



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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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 document 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 the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP).

Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO

2. Codex Trust Fund

2.1 The Codex Trust Fund (CTF2) is a joint FAO/WHO programme providing support to developing and transition economy countries to build strong and sustainable capacity to engage in Codex work. Since 2016, the CTF2 issues annual calls for individual and group applications from low- and middle- income countries eligible for support. To date, the CTF2 has funded 41 projects in 50 countries.

2.2 The CTF2 aims to issue its eighth call for applications by September 2023. The call for applications will be announced on the CTF2 website, via the Codex mailing list, and other channels. Support for the drafting of applications for CTF2 support can be sought from FAO and WHO regional focal points and through the resources available on the CTF2 website. Furthermore, annual webinars on the CTF2 application process and the self-assessment through the Codex Diagnostic Tool are being organized on a regular basis. Countries eligible for CTF2 support will be informed about the timing of these webinars, recordings of which are available on the CTF2 website as well.

2.3 In 2022, the CTF2 conducted a mid-term evaluation which confirmed the relevance and effectiveness of CTF2 operations to date and produced recommendations to ensure a more targeted support to eligible countries. The CTF is working towards formalizing proposed modifications to the operations of the CTF2, the results of which will be communicated in due course.

3. Codex eLearning Courses

3.1 A series of eLearning courses¹ has been developed to improve the understanding of Codex Alimentarius and develop sustainable national capacities to engage in and benefit from Codex work. The course series consists of four courses comprising two to five lessons each. The first course introduces Codex, explains what it is and why it is important. It will be useful to anyone who wishes to gain a general understanding of Codex. The second course aims to provide a clear understanding of how to engage in Codex. The lessons guide the learner in making a national Codex programme function efficiently and explain how to engage effectively in Codex at international level. It will be particularly relevant to national Codex officials. Course 3 provides insight into the scientific basis and the application of risk analysis in Codex, and explains the provision of scientific advice by FAO and WHO to Codex work. The fourth course gives an overview of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, explains their importance, the role of regional coordinators, and how to engage in Codex work at regional level. Upon successful completion of a test at the end of each course, the learner receives a digital badge certificate from the FAO eLearning academy.

¹ <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?name=codex-series>

4. UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2)

4.1 The UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) will take place at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy from 24-26 July 2023. FAO is working closely with Italy, as the official host of the UNFSS+2, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, which is responsible for the event, along with other Rome-based UN Agencies (RBAs) and the wider UN system to deliver a high-level event to promote and accelerate agrifood systems transformation to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). As part of this support, FAO is leading or co-leading on the planning, preparations and delivery of two thirds of the 30 sessions of the Stocktake. It is leading 11 sessions, including Plenary Session 1 'Food Systems Transformation in Practice – Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward'; and the Leadership Dialogue on 'Food Systems for Prosperity', and co-leading an additional nine sessions during the three-day event. The UNFSS+2 will be a milestone event for the 2030 Agenda, involving the in-person participation of the UN Secretary-General, as well as heads of state and governments, civil society, primary producers and private sector. The outcome of the UNFSS+2 will feed into the 2023 SDG Summit and will provide a roadmap for agrifood systems transformation for the two-years towards the next Stocktaking Moment in 2025.

4.2 WHO actively supports a number of UNFSS follow-up mechanisms. A full-time staff has been seconded to the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub since March 2022; and WHO is co-chair with UNEP of the UN Food Systems Task Force, which has more than 30 UN Agencies, Programmes and Funds as members and holds regular meetings. A WHO policy analysis of 104 national food systems transformation pathways conducted in early 2022² shows that while aspects to boost production of nutritious foods such as nutrition sensitive agriculture, food safety and raising awareness featured in over 75 percent of pathways, policy measures to shift consumption patterns towards healthier diets and reduce the availability, affordability, and accessibility of foods high in unhealthy fats, sugars and salts (including labelling, marketing regulation and fiscal policies) remain scarce. WHO hosts the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems (HDSFS) and is a member of its HDSFS secretariat; in addition WHO is also a member of the Schoolmeals Coalition. For the UNFSS+2, WHO is the Principal Lead of a Leadership Dialogue on "Food Systems for People's Nutrition and Health"; WHO has also been the penholder with UNEP to draft a report on behalf of the UN Food Systems Task Force, which has been incorporated in the UNSG's Report for the UNFSS+2³.

