to the availability of data.

Conclusion

65. The Committee noted the information provided and welcomed the progress made. The Committee further noted that much of the discussion on this item overlapped with that of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan (Agenda Item 4a) and that consideration should be given to consider this item together with the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan or to integrate this into the new Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA. A delegation pointed out this item was very important to assess progress and should be retained as a separate item, but could be structured differently. It was agreed to discuss this matter further at the next session.

NUTRITION ISSUES AT NATIONAL OR REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 5)

66. The Representative of FAO, referring to the information provided in the CX/AFRICA 13/20/4 Add.1, drew the attention of the Committee to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN+21) to be held in November 2013; the Food Safety and Nutrition Awareness Campaign launched by the Regional Office for Africa (RAF); a project on complementary foods in Malawi; and Supporting Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa.

67. Mrs Awilo Ochieng-Pernet, Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, encouraged delegates to take the opportunity of regional events in the area of nutrition to promote awareness about Codex in the perspective of the 50th anniversary of Codex.

68. One delegation pointed out that a sub-regional meeting for West African countries would be held in the framework of the SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) movement, in which only a few countries in the subregion were participating and stressed the importance of participation in such initiatives for countries in the region.

69. The Committee noted with appreciation the activities carried out at the national and regional level and encouraged countries in the region to participate in the SUN movement and all nutrition related regional initiatives, and to take this opportunity to promote awareness of Codex work.

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8 CL 2012/26-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 13/20/8 (comments of Central African Republic, Mauritius and Zimbabwe), CRD 1 (comments of Kenya), CRD 8 (comments of South Africa), CRD 2 (comments of Benin), CRD 3 (comments of Mali), CRD 4 (comments of Uganda).
NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 6)\(^9\)

70. The Delegation of Cote d’Ivoire, supported by many delegations, proposed to nominate Cameroon as Coordinator for a second term and expressed their appreciation for their achievements during the first term.

71. Several delegations, while agreeing with this proposal, referred to the discussion held under Agenda Item 4a on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA. These delegations noted that some aspects of the coordination would require improvements, especially as regards communication, the website, clarification of the roles of the coordinator and the chair of the Committee, representation of the coordinator in other meetings in order to ensure visibility at the regional and international level, in particular to ensure the high profile of Codex and food safety issues in the region.

72. The Chairperson recalled that as specified in the Procedural Manual (Rule IV Coordinators of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission), the Coordinator is a member country and that internal arrangements for practical implementation of the coordination are determined at country level.

73. Some delegations expressed their appreciation to Cameroon for carrying out coordination meetings of African countries in several Codex Committees.

74. Other delegations expressed the view that substantial improvement was required in the coordination, including in the framework of the Strategic plan, as regards exchange of views on Codex issues and coordination of positions and in the organisation of the session. They proposed that the issues identified should be openly discussed, with the cooperation and support of all countries in the region in order to ensure that the region as a whole could benefit from improved processes.

75. The Delegation of Kenya expressed interest in the position of Coordinator after Cameroon completed its second term at the 21\(^{st}\) Session of CCAFRICA.

76. The Committee noted the offer of Nigeria to provide assistance and the possible co-hosting of the CCAFRICA with Cameroon.

77. The Delegation of Mauritania requested that consideration be given to grant countries that have never had the opportunity to be coordinator, the opportunity to be coordinator for Africa.

78. The Delegation of Cameroon expressed its appreciation to all delegations for their trust and cooperation and assured the Committee that they would make all efforts to address the concerns expressed at the session, as regards the coordination as a whole and the organisation of the session. For this purpose, Cameroon relied on the cooperation and assistance of countries in the region in order to ensure a successful mandate and future session of CCAFRICA.

79. The Committee agreed to recommend to the 36\(^{th}\) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Cameroon be appointed as Coordinator for Africa for a second term.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE CCAFRICA STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 - 2019 (Agenda Item 7a))\(^{10}\)

80. The Delegation of Cameroon in introducing the discussion paper stated that a debate on the future strategic plan was necessary. The Delegation further noted that the evaluation of the current Strategic Plan revealed that many actions were still ongoing or warranted further funding or support to ensure their implementation. A new strategic plan would also need to address activities that had not received much attention, such as risk assessment, data generation and scientific advice, and the drafting of regional standards, in addition to other concerns related to improvement of food safety in the region.

\(^9\) CX/AFRICA 13/20/9.
\(^{10}\) CX/AFRICA 13/20/10.
81. The Delegation proposed that an electronic Working Group be established to draft a CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 with the terms of reference as outlined in the discussion document.

82. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic Working Group led by Cameroon and Kenya, working in English and French with the following terms of reference:

- Identify the primary objectives of the new strategic plan, in the light of the vision and objectives of the Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019, Africa’s current concerns about food standards and food safety, and the conclusions of the evaluation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2007 – 2013.

- Develop a draft CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 for further discussion by CCAFRICA.

