JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC
Kokopo, Papua New Guinea
23 – 26 September 2014
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The Thirteenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Coordinating Committee:
- Agreed on the need for revitalisation of RCCs and made comments on several proposals for the revitalisation of RCCs (para. 26);
- Agreed to suspend the Circular Letter requesting information on food control systems, participation in food standards setting and the use of Codex standards at the national level (para. 32);
- Returned the proposed draft Standard for Fermented Noni Juice at Step 2/3 (para. 53);
- Adopted the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2014-2019 (para. 56 and Appendix II);
- Noted that the monitoring of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2014-2019 would provide information on the contribution of CCNASWP to the implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan and that, therefore, it would not be necessary for CCNASWP to report on the status of implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan, separately (para. 58); and
- Unanimously agreed to recommend that Vanuatu be appointed as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific (para. 76).

Matters referred to other Committee

The Coordinating Committee:
- Requested advice from the Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) on a safe maximum level for scopoletin as well as a method of analysis (para. 51).

Other matters for information

The Coordinating Committee:
- Agreed to revise the discussion paper on the development of a Regional Standard for kava product that can be used as a beverage when mixed with water for consideration at its 14th Session (para. 62); and
- Agreed on a process to identify priority areas for new work of interest to the Region (para. 64).
INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) held its 13th Session in Kokopo, from 23 to 26 September 2014 at the kind invitation of the Government of Papua New Guinea. The Session was chaired by Dr Vele Pat Ila’ava, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Livestock and attended by delegates from 14 Member countries, two Member countries outside the Region, one international organization and Representatives of FAO and WHO. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariats, is given in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Honourable Peter O'Neill, Prime Minister, Papua New Guinea, opened the Session. The Prime Minister in his opening speech highlighted the importance of the production of safe and quality food for people’s health, food security and the agriculture sector and how Codex contributes to this.

3. The Honourable Ereman Tobaining (Jnr), MP Governor of the East New Britain Province; Ms Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr Dirk Schulz, Food Safety and Nutrition Officer, FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, and Mr Peter Hoejskov, Technical Officer, Food Safety & NCD, WHO Division of Pacific Technical Support, also addressed the delegates. These speeches are presented in CRD2.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

4. The Coordinating Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES (Agenda Item 2)

5. The Coordinating Committee noted matters arising from the 36th and 37th Sessions of the Commission.

FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE REGION, IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS (Agenda Item 3)

6. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/3 on FAO/WHO activities relevant to the region, identifying priorities and capacity development needs. Particular attention was given to the challenges identified during the process of capacity development in the area of food safety and quality in the region.

7. Delegations noted the range of FAO and WHO activities implemented in the region, including support for the development of food safety legislation in Samoa, and a food safety policy in Papua New Guinea. One delegation suggested that it would be useful for FAO and WHO to share plans for capacity development with other development partners in advance. The Representative of WHO stressed the importance of using existing mechanisms for such information exchange and mentioned the Food Safety Corporation Working Group (FSCWG), as one example.

8. With regard to the need for awareness-raising, delegations noted that the new Codex communication strategy could play an important role in gaining the recognition of Codex by high level decision-makers and help resource mobilization and allocation towards Codex related activities.

9. Delegations also acknowledged the growing importance of street food in the region and the need to develop some guidance in order to ensure food safety and quality and to protect consumers’ health. In this respect, it was noted that Codex regional codes of practice for street vended food as well as the FAO Manual on Good Hygienic Practices in the Preparation and Sale of Street Food in Africa would be important resources in capacity building and future work in this field, such as a code of practice for the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Furthermore, the challenge of small and medium size food enterprises (SMEs) in PICs in meeting international food safety requirements was raised as a key concern.

Conclusion

10. The Coordinating Committee thanked FAO, WHO and other partners for the technical assistance and scientific advice provided to the countries of the region. The Coordinating Committee agreed on the need for continued resource mobilization and capacity development to address national and regional priorities in the area of food safety and quality.

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1 CX/NASWP 14/13/1.
2 CX/NASWP 14/13/2.
3 CX/NASWP 14/13/3; CX/NASWP 14/13/3 Add.1, CRD4 (comment of Solomon Islands).
Successor Initiative to the Codex Trust Fund

11. The Representative of FAO introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/3 Add 1, on behalf of FAO and WHO, highlighting the current ideas and potential features of the successor initiative to the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund (CTF). This initiative will be further informed by the results of the ongoing final evaluation of the CTF, which will be presented to the 2015 sessions of the Commission and Executive Committee. Delegations were encouraged to continue to contribute to the discussion in developing the successor initiative.

