



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

Twenty-first Session

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 27 – 30 January 2015

**FAO / WHO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE REGION, IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES
AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and the provision of scientific advice implemented since the 20th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) which are complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

2. Under their respective mandates, goals and workplans, FAO and WHO are engaged in a range of food safety and quality capacity development activities at national and regional levels. These capacity development activities directly supported the Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013, and its successor, the Codex Strategic Plan 2014–2019. Furthermore, FAO and WHO capacity development activities also contribute to the Strategic Plan for the CCAFRICA.

3. FAO and WHO capacity development activities are generally aimed at:

- Upgrading the capacity of developing member countries in food safety, quality control and quality assurance and supporting their effective participation in the work of Codex;
- Enhancing the respective roles of the agriculture and health sectors and trade and industry in ensuring the safety and quality of the food supply; and
- Strengthening cooperation and collaboration between FAO and WHO and partner organizations, in the field of food safety and quality.

4. Since the last session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa, FAO and WHO (either jointly or together with partner organizations and donors) have commenced or are continuing to work with countries of the region on a range of activities (including direct technical assistance projects on food safety and quality, regional projects and events addressing food safety issues). Detailed information is provided in tables shown in paragraphs 6 below. More background on FAO and WHO technical capacity development activities is available at <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/home-page/en/>, www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/index.htm, <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/capacity/en/> and

<http://www.afro.who.int/en/clusters-a-programmes/hpr/food-safety-and-nutrition-fan.html>

5. Important information on capacity building activities and initiatives of global relevance was provided to the CAC37 and is available in CX/CAC 14/37/14 Add.1 (ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CAC/cac37/cac37_14e_Add1.pdf). The working paper provides information of relevance to all regions and describes the range of supporting materials (e.g. guidelines, manuals and online resources), key initiatives, international events and global projects which have been delivered or initiated since the last session. Issues of relevance include ongoing work dealing with food safety emergencies, risk-based food inspection including imported food control, adoption of safe food practices by food chain operators, food standards issues, foodborne disease surveillance systems, laboratory strengthening, science based food safety systems, improved guidance on evidence based food safety policy making, assessment and planning for national food safety programmes and consumer education. A summary of FAO/WHO Codex capacity building activities supported by the Codex Trust Fund for the period in question also appear in the annual reports and progress reports of the Codex Trust Fund which are submitted to CCEXEC69 and CAC37 (ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac37/cac37_13e.pdf).

6. Activities completed or ongoing in terms of Regional/ National events organized in the Region since the twentieth session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa are detailed in the following table.

TABLE 1: TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT THE REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL OR NATIONAL LEVEL

Activities	Organizers	Dates	Venue
Sub-regional workshop on management of acute malnutrition including food hygiene	WHO	26-27 March 2013	Ghana
WHO Global Foodborne Infections Network and PulseNet training course on laboratory based foodborne disease surveillance for microbiologists and epidemiologists from Southern Africa	AFRO/WHO + GFN	13-17 May 2013	Johannesburg, South Africa
Sub- regional FAO/WHO workshop on risk analysis for UEMOA countries	FAO/WHO	4-6 June 2013	Cotonou, Benin
National workshop on nutritional care and food hygiene for people living with HIV/AIDS	WHO	17-21 June 2013	Cote d'Ivoire
WHO Global Food Infections Network refresher training course of laboratory-based foodborne disease surveillance for microbiologists and epidemiologists from West Africa and selected Central African countries	AFRO/WHO+GFN	7-12 Oct, 2013	Cameroon
Sub-regional workshop on the Nutrition Friendly Schools Initiative	WHO/HKI	11-13 November 2013	Burkina Faso
Codex capacity building workshop for SADC member states	FAO/WHO	27-29, November 2013	Mozambique
Regional FAO/AU-IBAR workshop on Enhancement of Early Warning Systems for food safety in Eastern Africa	FAO/AU-IBAR	27 - 31 October, 2014	Nairobi, Kenya
Training course on effective participation in the codex and use of codex standards guidelines and recommendations	FAO/WHO	October 1-3, 2014	Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire
Workshop on Integrated Surveillance of Foodborne Diseases and Antimicrobial Resistance	WHO AGISAR/GFN	18-22 August 2014	Nairobi, Kenya