Matters arising from FAO

5. FAO Governing bodies

5.1 The 172nd Session of the Council of FAO was held from 24 to 28 April 2023. Inter-alia, the Council (full report is available⁴):

- reaffirmed the Organization's unique position and role in transforming agrifood systems in a coherent manner, as appropriate, in accordance with, and dependent on national contexts and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving no one behind;
- reiterated the important role of the science- and evidence-based normative and standard-setting work of FAO;
- stressed the importance of protecting and funding the normative and technical work of FAO, including the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), as well as the conventions, treaty bodies, including depositary functions, and intergovernmental arrangements.

5.2 The 43rd Session of the FAO Conference was held from 1-7 July 2023. The Conference endorsed the Report of the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). In its discussions on the Review of the State of Food and agriculture, the Conference stressed the importance of sustainable supply chains for timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including achievement of SDGs 1, 2 and 10; and noted the impact of trade restrictions and barriers for the global food security and nutrition, especially in the developing countries. In reviewing the Programme Evaluation Report 2023, the Conference highlighted the observations and recommendations arising from the evaluations of FAO's programme of work, including on the importance of: building strategic and inclusive partnerships; giving higher prioritization to areas of recognized FAO technical expertise, such as sustainable use of water for agriculture and antimicrobial resistance (AMR); and encouraging unearmarked or lightly earmarked voluntary contributions to finance innovation and underfunded and emerging areas in FAO. The Conference appointed Dr QU Dongyu to the office of Director-General for a period of four years from 1 August 2023, the term of office expiring on 31 July 2027. The Conference further approved the Medium-Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-25.

² <https://www.unnutrition.org/library/publication/un-nutrition-journal-volume-1-transforming-nutrition>

³ https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/unsq.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6_11

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/nm116en/nm116en.pdf>

6. FAO Strategic priorities for food safety within the Strategic framework 2022-2031

6.1 The FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) emphasized at its 27th Session the connection between food safety and food security, as well as the role food safety plays in FAO's support in achieving more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. COAG 27 requested that FAO develop a new Food Safety Strategy to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Further to the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution 73.5 to strengthen efforts on food safety, COAG 27 requested that FAO collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure that their respective food safety strategies are aligned and mutually supportive.

6.2 Following the Committee's request, and taking into account the global strategic context, FAO developed a set of Strategic Priorities for its work on food safety, while maintaining its vision to provide "Safe food for all people at all times" and the mission "To support Members in continuing to improve food safety at all levels by providing scientific advice and strengthening their food safety capacities for efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems." These Strategic Priorities are articulated around four Strategic Outcomes that result from an iterative consultative process led by FAO with its Members and international partner organizations, including, notably WHO.

6.3 Further to their endorsement by the 28th Session of the Committee for Agriculture, the FAO Council has finally approved the FAO Food Safety Priorities at its 171st Session in December 2022⁵.

6.4 FAO expects the Strategic Priorities for Food Safety to act as an instrument that will spur investments and secure adequate human and financial resources for FAO to successfully implement its food safety programme and to provide international guidance, policy and advocacy for policymakers.

6.5 These Strategic Priorities encourage a more consistent integration of food safety in the development of sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems, food security and nutrition policies, and agriculture development strategies. In developing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the Organization outlined Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), a number of which are centered around or include important food safety activities [in particular, but not limited to, PPA better nutrition "Safe food for everyone" (BN3), PPA better nutrition "Transparent markets and trade" (BN5), and PPA better production "One Health" (BP3)].

6.6 During the development of the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety and the WHO Global Food Safety Strategy, FAO and WHO maintained a standing and rigorous information sharing and discussion mechanism. Both organizations have committed to plan the development of a joint framework for implementation, following the endorsement of the respective strategic directions.