12. One delegation, recognizing the importance of the final evaluation of the CTF in developing a more meaningful successor, requested that adequate time be allowed for translation into all official languages and the findings to be fully considered to inform the successor initiative. In their opinion an extension of the existing CTF would allow for this.

Conclusion

13. The Coordinating Committee acknowledged the valuable support of the CTF to the region, and expressed broad support for the successor initiative.

REVITALISATION OF FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEES - PROPOSALS ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND PLATFORM OF RCCs (Agenda Item 4)¹

14. The Codex Secretariat introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/4 and highlighted that the document had been prepared for all six FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (RCCs) to stimulate discussion on how RCCs could be revitalized to contribute more effectively to Codex, food safety and quality needs of countries, and the related work of FAO and WHO, including capacity development.

15. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, also highlighted that this is an important discussion to continue to strengthen the role of RCCs in global food safety governance. RCCs provide a unique opportunity as they bring together country delegations, with the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO. It was suggested that an important step for the Committee would be to agree on an overall vision for revitalization of the Committee, recognizing that the discussion will take time to evolve and time to implement.

General Discussion

16. Delegations were in support of the revitalisation of RCCs to enhance countries’ engagement; maximize the use of resources; debate issues of relevance to the region and use of Codex standards. Delegations noted that the document prepared was timely, offered a good opportunity to analyse the RCCs work and discuss future opportunities. It was also noted that the discussion in RCCs should not lose track of the specificity of CCNASWP, not be over ambitious and that working modalities of RCCs should take advantage of advancements in technologies.

Specific Discussion

17. Delegations commented on the proposals put forward in the document (Section 3) as follows:

RCCs as improved food safety and quality fora: aligning RCCs (3.1)

18. Delegations supported the proposal of aligning the agenda of the six RCCs, as this would allow a comparison of their discussion and activities. However, delegations highlighted the need that RCCs agendas should allow addressing specific regional issues.

19. One Observer organization was of the view that the agenda and work of RCCs should allow for dialogue between Codex members and observers.

20. Delegations supported the identified common agenda items but expressed caution on the mechanisms for collecting information, which should not result in an additional burden to countries. It was also mentioned that data should be collected in a timely manner to allow for their analysis, which would contribute to a more informed discussion at RCCs.

¹ CX/NASWP 14/13/4; CRD3 (Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019); CRD6 (Draft template to collect information on official Government control for food safety and quality).
Platform for information sharing on food control systems and roles and responsibilities in food safety (3.2)

21. Delegations agreed on the importance and value of continuing to exchange information on food control systems, in particular to support countries’ continuing efforts to strengthen their systems. When considering CRD6, delegations agreed that more time was needed to consider the type of information to be exchanged. In doing so, consideration needs to be given to how this information would be used and analysed. Delegations were of the view that it was premature to determine a mechanism for collecting information and that this would be informed as the discussion evolves.

22. The Coordinating Committee agreed that continued discussion on the type of information to share on food control systems/food safety and quality issues should take into account the ongoing work at the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) on the burden of multiple questionnaires directed at exporting countries.

Identification of needs and priorities in regions (persistent and emerging food safety/quality issues) (3.3)

23. Delegations agreed that this is an important task of RCCs and raised the need to reflect on the mechanisms to be put in place and the ability to identify needs and priorities. It was noted that opportunities exist through enhanced information exchange and linkages with other regional organizations and fora. Delegations also asked if mechanisms other than Circular Letters would better serve the purpose and highlighted the need to have in place a clear process to identify issues for discussion. In this regard, delegations noted the proposed process to identify priority areas for new work on matters of interest to the region in CX/NASWP 14/13/9.

Regional strategic planning (3.4)

24. Delegations supported work on the regional Strategic Plan noting that it was used by some countries for developing their national strategies for Codex, identifying capacity development needs; planning for capacity development activities; and soliciting funding for Codex programmes.

25. Delegations supported aligning the timeframe of the regional Strategic Plan and the global Codex Strategic Plan; however, it was noted that some flexibility was needed to take into account the different schedules of RCCs and the Commission.

