

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 18

CX/CAC/41 CRD/35

REPORT ON SIDE EVENTS “FOOD INTEGRITY AND FOOD AUTHENTICITY: A WAY FORWARD”

Prepared by the Codex Secretariat

IGO and NGO Panel Discussions - Monday 2 July 14:00 – 15:00 and Tuesday 3 July 18:00 – 19:00

1. As presented by the Chair of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), an electronic working group on food authenticity and food integrity has recently been established with an initial objective to define and distinguish the various terms related to the subject i.e. food integrity, food authenticity, food fraud and economically motivated adulteration (EMA). Definitions of these terms will help determine future new work on the subject within Codex. With the Codex working paper on this issue due out in August 2018 and discussions scheduled for the next CCFICS meeting in Brisbane (October 2018), these panel discussions served as an informal means for Observers and Members to provide some of their views on this very topical issue.
2. Panellists from International Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) represented the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO), the Gulf Cooperation Council Standardization Organization (GSO), the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the World Customs Organization (WCO). Some highlights from their interventions on Monday 2nd July 2018 included the following statements:
 - Food fraud is a serious but not a new crime, and one that affects us all, thus international solutions are paramount
 - All actors in the food chain need to play a role in addressing food fraud. Improved awareness and knowledge on the issue are key for such engagement.
 - The media and in particular social media are important tools to build awareness in this area.
 - Customs organizations identify three main types of fraud e.g. (i) smuggling (ii) international property rights violations and (iii) inappropriate or fraudulent certification/documentation
 - Improved traceability systems, uptake of new technologies (e.g. use of e-documents, blockchain) and development of new electronic systems can be important parts of the solution.
 - African countries see a strong need for quality assurance and capacity building on analytical methods in the fight against food fraud at the border as well as a need to encourage governments to develop and implement policies in this area, promote harmonization, address corruption and embrace innovation
 - There are sector specific challenges e.g. in the wine sector fraudulent practices can more often lead to quality rather than safety issues.
3. Panelists from International Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), namely the Fédération internationale des vins et spiriteux (FIVS), FoodDrinkEurope (FDE), the International Food Authenticity Assurance Organization (IFAAO), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) participated in the second round of the discussions on Tuesday 3rd July 2018. There was a strong focus on practical next steps and in particular the importance of defining the problem. Issues raised included:
 - It is imperative to distinguish between the different terms (e.g. integrity, authenticity, fraud, intentional substitution, dilution, and misrepresentation) and to clearly define them at an international level
 - Codex provides an excellent platform to work together on harmonized terminology. Once definitions have been agreed, next steps could be prioritized rather than try to tackle all aspects of food fraud simultaneously
 - Vulnerability assessment was considered an important of food safety and management systems.
 - The subject requires a broader mind-set approach and involvement of a wide set of actors
 - There are numerous initiatives underway in this area, although they are often working independently

- Analytical methods have a contribution to make, but are not enough to solve the problem due to the complexity of food fraud.
 - Consumer and the food industry alike are affected by the challenges countries face due to lack of regulation, capacity and knowledge on this issue. Therefore, only a multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary approach will help mitigate criminal activities in future.
4. Countries attending the side events indicated both their progress and challenges related to the subject, highlighting the diversity of Codex Members in terms of their capacity to identify and address fraudulent activities. They also underlined the very practical daily challenges they face due to lack of regulation, capacity and knowledge on this issue.
 5. In summarising, panellists concurred that Codex was an ideal arena in which to further explore the issue and to promote harmonization, especially regarding definitions.

Further relevant resources: Codex video: [What do you know about food fraud?](#); UK government initiative on food authenticity: <http://www.foodauthenticity.uk/>; work of [ISO TC 292](#); Global Food Safety Initiative "[Tackling food fraud through food safety management systems](#)" (2017).