TABLE 2: PROJECTS/DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES

Summary of activities	Organizers	Countries	Status
FAO/WHO Data Collection project on contamination of sorghum by mycotoxins, supported by the Codex Trust Fund	FAO/WHO	Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Sudan	Ongoing
WHO and partners supported in the finalization or drafting of their national food safety policies	WHO	Ghana	Completed
Nutrition landscape analysis including inclusion of food hygiene in the landscape analysis tools	WHO + partners	Mali, Guinea	Completed
Project for the elaboration and implementation of a communication strategy for the general public on food safety within the framework of a STDF project on strengthening SPS system	WHO	Comoros	Ongoing
Evaluation of food safety programmes and food control systems for development of policies and national strategic plans	WHO	Malawi	Completed
Project to promote healthy growth and prevention of childhood stunting	WHO	Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire	Ongoing
Project to promote nutrition and food hygiene through the nutrition friendly schools initiative	WHO/AFRO/HKI/ University of Montreal	Benin and Burkina Faso	Ongoing
Elaboration and implementation of food safety and nutrition tools for schools	WHO	Burkina Faso and Niger	Completed
WHO Five Keys to Safer Food, The Three Fives and Healthy Food Market Initiatives	WHO	Healthy Food Market initiative: Congo; Togo; Five Keys initiatives: Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Gambia, Gabon, Senegal, Lesotho, Niger, Togo, and Mali	Ongoing
WHO supported countries in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel Region and others in building resilience to health impact of food crisis and other emergencies	WHO	Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia. Guinea	Ongoing
Elaboration of risk communication strategy	WHO	Togo	Ongoing
Pilot projects on foodborne disease surveillance and antimicrobial resistance	WHO + GFN/AGISAR	Gambia, Togo, Ghana Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya;	Ongoing
Integration of foodborne disease indicators into the Integrated Disease Surveillance Response (IDSR) system	WHO	Madagascar	Ongoing
Technical assistance in the review of national protocols on the management of acute malnutrition and/or strategy for the prevention of chronic malnutrition and integration of food hygiene	WHO	Uganda	Ongoing

Summary of activities	Organizers	Countries	Status
STDF on TDS in West Africa: Data generation of food contamination using TDS for standards setting	FAO	Benin, Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria	Ongoing
Continuation of the pilot country work on testing multi criteria decision approach to making evidence-informed food safety decisions. FAO/EC Global Governance for Hunger Reduction.	FAO	Uganda	Ongoing
TCP- CCAFRICA on Codex capacity building and pilot in the French speaking countries: Strengthening CCAFRICA to coordinate Codex activities in the three selected Central African countries	FAO	Cameroun, Gabon, Centrafrique Republic	Ongoing
TCP on improvement of the regulatory framework for animal health and food of animal origin for CEMAC: New regulatory framework to facilitate trade of live animals and food of animal origin between CEMAC countries	FAO	Cameroun, Gabon, Centrafrique Republic, Chad, Equato Guinea, Congo	Ongoing
TCP: Codex and Food control capacity building	FAO	Comoros	Ongoing
TCP: Strengthening national food control system	FAO	Rwanda	Ongoing
TCP on the safety of street vended food in West Africa: improving food safety of street vended food	FAO	Mali, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire	Ongoing
TCPs- CCAFRICA capacity building and pilot in East Africa: strengthening CCAFRICA capacity building to coordinate Codex activities		Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Djibouti.	Ongoing
Technical assistance for Pilot assessment of the National food control system in Morocco;	FAO	Morocco	November 2013-March 2014
Technical assistance for national food control system assessment and assessment-driven proposal development for improving food safety capabilities and capacities in the Gambia (STDF funding)	FAO	The Gambia	January 2014-December2014
Technical assistance for the pilot assessment of the national food control system in Zambia	FAO	Zambia	Ocotber 2013-May 2014
Technical assistance for the pilot assessment of the national food control system in Sierra leone	FAO	Sierra Leone	March 2014-suspended
TCP/MLI/3502: training on risk analysis	FAO	Mali	ongoing
UNJP/URT/138/URT: Training of food safety trainers in the meat, tomato, maize and cashew value chains.	FAO	Tanzania	ongoing
GCP/SFS/001/MUL : Strenghtening Controls of Food Safety, Plant and Animal Pests and Diseases for Agricultural Productivity and Trade in Southern Africa;	FAO	Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Madagascar	ongoing
TCP/GUI/3504 - Emergency assistance to strengthen Ebola virus disease response capacities at the human-wildlife-ecosystem interface	FAO	Guinea	ongoing
TCP/LIR/3501 - Emergency assistance	FAO	Liberia	ongoing

Summary of activities	Organizers	Countries	Status
to strengthen Ebola virus disease response capacities at the human-wildlife-ecosystem interface			
TCP/SIL/3501 - Emergency assistance to strengthen Ebola virus disease response capacities at the human-wildlife-ecosystem interface	FAO	Sierra Leone	ongoing