Conclusion

26. The Coordinating Committee:
   - Agreed on the need for revitalisation of RCCs to improve their effectiveness in achieving both regional and global goals of Codex, FAO, WHO and countries concerning food safety systems, food trade, consumer information, and food and nutrition.
   - Supported the proposal for the alignment of the agenda across the six RCCs and agreed that the common items identified were acceptable, but noted that the specificities of CCNASWP should not be lost in the process.
   - Expressed support for exchange of information on food control systems, but considered that further reflection was needed on the type of information that should be collected, the purpose, and the mechanism for collection.
   - Expressed general support for maintaining regional Strategic Plans that serve in support of development of national strategies for Codex and for the planning of capacity development activities and resource mobilisation.
   - Acknowledged that the current mechanism of the Circular Letter to collect information on national food control systems, consumer participation in standards-setting and Codex at national level could be improved. The Coordinating Committee agreed to suspend the use of this Circular Letter until a replacement mechanism was found.

27. The Coordinating Committee noted that the outcome of the discussion of the six RCCs on the “Revitalisation” would be presented at the next Session of the Commission.
COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (REPLIES TO CL 2014/19-NASWP) (Agenda Item 5)  

28. Replies received showed that there had been some developments in food control systems, in particular development or amendment of food acts or bills as well as food safety and quality standards or regulations to ensure a safe and quality food supply.

29. It was noted that countries in the region were harmonising their national standards with international standards, such as Codex, to the extent possible; and in some cases where there were no standards at national level, by default Codex standards were used.

30. Stakeholder awareness of the importance of Codex was encouraged through several mechanisms, ranging from publication of information on websites to holding of informative and educational workshops, and discussion websites, e.g. food standards networks.

31. There was continued support and interest in Codex activities but challenges remained in terms of budgetary and other resources. Countries had to be more strategic in prioritizing their participation in Codex and participation should not be limited to physical participation in Codex sessions.

32. The Coordinating Committee recalled the conclusion of the discussion on “Revitalisation” (Agenda Item 5) that further discussion was needed on collection of data and information relevant to Codex and on food control systems in the region, the type of information required and the mechanism for collection of this information and to suspend the use of the Circular Letter.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR FERMENTED NONI JUICE (Agenda Item 6)

33. The Delegation of Tonga introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/6 and highlighted the key issues addressed by the EWG as well as issues which needed further discussion, namely, the need for scientific advice and identification of methods of analysis.

General Discussion

34. The Coordinating Committee considered the requests for scientific advice identified in the Project Document (CX/EXEC 13/68/4) as well as a request for the determination of safe intake levels for scopoletin.

35. The Coordinating Committee was reminded that requests for scientific advice needed to be clearly scoped to allow FAO/WHO to respond appropriately.

36. In order to progress the discussion during the session, the Coordinating Committee agreed to consider the proposal for scientific advice once it had considered the provisions in the proposed draft Standard in order to determine whether such advice was still warranted.

37. The Coordinating Committee further noted that methods of analysis could only be finalized once all the provisions in the Standard were clearly identified; that the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) could be requested to assist in the identification of methods of analysis; and that a Standard could progress in the Step procedure even if all the methods were not finalized.

Specific comments

Product Definition

38. The Coordinating Committee agreed to indicate the variety of the fruits to be used in the production of fermented noni fruit juice as *Morinda citrifolia* L. var *Citrifolia* of the Rubiceae family noting that these were the fruits traditionally used for the production of these products.

Noni Fruits

39. The Coordinating Committee considered a proposal by one delegation to exclude “noni fruit seeds” in the production of fermented noni fruit juice to alleviate food safety concerns in relation to anthraquinones. It was clarified that whole fruits, including the seeds were traditionally used in the production of the fermented noni fruit juice and would be removed after fermentation.
Quality factors

40. The Coordinating Committee agreed to delete patulin as not relevant to the product. Lucidin, alizarin and rubiadin were also deleted as the way they were expressed implied a zero tolerance that would make identification and endorsement of a method difficult. The Coordinating Committee noted that to determine if a method was fit for purpose or to calculate performance criteria, a numerical value was needed. Therefore, should there be a need for these provisions, it would be necessary to provide a corresponding value.

41. Sections on definition of defects and methods of analysis were amended accordingly.

Fermented Noni Fruit Juice

42. The Coordinating Committee noted that quantitative methods for deacetylasperulosidic acid and scopoletin should be identified. In the case of “acidity”, the Coordinating Committee noted that for purposes of analysis, the specific acid to be determined should be stipulated.

