



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES
Thirty-second Session**

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INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCGP

Prepared by FAO and WHO

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper presents information on activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) that could be of interest or relevant to the work of CCGP.

Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO:

2. COVID-19

2.1 As the global COVID-19 pandemic evolves, FAO and WHO have aimed to keep Member States informed about matters relating to COVID-19 and food safety.

2.2 The FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat has developed guidance for food businesses¹ and for competent authorities responsible for national food safety control systems² with regards to COVID-19 and food safety. This guidance has also been disseminated through the WHO Epidemic Information Network (EPI-WIN) and presented during several webinars targeted at food industry and food regulatory professionals. In addition, the FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat collected questions from members about COVID-19 and food safety and posted the answers on the FAO/WHO INFOSAN Community Website as well as publicly.^{3,4}

2.3 FAO and WHO have jointly and individually published numerous policy and guidance documents to aid their members in managing the current global crisis and minimizing the impact the pandemic has. All documents are available here:

- FAO's Food Safety and Food Systems Division has made the collection of food safety specific policies, guidance and information materials available here: <http://www.fao.org/food-safety/covid-19-materials/en/>
- WHO: WHO's Department of Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS) has set up webpage to consolidate all documents related to COVID-19 and Nutrition and Food Safety: <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/covid-19>. Questions and answers (Q&A) on nutrition and food safety related to the COVID-19 pandemic have been published: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-food-safety-and-nutrition>

3. UN Food Systems Summit 2021

3.1 In 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. More details are available on its dedicated website.⁵ FAO and WHO are heavily involved in the preparation and would like to share the current state with Codex members.

¹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance-publications>

² https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331842/WHO-2019-nCoV-Food_Safety_authorities-2020.1-eng.pdf
(also available in other UN languages)

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/questions-relating-to-food-businesses>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/questions-relating-to-food-safety-authorities>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

4. Food Systems Summit

4.1 The outcomes of the Summit have been defined as:

- a) Significant action and commitment to action, with measurable outcomes and impact that enable achievement of the SDGs by 2030. This will include highlighting existing solutions and celebrating leaders in food systems transformation, as well as calling for new actions worldwide by different actors, including countries, cities, companies, civil society, citizens, and food producers.
- b) Dramatically elevated public discourse about the importance of food systems leading to the achievement of the SDGs and reforms implemented for people and planet.
- c) A high-level set of principles developed through the process that will guide Member States and other stakeholders to leverage their food systems capacity to support the SDGs. Distilled through all elements of the preparatory process, these principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world.
- d) A system of follow-up and review that will drive new actions and results; allow for the sharing of experiences, lessons and knowledge; and incorporate new metrics for impact analysis.

4.2 In order to deliver on the outcomes of the Summit, several structures have been put in place including Action Tracks and Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

4.3 The Action Tracks are tasked to create synergies and solutions at local, national, regional, and global levels and to scale up and to accelerate existing initiatives which align to the Summit Vision and principles. To support this work, the Action Tracks will identify challenges, opportunities, and barriers, with the goal of reaching a multi-stakeholder alignment on actions for transforming food systems. The Action Tracks are:

1. Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All
2. Shift to Sustainable (and healthy) Consumption Patterns
3. Boost Nature Positive Production at sufficient scale
4. Advance Equitable Livelihoods
5. Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress

4.4 Each Action Track is expected to develop exemplary aligned game changing and systemic solutions and mechanisms that foster, encourage and allow the alignment of initiatives and actions. The implementation of these actions are enabled through policies, institutions, finance, incentives, data, innovation, advocacy, education, and empowerment.

4.5 Diverse and multistakeholder membership of the Action Tracks is constituted by the Chairs and Vice Chairs. Each Action Track is supported by a UN Anchor Organization.

4.6 Member States have been encouraged to engage in the five Action Tracks and are expected to provide on the ground expertise for the direction of the Action Track, promote and advocate for the work of the Action Tracks at governmental level and ensure participation and dialogue across government, host inclusive dialogues for the Food Systems Summit at national level bringing relevant findings into the work of action tracks and leading mechanisms to drive implementation of proposed changes post-Summit.