83. The Committee noted that the meeting of contact points coordinated by AU-IBAR could be an opportunity for informal discussion of the proposed draft Strategic Plan by members of the region.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE ELABORATION OF REGIONAL STANDARDS IN AFRICA (Agenda Item 7b)**

84. The Delegation of Cameroon introduced the discussion paper as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/11 and highlighted the fact that there were many food products produced in Africa that were likely to be traded intra-regionally or internationally and for which regional or international standards could be developed. The Delegation proposed the establishment of a Working Group to identify products from the region suitable for a Codex international or regional standard and to rank the identified products in order of priority.

85. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic Working Group led by Botswana and Cote d’Ivoire and working in English and French to identify and rank regional products suitable for a Codex standard (regional or international) for discussion at the next session of the Committee.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF CANDIDATURES FROM AFRICA FOR POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AT THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 7c)**

86. The Delegation of Cameroon introduced the discussion paper as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/12 and noted that the document had been developed in response to a request from members of the region in view of the difficulties noted for candidatures of African countries to the various positions of responsibility at the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

87. Due to time constraints, the Committee did not discuss the proposed Guidelines. The Committee agreed that the Codex Secretariat would request comments on the proposed Guidelines through a Circular Letter. It was further agreed that the proposed Guidelines would also be discussed by the coordination meeting of CCPs of the region in the margins of the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 2013. The Delegation of Cameroon would prepare a revised proposal taking into account all comments received for presentation to the next session of the Committee.

**BIOFORTIFICATION BY CONVENTIONAL BREEDING (Agenda Item 7d)**

88. The Coordinating Committee noted the information provided by the Observer from IFPRI on biofortification by conventional breeding. The Observer mentioned that there is no Codex standard on biofortification by conventional breeding and noted that this gap creates difficulty in some aspects of work involving biofortification. The Committee was informed that a discussion paper on this matter would be considered at both the 40th Session of CCFL (14 – 17 May 2013) and the 35th Session of CCNFSDU (4 – 8 November 2013).

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11 CX/AFRICA 13/20/11.
12 CX/AFRICA 13/20/12, CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria).
DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 8)

89. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 21st Session would be held in approximately two years time (2015) and that the exact date and venue would be communicated to Members at a later stage on the basis of consultation between the Coordinator to be appointed by the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.
APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

Chairperson : Mr Médi Moungui
Président Deuxième Conseiller
Représentant permanent adjoint auprès de la FAO
Ambassade de la République du Cameroun
Via Siracusa, 4-6
00161, Rome
Italie
Phone: +39 06 4403544
Fax: +39 06 4403644
Email: medimoungui@yahoo.fr

ANGOLA

Mrs SILVA Teodora
Director General/Vice President Codex National
IANORQ-Instituto Angolano normalização Qualidade; Codex – Angola
Rua Cerqueira Lukoki n° 25
Luanda - C.P 594
Phone: 244927308077
Email: Tlourenosilva@gmail.com

BENIN

Mr HOUGBENOU HOUNGLA Egnon Jacques
Animateur du Secrétariat Permanent du Comité National du Codex Alimentarius
Direction de l’Alimentation et de la Nutrition Appliquée du Ministère de l’Agriculture, de l’Élevage et de la Pêche
BP 295
Porto-Novo
Phone : +22993051186
Email : maepdana@gmail.com jacob75@yahoo.fr

Dr DANSI Sénégbédo Germain
Cadre de la Surveillance Sanitaire des Frontières Ports et Aéroports
Direction Nationale de la Santé Publique Ministère de la Santé
04BP1070 Cadjéhoua
Cotonou
Phone: +229 95068343
Email: ds.germano40@yahoo.fr

BOTSWANA

Dr SEIPONE Khumo
Director of Health Services
Ministry of Health
Private Bag 0038
Gaborone
Phone: +267 3632522
Fax: + 267 391055
Email: kseipone@gov.bw  kseipone@yahoo.com

Dr BAIPOLEDI Kekgonne Edinton
Deputy Director
Department of Veterinary Services
Ministry of Agriculture
Private Bag 0032
Gaborone
Phone: +267 368 9500
Fax: +267 390 3744
Email: kbaipoledi@gov.bw

Mr TARIMO Hussein
Principal Scientific Officer
Ministry of Health
Public Health Department
Private Bag 00269
Gaborone
Phone: +267 363 2121
Email: htttarimo@gov.bw htuttarimo@yahoo.co.uk

BURKINA FASO

Mr OUATTARA Moussa
Agronome
Point Focal Codex Ministère de l’agriculture et de la sécurité alimentaire
DPV 01 BP: 5362 Ouagadougou 01
Ouagadougou
Phone: + 226 71353315
Email: ouatmouss@yahoo.fr

Mr KOUDOUGOU Karim
Directeur du Contrôle des Aliments et de la Nutrition Appliquée
Laboratoire National de santé Publique (LNSP)
BP 24 Ouagadougou 09
Ouagadougou
Phone: +226 788 372 99
Email: krmdkg@yahoo.fr