43. The Coordinating Committee also noted the need to clarify the type of fermentation being referred to in the Standard.

44. One delegation noted the need to determine the recommended maximum daily intake of fermented noni juice as the safety data referenced in the project document were based on 30 ml whereas a typical juice serving size is identified as 240 ml. This could be dangerous and misleading and could pose adverse health effects to susceptible populations when consumed in quantities typical of fruit juices. In response to this concern it was explained that 30 ml related to the serving size of the concentrated fermented noni juice.

Definition of Defects

45. The Coordinating Committee further noted that the defects: bacterial aerobic total viable count, yeast and mould counts needed further consideration as to their appropriateness as defects and that it was necessary to establish whether the defects were applicable before or after pasteurization. In addition, the Coordinating Committee agreed to include presence of seeds as a defect in the final product.

Food Additives

46. The Coordinating Committee agreed to indicate that flavouring substances should be in accordance with the Guidelines on the Use of Flavouring (CAC/GL 66-2008) and that the inclusion of a provision for carry-over was not necessary.

Hygiene and Packaging

47. The Coordinating Committee noted that clarification was necessary on whether the Code of Practice for Aseptically Processed and Prepackaged Low Acid Food (CAC/RCP 40-1993) was applicable to the products, since the products were considered low pH and not low acid foods.

Minimum Fill

48. The Coordinating Committee noted that consideration should be given to reference OIML R8717 instead of the current detailed procedure plus whether an average requirement and individual package requirements should be specified.

Methods of Analysis and Sampling

49. The Coordinating Committee agreed to replace the proposed method for the determination of ash with AOAC 940.26.

Conclusion

50. Noting that several issues needed further discussion and the proposed draft Standard was not ready to progress in the Step process, the Coordinating Committee agreed to reconvene the EWG, led by Tonga, to redraft the proposed draft Standard taking into account the discussion and decisions taken by the Coordinating Committee as well as all written comments submitted to the session.

51. The Coordinating Committee also agreed to request advice from the Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) on a safe maximum level for scopoletin as well as a method of analysis. No further scientific advice was needed at this time.

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52. One delegation was of the view that once this information was received, the question on the recommended maximum daily intake of fermented juice could be resolved.

**Status of the Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Fermented Noni Juice (N01-2013)**

53. The Coordinating Committee agreed to return the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for redrafting by the abovementioned EWG, circulation for comments and consideration by the next session of the Coordinating Committee.

**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP (Agenda Item 7)**

**Status of Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013**

54. The Coordinating Committee noted the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2008-2013, as presented in CX/NASWP 14/13/7. It was further noted that activities that were not completed had been transferred to the new draft Strategic Plan.

**Draft new Strategic Plan 2014-2019**

55. The Coordinating Committee considered the report of the physical Working Group (PWG) on the new Strategic Plan for CCNASWP (CRD1) with a particular focus on a number of issues that remained to be solved. In particular, the Coordinating Committee amended the draft prepared by the PWG:

- Indicated the linkage of each of the six Objectives with the activities of the global Strategic Plan 2014-2019;
- Aligned the terminology with that of the global Strategic Plan 2014-2019;
- Clarified the text of a number of outcomes and measurable indicators to be consistent with the corresponding activity and to better differentiate between the two;
- Removed some repetitions and redundant texts;
- Broadened the scope of Objective 6, which was limited to the development of standards for food products produced by Pacific Island Countries, to include work on other food related issues.

**Conclusion**

56. The Coordinating Committee agreed to adopt the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2014-2019 (see Appendix II) and to inform the 38th Session of the Commission.

57. The Coordinating Committee requested the Coordinator to present a report on the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP at its next session and noted that this will give an opportunity to CCNASWP to review the implementation status of the plan.

58. The Coordinating Committee noted that in view of the clear linkages established with the global Codex Strategic Plan, the monitoring of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP would provide information on the contribution of CCNASWP to the implementation of the global Strategic Plan. Therefore, it would not be necessary for CCNASWP to report on the status of implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan, separately.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR KAVA PRODUCT THAT CAN BE USED AS A BEVERAGE WHEN MIXED WITH WATER (Agenda Item 8)**

59. The Delegation of Vanuatu introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/8 and noted that the issue of kava was a very complex one, and that the import ban on kava products in general by certain Codex member countries contributes to the misunderstanding of the safety of the product.

