

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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ALINORM 09/32/28

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Thirty-second Session
Rome, Italy, 29 June – 4 July 2009*

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING
COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

Accra, Ghana, 24-27 February 2009

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Eighteenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa reached the following conclusions:

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 32ND SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 62ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Coordinating Committee:

- agreed that participation of developing countries in the work of Codex was critical and acknowledged the role of the Codex Trust Fund in assisting developing countries to participate, but that several other mechanisms at national level could contribute to more effective participation by developing countries (paras 9-13);
- expressed appreciation for the use of Portuguese as language of interpretation for CCAFRICA and agreed to request that Portuguese be used as language of interpretation and translation of documents for the next session of the Committee (paras. 14-15);
- noted several mechanisms have been implemented by Members to implement activities 4.5, 5.4 and 5.5 of the Codex Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and that the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan was a useful tool to strengthen the implementation of these activities (paras 17-20);
- identified priority activities for the implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan, adopted a format for annual country reports on Codex activities and Guidelines for the Transfer of Coordinatorship (paras 29-41, Appendices II - IV);
- unanimously agreed that Ghana be re-appointed as Regional Coordinator for Africa (para. 61).

MATTERS REFERRED TO CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)

The Coordinating Committee:

- reconfirmed its view that the current terms of reference of the Coordinating Committees should be kept unchanged (para. 16).

OTHER MATTERS

The Coordinating Committee:

- expressed appreciation to FAO and WHO for their work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice (paras 22-27);
- acknowledged the offer of assistance by the African Union for the implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan and related activities (paras 33, 38 and 41);
- exchanged information on national food control systems and consumer participation in food standards setting, use of Codex standards at national and regional level and nutritional issues in the region (paras 42-60);
- noted that in future the information provided on food control systems, consumer participation and use of Codex standards should be analyzed so as to identify areas and subjects that required further assistance from FAO and WHO to build capacity in member countries (para. 52).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa held its Eighteenth Session in Accra, Ghana from 24 to 27 February 2009, by courtesy of the Government of Ghana. The Session was chaired by Professor Samuel Sefa-Dedeh, Professor of Food Science and Technology, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences University of Ghana Legon. The Session was attended by 183 delegates, advisors and observers representing 31 Member Countries, 5 Observer Members from outside the Region, and 4 international organizations. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariat and Representatives of FAO and WHO, is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Session was opened by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana. In his opening remarks, the Vice-President recognized the importance of Codex in protecting consumer health and facilitating international trade in food and that it was an honour for Ghana to be hosting the CCAFRICA. He emphasized that there was a need for effective and dynamic cooperation and communication amongst the Coordinating Committee for Africa members, and other major actors involved directly or indirectly in food safety issues and that this should be seen as a matter that requires urgent attention. He also stressed that it was time for African Governments and Donor Agencies to show renewed commitment by providing support to Codex activities and that this political will needed to be translated into urgent and real actions to allow the region to make the much needed impact. He further indicated the need to raise awareness of Codex activities in the various countries and at political level.

3. Dr Daniel Kertesz, WHO Representative for Ghana, and Mr Edouard K. Tapsoba, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, welcomed the delegates to Ghana on behalf of World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), respectively.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

4. The Coordinating Committee agreed to discuss Agenda Item 4 (Strategic Plan for Coordination of CCAFRICA) after the consideration of Items 5 and 6 since these items were interrelated and outcomes of discussions under Items 5 and 6 could impact on the discussion of the Strategic Plan and its implementation.

5. The Coordinating Committee also agreed to the proposals by the Delegations of Nigeria and Ghana to discuss under Agenda Item 9 'Other Business and Future Work' the following matters:

- Product Labelling (proposed by the Delegation of Nigeria);
- Criteria for Methods for the detection and identification of foods derived from biotechnology and labelling of genetically modified foods (proposed by the Delegation of Ghana);
- Traceability (proposed by the Delegation of Ghana);
- The Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food (proposed by the Delegation of Ghana); and
- Proliferation of private standards (proposed by the Delegation of Ghana).

6. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as the Agenda for the Session with the additions noted above.