BURUNDI

Mr MIVUBA Zacharie
Head Certification
Burundi Bureau of Standards
P.O. Box 3535
Bujumbura
Phone: +275 76 253 264
E-mail: zachariemivuba2000@yahoo.fr

CAMEROON/CAMEROUN

Mr POUEDOGO
Department of Industry and Commerce
Prime Ministry’s Office
NCC Member
BP 12876
Yaoundé
Phone: +233 99897733
Email: pouedo@gmail.com

Dr ESSOMBA Jacques Armand
Deputy Director
Standards And Quality Agency (ANOR)
BP 14966
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 94 92 50 55
Email: essomba@cameroon-france.fr

Mr EBAI TAKANG Stephen
Sub-Director / Member of Task Force
MINADER
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 77 48 21 12
Email: ebaits@yahoo.co.uk

Mr MINDJOS MOMENY Martin Paul
Chef de Division de la Normalisation et de la Qualité
Ministère des mines, de l’Industrie et du Développement Technologique
 Coordinateur du Secrétariat
Technique du CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 70 75 91 29
Email: mindjos@yahoo.fr

Mme BOOTO à NGON, née WOLIMOUM Colette
Sous Directeur de l’Alimentation Animale
Ministère de l’Elevage, des Pêches et des Industries Animales
CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 99 61 24 71
Email: booto25@yahoo.fr

Mr KANGUE KOUM Henri
Chef de Bureau des Normes et du Contrôle Alimentaire
Ministère de la Santé Publique
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 77 32 82 01
Email : henrykangue@yahoo.fr

Dr GIMOU Marie Madelène
Head of Laboratory Centre Pasteur du Cameroun
Centre Pasteur of Cameroon
P.B 1274
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 99 61 90 31
Fax: +237 22 23 15 64
Email: gimu@pasteur-yaounde.cm

Ms NDJOU DJIO SOKAM Laure
Représentante Syndustricam
B.P 2622
Douala
Phone : +237 77 11 62 42
Email: laure.ndjoudjiosukam@cm-nestle.com

Mrs AMOUGOU Marie-Delaventure
Représentant Regional Centre,Sud,Est
Groupement Interpatronal du Cameroun
B.P :1134
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 99 92 41 43
Fax +237 22 23 12 26
Email: mmessomolle@gicam.org

Ms MAHAMAT Ache
Ministère de l’Agriculture et du Développement Rural / DEPC
Phone : +237 99069334
Email : ache_mahamat@yahoo.fr

Mr TATAH Solomon
Sub Director
Ministry of External Relations
B.P 30726 Yaoundé
Phone /Fax: +237 75 52 04 59 / 22 20 11 33
Email: tatah-enoma@live.com

Mr AWE Pierre
Cadre
Ministère de l’Eau et de l’Energie
B.P 70
Yaoundé
Mr FORGHAB Patrick MBOMBA
Sub-Director of Environmental Economics
Member of the Task Force and Sustainable Development
Ministry of Environment Protection of Nature
P.O. Box 320
Yaoundé
Phone /Fax : +237 77 61 53 43 / +237 22 22 11 06
Email: forghabp@yahoo.com / forghabp@gmail.com

Ms MAFOPA Henriette Florence
Chef de service de la législation rurale
Chambre d'agriculture
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 99 97 27 01
Email: henriettemafoapa@yahoo.fr

Mrs AVOMO Victorine ABÉNÉ
Chef de service de la promotion commerciale
Chambre de Commerce
B.P. 36
Yaoundé
Phone : +237 75 63 52 41
Email: avomovictorine@yahoo.fr

Mr NKANDI Hermann Henri
Inspecteur Phytosanitaire Assermente
Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural, Direction de la Réglementation et Contrôle de qualité
B.P 2082
Yaoundé
Phone : + 237 99 80 87 24
Email: nkandihermann@yahoo.fr

Mr MOHAMADOU
Directeur de qualité et normalisation de la Société AZUR SA.
Task Force Syndricam
B.P. 378
Douala
Phone /Fax: +237 99688284/+237 33433699
Email: mohamadou@azur-sa.com / mohamadouazur@yahoo.fr

Mr TOUNA L.M
Chef de service
Ministère de l’Agriculture et du Développement rural/DEPC
Phone : +237 96162539
Email: touson2005@yahoo.fr

Ms DASSIE FANLE Rosette
Quality Manager
Etat Africain Company S.A.
Douala
Cameroun
Phone: + 237 99677902
Email: dassie_rosette@yahoo.fr

Dr NGAMBIA FUNKEU Roger
Chief of Service
MINEPIA
Yaoundé,
Phone: +237 77 95 80 01
Email: ngafuro@yahoo.com

Dr ESSOUNGOU NDEMBA Samuel
Président
Association Pour le Défense de Consommateurs
B.P 187
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 77 73 56 82 / +237 22 00 21 87
Email: snesungu@gmail.com/adconso@yahoo.com

Ms NNAMA Nkili Renée-Michelle
Cadre
Cellule de la Normalisation et de la Qualité
Ministère du Commerce
B.P 2997, SOA
Phone : +237 99352555
Fax : +237 22 22 3569
Email: renee_michele@hotmail.fr

