

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 2**

**CX/NFSDU 08/30/2-Add.2  
September 2008**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES**

**30<sup>th</sup> Session,  
Cape Town, South Africa**

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FROM FAO/WHO OF INTEREST TO CCNFSDU**

#### **PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE IN NUTRITION**

FAO and WHO are progressing plans to strengthen the provision of scientific advice on nutrition matters to Member States and to Codex. This intention ("FAO and WHO are considering the possible approaches to provide scientific advice on nutrition issues") is mentioned in the document *FAO/WHO Framework for the Provision of Scientific Advice*, the finalisation of which was communicated to the Codex Commission last year and is available on the FAO website

([http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/advice\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/advice_en.asp)).

The current plans build on the identification of FAO/WHO as the primary source of risk assessment advice in *The Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius* given in the Codex Procedural Manual. More specifically, FAO/WHO have been reaffirmed in this role in the *Proposed Nutritional Risk Analysis Principles and Guidelines for Application to the work of the CCNFSDU* currently at Step 5 (Appendix VI, ALINORM 08/31/26).

Under consideration is a strengthened joint mechanism that would provide advice to Member States and/or Codex as appropriate. A number of models drawn from existing FAO/WHO approaches in food safety and nutrition are under consideration. The Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Commission in 2008 were informed of the progress made to date.

- A Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Fat and Fatty Acids in Human Nutrition will be held in Geneva, 10 – 14 November 2008. The report is expected to be published in early 2009.
- WHO/UNICEF Joint Informal Meeting on establishing research priorities for neonatal vitamin A supplementation is scheduled for December 2008.
- A joint WHO/UNICEF/Micronutrient Forum Consultation for revising the guidelines on Vitamin A Supplements and Indicators for Assessing Vitamin A Deficiency is planned for Spring 2009.

#### **SCIENTIFIC UPDATE ON CARBOHYDRATES, 2007**

In 2006, FAO and WHO undertook a scientific update on carbohydrates in human nutrition with a view to updating the scientific evidence on selected issues related to carbohydrates in human nutrition. The last joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Carbohydrates in Human Nutrition was held in Rome in April 1997. Given the developments and other relevant recommendations made during the intervening period, including those from the 2002 Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases (TRS 916, WHO, 2003), FAO and WHO agreed to undertake a scientific "update" on some of the key issues related to carbohydrates in human nutrition. The key issues reviewed included terminology

and classification, measurement, physiology, carbohydrates and diseases (i.e. obesity, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer), and glycemic index and glycemic load. The background papers prepared for this scientific update have been published in the supplement of the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition in December 2007 (EJCN, vol 61, suppl 1, December 2007).

### **SCIENTIFIC UPDATE ON TRANS FATTY ACIDS UNDERTAKEN IN 2007**

In June 2007, WHO initiated the undertaking of a scientific update on trans fatty acids (TFA) as an interim action, prior to the planned Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Fats and Fatty Acids in Human Nutrition. This was considered necessary as WHO was moving forward on increasing engagement with the commercial sector by examining the issue of product reformulation including the removal/reduction of TFA as part of the implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAS) endorsed by the 57<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2004.

The review papers prepared as part of this Scientific Update applied the criteria used by the 2002 WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases. The Scientific Update reviewed the health effects of TFA, coronary heart disease effects of replacing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils with other fats and oils, feasibility of recommending replacement fats as well as possible approaches to removing TFA, examining the experiences from Denmark, Canada, New York City, Argentina and India. The background scientific papers for each subject together with the full conclusions and summaries of the Scientific Update are scheduled to be published as a supplement of the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition before the end of 2008.

**The Technical Consultation on the Dietary Management of Moderate Malnutrition**, which will take place at WHO, Geneva from 30 September to 3 October 2008. The recommendations and report are expected to be used by CCNFSDU to develop new standards of food products for underweight children or for adapting current standards. The main conclusions of the meeting will be presented at the present CCNFSDU meeting.

Publication in 2008 of the report of the Expert Consultation meeting on 'Nutrition Indicators for Biodiversity – 1. Food composition' which was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 21 October 2007. The report is available in English, French and Spanish.

Foreseen publication of the Food Composition Study Guide in 2009 (see [http://www.fao.org/infoods/StudyGuide\\_17Oct2007.pdf](http://www.fao.org/infoods/StudyGuide_17Oct2007.pdf) for more details). It is a distance learning tool which allows learners to acquire and evaluate their knowledge in food composition. This publication might be useful for those involved in compositional data generation, management and use, e.g. those working on labelling nutrient contents of foods.

A manual for Developing Food-based Dietary Guidelines was published by FAO in December 2007. It is based on the experiences of four Caribbean countries. See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai800e/ai800e00.htm>

A joint FAO/WHO Regional Food-based Dietary Guidelines for the Eastern Mediterranean/North Africa was developed in 2007 and will be published shortly.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF FBDG PROCEDURAL MANUAL**

WHO is in the process of developing a procedural manual for the development and implementation of regional and country-specific food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) which include modules on how to formulate FBDG based on scientific evidence, field-testing of FBDG, how to develop of advocacy materials including educational materials such as food guides, how to implement FBDG and how to monitor and

evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of FBDG. It is planned that the procedural manual will be completed, after field-tested in some countries in Africa and Asia, in June 2009.

A peer-reviewed publication entitled "Food-based approaches for combating micronutrient deficiencies" is to be published at the end of 2008. The publication aims at documenting the benefits of Food Based Approaches (FBAs). It contains a variety of relevant advocacy and technical material under one cover to encourage and promote further attention and investment for such activities.

A Field Guide on Andean Crops was published in Spanish in 2007 by FAO and ANPE-Lima. The Guide includes scientific data and the knowledge of traditional producers on the 20 most commonly grown crops. See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai185s/ai185s00.htm>

A WHO Report on the World prevalence of anaemia 1993-2005, WHO Global Database on Anaemia, was published in 2008.

WHO Expert Consultation on Salt as a Vehicle for Fortification took place March 21-22, 2007 in Luxembourg and the report was published in 2008.

A joint WHO/UNICEF/ICCIDD expert consultation for the revision of guidelines on the Assessment of Iodine Deficiency Disorders and Monitoring their Elimination: a guide for programme managers was held in Geneva, Switzerland 22-23 January 2007 and the revised guidelines were published in 2008.

An update of the prevalence of vitamin A deficiency in populations at risk is currently being conducted and a report will be published in late 2008 or early 2009.

## **ACTION PLAN FOR THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD) was endorsed by the WHA in 2000 (WHA56/17) and the Action Plan for the Global Strategy on noncommunicable diseases (WHA61/8, [http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/A61/A61\\_8-en.pdf](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/A61/A61_8-en.pdf)) was endorsed by the 61<sup>st</sup> World Health Assembly in May 2008 (WHA61/14, <http://www.who.int/nmh/WHA%2061.14.pdf>).

The NCD Action Plan comprises 6 objectives and an overarching and broad ranging set of actions directed to all stakeholders to tackle the growing public health burden imposed by noncommunicable diseases. The NCD Action Plan builds on implementation of other WHO strategies including the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. It reiterates the need for provision of accurate and balanced information for consumers in order to enable them to make well-informed and healthy food choices.