7. The Committee agreed to establish two in-session physical working groups open to all interested parties, one chaired by Ghana and working in English and another, chaired by Cameroon, working in French. The Terms of Reference of the working groups were to discuss the implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic plan and to make recommendations on how to better facilitate its implementation including proposals for possible projects at regional or sub-regional level to assist in the implementation of some of the activities of the Strategic Plan.

¹ CX/AFRICA 09/18/1; CRD 11 (Proposal by Nigeria)

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2)²

8. The Committee noted matters arising from the 30th and 31st Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the 60th and 61st Sessions of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the 24th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) as summarized in the working document and discussed in particular the following matters:

Participation of developing countries in Codex Meetings (31st CAC)

9. The Committee recalled that the Commission, at its 31st Session, had recommended that Coordinating Committees consider the issue of participation of developing countries and report their views to the 32nd Session of the Commission. The Committee noted that the 25th Session of the Committee on General Principles would consider a document prepared by the Secretariat which would include data on the participation of developing countries in Codex sessions and proposals to improve the situation.

10. The Committee agreed that participation of developing countries in Codex was critical and that participation needed to be strengthened.

11. The Committee acknowledged the role of the Codex Trust Fund in financially assisting developing countries to participate in Codex and extended its appreciation to the Trust Fund. The Committee acknowledged that funding through the Trust Fund was not sustainable over the long-term and that countries should seek other sources of financial assistance. It was noted that awareness of Codex by political decision-makers was critical in this regard and encouraged the inclusion of SPS and Codex activities in national budgets.

12. The Committee was of the view that improved participation in Codex by countries of the region could best be achieved through amongst others: strengthening national structures, such as Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees; strengthening infrastructure and human resource capacity especially with regard to scientific data collection; and ensuring consistency of delegates to Codex meetings and that implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCAFRICA would contribute to achieving the aforementioned. The Committee further noted the importance of sensitizing the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities (RECs) to the work of Codex and the need for their cooperation with and participation in the work of Codex. The Secretariat informed the Committee that very few RECs in Africa currently had observer status in Codex and urged countries to encourage their RECs to gain observer status with Codex.

13. The Observer from Brazil noted that although the Codex Trust Fund was an important instrument to assist countries to participate, that it was not the only solution to enhance participation of developing countries, but that more importantly, the structure of Codex needed to be re-examined especially with regard to the dispersion of Codex meetings and that there was a need for their centralization to be considered.

Use of Portuguese as Language of Interpretation

14. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the opportunity to use Portuguese as a language of interpretation during the current session, in recognition of its usefulness to enable more participation from Portuguese-speaking countries.

15. The Committee agreed to request the Commission to consider the use of Portuguese for interpretation and translation of documents for the next session of the Committee, to allow more participation from Portuguese-speaking countries in the Committee.

Terms of Reference of Regional Coordinating Committees (24th CCGP)

16. The Committee recalled that its 17th Session had expressed the view that “*terms of reference of all Coordinating Committees should remain unchanged since there were no imperative reasons that justify the proposed amendment*” and reconfirmed this view.

² CX/AFRICA 09/18/2

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2008 - 2013 (Agenda Item 2)³

Activity 4.5: Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level

Activity 5.4: Strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees

Activity 5.5: Enhancing participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels

17. The Committee recalled the request of the 31st Session of the Commission on Activities 4.5, 5.4 and 5.5.⁴

18. In considering this request, information provided by members and observers in response to Part A.2 (i) and (ii) and Part C (i) and (ii) of CL 2008/30-AFRICA, was considered.

19. The Committee noted that most members had implemented some mechanism either through a National Codex Committee or similar structure to promote interdisciplinary coordination at national level and that all stakeholders including consumer organizations were encouraged to participate, but that several challenges remained to strengthen these structures and participation in them.

20. The Committee agreed that the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCAFRICA (see Agenda Item 4) was a useful tool to strengthen the activities identified under Activities 4.5, 5.4 and 5.5.

21. The Representative of the African Union informed the Committee of the “Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards-Setting Organizations” Project (PAN-SPSO) funded by the European Community and coordinated by the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) with its implementation partners, the seven regional economic communities (RECs) on the continent. The Committee noted that one of the aims of the project is to facilitate effective participation of African countries in the activities of the OIE, IPPC and Codex (see CRD 13).