60. The Delegation also pointed out that the EWG did not have sufficient time to consider in detail the FAO/WHO Technical Report on Kava: a review of the safety of traditional and recreational beverage consumption. The Delegation proposed that the Coordinating Committee consider reconvening the EWG to revise the discussion paper and project document taking into account the FAO/WHO report as well as other available information. At the same time, the Delegation proposed that countries could use the information available to develop an industry standard.

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8 CX/NASWP 14/13/7.
9 CX/NASWP 14/13/7 Add.1; CX/NASWP 14/13/7 Add.2 (comments of Australia and Solomon Islands); CRD1 (Report of the Physical Working Group on the CCNASWP Strategic Plan 2014-2019).
10 CX/NASWP 14/13/8.
61. There was general support to continue developing the discussion paper in view of the importance of kava in PICs. Kava is a major crop in Pacific Island countries, while in other countries of the NASWP region it is imported and consumed.

Conclusion

62. The Coordinating Committee agreed to reconvene the EWG, led by Vanuatu:
   - To further develop the discussion paper taking into account the FAO/WHO report and other available information; and
   - To consider the possibility of other risk management options, such as a code of practice.

63. The Coordinating Committee recalled the agreement of CCNASWP12 that the scope of work would apply only to kava as a dried product that can be used as a beverage when mixed with water.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON PRODUCTS OF THE REGION THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED BY REGIONAL STANDARDS AND MECHANISM FOR THEIR PRIORITISATION (Agenda Item 9)**

64. The Coordinating Committee agreed to use the process outlined in Attachment A of CX/NASWP 14/13/9 to identify priority areas for new work of interest to the Region. It was noted that this decision was in line with proposal 3.1.4 of the “Revitalisation” document (CX/NASWP 14/13/4).

65. One delegation noted that in other Codex committees the circular letter has been an effective mechanism and could help the Coordinating Committee prioritize its work.

**NCDs ISSUES IN THE NASWP REGION (Agenda Item 10)**

66. The Representative of WHO, on behalf of WHO and FAO, introduced CX/NASWP 14/13/10 on noncommunicable disease (NCD) issues in the NASWP region. The Representative highlighted that the Pacific region has been declared to be in a health and development crisis due to the NCD epidemic. It was highlighted that an unhealthy diet is a major risk factor for NCDs and that food standards and regulations are a key policy instrument to influence the composition of foods and labelling and the exposure to diet-related risk factors for NCDs.

67. The Representative stressed that many activities have been implemented since the CCNASWP12, but action needed to be scaled up. A number of potential areas for interventions and challenges associated with measures to address food and diet related NCD risk factors were presented.

68. The Coordinating Committee expressed its gratitude to FAO and WHO for preparing the paper and bringing this important issue to their attention. The Coordinating Committee noted the importance of urgent action to address NCDs and vitamin and mineral deficiencies (VMD) in the region and the need for multisectoral approaches to prevent and control these health challenges. The Coordinating Committee further noted that an effective strategy to address these issues should comprise a range of complementary interventions at national and regional level.

69. The Coordinating Committee took note of countries’ different approaches in their ongoing efforts to address NCDs and VMDs and highlighted the need for interventions to be tailored to specific country needs and contexts. Member countries were encouraged to share best practices and experiences in developing and implementing programmes to improve diets.

70. The Coordinating Committee highlighted the need for countries to use Codex and a harmonized approach in the development, revision and updating of national food policies, laws, regulations and standards.

71. One Observer organization also drew attention to the potential benefits associated with biofortification as a means to address VMD in the region.

Conclusion

72. The Coordinating Committee acknowledged the support provided by FAO and WHO to address the NCD and VMD issue but highlighted the need for continued support to build capacity among beneficiaries at various levels of government as well as civil society. In this regard, the Coordinating Committee was advised that FAO and WHO with support from the Codex Trust Fund, will conduct a workshop for PICs in early 2015 on nutrition and diet related NCD challenges in the Pacific and the role of Codex.

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11 CX/NASWP 14/13/9; CRD5 (comments of Papua New Guinea).
12 CX/NASWP 14/13/10.
CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 11)\textsuperscript{13}

73. The Coordinating Committee noted that Attachment A of CX/NASWP 14/13/11 included useful information that could assist countries of the region to identify and prioritise issues under discussion in Codex that could be pursued at national or regional level in the coming years.

