

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda item 9

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Twenty-fourth Session

Brisbane, Australia, 22 - 26 October 2018

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH FOR INTER-SESSIONAL PWGS

Comments from African Union

African Union

Issue

At the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS23) in May 2017, the Chair recalled concerns expressed by developing countries regarding the implications of resource constraints for their regular attendance at PWG meetings. Acknowledging those difficulties, the Chair noted that certain types of work could be conducted effectively through EWGs but that on other, complex issues, such as National Food Control Systems (NFCSs), PWGs had contributed to resolving concerns in the development of texts. The Chair emphasized the benefit of PWGs as effective in capturing the needs of developing countries and producing outputs valuable to them.

Two webinar pilots were subsequently conducted in Chile and the UK. While these were regarded as successful by the working group some challenges were however experienced.

General Comment

African Union supports the use of webinars as an alternative to PWG

Issues

Some challenges were, however, identified during this trial, these include; problems with the use of simultaneous interpretation for the broadcasting, interruptions in the transmission of the PWG due to connection problems in either the host country or that of the remote participant, and difficulties to participate because of the different time zones.

Position

African Union recommends further pilots to address the aforementioned challenges. AU also recommends that the different level of technology capabilities amongst members as well as the difference in time zones be taken into consideration as the committee adopts the proposed approach.

Rationale

This will ensure that all possible limitations and weaknesses are identified for optimization to enable countries to derive maximum benefits from this new approach for organizing meetings.