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING (Agenda Item 3)⁵

22. The Representative of FAO, speaking on behalf of FAO and WHO, informed the Committee of a number of capacity building activities and technical and training tools to strengthen food control systems, including a good hygienic practices manual for the production and sale of streetfoods in Africa, a risk-based inspection manual and the guide on risk analysis for food safety authorities.

23. The Representative also informed the Committee of recent scientific advice from joint FAO/WHO Expert meetings on: (i) use of chlorine in the food production and processing; (ii) *Enterobacter sakazakii* in powdered follow-up formulae; and (iii) WHO’s expert meeting on toxicological aspects of melamine and cyanuric acid. The Representative drew the attention of the Committee to two upcoming expert meetings on the health risks and health benefits associated with consumption of fish and other seafood, and on the possible food safety implications of nanotechnology to food and agriculture (to be held in June 2009).

24. The Representative of WHO informed the Committee of global activities on: (i) Guidelines for the investigation and control of foodborne diseases; (ii) INFOSAN Network that is an information sharing mechanism to alert food safety incidents (e.g. melamine contamination in food) and disseminate technical information, and several regional training and capacity building activities (e.g. “Five Keys to Safer Food” for education and communication, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system, laboratory-based foodborne disease surveillance). The Representative also informed the Committee of a recent WHO initiative to estimate the burden of foodborne diseases⁶. It was noted that the Codex Trust Fund supported 336 participants from Africa in 2004-2008.

³ CX/AFRICA 09/18/2-Add.1 and CX/AFRICA 09/18/5 (Replies from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe); CRD 2 (Reply from Morocco); CRD 5 (Reply from Malawi); CRD 6 (Reply from Uganda); CRD 8 (Reply from Cameroon); CRD 11 (Reply from Nigeria), CRD 13 (PAN-SPSO Project Presentation by the AU/IBAR)

⁴ ALINORM 08/31/REP, para141 and paras 145 - 146

⁵ CX/AFRICA 09/18/3 (Part I and Part II), CRD 11 (Comments of Nigeria)

⁶ undertaken by Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Group (FERG) (http://www.who.int/foodsafety/foodborne_disease/ferg/en/index3.html)

25. The Committee noted that the usefulness of INFOSAN was widely acknowledged in particular in the context of the recent food safety incident on melamine contamination. To a request that CCMAS produce a reference method for melamine, the Codex Secretariat clarified that this matter could be raised at the forthcoming session of CCCF, in which the issue of melamine would be raised and the JECFA Secretariat would be providing detail of the recent expert meeting on melamine, or at the forthcoming session of CCMAS.

26. Some delegations, expressing their appreciation to FAO and WHO which provided a number of capacity building activities in their countries, wished to be better informed of the mechanisms to access technical assistance. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee of the different modalities, and advised to refer all initial requests of assistance to the national FAO Representations, clearly underlining the priority for the Government, as FAO could only take action upon receipt of official requests. Some other delegations requested for more involvement of FAO and WHO local offices in National Codex Committee meetings and other food safety related activities.

27. The Committee reiterated its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their support to building capacity of members in the region. The Committee also welcomed the initiative of FAO with regard to increased food safety.

ACTIVITIES OF THE STDF PROGRAMME IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 3.1)⁷

28. The Representative of WTO, referring to CX/AFRICA 09/18/3-Add.1 informed the Committee of the aims of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and announced that more detailed information on the STDF and recent developments in the SPS Committee including an update on the work on private standards would be provided during a seminar scheduled to be held during the present session of CCAFRICA.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COORDINATION OF CCAFRICA (Agenda Item 4)⁸

29. The Committee recalled that its 17th Session had adopted the Strategic Plan and had agreed that the following would be developed by the Coordinator:

- regional plan of action
- appropriate indicators for conducting periodic evaluations
- mechanisms for reporting achievements through the Coordinator to CCAFRICA
- proposals for a regional project

Report by the Coordinator

30. The Delegation of Ghana as the Coordinator introduced its report on the progress of implementation of the strategic plan as outlined in CRD 12. The Delegation informed the Committee that a draft regional plan of action for CCAFRICA had been developed as well as a mechanism for monitoring progress of the implementation of the Strategic Plan⁹. It was further indicated that a regional project proposal had not been developed since the Coordinator was of the view that several projects could stem from the activities in the strategic plan.