Ms DASSI Emilie
Cadre
CCIMA
Phone : +237 99131630
Fax : +237 22 22 47 76
Email: emfeutcha9000@yahoo.com
CAP-VERTE
Mr JOAO DOS SANTOS Gonçalves
Point Focal Codex- Directeur ARFA
Agence de Régulation des Produits Alimentaires
C.P 292, ASA
Praia
Phone: 238 2626410
Fax: 238 2622970
Email: joao.s.goncalves@arfa.cv

Mrs GOMES de SÁ NOGUEIRA Augusta
Coordenadora Inspeção das Alimenta.
Responsável pela Vigilância Epidemiológica
Membre du Comité Codex
Point Focal Notification OMC.
Ministère du Développement Rural, Direction
Général de l Agriculture, Sylviculture et Elevage
DGASP Achada de São Filipe
BP 278
Praia
Phone : 264 75 47 /39
Fax : 264 75 43/42
Email: eduarda.nogueira@mdr.gov.cv
edusanog@hotmail.com

CHAD/TCHAD
Mrs NAISSEM BELEMEL Francoise
Chef de division d’hygiène du milieu et
assainissement
Ministère de la santé publique
Ndjamena 440
Phone : +26566462998
Email: naibe-francoise@yahoo.fr

Mr NGUETORA Guiradoumadji
Chef de division d’hygiène du milieu et
assainissement adjoint
Ministère de la santé publique
Ndjamena 440
Phone : +26366260837
Email: nguetoraa@yahoo.fr

COMOROS
Mr MANSOURI Ahamed
Chef du département Agroalimentaire
Point Focal du Codex Alimentarius
Vice-Président en charge du Ministère de la
production, de l’Environnement, de l’Energie, de
l’Industrie et de l’Artisanat
Grande Comore
Phone: +269 333 61 40/ 331 79 01
Email: manouri1953.ah@hotmail.fr
dirmasaep@yahoo.fr

Mr HAMID Papa Abdallah
Point focal national de nutrition
Chargé des facteurs de risque de la maladie
Direction de lutte contre la maladie
Direction nationale de la santé
Ministère de la santé
Route de la corniche, Bât. Projet Palu
Moroni
Phone: + 269 3342830
Email: hamidpapa@yahoo.fr

CONGO REPUBLIC OF/REPUBLIQUE DU
CONGO
Mr GALEBAÏ Daniel
Point focal Codex Alimentarius chef de
Service normes
Association congolaise de Codex/ Ministère de
l’Industrie
BP : 185 rue ombele talangai
Brazzaville
Phone: +242 06 85 44 021
Email : galibaidani@yahoo.fr

Mr ESSEA Boniface
Chef de Service Contrôle qualité et Sécurité
alimentaire
Ministère de la Pêche et de l’Aquaculture
09, Rue Oyo Talangaï
Brazzaville
Phone : + 242 05 56 32 406
Email: essea_b@yahoo.fr

CÔTE D’IVOIRE
Dr EHOUSSOU Narcisse
Président
Comité National du Codex Alimentarius
20 BP 211
Abidjan 20
Phone: +225 01015596
Email: narcehoussou@yahoo.fr

Prof DEMBELE Ardjouma
Head of Agrochemical and Ecotoxicology
Laboratory
Comité National du Codex Alimentarius
04 BP 504
Abidjan 04
Phone: +225 05959572
Fax: +225 20227117
Email: ardjouma@yahoo.fr

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
CONGO/CONGO, RÉPUBLIQUE
DÉMOCRATIQUE
Dr OLENGA Yuma Jean-Marie
Chargé de communication
Secrétariat Technique SPS et Codex Alimentarius
Comité national SPS et Codex Alimentarius
BP 8722 Kinshasa-Gombe
<table>
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<td>Kinshasa</td>
<td>Mr KASSA M’VOUBOU Félicien</td>
<td>Chef de Service National d’Hypothèse Publique</td>
<td>+243 24101763172 / 07331353</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr">kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr MOUAYA Gaston Ulrich</td>
<td>Chargé d’études direction Général de l’Industrie</td>
<td>Phone: +243 81 51 68 294</td>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:mouyagaston@yahoo.fr">mouyagaston@yahoo.fr</a></td>
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<td>Agent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr KASSA M’VOUBOU Félicien</td>
<td>Chef de Service National d’Hypothèse Publique</td>
<td>+243 24101763172 / 07331353</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr">kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr MOUAYA Gaston Ulrich</td>
<td>Chargé d’études direction Général de l’Industrie</td>
<td>Phone: +243 81 51 68 294</td>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:mouyagaston@yahoo.fr">mouyagaston@yahoo.fr</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Email: sefad@ug.edu.gh

Ms OKOREE Joyce
Manager
Codex Contact Point
Ghana Standards Authority
P.O. BOX MB 245
Accra
Phone: +233 244 381 351 / +233 02 519 758
Email: codex@gsa.gov.gh, jooko88@yahoo.com