Table 1 – Action Track Chairs, Vice Chairs and UN Anchor Organizations

	Action Track 1	Action Track 2	Action Track 3	Action Track 4	Action Track 5
	Ensure Safe and Nutritious Food For All	Shift Sustainable Consumption Patterns to	Boost Nature Positive Production	Advance Equitable Livelihoods	Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities Shocks and Stress
Chair	Lawrence Haddad, GAIN (Europe)	Gunhild Stordalen, EAT (Europe)	Joao Campari, WWF (Lat. America)	Michelle Nunn, CARE (N.America)	Dr. Saleemul Huq, ICCCAD, (Asia)
Vice Chair	Godfrey Bahiigwa (Africa)	Ajay Vir Jakhar, Farmers Forum (Asia)	Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu (Africa)	Shakuntala Thilsted, WorldFish, (Asia)	Sandrine Dixson, Club of Rome (Europe)
Youth Vice Chair	Janya Green, 4-H (North America)	Lana Weidgenant, Real Food Systems (Latin America)	Lavetanalagi Seru, Alliance for Future Generation (Pacific)	Mai Thin Yu Mon, UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (Asia)	Mike Khunga, Scale Up Nutrition Youth Movement, Malawi (Africa)
UN Anchor Organization	FAO	WHO	UNCCD	IFAD	WFP

4.7 Three iterations of Food Systems Summit Dialogues will take place at three levels between October 2020 and May 2021.

Member State Dialogues:

4.8 Organized by National Authorities, involving leaders of food system stakeholder groups, the dialogues will allow participants to explore options for the future of local and national food systems and shape the national pathway to sustainable food systems by 2030. The findings of the Dialogues will be posted on a Dialogue Gateway website and synthesised for input to the work of the Action Tracks towards the Summit.

Global Dialogues:

4.9 Organized on behalf of Summit Secretariat a set of dialogues will be convened at high-level international events. They will be an opportunity to explore interconnections of food systems with global action for good nutrition, climate action, biodiversity, the ocean, finance, against desertification, and more.

Independent Dialogues:

4.10 Organized by anyone, these dialogues will use toolkits accessed by individuals and organizations to establish multi-stakeholder dialogues. When dialogues follow the Summit principles their findings will be posted on the Dialogue Gateway website.

4.11 FAO continues to provide its full support to the Special Envoy in the preparatory process towards the Food Systems Summit. The Organization is fully represented in the Governance Structures outlined above with the Director-General a member of the Advisory Committee, the Chief Economist an ex officio member of the Scientific Group, FAO being the UN Anchor Agency for Action Track 1, and the Director, Food Systems and Food Safety Division representing the Organization on the UN Taskforce as well as (partly) seconded to support the Food Systems Summit Secretariat. WHO is represented by the Assistant Director-General Healthier Populations in the UN Taskforce.

4.12 FAO hosts the Rome-based part of the Food Systems Secretariat, which is focused on ensuring the provision of evidence and knowledge as inputs to the Action Tracks and to the country level Food Systems Dialogues.

4.13 FAO directly supports Action Track 1 on “Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food” as the UN Anchor Agency. FAO will also support to the remaining Action Tracks through its involvement as a support UN Agency within individual tracks coordinated by the respective UN Anchor Organization, drawing in the extensive knowledge generated by its technical divisions. Similarly, WHO directly supports Action Track 2 on “Shifting to Sustainable (and healthy) Consumption Patterns”.

4.14 A Scientific Group, with FAO support, is developing a series of papers on, inter alia, definitions and concepts and the modelling of trade-offs intrinsic to food systems.

4.15 FAO will support the provision of data and evidence on food systems to inform the country level food systems dialogues and through its extensive country office coverage, will provide support the coordination and conduct of the Dialogues.

4.16 WHO is committed to work with the Action Track 2 members as well as across Action Tracks to ensure that food systems deliver healthy and safe diets and improve people's health and wellbeing. WHO offers its guidance and guidelines, implementation tools and databases to inform the food systems transformation. WHO will encourage stakeholders to use a health lens when formulating game changing solutions and assessing impact.

4.17 FAO and WHO jointly lead the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and as such aim to connect, align and leverage the Nutrition Decade's action networks, accountability frameworks and commitment making process with the Food Systems Summit.