⁷ CX/AFRICA 09/18/3-Add.1, CRD 9 (Report by WTO Secretariat on recent developments in the SPS Committee)

⁸ CX/AFRICA 08/18/4; CRD 1 (comments from Kenya); CRD 3 (comments from Morocco); CRD 10 (Draft Guidelines for the Transfer of CCAFRICA Coordinatorship prepared by Ghana); CRD 11 (comments from Nigeria); CRD 12 (Report on Implementation of Strategic Plan prepared by Ghana); CRD 14 (report of in-session Working Groups)

⁹ CX/AFRICA 09/18/4

Priority activities for implementation of the strategic plan

31. The Committee considered the reports of the two in-session working groups¹⁰ (see Item 1) as contained in CRD 14 and agreed to all the priority activities identified with minor changes, except for the proposal identified under objective 7 (e.g., develop regional guidelines on GM foods) (see Appendix II). Among the priority activities for the region, the Committee agreed with the proposal of the Delegation of Morocco of the need to elaborate texts on mycotoxins. However given the short time before the next session of the CCCF, Morocco was encouraged to use the chat-room on the CCAFRICA website to exchange information on this matter.

32. The Representative of WHO indicated that the Trust Fund could provide a mechanism for support for some of the priority activities identified and that in collaboration with the FAO and WHO would use the strategic plan to try and provide tailored assistance to countries.

33. The Committee acknowledged and extended its appreciation to the Representative of the African Union for its offer to provide assistance to the region in the implementation of the strategic plan.

Annual Report Format¹¹

34. The Committee discussed Annex II, the proposed format for the annual country reports, that was necessary to facilitate analysis of the information by the Coordinator and made the following observations and changes:

Title

35. The committee agreed to amend the title of the document to accurately reflect its intent.

Main body

36. Under subsection “b”, it was agreed to also request for information on the source of funding for participation in Codex meetings and to include “constraints” in subsection “h”. A new part on conclusions and recommendations was added as a new section 5.

37. With these changes, the Committee adopted the format for annual country reports (see Appendix III).

Guidelines for the transfer of Coordinatorship¹²

38. The Committee adopted the guidelines as proposed by the Coordinator (Appendix IV). It was clarified that this document would be for internal use by the Committee. The Committee acknowledged the offer from AU to provide financial assistance in the implementation of these guidelines.

Other matters

39. The Committee was informed that the Coordinator had executed a project in order to undertake a situation analysis of the region’s Codex activities and infrastructure; to investigate the reasons for the non-use or underutilization of the CCAFRICA website; to identify and prioritize regional needs in matters of food safety standard setting; and to develop a database of experts/specialists, amongst others. Full details of the outcomes and recommendations can be found in the report of the project on the CCAFRICA website.

40. One of the key outcomes of the project was the redevelopment of the CCAFRICA website (www.codexafrica.org) which contained a number of features to enhance information sharing and communication within countries of the region.

41. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Coordinator for the redeveloped website. A delegation, while acknowledging the usefulness of the website, cautioned about the difficulties for some countries of region to make optimum use of the website due to poor infrastructural capacity. The Committee

¹⁰ English in-session working group led by Ghana with assistance from Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Vice Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, WHO and Observer from United States of America. French in-session working group led by Cameroon with assistance from Benin, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, FAO, WHO and Observer from Brazil.

¹¹ CX/AFRICA 09/18/4

¹² CRD 10 (Draft Guidelines for the Transfer of Coordinatorship prepared by Ghana)

also discussed the sustained maintenance of the website especially during change in coordinatorship. The Committee agreed to explore the option of having a permanent host for the website and acknowledged the offer from the Representative of the African Union to host, manage, and maintain the website.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING (Agenda Item 5)¹³

42. The Committee was informed of national food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting on the basis of the written submissions in reply to Circular Letter (CL 2008/30-AFRICA, Part A).

43. The Committee noted the recent developments and improvement of the national food control system in some countries, while in some other countries, national food law was being developed or reviewed and that there was a need for human and financial resources for food control, legislation and regulation on food safety and quality, including laboratory capacity for inspection purposes. Several delegations however reported that some food control systems remained fragmented resulting in overlapping, duplication and inefficient use of resources.

44. The Committee also noted that in some countries there was high awareness of consumer participation in food standard setting. However in other countries there was still the need for more involvement of consumers and other stakeholders in this process.