74. With regard to the prioritization of Codex work, the Coordinating Committee recalled the three priority issues, i.e. date marking (CCFL), proposed revision of the general principles of food hygiene including HACCP (CCFH) and principles and guidelines for elaboration and management of questionnaires directed at exporting countries (CCFICS), which were identified during the FAO/WHO Technical Workshop on Developments in Codex relevant to Pacific Island Countries (Kokopo, Papua New Guinea, 21 September 2014). Members were encouraged to submit written comments on these issues which would further enhance their participation.

75. It was also noted that some suggestions as to the mechanisms to develop regional positions on Codex work (para. 11 of the document) deserved serious consideration and were in line with proposal 3.3 of the “Revitalisation” document (CX/NASWP 14/13/4).

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 12)\textsuperscript{14}

76. On the proposal of the Delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 38\textsuperscript{th} Session of the Commission that Vanuatu be appointed as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific. The Delegation of Vanuatu thanked all the Countries for their support and accepted the nomination.

77. The current Coordinator expressed gratitude to all Countries of the region and the Government of Papua New Guinea for the support received to undertake this important task.

78. The Coordinating Committee expressed its thanks to Papua New Guinea for the excellent work carried out as Coordinator for the NASWP region.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 13)

79. The Coordinating Committee noted that no other business had been put forward during the adoption of the Agenda.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 14)

80. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 14\textsuperscript{th} Session would be held in approximately two years’ time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 38\textsuperscript{th} Session of the Commission.

\textsuperscript{13} CX/NASWP 14/13/11.

\textsuperscript{14} CX/NASWP 14/13/12.
## SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC (CCNASWP) 2014-2019

INTRODUCTION

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations in 1963. The main objective of CAC is to develop international food standards to protect health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. It also promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations; it publishes elaborated standards as Codex worldwide or regional standards and to amend published standards in the light of new developments.

The region is quite unique based on the heterogeneity of countries in terms of capacity to implement Codex standards in the food safety area and experience with participation in Codex work. This underlines the need in capacity development to increase the level of participation and the technical quality of contributions to Codex work, as well as to raise capacity for the utilization of Codex standards for strengthening food safety control systems and for ensuring the protection of domestic consumers and consumers in importing countries. The Strategic Plan for the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) responds with basic actions to address the need for ensuring more consistent technical inputs, promoting greater participation of CCNASWP countries to Codex work, and fostering the collection and provision of regional data for standard setting purposes.

The Strategic Plan 2014-2019 for CCNASWP contains the goal, strategic objectives and actions to achieve the expected outcomes within the five (5) year time frame. The Strategic Plan for CCNASWP has been aligned to support the global Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019, seeking to achieve better coordination and interaction among member countries for strengthening national food safety systems, promoting harmonisation of standards and equivalence of practices in ensuring food safety.

GOAL

The goal of this Strategic Plan is to increase and enhance the effectiveness of CCNASWP in achieving its responsibilities to its Member countries and enhancing the Region’s contribution to the CAC.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies six strategic objectives of the region for the period 2014-2019. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of the Coordinating Committee to determine the status of the Plan and the continued appropriateness of the identified objectives.
**Objective 1:** To strengthen the communication among CCNASWP members and the coordination of the region’s activities in Codex.

**Rationale:** Meaningful consultation and coordination among the CCNASWP members including relevant stakeholders in the country is important to ensure effective operation of the region’s activities within Codex.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 3.2.3 “Where practical, the use of Codex meetings as a forum to effectively conduct educational and technical capacity building activities”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Expected Outcome</th>
<th>Measurable Indicators / Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all Members(^1) at Codex Committees, Task Forces, Working Groups and the Commission.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Improvement made in the coordination and communication in the region.</td>
<td>Meetings held with maximum participation of all members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Continue to promote the sharing of written comments to Circular Letters (CLs) and on other working documents, and subsequent discussion of issues of mutual interest as may be appropriate, including coordinating positions.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Written comments are exchanged and member positions coordinated.</td>
<td>Increase in the number of comments shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Encourage information exchange among member countries through the use of electronic information systems.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Maintain website and exchange information through internet.</td>
<td>Increase in contact among members and use of website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Focus CCNASWP agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to the region.</td>
<td>Coordinator(^2) in consultation with FAO and WHO and members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Codex issues of interest to the region clearly highlighted.</td>
<td>Agenda for CCNASWP meeting strengthened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Ensure a seamless transition between Coordinators.</td>
<td>New and previous Coordinators with assistance from Secretariat</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Activities of CCNASWP continue in a seamless way among Coordinators.</td>
<td>Checklist prepared for new Coordinators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) “All Members” refers to all CCNASWP members.

