

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

41st Session

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REPORT ON SIDE EVENT: FAO AND WHO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Monday 2 July, 15:00 - 16:00 Plenary room A335

The representative of FAO opened the side event by welcoming delegates and informing the plenary that this session of the CAC would use a different approach from the past, with more emphasis on hearing from countries about their experiences with capacity development in form of a side-event to give more time for discussion.

In the introductory remarks, the representatives of FAO and WHO emphasized that the capacity development programme is demand driven based on countries' needs and priorities as identified through the respective country programming processes. Given the limitations in resources, there was a need to prioritise key areas for support in each country. It was important to move away from one off, stand-alone events and foster approaches that provide a pathway towards achieving results in a sustainable manner. Key capacity development initiatives highlighted included the application of the food control assessment tool in a range of countries; support for a pathway for increased use of risk assessment in supporting food safety decision-making; application of food safety foresight techniques to enable forward-looking strategic planning; support to implement the global action plan on AMR, including using Whole Genome Sequencing in integrated surveillance, also in outbreak response; as well as the work of the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to support countries in outbreak preparedness and response.

In their response, several countries acknowledged support provided, citing concrete examples and expressing their appreciation to FAO and WHO. Key points extracted from the interventions include:

- It was noted that interventions drive lasting change when there is high commitment and an enabling policy environment in the country. Conversely, some delegates pointed to difficulties in mobilizing national contributions.
- Several delegates explained that they participate in national processes for prioritizing requests of technical assistance. However, they noted the lengthy process it can take from identification of an issue to receiving actual support (during which priorities can change).
- There continues to be a need for capacity development in a number of areas including food import control risk profiling, the use of the food control system assessment tool, and good hygienic practices for priority value chains. A number of delegations highlighted their interest in generating data on food consumption to support risk assessment. Some delegations noted the benefits of regional approaches to capacity development.
- Delegations also pointed out the need to strengthen laboratory capacity to generate data for decision making at national level, as well as to underpin Codex standard setting processes.
- Delegates welcomed the recent regional workshops on using the Codex online commenting platform and noted the usefulness of the e-learning tool for Codex participation, requesting the simplification of such tools.

In concluding the side event, the representatives of FAO and WHO thanked delegations for their feedback, applauded the approach taken by countries to help each other and urged them to continue to join forces and strengthen this type of collaboration. The new format of covering this agenda item in a side event was seen as the right way forward, and follow up would be continued on an individual bases with countries.