7. Agrifood systems transformation agenda

7.1 FAO is advancing the agenda for agrifood systems transformation as part of its global responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (No hunger) and 10 (Reduced inequalities). It is building a programme of work designed to lead to transformative changes to accelerate the implementation of actions required to achieve the SDGs: transformation of mindsets; of institutional arrangements; and of alignment in policies, practices and investments. These efforts to fix fragmentation will aim to operationalize the "systems approach" needed to lead to transformative outcomes on the SDGs. FAO recognizes these changes are needed both internally to FAO and externally. As set out in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, it is only by recognizing that the different parts of system are interrelated that people and institutions will be able to work collectively to fully leverage the power of agrifood systems to provide solutions. The work to advance the agrifood systems transformation will include the development of clear definitions of terms and a positive, solutions-focused narrative making it clear why taking action recognizing the inter-relationships in the system is needed and evidence of risks of not taking these approaches. The narrative will help people see where they fit in this system, the contribution they can play in transformation and how they can measure early signs of transformation. FAO also hosts and conducts work in support of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub which was established following from the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. The Hub has a coordinating and connector role, drawing on the capacities of the UN system, including FAO, and leveraging the advice and expertise from the wide ecosystem of actors involved in food systems.

Matters arising from WHO

8. WHO Governing Body- 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13)

8.1 The 13th General Programme of Work 2019 – 2023 (GPW13)⁶ defines WHO's strategy and focuses on "Triple Billion" targets: 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

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc4040en>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/thirteenth-general-programme-of-work-2019---2023>

measurement is based on outcome indicators, which cover areas including child nutrition and child development, trans fats, obesity, clean air, safe water, sanitation, and tobacco and alcohol use. In 2022, Member States adopted a resolution⁷ (WHA 75.6) to extend the GPW13 by two more years to 2025 in order to strengthen country response, support countries to recover from the impact of the pandemic, and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the triple billion targets and health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The Update of WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety

9.1 The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030 was adopted by the WHO World Health Assembly 75 in May 2022 (WHA 75(22)) and the final document was launched in October 2022. It updates the last strategy in order to address current and emerging challenges, incorporate new technologies, and include innovative approaches for strengthening national food safety systems. This request was made by Member States in recognition that food safety remains a public health priority with a critical role in the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and taking into consideration the outcomes of the First International Food Safety Conference organized by WHO, the African Union (AU) and FAO, which was held in Addis Ababa on 12–13 February 2019 and the outcomes from the International Forum on Food Safety and Trade, held in Geneva in April 2019, by WHO, FAO and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

9.2 In developing this strategy, WHO has had the support from the Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety: Safer Food for Better Health, consulted widely with scientific experts, with WHO Regional Advisors for food safety, international partners such as FAO and WOH, Member States and public consultation. Existing regional food safety frameworks and food safety strategies were also considered, as well as the recommendations and guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius and the FAO food safety priorities.

9.3 The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030 has been developed to guide and support Member States in their efforts to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate actions towards the reduction of the burden of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety systems and promoting global cooperation.

9.4 For the first time there are indicators proposed to measure the impact and the implementation of the activities to strengthen food control systems. The impact indicator is calculated by the Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) refers to the global estimated number of cases from the five foodborne pathogens: *Campylobacter* spp., Enteropathogenic *E. coli* - EPEC, Enterotoxigenic *E. coli* - ETEC, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* - STEC, and Non-typhoidal *Salmonella* Enterica. This indicator was collected from FERG and refers to data from 2010 that was published in 2015. FERG 2021-2024 is updating this data⁸. It takes into consideration the 5 most frequent bacterial cause of diarrheal foodborne diseases. The progress indicator aims to measure the implementation of the strategy. They are extracted from International Health Regulation (IHR, 2005) assessment. The indicator on Multisectoral collaboration mechanism for food safety events is extracted from the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) report⁹. The other progress indicator also comes from the IHR, but is extracted from the State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR)¹⁰.

⁷ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB152/B152_28-en.pdf

⁸ <https://www.foodbornediseaseburden.org/ferg/estimates>

⁹ <https://extranet.who.int/sph/jee>

¹⁰ <https://extranet.who.int/e-spar>