\(^2\) “Coordinator” refers to CCNASWP Coordinator.
**Objective 2**: To promote maximum participation of all CCNASWP member countries of the region in the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the CCNASWP region.

**Rationale**: The participation of all member countries is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring issues identified as being significant to the region take into account of the full range of interest and viewpoints of members.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019**: Activity 3.2.2 “Encourage developing countries to identify and prioritize Codex committees and task forces of significance to them”.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Encourage PIC member countries to continue to request funding assistance (e.g. the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhancing the Participation of Developing Countries in the Work of Codex and its successor initiative, as well as other funding sources such as WHO, FAO, UNDF, STDF and other national and international organizations).</td>
<td>All eligible PIC member countries</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>PICs more actively engaged in Codex activities.</td>
<td>Increase in attendance of PICs in Codex meetings, Task Forces and working groups to develop capacities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Promote coordinated approaches for assistance from funding sources to maximise coverage of subject areas of interest to the region. PIC members should coordinate application to the various funding sources to ensure, to the extent possible, that members benefit from participation in a wider range of committees.</td>
<td>All eligible members and the Coordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Attend CCNASWP and other relevant Codex committees.</td>
<td>Increase in sources of funding used to increase participation at Codex meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Members to participate in working groups (both electronic and physical) and to submit written comments on subjects of national and regional interest irrespective of whether members can physically attend the meetings.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Immediate and ongoing</td>
<td>All members sharing their written comments with all members of the region to inform and assist them to formulate national positions/views.</td>
<td>All members submit written comments on issues of interest to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Ensure that the country comments from members of the CCNASWP region are considered by the committee including those not present at meetings.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>All members to submit country comments.</td>
<td>Comments submitted by members considered at meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Objective 2:** To promote maximum participation of all CCNASWP member countries of the region in the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the CCNASWP region.

**Rationale:** The participation of all member countries is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring issues identified as being significant to the region take into account of the full range of interest and viewpoints of members.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 3.2.2 “Encourage developing countries to identify and prioritize Codex committees and task forces of significance to them”.

| 2.5 Identify items arising from other Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups that are of particular significance to the region to facilitate development of common position and advancement of regional interest in Codex work. | Coordinator in consultation with members | Ongoing | Careful consideration of matters arising from CAC and other Codex committees. | Identify issues of interest to the region. |

**Objective 3:** To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of the national Codex contact points, national Codex Committees, delegates and stakeholders especially for the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions

**Rationale:** In order for a country to participate effectively in the Codex process, it requires a functional Codex Contact Point (CCP), including an effective structure that supports stakeholder consultations and delegates development of national positions. This still presents a challenge to many of the Pacific Island Country (PIC) Members where effective Codex Contact Points, and their support infrastructures are needed to carry out the core functions. Regional networking could greatly benefit the newer members of the region to improve their understanding of Codex and help enhance their participation in Codex.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 3.1.1 “Encourage Members to develop sustainable national institutional arrangements to promote effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Identify the capacity building needs of the Codex Contact Points to strengthen Codex structures at the national level and facilitate greater participation of members in Codex work.</td>
<td>FAO and WHO, Coordinator and members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Strengthen National Codex Contact Points and supporting structures of all members</td>
<td>Implement regional/national level training programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Conduct national and/or regional workshops on developing effective administrative/consultative/participatory mechanisms to support for Codex Contact Points, delegates and National Codex</td>
<td>FAO and WHO and all members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Implement national/regional workshops with further workshops planned around regional meetings.</td>
<td>Hold regional/national workshops to strengthen national capacities.</td>
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**Objective 3:** To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of the national Codex contact points, national Codex Committees, delegates and stakeholders especially for the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions

**Rationale:** In order for a country to participate effectively in the Codex process, it requires a functional Codex Contact Point (CCP), including an effective structure that supports stakeholder consultations and delegates development of national positions. This still presents a challenge to many of the Pacific Island Country (PIC) Members where effective Codex Contact Points, and their support infrastructures are needed to carry out the core functions. Regional networking could greatly benefit the newer members of the region to improve their understanding of Codex and help enhance their participation in Codex.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 3.1.1 “Encourage Members to develop sustainable national institutional arrangements to promote effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.3 Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points /delegates to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.</th>
<th>Members with lead from Coordinator</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
<th>Initiate networking with exchange of emails.</th>
<th>Increase networking of CCPs/delegates in the region.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Organise training opportunities for all countries CCPs, stakeholders and/or delegates through work attachments and in country support to more experienced CCPs to observe the management and implementation of Codex work.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Improve capacity building of CCPs/Secretariat/Technical personnel.</td>
<td>Provide on the job training to all members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Encourage all members to mobilize national resources to enable them to participate effectively in Codex.</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Sustain or increase resource allocation to Codex activities.</td>
<td>Increased participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Objective 4:** To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise and information amongst member countries of the region.

**Rationale:** As a fundamental element of food control systems is good science, the exchange of scientific and technical expertise / information will contribute to enhancing the scientific basis of the various food control infrastructures in the region.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 2.1.2 “Encourage engagement of scientific and technical expertise of Members and their representatives in the development of Codex standards”.

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<tr>
<td>4.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis/evidence.</td>
<td>All members and FAO and WHO</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regional issues.</td>
<td>Provide technical expertise / information and guidance on the critical areas of interest in data generation, collection, analysis and storage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Foster the establishment of communication links amongst the technical experts and the institutions in the countries of the region and promote the sharing of data and other scientific information as appropriate.</td>
<td>All members and FAO and WHO</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Develop links between technical expertise / information to share data and collaborative efforts.</td>
<td>Codex Contact Points to provide or facilitate access to technical expertise / information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Organize and conduct workshops/training courses to facilitate the development of technical capacity of the members of the region to address any identified issues including the application of risk assessment processes.</td>
<td>All members and FAO and WHO</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ensure and facilitate appropriate workshops and training courses.</td>
<td>Conduct workshops on specific areas of interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Objective 5:** To promote use of Codex standards, codes and guidelines as the basis for national standards development

**Rationale:** Increased harmonization of regulatory standards, policies and practices related to food would contribute to protect the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade; not only amongst members of the region, but also more broadly. Many of the PICs are unfamiliar with the full range of Codex standards and it would be helpful to their standards development and review process to identify those standards and guidelines that might be of greatest interest to them.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 1.2.2 “Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade”.

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<tr>
<td>5.1 Support practical training on the importance of international harmonisation and the development of national standards and regulations harmonised on Codex.</td>
<td>FAO and WHO and all members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased the number of workshops planned and conducted.</td>
<td>Increased number of national standards harmonised with Codex standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, industries, consumers, academia, professional bodies and NGOs).</td>
<td>All members</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased engagements by relevant stakeholders.</td>
<td>Increased inputs in the development of country comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 6:** To promote the development of Codex standards for specific food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries and for other food related issues.

**Rationale:** To identify and prioritise specific food products and other issues of interest to the region, and in particular to the PICs, to ensure that their needs are taken into account in the development of worldwide and/or regional texts.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 1.2.1 “Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade”.

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<tr>
<td>6.1 Establish national mechanism for standard development process in the PICs to identify specific food products and other food related issues of interest to the region that require a standard to be developed in order to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.</td>
<td>All PICs</td>
<td>By 2019</td>
<td>Identify, prioritise and develop standards for food products in the PIC.</td>
<td>Establish national mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Objective 6:** To promote the development of Codex standards for specific food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries and for other food related issues.

**Rationale:** To identify and prioritise specific food products and other issues of interest to the region, and in particular to the PICs, to ensure that their needs are taken into account in the development of worldwide and/or regional texts.

**Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019:** Activity 1.2.1 “Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade”.

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<tr>
<th>6.2 Provide a mechanism for identifying standards development issues in Codex of interest to the PICs and establish sub-regional Working Group, as appropriate for PICs to address these issues.</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
<th>By 2019</th>
<th>Identify Codex standard development issues and establish sub-regional working groups.</th>
<th>Establish electronic and physical working groups on kava, fermented noni juice and other food products and other food related issues of importance to the PICs.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products and other food related issues of interest to the PICs to CCNASWP for consideration prior to submission to the Commission or other Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups.</td>
<td>PICs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>New proposals of interest for the region accepted as new work.</td>
<td>Submit proposals for new standards to CAC and other committees through CCNASWP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>