



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA**  
**AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

Twelfth session

Madang, Papua New Guinea, 19–22 September 2012

**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX**  
**ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION RELEVANT TO THE REGION**

(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 11th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) 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 support the Codex Strategic Plan 2008–2013; in particular, activities 1.7, 2.6 and 5.4. Furthermore, FAO and WHO capacity development activities also contribute to the Strategic plan for the CCNASWP, especially objective 3 (development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points), Objective 4 (the exchange of scientific and technical expertise in the region) and

Objective 5 (promote procedures to review Codex codes, standards, guidelines and recommendations to facilitate their use as the basis for national standards).

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 North America and the South-West Pacific, 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 below in tables shown in paragraph 8 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.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/index.htm), <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/rap/home/subregional/en/>, <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/capacity/en/> and <http://www.wpro.who.int/foodsafety/en/index.html>.

5. Important information on capacity building activities and initiatives of global relevance was provided to the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of CAC and is available in CX/CAC 12/35/14 Add.1

([ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35\\_14\\_add1e.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35_14_add1e.pdf) ). The working paper provides information of relevance to the 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 on dealing with food safety emergencies, risk-based food inspection including imported food control, undertaking of country case studies to support the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases (FERG), adoption of safe food practices by food chain operators, 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.

### Specific focus on regional initiatives

6. Joint FAO and WHO capacity-building activities organized by the Codex Trust Fund in collaboration with Codex partners for the period in question appear in the annual reports and progress reports of the Codex Trust Fund which are submitted to the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCEXEC and the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the CAC ([ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35\\_13e.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35_13e.pdf) ).

Specific to the forthcoming 12<sup>th</sup> Session of CCNASWP, FAO and WHO with funding from the CTF are holding a pre-CCNASWP technical workshop on developments in Codex relevant to Pacific Island Countries. The expected outcomes of the workshop will have enabled participants to:

- Receive updates on ongoing and/or future work in Codex;
- Discuss recent developments in the work of codex and implications of relevant draft codex standards for Pacific island countries;
- Discuss the need for Pacific island countries to contribute to current/future Codex agenda items of specific interest to countries of the region;
- Develop presentations to disseminate information and outcomes of the workshop to their respective national codex committees.

7. On a regional level, in 2011 in September 2011, Pacific Islands Forum leaders have declared non-communicable diseases a crisis in the Pacific. Dietary related non-communicable diseases are discussed further in agenda item 10.

Additionally, in October 2011 the WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee meeting endorsed the WHO Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015 and urged Member States to use the Strategy as a framework for the strengthening of national food control systems to effectively protect public health, prevent fraud, avoid food adulteration and facilitate safe and healthy food (<http://www.wpro.who.int/foodsafety/en/index.html> ).

FAO is currently developing the Multi-Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Pacific Island Countries which will determine the programmatic focal areas (including Food Safety) for FAO assistance during the period 2013- 2017 in alignment with the UNDAF.

8. Activities completed or ongoing since the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific are detailed in the following tables.

<b>REGIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Organizers</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Technical support in response to food contamination concerns associated with Japan's nuclear disaster	FAO/WHO	Commenced March 2011	NA
A Study of Cyanide Levels in Cassava and its Products in some South Pacific Island countries	FAO with the University of the South Pacific	Ongoing	Fiji
Development of a practical guide to introducing food standards to promote health and trade for smaller island states has been prepared and is being reviewed and revised	WHO with FAO	Ongoing	NA
Development of a practical guide on risk-based food inspection	FAO/WHO	Ongoing	NA

<b>REGIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Organizers</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Development of tools to facilitate risk-based imported food control	FAO/WHO	Ongoing	N/A
Technical Consultation on a Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	4-5 May 2011	Selangor, Malaysia
Training Workshop on Strengthening the National Codex Contact Point in Pacific Island Countries	FAO, with support from Australia, NZ and USA	10-12 May 2011	Apia, Samoa
Sub-Regional Workshop On Risk-Based Food Inspection For The Northern Pacific	FAO	18-21 October 2011	Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
Study on the National Codex Systems in the NASWP Region	FAO/WHO/Codex Trust Fund	Commenced December 2011	N/A
Third meeting of the Pacific Food Safety and Quality Legislation Expert Group (PFSQLE)	FAO/WHO	6 December 2011	Wellington, New Zealand
Meeting on Utilizing Risk-based Approaches in National Food Control Systems in the Pacific	FAO/WHO/ Codex Trust Fund with input from Australia and New Zealand	5 – 9 December 2011	Wellington, New Zealand
On the Job Training For Codex Contact Points from the South West Pacific (Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu)	FAO/WHO/ Codex Trust Fund with New Zealand	27 February -2 March 2012	Wellington, New Zealand
Food Safety Cooperation Working Group	APEC/ASEAN/ FAO/OIE/WHO	12-13 April 2012	Canberra, Australia
Risk-based food inspection workshop	WHO	16-19 April 2012	Yap, Federated States of Micronesia
Establishing a food security information system in the Pacific	WHO with FAO	Ongoing	FAO