Challenges

7. The challenges identified during capacity building include:

- Providing expertise to develop robust, resilient and procedural based national and regional food safety systems for Africa.
- Coordination of multiple agencies involved in the food control system continues to remain a challenge. This is compounded with the lack of or ineffective enabling national food policies and legislative framework with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of each agency.
- Given that many countries have now graduated from the Codex Trust Fund, some graduate countries' ability to participate physically in Codex committees and contribute technically is constrained by lack of funds. There is further a continued need for advocacy among high level decision-makers at national level on the role and importance of codex. Limited funding and resources means that countries focus on short term actions, without a broader strategic plan for strengthening of national food control systems and the infrastructure to manage the same. This is compounded by the lack of prominence of food safety in national development plans and policies.
- Policy choices are often not rooted into evidence; priority setting and other food safety decision making would benefit from adopting a risk based approach. However, the datasets on which risk based approaches could be progressively developed are themselves very limited; lack of capacity is observed in identifying both national and international sources of reliable data, and analyzing the quality of data.
- Foodborne disease surveillance and monitoring needs strengthening in most countries of the Region. Limited data on foodborne disease and food contamination continues to impede understanding about the costs of food safety failures and prevent evidence based policy development.
- National food inspection and certification services continue to be challenged by limited capacity and resource in applying modern risk-based inspection techniques.
- Dietary non communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiencies remain key issues of concern within the region. In addition, the synergies that could be achieved in linking food safety, food security and nutrition are not often appreciated. There is a need to explore how national food control systems can further contribute towards the prevention of dietary related non communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiencies.
- Early warning capable food chain surveillance and intelligence, and emergency response systems continue to be weak.
- The capacity of food business operators, and especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to supply safe food and comply with food safety assurance requirements (including GMPs, GHPs, HACCP, etc.) is limited. In some countries, the exclusive focus on export controls has resulted in two tier industries, with international food safety standards implemented only in the export sector.
- A general lack of awareness among different types of stakeholders about the need for improved food safety and the linkages between food safety and public health is often one of the most significant challenges to effective implementation of food safety measures. There is a continued need to strengthen food safety consumer education programmes as well as training programmes food operators in different value chains, including people at management level who ultimately are those who take decisions regarding resources crucial to the implementation of hygienic practices. In addition, shippers (land, sea and air) should be included in awareness raising and training as they can play a crucial role in the safety of foods.

Priorities

8. Looking ahead, priorities for the coming year in the region, which may be implemented jointly by FAO and WHO, or in association with other partner organizations, aim at strengthening national food control systems in African countries. Continued support will include:

- Improving coordination at national level through the development of food safety policies and enhancing linkages between the agriculture, health, trade and commerce, industry and other related sectors.
- Providing expertise in the drafting of laws, regulations and standards in compliance with SPS with specific reference to Codex and facilitating regional harmonization and understanding;
- Supporting national Codex programmes (including Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees) to facilitate effective participation in Codex, providing tailored Codex training to further enhance participation in Codex activities at regional, sub-regional and national levels; and advocacy to raise recognition of codex among high level decision makers.
- Promoting the integration of food safety into national development planning processes and policies at the national level;
- Supporting regional efforts in the development of early warning systems (EWS) in food safety (and one health), strengthening their capabilities and capacities to be fully integrated into national food control systems, and including Rapid Alert Networks at the country level. Additional regional and national workshops, and promotion of a more integrated, multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral and interdepartmental collaboration through a wider adoption of One Health approach should be supported. Adopting approaches to strengthen surveillance of foodborne disease and monitoring through closer linkage with existing national surveillance systems;
- Promoting risk-based food inspection systems including risk-based import control systems.
- Enhancing awareness of the inter/linkages of food safety in the context of food security and promoting the systematic integration of food safety into policies and interventions to improve nutrition and food security.
- Supporting countries to strengthen their risk analysis capability including risk assessments, risk management and risk communication, as well as the datasets underpinning risk analysis processes.
- Building capacity of small and medium size enterprises to implement preventative approaches including GAP/ GMP/HACCP, etc for compliance to standards on food quality and safety.
- Improving consumer education through sharing experiences between countries.
- Capacity development activities at national and regional levels are implemented according to organization-wide strategic planning, as well as in response to direct requests from member countries. Greater focus will be on collaborating and coordination between FAO and WHO in the implementation of food safety related activities.

9. ***The membership of CCAFRICA is invited to engage with FAO and WHO*** to provide feedback on:

- How to improve ongoing FAO and WHO activities to strengthen food safety and quality in the region.
- Ranking the above identified issues in terms of priority needs at national and regional levels which require further support from FAO and WHO.