Ms OSEI Celestine
Assistant Standards Officer
Ghana Standards Authority
P.O. Box MB 245
Accra
Phone: +233 243 187 857
Fax: +233 302 500 231
E-Mail: codex@gsa.gov.gh

Mr VAN ESS Kwamina
Kwamina Van-Ess and Associates
Accra
Phone: +233 244 653 167
Email: kwaminav@yahoo.com

Mr OPPONG-OTOO John
Standards Officer
Ghana Standards Authority
P.O. Box MB 245
Accra
Phone: +233 243 785 375
Email: nanapong23@yahoo.com

Mr OSEI Patrick
Regulatory Officer II
Food and Drugs Authority
P.O.Box KF 243
Accra
Phone: +233 264 088 756
E-Mail: fdbpatosei@yahoo.co.uk

GUINEA-BISSAU/GUINÉ-BISSAU

Mr INJAI Julio Malam
Point focal du CNCA
Ministère de l’Agriculture
BP : 844 Granja de Pessube
Bissau
Phone : +245 662 1182
Fax : +245 322 10 19
Email: jumaingw@hotmail.com

Dr GOMEZ FERREIRA Pina Ferreira
Issis Julieta
Directora
Direcção dos serviços de saúde ambiental
e Hygiène Publica/ MINSA
CP n°50 Ministerio da Saude e de Solidariedade Social

GUINEA EQUATORIAL/GUINÉ ÉQUATORIALE

Dr NDJENG MBA Pablo
Prof analyse de aliments(Universidad UNGE)
Universidad Nacional Guinea Ecuatorial
AVda HASSAN II S/N Malabo G.E
Tel: +240 22 25 92 422
Email: pablondjengmba@yahoo.fr

Dr MBA NDONG OBONO Antonio bonifacio
Medico veterinario
Minister de agricultura y bisques
Avenida HASSANII de Malabo G.E
Phone: +240 222 685 855
Email: ambandong@yahoo.es

KENYA

Mrs ONYANGO Alice
Manager
Kenya Bureau of Standards
PO 54974
Nairobi
Phone: +2546948303
Fax: +254 609660
Email: akothe@kebs.org
Info@kebs.org

Dr GICHIA Moses
Deputy Director of Veterinary Services
Department of Veterinary Service
P.O Private Bag, Kangemi
Nairobi
Phone: +254 733557134
Email: medwrin@yahoo.com

Mr KILONZO Robert
Head division of food safety and quality
Ministry of public health and sanitation
Po.box: 30016-00100
Nairobi
Phone: + 254 271 70 77
Fax: +254 271 00 65
Email: rmkilonzo@yahoo.co.uk

LESOTHO

Mr MAKARA Motjoka
Chief Standards Officer
Ministry of Trade & Industry Cooperatives and Marketing
PO Box 747
Maseru 100
Phone: +26622322113
Fax: +26622324642

GUINEA-BISSAU/GUINÉ-BISSAU

Mr INJAI Julio Malam
Point focal du CNCA
Ministère de l’Agriculture
BP : 844 Granja de Pessube
Bissau
Phone : +245 662 1182
Fax : +245 322 10 19
Email: jumaingw@hotmail.com

Dr GOMEZ FERREIRA Pina Ferreira
Issis Julieta
Directora
Direcção dos serviços de saúde ambiental
e Hygiène Publica/ MINSA
CP n°50 Ministerio da Saude e de Solidariedade Social
Email: lessza@leo.co.ls
Dr MASENTELE SEEISO Tabitha
Director Veterinary Public Health
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
Department of Livestock Services Private Bag A82
Maseru
Phone: +266 223 172 84
Fax : +266 223 11 500
Email: seeisotabitha@yahoo.com

MADAGASCAR
Mr IARIVONY Rabotondramihamina
Chef de service des normes alimentaires
Ministère de la santé publique
Agence de contrôle de sécurité sanitaire et de la qualité des denrées alimentaires
IVG 114 Behorivika Ankaditapaka
Antananarivo 101
Phone: +261340114059
Email: iarivony51@yahoo.fr

Mr RAKOTONDRAVONY Hervé francis
Président
Comité national du Codex Alimentarius
BP : 1042 nanisara Antananarivo.101
Antananarivo
Phone: +261 32 02 58 886
Email : spcplabo@noov.mg

MALI
Mr KONE Farakoro
Chef de la section législation et normes
Direction nationale de l’agriculture
PB 1098
Bamako
Phone: +22376306078
Email: farakorokone@hotmail.com

Dr COULIBALY Drissa Dounanké
Chef de section inspection vétérinaire
Direction nationale des services vétérinaires
03 BP 220
Bamako 03
Phone: +22376023473
Fax : +2232025229
Email: dculibaly9@yahoo.fr

