

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 4**

**CX/AFRICA 00/4  
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## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**Fourteenth Session**

**Kampala, Uganda, 27 – 30 November 2000**

#### **HARMONIZATION AND COOPERATION IN FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Committee at its 13<sup>th</sup> Session agreed that progress reports on harmonization efforts should be further discussed at its 14<sup>th</sup> Session. In view of this, the Secretariat issued CL 1998/39-AFRICA, requesting comments and information from member countries. Responses were to be provided not later than 1 February 2000. Although the Codex Secretariat is aware of positive actions being taken by sub-regional groups, yet up till the time of going to press, no official notification was received by the Secretariat.

One of the provisions of The World Trade Organization is that Codex Standards will be used to arbitrate between disputing trading partners. In view of this the organization encouraged signatories to the agreements on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical barriers to trade (TBT) to harmonize their national/ regional food control legislation i.e. food law and enabling regulations/standards/statutory instruments, with those elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This will eliminate or reduce the incidence of disputes and facilitate international trade in food.

In the area of food labelling, harmonized food labelling requirements will eliminate technical barriers and thereby facilitate movement of food items. It is a common phenomenon that food items supposedly meant for country B and is in transit through country A, invariably end up on shelves in country A instead of passing through to country B. This has made some countries to inspect and examine all food items passing through their borders to ensure that they are safe and of good quality. Where food legislation are harmonized, country B could rely on the results of examination performed by country A and so could decide to reject or accept a consignment of food based on the results obtained by country A. This situation will be of great benefit to many countries in the region which have no capabilities to examine their imported food items.

Governments are invited to report on the progress made on the above subject matter at national and subregional levels.