

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 4(a)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

Twentieth Session

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 29 January – 1 February 2013

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCAFRICA

Discussion paper on evaluation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2008-2013

INTRODUCTION

Since 2008, under the coordination of Ghana and Cameroon, the Codex community in the Africa region has taken steps to implement the Strategic Plan of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA).

The Strategic Plan 2008-2013 focused primarily on communication between CCAFRICA members and with the other Codex Alimentarius bodies, on an active and effective participation of the African continent in Codex Alimentarius work, and on cooperation for participation in Codex Alimentarius work and the use of Codex Alimentarius outputs to improve food safety in Africa.

Several activities have been effectively implemented. Some continue to receive specific attention because associated with objectives of particular relevance.

Some activities have not been accomplished but today warrant attention. These include:

- Implementation of the risk assessment process.
- Production of data and scientific advice.
- Advocacy among political and administrative authorities to secure higher priority to Codex activities in the country.
- Elaboration of regional standards to improve food safety and enhance the marketing of foods of African origin.
- Use of Codex standards to improve national food safety systems.

From a global perspective, implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2007-2013 has definitely established an active and effective presence of Africa in the work of the Codex Alimentarius in terms of health of its populations, its economy and its development. However, many challenges remain:

- prioritizing Codex activities in the strategic planning of countries,
- ensuring the effectiveness of national Codex structures,
- producing data and scientific advice,
- strongly improving food safety in countries.

Activities accomplished:

Nº	Objectives	Activities	Objective verifiable indicators	Level of accomplishment	Observations
2	To achieve an active and effective participation of all countries of the region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly CCAFRICA.	<p>2-5 Involve all countries of the region in the activities of the CCAFRICA.</p> <p>2-6 Hold, in conjunction with sessions of the CCAFRICA, seminars and workshops on food safety and matters of concern to the region.</p> <p>2-7 Encourage countries with a common interest to coordinate their position and present it as a common position at Codex committee meetings.</p>	<p>Codex Contact Points established in the countries of the region.</p> <p>Reports of seminars and workshops organized in conjunction with the CCAFRICA.</p> <p>Information on meetings. Joint reports and communication with countries before each Codex meeting.</p>	<p><i>Number of established CCPs and NCCs to be determined.</i> However, all the member countries of the CCAFRICA have often been invited to its activities.</p> <p>A workshop will be held during the present 2013 session to raise the effectiveness of national food safety systems, with the Codex Trust Food sponsoring all delegates (2 per country).</p> <p>The Coordinator of the CCAFRICA often holds consultation meetings of the Africa Group alongside sessions of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies.</p>	<p>Many countries do not participate despite the invitations sent and the possibility of funding. They should be made more aware of the possibility of funding.</p> <p>This type of workshop is regularly organized alongside CCAFRICA sessions.</p> <p>Africa is increasingly adopting common positions on matters of common interest or out of solidarity with a specific group of countries concerned. This has resulted from consultation at Africa Group meetings organized by the Coordinator of the CCAFRICA.</p>

3	<p>To promote the development of and strengthen National Codex Committees and/or Codex Contact Points in member countries of the region.</p>	<p>3.1 Identify needs for capacity building with other organizations and look for possible financing sources.</p>	<p>Analytical reports of capacity needs. Possible sources of financing identified for capacity building activities.</p>	<p><i>Report on the identification of individual country needs.</i> The Coordinator of the CCAFRICA has initiated a technical cooperation programme with FAO to support the strengthening of the National Codex Committees and Codex Contact Points for 3 countries of the Central Africa sub-region (Cameroon, Central African Republic and Gabon).</p>	<p>While the TCP is a pilot programme directed at 3 countries of the Central Africa sub-region, there are plans to extend it to other countries in Africa in general and Central Africa in particular. With this in mind, other sources of financing need to be identified and explored. The TCP, whose memorandum of understanding will be signed at the 20th session of the CCAFRICA, has obtained funding of 376 000 USD. The actual start of the TCP is scheduled for February 2013.</p>
4	<p>To take advantage of available technical and scientific expertise of member countries of the region.</p>	<p>4.1 Identify and establish a list of specialists and competent institutions in the region, based on information provided by each country that could provide support and specialized advice to the CCAFRICA.</p>	<p>Database of specialists and competent institutions.</p>	<p>With technical and financial support from the AU/IBAR, the CCAFRICA Coordinator is in the process of establishing a database of African experts capable of providing scientific advice and input on topics to be discussed in the work of the Codex Alimentarius. Provide figures.</p>	<p>Identification of experts is not yet optimal. NCCs and CCPs should be encouraged to involve academics and researchers more closely in Codex Alimentarius work. Experts thus familiarized would help build a pool of Codex expertise in the region.</p>