<b>PROJECTS/DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Status</b>
Technical assistance on developing draft food regulations	FAO/WHO	Cook Islands	Ongoing
Strengthening of food control system in Micronesia	FAO	Federated States of Micronesia	Ongoing
Provision of food safety education to street food vendors	WHO	Federated States of Micronesia	Ongoing
Technical assistance in development of national food safety emergency response plan and strengthening the national INFOSAN network	WHO	Fiji	Ongoing
Technical assistance on microbiological risk assessment	WHO	Fiji	Ongoing
Technical assistance on the development and implementation of various aspects of food regulations	WHO	Fiji	Ongoing
Technical assistance on developing draft food regulations, risk-based food inspection training and provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Kiribati	Ongoing
Provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Nauru	Ongoing
Developing national capacity in Codex	FAO and NZ	Nauru	Completed
Assistance with processing and value adding of agricultural products for Niue	FAO	Niue	Ongoing
Technical assistance on risk-based food inspection training and provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Palau	Ongoing
Technical assistance in developing a national food safety policy, risk-based food inspection training and provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Papua New Guinea	Ongoing

<b>PROJECTS/DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Status</b>
Technical assistance to achieve international Accreditation of the Food Laboratory Scientific Research Organization of Samoa (SROS)	FAO	Samoa	Completed
Technical assistance on solar drying food technology	FAO	Samoa	Completed
Developing private sector capacity on food packaging	FAO	Samoa	Ongoing
Technical assistance to develop and consultant on a food bill and draft food regulations	FAO/WHO	Samoa	Ongoing
Technical assistance to include food safety and NCD aspects into a horticultural development project	FAO/WHO	Samoa	Ongoing
Technical assistance on risk-based food inspection training	FAO/WHO	Samoa	Completed
Technical assistance on risk-based food inspection training and provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Solomon Islands	Completed
Provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Republic of Marshall Islands	Completed
Assistance for the national food summit	WHO	Tonga	Completed
Technical assistance on agro-processing in Tonga	FAO	Tonga	Completed
Technical assistance on developing draft food regulations and associated implementation plan development	WHO	Tuvalu	Ongoing
Technical assistance on food regulations development and risk-based food inspection training	WHO	Vanuatu	Completed

9. The challenges identified during capacity building include;

- Most Pacific island countries involve multiple agencies to manage the food control system, but in the absence of national food policies or food law that defines the roles and responsibilities of each agency, coordination is hampered.
- Limited funding and resources means that many countries are focused on short term actions, without a broader strategic plan for strengthening national food control systems.
- A whole of food chain approach is yet to be developed. Linkages and integration of food safety and quality into the agriculture sector needs to be facilitated. Enhancing partnerships between government and industry will also facilitate an improved whole of sector approach to food safety and quality.
- Steps towards better utilising national food control systems to contribute to the prevention of dietary related non-communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiencies have been undertaken, but could be expanded further.
- Limited data on foodborne disease, food contamination and micronutrient deficiencies continues to prevent evidence based policy development.
- Limited capacity and resource in food inspection and certification services prevents effective implementation of food legislation. Risk-based inspection approaches are yet to be adopted.
- The capacity of small and medium size food manufacturers to meet international food safety requirements is limited and certified HACCP systems generally confined to a few larger processors operating in export-oriented markets.
- Food handler training and consumer education requires substantial resource not available to Pacific island countries.
- Food safety emergency response systems vary between country to country, although there is a widespread interest to further develop such systems.

10. 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 Pacific island countries, including:

- Providing expertise in the drafting of Codex compliant laws, regulations and standards and facilitating regional harmonization and understanding;

- Continue to utilise the FAO and WHO Pacific Food Safety and Quality Legislation Expert Group (PFSQLE) to discuss the development of food legislation, share information between countries and develop mechanisms for effective implementation of food legislation for food safety, micronutrient deficiencies and dietary related non-communicable disease issues.
- Supporting national Codex programmes (including Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees) to facilitate effective participation in Codex and providing tailored Codex training to further enhance participation in Codex activities at regional and national levels.
- Development of national strategic plans for codex to support sustainability of codex work;
- Improving coordination at a national level through the development of food safety policies and enhancing linkages between the health, trade and agriculture sector.
- Developing tools and training materials to assist food safety and quality control activities.
- Advocating the importance of foodborne disease surveillance information to public health officials.
- Promoting risk-based food inspection systems and developing new approaches to improve food inspection capacity such as e-based learning and twinning with established services.
- Targeted training for food safety officials and technical staff (food safety managers, food inspectors, and food analysts) in carrying out their respective duties.
- Building capacity of small and medium size enterprises to implement food quality and safety standards.
- Improving consumer education through sharing experiences between countries.
- Strengthening regional and international food control information exchange and cooperation activities.

11. 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. In the Pacific, FAO and WHO have a tradition of collaborating and coordination in the implementation of food safety related activities.

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

- Ongoing FAO and WHO activities to strengthen food safety and quality in the region.
- Priority needs at national and regional levels which require further support from FAO and WHO.