MAURITANIA/MAURITANIE
Dr BRAHIMELKORY MOHAMED SALEM
Mohamed
Point Focal National du Codex
Directeur de l’Institut National de Recherches en Santé Publique (INRSP)
Ministère de la santé
BP 695
Nouakchott
Phone: +22245253134
Fax : + 22245292649
Email: melkory69@yahoo.fr

Mr CHEIKH Elghady Issehmou
Secrétariat du Comité National du Codex
INRSP
BP 695
Nouakchott
Phone: +22246440556
Email: elghadyi@yahoo.fr

MOROCCO/MAROC
Mr SAAD Lhoussaine
Chef de la Division du Contrôle des Produits végétaux et d’origine végétale
Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits Alimentaires
Ministère de l’agriculture et de la pêche maritime
Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui – Agdal - Rabat
Phone: +212 5 37 67 65 30
Fax: + 212 5 68 20 49
Email: saad.lhoussaine@gmail.com

Dr AZZI Abdelghani
Chef du service de l’inspection des produits animaux
Office national de sécurité sanitaire des produits alimentaires
Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui – Agdal - Rabat
Phone: + 212 5 37 67 65 25
Fax: +212 5 68 20 4
Email: abdelghniasi@gmail.com

NIGERIA
Mrs ESHIETT Margaret Efiong
Deputy Director
Head Food, Codex Contact Point Nigeria
Standards Organization of Nigeria
13/14 Victoria Arobieke Street
Lekki Phase I
Lagos
Phone: +234 8023179774
Email: megesciett@yahoo.com

Dr MAJASAN Ademola Adetokunbo
Deputy Director
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
FCDA Secretariat, Area 11, GARKI
Abuja
Phone: +234 0855178412
Email: demmyjas@yaho.com

Dr ADEGBOYE Abimbola Opeyemi
Assistant Director
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
Plot 2032, Olusegun Obasanjo Way
Wuse Zone 7
Abuja
Phone: +234 803170810
Email: adeboye.a@nafdac.gov.ng;
bimbotica@yahoo.com

Mrs AGBANA Omotola
Standards Officer 1
Standards Organisation of Nigeria
Plot 1687, LOME Street Wuse Zone 7
Abuja
Phone: +234 8034526706
Email: toladiamond@yahoo.com

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC/ RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE

Mr SANA Romain Serge
Chef de Service des normes et de la qualité
Ministère du commerce et de l’industrie
BP 1988
Bangui
Phone: +236 75 05 84 98
E-mail: sromainserge@yahoo.fr
codexcentralfric@gmail.com

Mr. LANGO-YAYA Ernest
Chef de Service dxe Microbiologie Alimentaire
Ministère de la Santé Publique
Laboratoire Nationale de Biologie Clinique et de Santé publique de Bangui
B.P 1426
Bangui
Phone: 750 446 05 / 72 01 7008
Fax: 21 61 81 80
Email: elangoyaya@gmail.com

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA/RÉPUBLIQUE DE GUINÉE

Mr SAKOUVOGUI Alphone Vohou
Chef de section de sécurité sanitaire des aliments
Ministère de la santé et hygiène publique
Direction nationale de l’hygiène publique
BP 1689 Conakry
Phone: +22464506789
Email: vsakou@yahoo.fr

Mr. SĬLLA Aly
Chef Section Agroalimentaire
Institut Guinéen de Normalisation et de Métrologie – IGNM
B.P 1639
Conakry
Phone: +224 62 47 52 29
Email: alybagatatem@yahoo.fr

SOUTH AFRICA/AFRIQUE DU SUD

Mr. MATLALA Malose Daniel
Deputy Director Food Control
Department of Health
Private Bag X858
Pretoria
Postcode : 0001
Phone: +27123958789
Fax: +27123958854
Email: cacpsa@health.gov.za

Mr. MAKHAFOLA Billy Malose
Deputy Director
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (DAFF)
Private Bag X343
Pretoria
Postcode: 0001
Phone: +27 319 6023
Fax: +27 319 6055
Email: billym@daff.gov.za

Mr. DEON Jacobs
Principal inspector
National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications
P.O BOX : 12b railway road montague gardens
Cape Town
Phone: +0027 21 52 63 400
Fax: +0027 21 526 34 51
Email: jacobsdc@nrcs.org.za

SENEGAL/SÉNÉGAL

Dr DIOUF Amadou
Président du CNCA Sénégal
Ministère de la santé et action sociale
Université de Chelkanta DIOP (UCAD)
Cheikh Anta Dakar
Phone: +221776449823
Email: amdouif@refer..sn

Mr NIANG Ousseynou dit Diallo
Chef du bureau assurance de qualité à la DSV
37 avenue Pasteur
BP 67
Dakar
Phone: +221775187777
Email: ousseynoun.niang.diallo@gmail.com

Dr MAME COUMBA CODOU Faye
Point Focal du Codex
Ministère de la Santé et de l’Action Sociale
Rue Aime Cesaire Dakar FANN
B.P 4024
Dakar
Phone: +24 77 55 66 478
Email: mamecoumba@yahoo.com
Codexsenegal@gov.sn
SEYCHELLES
Ms YOUPA Naomi
Head Food Control Unit
Public Health Department
Ministry of Health
P.O. Box 52 M Fleuri
Victoria, Mahé
Phone: +2484385195
Fax: +2484225714
Email: naomi.youpa@health.gov.sc