		5.1 Design a biennial plan of action to be implemented between CCAFRICA sessions.	Annual plan of action to the implemented between CCAFRICA sessions.	The CCAFRICA Coordinator established a plan of action after the transfer of competence mission with Ghana.	This plan of action is based on the status of implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan in 2011.
5	To ensure the continuity and sustainability of CCAFRICA activities.	5.2 Conduct periodic review and follow-up of actions in the Strategic Plan.	Annual report of the Coordinator.	A circular letter was sent to NCCs/CCPs for implementation of the Strategic Plan. Regular follow-up is conducted by the Technical Secretariat.	The delay in country responses makes it very difficult for the Coordinator to report on implementation of the Strategic Plan.
		5.3 Establish information transmission procedures to ensure a better transition of the coordinatorship of the CCAFRICA.	Guidelines on the transmission of information to ensure a better transition by the end of 2008. A draft to be submitted at the meeting of 2009.	A guide on this had been prepared by the Coordinator of Ghana.	
		5.4 Present a progress report on achievements in key areas of the Strategic Plan at meetings of the CCFRICA.	Implementation evaluation report available at the CCAFRICA meeting in 2013.	<i>Item 4 of the agenda for the 20th session.</i>	

6	<p>To obtain technical cooperation and develop a funding mechanism that would enable the CCAFRICA to sustain its activities in accordance with its objectives.</p>	<p>Elaborate a list of organizations that could provide technical and financial cooperation.</p>	<p>A database of organizations that could provide technical support should be compiled by the end of 2008.</p>	<p>In addition to the cooperation that already exists and is being further developed between the CCAFRICA and the Codex Trust Fund, the AU/IBAR and the USDA, other cooperation avenues have been explored by the CCAFRICA Coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical cooperation programme with FAO, - harmonization of food safety management in Africa with the African Union, with funding from the European Union, - harmonization of food legislation in Central Africa with the EAS group of the European Union, - improvement of food inspection with Canada. 	<p>Cooperation calls for a meaningful involvement of governments that is both regional and sub-regional. The weak involvement of countries could delay or eliminate any vague desire to cooperate.</p>
7	<p>Identify and prioritize regional needs in matters of food safety and other areas with a view to finding solutions to meet these needs.</p>	<p>7.1 Identify priority economic and food safety issues for which consensus exists within the region for the elaboration of Codex standards.</p>	<p>Reports of stakeholder meetings on economic and/or food safety priorities communicated to country members by the end of 2008.</p>	<p><i>Report on the identification of individual country needs.</i></p>	

Activities ongoing:

N°	Objectives	Activities	Verifiable indicators	Level of achievement	Observations
1.1	To foster effective and dynamic communication between the CCAFRICA members and other regions, other Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.	Maximize the use of electronic communication in countries of the region, and encourage the development of a webpage for each Codex Contact Point (renovation of the CCAFRICA website, creation of a webpage for each Codex Contact Point).	Websites operational in the Codex Contact Points of the member countries by December 2008.	Activities for the hosting and design of the CCAFRICA website are ongoing.	<p>ANOR has asked the established public communications company, owner of the optical fibre network in Cameroon, to design and host the CCAFRICA website. This is a very short-term solution</p> <p>For the long term, an in-depth study is required on the feasibility of a permanent host for the CCAFRICA website. This feasibility study will be conducted with the support of partners.</p>
1-2	To foster effective and dynamic communication between the CCAFRICA members and other regions, other Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.	Each country should continuously update contact details to facilitate communication and duly inform the Codex Secretariat and the Regional Coordinator.	Updated contact details sent to the Coordinator every six months.	Countries have been asked by the CCAFRICA Coordinator to update contact details of the Codex Contact Points and the heads of National Codex Committees (by email and distribution of forms).	<p>In 2011 the CCAFRICA Coordinator sent an email to all Codex Contact Points and all known National Codex Committees in each country in order to establish contact and to request information on the country's updated Codex addresses. Only a few countries replied, despite repeated reminders which were all unsuccessful. This is a good opportunity to commend those countries that have notified the CCAFRICA Technical Secretariat of changes made in their respective Codex bodies.</p> <p>A questionnaire was subsequently drawn up and distributed at the 3rd meeting of CCPs in Douala. This produced a few details of Codex bodies in some countries.</p>