Matters arising from FAO

5. FAO Governing body

5.1 The 165th Council of FAO has inter-alia (full report is available⁶):

- endorsed the recommendation of the 27th Committee on Agriculture of FAO which inter-alia, (full report is available⁷):
 - welcomed the fact that resources and independence of the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and of the Food Safety and Quality Unit in the new Food Systems and Food Safety division would be maintained within the new organisational structure, stressing the need for sustainable funding for the FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC);
 - Endorsed a new 5-year action plan of FAO on AMR⁸
 - Endorsed the development of a FAO food safety strategy
- welcomed the progress in the implementation of the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) 2016-2020, and the proposal for a new FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025, and welcomed the Tripartite (FAO-World Health Organization-World Organisation for Animal Health) collaboration to address AMR and to promote the One Health approach and requested regular progress reports on the FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025 and on Tripartite collaboration, without gaps or overlaps;
- noted FAO's continued support to Members in developing sustainable food systems and to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda;
- recognized that food safety is key for food security, encouraged further UN-level and multi-partner collaboration, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and supported the need for ongoing sustainable funding, including multiyear contributions, for the food safety advice programme and the CODEX Alimentarius Secretariat;

6. Organizational updates

6.1 FAO has re-organized its internal structure and a new organigram is available.⁹ Of particular interest to Codex Members may be:

- The Codex Secretariat is now located within the Joint FAO/WHO Centre (Codex Food Standards and Zoonotic Diseases), CJW. This centre also hosts the lead unit for AMR.
- The scientific advice program (JEMRA, JECFA and most ad-hoc expert committees) and food safety capacity building is now located within the new Food Systems and Food Safety Division, ESF
- The FAO secretariat for JEMNU remains with the Food and Nutrition Division, ESN

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/ne381en/ne381en.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/ne021en/ne021en.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/nd393en/nd393en.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/about/org-chart/en/>

- The FAO secretariat for JMPR is now located within the Plant Production and Protection division, NSP.

7. COVID-19

7.1 FAO has implemented an array of tools to support policy analyses and assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture, value chains, food prices, food security across the globe. Information tailored for various sectors, regions, actors and stakeholders are available here: <http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/en/>.

7.2 Strengthening food production and distribution systems is key to fighting hunger and entails helping tackle diseases wherever they emerge in humans, animals, plants or the environment. The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global health crisis with dramatic implications for economies, and FAO is playing a role in assessing and responding to its potential impacts on people's life and livelihoods, global food trade, markets, food supply chains and livestock.

7.3 The need to reduce inter-personal contacts and movement under the Covid-19 pandemic while keeping open food production units raised the need to consider the use of technologies allowing remote food inspection and audit, where possible and appropriate. In this time of crisis, and with many restrictions on resources, it is also important to focus regulatory action, such as inspection, where risks are higher (food business or sectors): instruments such as a risk categorization framework are very useful towards that end. FAO is currently finalizing a draft guidance on risk categorization to help competent authorities building their own national risk categorization framework.

7.4 FAO has mobilized the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Programme with prioritized trade and food safety standards for facilitating and accelerating food and agricultural trade during COVID-19 and beyond. The programme will address non-tariff barriers and administrative procedures, and foster regulatory cooperation with focus on intraregional trade (<http://www.fao.org/3/cb0299en/CB0299EN.pdf>).

7.5 FAO believes this will allow countries to anticipate and mitigate possible disruptions the pandemic may trigger for people's food security and livelihoods, avoiding panic-driven reactions that can aggravate disruptions and deteriorate the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable.

Matters arising from WHO

8. Transformation of WHO

8.1 In March 2019, WHO announced reforms to strengthen the WHO's role as the world's leading authority on public health and to effectively support countries in achieving the "triple billion" targets. As part of this transformation of WHO, in January 2020, the Department of Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS) was created under the UHC/Healthier Populations Division, through bringing together the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development and the Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses, to address the burden of disease from physical, chemical and microbial hazards in food and unhealthy diets, maternal and child malnutrition, overweight and obesity. The new Department aims to ensure universal access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food and effective nutrition actions, through setting science-based international food standards, promoting nutrition action in health systems, fostering sustainable food production and consumption, improving food environments and empowering consumers in all situations, monitoring nutrition status, and managing food safety events at the international level, closely working with Member States, UN partner agencies and non-State actors.