Ms KATE Catherina
Public Health Officer – Food Control Unit
Public Health Department
Ministry of Health
Seychelles Hospital
Victoria, Mahé
Phone: +2484388195
Fax: +2484225714
Email: catherinakate@hotmail.com

SWAZILAND
Mr DLAMINI Edmund J.
Chief Environmental Health Officer
Swaziland Government Ministry of Health
Box 5, Mbabane H100
Phone: +268 2404 9351
Fax: +26824049351
Email: edmunddlamini@yahoo.co.uk

Mr SABELO MUZIKAYISE Masuku
Environmental & Public Health Manager
Matsapha Municipality
PO Box 1790
Matsapha M202
Phone: +268 78020864
Fax: +26825186646
Email: sabma52003@yahoo.com
masukus@matsapha.co.sz

TOGO
Mr KAZIA Tchala
Codex Contact Point
Ministry of Agriculture
PO Box 1163
Lomé
Phone: +22890025525
Fax: +22522251559
Email: kaziatchala@yahoo.fr

UGANDA/OUUGANDA
Mr SEKITOLEKO Patrick
Manager, International Liaison
Uganda National Bureau of Standards
P.O. Box 6329
Kampala
Phone: +256 414 222367/9
Fax: +256 414 286123
Email: Patrick_ssekitoleko@unbs.go.ug
patrickssekitoleko@hotmail.com

ZAMBIA/ZAMBIE
Dr YVONNE GOMA Fusya
Senior Epidemi-Surveillance & Information Officer
Ministry of Agriculture-Department of Veterinary Services, DVS NALIC
P.O Box 50060
Postcode: 10101
Lusaka
Phone: +260 977 80 84 40
Fax: + 260 256814
Email: f_goma@yahoo.com

Ms NGALA Florence
Chief Environmental Health Officer-Food Safety National Codex Focal Point
Ministry of Health
P.O Box 30205
Postcode: 10101
Lusaka
Phone: +260 211 229 470
Fax: + 260 256814
Email: ngalaflo@yahoo.co.uk

OBSERVER COUNTRIES
PAYS OBSERVATEURS

CANADA
Dr GODEFROY Samuel
Vice Chair of the Commission
Director-General
Food Directorate
Health Canada
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway
Room E237 (2202E)
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9
Phone: +1 613 957 1821
Fax: +1 613 957 1784
Email: Samuel.godefroy@hc-sc.gc.ca

INDIA/INDE
Mr DAVE Sanjay
Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
3rd Floor, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road
New Delhi
Postcode 110002
Phone: +91 11 23237436
Fax: +91 11 23237436
Email: dave.codex@fssai.gov.in
Mr DWIVEDI Gaurav
Assistant Director (Marketing)
Spices Board , Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Govt. Of India
Old Market Yard Complex,
Chuttugunta Centre,
Opposite SBI Guntur
Phone: +91863-2338570
Fax: +91863-2338570
Email: gauravdwivedi.sb@gmail.com

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE
Ms OCHIENG PERNET Awilo
Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
Division of International Affairs
Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
Post Box CH-3003 Bern
Phone; +41 313220042
Fax: +41 313221131
Email: awilo.ochieng@bag.admin.ch

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/ETATS-UNIES D’AMÉRIQUE
Mr LOWERY Kenneth
International Issues Analyst
U.S. Codex Office
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4861 – South Building
Washington DC 20251
Phone: 1 202 690 4042
Fax: +1 202 720 3157
Email: kenneth.lowery@fsis.usda.gov

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES

AU
Mr COLY Raphael
Secretary-General
African Union (AU)
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Phone: +251 1 517700
Fax: +251 1 512622
Email: raphael.coly@au-bar.org

UEMOA
Dr DOUMBIA Moussa
Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)
Chargé de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments
Avenue du Professeur Joseph KI-ZERBO
01, BP 543
Ouagadougou 01
Burkina Faso
Phone: +226 50 31 88 73
Fax: +226 50 31 88 72
Email: mdoumbia@uemoa.int

INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES

AEDA-EFLA
Ms ARAB Rola
Association européenne pour le droit de l’alimentation (AEDA/EFLA)
rue de l’ Association 50
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Phone: +32 2 209 11 42
Fax: +32 2 219 73 42
Email: secretariat@efla-aeda.org

IFAH
Dr ESPEISSE Olivier
Vétérinaire responsable
Elanco Animal Health
Immeuble Le Riva
24-30 Boulevard Vital Bouhot
92200 Neuilly/Seine
France
Phone: + 33 1 55 49 35 35
Fax: + 33 1 55 49 36 70
Email: espeisse_olivier@elanco.com