1-4	To foster effective and dynamic communication between the CCAFRICA members and other regions, other Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.	Establish a mechanism whereby the Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committees in the region can share information and expertise.	Country reports on meetings of stakeholders or meetings of the National Codex Committee. Information from organizations for the database on works conducted and experience gained should be uploaded onto the national website.	Although a formal mechanism has not been established, activities have been conducted that pave the way for such a mechanism.	<p>cooperation with the USDA through exchanges of opinions on items on the agenda of selected Codex technical committees.</p> <p>The USDA has also implemented its <i>Mentoring</i> programme with a training component to enhance participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.</p> <p>Another approach has been devised by the African Union through the Inter-African Office of Animal Resources (BIRA), which has supported the CCAFRICA Coordinator in organizing each year, for the last 3 years, a meeting of Codex Contact Points to permit an exchange of views on matters on the agenda of Codex committees relevant to Africa.</p> <p>Along the same lines, the CCAFRICA Coordinator has taken steps to hold meetings of the Africa Group in all Codex committees relevant to Africa. These meetings, which are often held in parallel with Codex sessions, have frequently served to determine and present common African positions on items under discussion, and to determine a strategy and argument to defend those positions.</p> <p>For some sensitive issues, such as voting at the CAC, the Coordinator has often had to seek the support of, or negotiate with, the heads of other regions for the Africa Group to achieve its aim.</p> <p>cooperation with the USDA through exchanges of opinions on items on the agenda of selected Codex technical committees.</p> <p>The USDA has also implemented its <i>Mentoring</i> programme with a training component to enhance participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.</p> <p>Another approach has been devised by the</p>

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2.4	To achieve an active and effective participation of all countries in the region in the	Establish working groups responsible for examining strategic	Information on the database of experts and research conducted.	Groups of African experts have been drawn up for	With support from the AU/IBAR, the CCAFRICA Coordinator has identified African experts and commissioned them to

	Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly the CCAFRICA.	aspects of Codex activities.		individual Codex technical committees.	examine topics on the agenda of Codex meetings. He has also helped delegates determine national positions. It is important to involve academics in Codex Alimentarius work so that they can become Codex experts capable of providing valid opinions.
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Activities not accomplished:

Nº	Objectives	Activities	Verifiable indicators	Problems	Observations
2.1	To achieve an active and effective participation of all countries in the region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly the CCAFRICA.	Undertake advocacy actions targeting responsible parties at national level that will lead to higher priority and enhanced support for Codex activities.	Annual presentation of evidence, with supporting documents, of collaboration of political personalities, NGOs and parliamentarians, and of results achieved at national level.	There is no real policy of lobbying policymakers to include Codex activities in development policy.	There have not been many reactions from countries to such advocacy actions. It seems clear that most countries of the region fail to pay sufficient attention to Codex activities in their government priorities. Most decision-makers still fail to grasp the economic and health implications of these activities and the key issues for the development of their country. The CCAFRICA Coordinator encourages delegates to take advantage of the fiftieth anniversary of the CAC to familiarize national policymakers and senior officials with the Codex, its activities and its economic, health and social significance.
4.2	To take advantage of available technical and scientific expertise and experiences of the member countries of the region.	Establish a regional risk assessment body that will coordinate the communication of expert data with FAO/WHO expert bodies.	Risk assessment body established in each country by December 2009	Scientific data are indeed produced in Africa, but the absence of a planning and coordinating body undermines the effectiveness of	Scientific data production and consequent risk assessment need to be carefully considered in the African region in view of the related implications. Countries are not at the same stage in risk assessment needs. The topic chosen by the countries for the pre-CCAFRICA workshop shows that risk assessment is not a priority. However, the new Codex Strategic Plan highlights

				their production and use.	the production of data and scientific advice by developing countries.
7.2	Identify and prioritize regional needs in matters of food safety and other areas with a view to finding solutions to meet these needs.	Elaborate standards, guidelines and other recommendations that have been identified as being of interest to the region.	Reports of national working groups on standards, guidelines and recommendations by the end of 2008. Reports that the Coordinator can present at the meeting of 2009	<i>See the discussion paper on the elaboration of regional standards.</i>	<i>See the discussion paper on the elaboration of regional standards.</i>