9. WHO Governing Body

13th General Programme of Work (GPW13)

9.1 The WHO Impact Framework¹⁰ of the 13th General Programme of Work 2019 – 2023 (GPW13) will monitor the WHO's progress towards achieving the GPW13's "Triple Billion" targets, focusing on measurable impact indicators for people's health at the country level. The Triple Billion targets of the GPW13 are: 1 billion more people with universal health coverage, 1 billion better protected from health emergencies, and 1 billion enjoying better health and well-being primarily through multisectoral policy, advocacy and regulation. Each of the triple billion targets will be measured with composite indices. The Healthier Populations Billion aims to encourage and enable people to lead healthier lives and counts the number of people who have benefited in one or more ways from changes related to environmental, behavioural and socially linked health risk factors. The measurement is based on 16 of the GPW13 outcome indicators, which cover areas including child nutrition and child development, trans fats, obesity, clean air, safe water, sanitation, and tobacco and alcohol use. The

¹⁰ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA72/A72_5-en.pdf

possibilities are currently being explored to also develop an indicator for food safety and a composite indicator for healthy diets as a whole.

World Health Assembly resolution

9.2 Member States agreed a new resolution¹¹ (WHA73.5) that aims to strengthen global efforts on food safety. The resolution urges Member States to apply a “One Health” approach that promotes the sustainability and availability of safe, sufficient and healthy food for all populations. Recognizing food safety threats, including foodborne antimicrobial resistance and climate change, the resolution also calls upon Member States to invest in national food safety systems and innovations, and to share timely data and evidence on foodborne disease outbreaks and hazards to the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN). The Secretariat is requested to update the Global Strategy for Food Safety to address current and emerging challenges and incorporate new technologies and innovative approaches for strengthening food safety systems. It also calls on the WHO Director-General to strengthen the Organization’s leadership in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and INFOSAN, and produce updated global foodborne disease estimates by 2025.

9.3 In the resumed WHA73 in November 2020, food safety resolution was discussed under agenda item 15.3. Member States welcomed the adoption of the food safety resolution and showed strong supports to WHO for the implementation of the resolution. More detailed statements made by Member States are available on WHO website¹².

10. The Update of WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety

10.1 With the endorsement of the resolution, “Strengthening Efforts on Food Safety” by the World Health Assembly in late July, WHO is mandated by Member States to update the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety (“the strategy”), in coordination with FAO and in consultation with Member States and OIE, eventually report back to WHA75 in 2022. This strategy is aiming to address current and emerging challenges, incorporate new technologies and include innovative approaches for strengthening food safety systems. WHO Director-General already approved the establishment of a new Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Food Safety: safer food for better health and the nominated experts. This TAG is composed of 24 renowned international food safety experts encompassing different technical areas. One of the functions of this TAG is to advise WHO on the update of the strategy in the coming two years. Besides the establishment of the TAG, WHO is in close dialogue with FAO to brainstorm different essential components to be considered in the updated strategy and ensure the complementarity is well reflected in both food safety strategies that are under development. TAG meetings, Member States and other relevant stakeholders’ consultations are also planned in 2021.

11. COVID-19

11.1 A Healthy@Home Healthy Diet¹³ webpage has been published including food safety tips and a video on the “5 keys to safer food”. A Healthy Diet information brief “Healthy diets to maintain nutritional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic” is soon to be published bringing together main content and messages on healthy diets based on existing WHO guidelines and other WHO documents.

11.2 WHO is assessing health service disruption due to COVID-19 including immunization, NCDs, mental health and essential health services (EHS) and these pulse surveys are happening on a quarterly basis. For the January 2021 round, a Sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) and nutrition questionnaire module is under development.

11.3 In the next update to the WHO interim guidance on Clinical management of COVID-19¹⁴, there will be a new chapter added on micronutrients to look at the effect of vitamins C, D and Zinc in the treatment of COVID-19. Systematic reviews are currently underway, a guideline development group is expected to meet and the updated guidance is in development.

¹¹ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_R5-en.pdf

¹² https://apps.who.int/gb/statements/WHA73_RESUMED/

¹³ <https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---healthy-diet>

¹⁴ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/clinical-management-of-covid-19>