IFPRI
Dr MACKENZIE Anne
Standards and Regulatory Advisor
International Food Policy Research Institute
2033 K. St. NW
Washington, DC
20806 – 1002
U.S.A.
Phone: +1 613 692 0211
Email: amackenzie@rogers.com

Dr BALL Anna-Marie
Country Manager / Uganda
International Food Policy research Institute
PO Box 28565
Kampala
Uganda
Phone: +256 414285060/084
Email: a.ball@cgiar.org
ISDI

Mrs LEONE Jolanta
Member ISDI
Rue de l’Association 50
Brussels 1000
Belgium
Phone: +30222091143
Fax: +3222197342
Email: secretariat@isdi.org

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Mrs MULHOLLAND Catherine
Administrator, FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
Geneva
Phone: +41 22 791 3080
Fax: +41 22 791 4807
Email: mulhollandc@who.int

Dr KARIUKI Sam
Consultant
World Health Organization
Regional Office for Africa
Cité du Djoué
P.O.Box 06
Brazzaville
Republic of Congo
Phone: + 237 241 39135
E-mail: kariukis@afro.who.int

Mr Samuel BESONG
NPO / MEDICATIONS ESSENTIELS
World Health Organization
B.P 155 Yaoundé
Cameroun
Phone/ Fax: +237 91 69 86 98 / +237 22 21 10 77
Email: besongs@cm.afro.who.int

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

Mrs SEMEDO Maria Helena de Morais
FAO sous-Directrice Générale
Représentante Régionale pour l’Afrique
FAO Building Gamel Abdul Nasser Road
P.O. Box GP 1628
Accra
Ghana
Phone: +233 30 2675000
Fax +233 30 2668427
Email MariaHelena.Semedo@fao.org

Mr KAMANZI Jean
Regional Food Safety & Quality Officer
FAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa (SFS)
Block 1, Tendeseka Office Park
Cnr Samora Machel Ave/Renfrew Road
P.O. Box 3730
Harare
Zimbabwe
Phone: +263 4 253655-8
Fax: + 263 4 700724
Email jean.kamanzi@fao.org

Ms TONNOIR Florence
Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods
FAO Représentation du SFC
Bureau Sous Régional pour l’Afrique Centrale
Cité de la Démocratie
L ibreville 2643
Gabon
Tel.: + 241 04 38 00 48
Email: florence.tonnoir@fao.org

Ms BESSY Catherine
Food Safety & Quality Officer
Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
Food and Agriculture Organization
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome
Italy
Phone: +39 06 5705 3679
Fax: +39 06 5705 4593
Email: catherine.bessy@fao.org

Mr ETOUNDI Jean Martin
Technical Secretary of National Codex Committee and Food Safety
Sub Director of Quality and Promotion in Standards and Quality Agency
P. O. Box 8186
Yaoundé
Phone: + 23777742241/+23797143633
Email: etoundijme@yahoo.fr

Ms BONIADIOU Awal
Cadre à la Sous Direction de la Promotion Agence des Normes et de la Qualité
CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA
B.P 14966
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 99 42 07 80
Email : moawaln@yahoo.fr

Mr ETABI BIKIE Yannick Herve
Chargé d’Etude Assistant N°2
Ministère des Mines, de l’Industrie et du développement Technologique
Yaoundé
Phone: +237 99 43 98 07
Email : etabicylode@yahoo.fr
Mrs CHOUYA TCHAKOUTE Garone Josiane  
Contact Point of Codex Standards and Quality Agency  
P. O. Box 14966 Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99542384  
Fax: +237 22226496  
Email: pointfocalcameround@yahoo.fr

Mrs MBIDA MINDJEME Vivi Bertille  
Cadre d’Appui Comité National du Codex Alimentarius et de la Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 74 25 30 77  
Email: vivibertillem@yahoo.fr

Mrs KAYITAVU Ingratia  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique Ministère des Mines, de l’Industrie et du développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 77 10 55 33  
Email: ndjeama@yahoo.fr

Mr NDI ATEBA Jean Marie  
Cadre d’Appui Comité National du Codex Alimentarius et de la Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 76 41 56  
Email: ndegueleonard2013@yahoo.fr

Mr EBOA MPILE Felix  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique Ministère des Mines, de l’Industrie et du développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 95 17 25 77  
Email: mpileeboa@yahoo.fr

Mr CHAPWOUO TCHAKOUTE Landry Delphin  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique Ministère des Mines, de l’Industrie et du développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 91 68 22  
Email: landryzap@gmail.com

Mr MBELE LAWSON Gaëtan Frigate  
Chauffeur Ministère des Mines, de l’Industrie et du développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 79 42 31 12  
Email: lawsongaetan@yahoo.fr

CODEX SECRETARIAT  
SECRÉTARIAT DU CODEX

Ms CAROLISSEN Verna  
Food Standards Officer Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +39 06 5705 5826  
Fax: +39 06 5705 3057  
Email: verna.carolissen@fao.org

Ms DOYRAN Selma  
Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +39 06 5705 5826  
Fax: +39 06 5705 3057  
Email: selma.doyran@fao.org