45. The Vice-chairperson of the Commission, noting the usefulness of sharing information on the issue of national food control systems, and consumer participation under this Agenda Item, proposed that the Committee discuss how best to use this type of information. The Vice-chairperson suggested that this be linked to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA (Item 4) and that in future a system be developed to analyze this information so that areas of concern could be identified.

USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 6)¹⁴

46. The Committee recalled that the Executive Committee had agreed to add this new standing agenda item to regional Coordinating Committees, following the decision of the Commission to abolish the acceptance procedure of Codex Standards, in order to collect information on how Codex standards and related texts were used at national and regional level.

47. The Committee noted the information contained in written submissions in response to Circular Letter (CL 2008/30-AFRICA, Part B) or presented during the session. In particular, the Committee noted that many countries based their national food standards / regulations on Codex standards or used them as reference. Similarly, several regional economic communities were developing regional standards based on Codex standards to ensure harmonization of standards across the relevant regions.

48. Some countries endeavoured to use scientific evidence from other sources in developing or reviewing their food standards in the absence of Codex standards.

49. Several difficulties encountered in the use or application of Codex standards were highlighted, in particular, the interpretation of some standards and the lack of microbiological specifications or levels for chemicals (e.g. contaminants). It was clarified that in view of the risk analysis approach in the development of Codex standards, the development of microbiological specifications or setting of maximum limits were dependent on risk assessments provided by expert bodies such as JEMRA and JECFA, amongst others, and that these processes took time and were dependent on the provision of data.

¹³ CX/AFRICA 09/18/5 (information submitted from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe), Circular Letter (CL 2008/30- AFRICA (Part A), CRD 2 (information from Morocco), CRD 5 (information from Malawi), CRD 6 (information from Uganda), CRD 14 (information from Angola, Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania)

¹⁴ CX/AFRICA 09/18/6 (information submitted from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe), Circular Letter (CL 2008/30- AFRICA (Part B), CRD 2 (information from Morocco), CRD 5 (information from Malawi), CRD 6 (information from Uganda); CRD 7 (information from Rwanda), CRD 8 (Information from Cameroon), CRD 15 (information from Angola, Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, D. R. Congo, Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania)

50. Members also informed the Committee that despite harmonization of national standards or regulations with Codex standards, some countries still faced difficulties in accessing certain markets due to the imposition of standards by importing countries that were more stringent than Codex standards, and in particular, the proliferation of private standards was highlighted.

51. The Committee further noted that despite countries having adopted Codex standards in their regulations, enforcement and implementation of those regulations remained a challenge, due to lack of human and financial resources.

52. The Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, noting the difficulty in application of Codex standards, in particular, in small or medium-sized enterprises, urged a need for analysis of the situation aimed at identifying areas and subjects that required further assistance from FAO and WHO to build capacity in member countries.

NUTRITIONAL ISSUES WITHIN THE REGION (Agenda Item 7)¹⁵

53. The Committee recalled that this matter had been placed on the Agenda based on the recommendation of the 61st Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

54. Many Delegations expressed their appreciation for the inclusion of this item on the agenda as nutrition-related matters remained a challenge to many countries of the region and unless these matters were addressed, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) might not be met.

55. The Representatives of the WHO and FAO highlighted some of the activities of their respective organizations in the region, in particular, work done in the field food security and nutrition, salt iodation, the integration of nutrition in HIV/AIDS control programmes, food composition information, micronutrient deficiencies (Vitamin A and iodine deficiency) and complementary foods.

56. The Representative of WHO informed the Committee of the important role of WHO in relation to the implementation of Strategic Objective 9 (Nutrition/Food Safety to address health problems in relation to malnutrition and unsafe food).

57. Several delegations shared information about the nutrition status in their countries, in particular, problems relating to vitamin A deficiency, lifestyle diseases, malnutrition especially amongst infants and young children and the programmes being implemented to address these problems (fortification of staple foods, mandatory salt iodation and adoption of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes).

58. The use of Codex standards in relation to nutrition labelling and nutrition claims was noted as well as the difficulties experienced in the evaluation and assessment of nutrition claims. A Delegation informed the Committee of developments to establish a health products regulatory agency to review claims of health products in their country.

59. The difficulties experienced with the marketing of foods with low nutritional value needed to be addressed. It was noted that consumer awareness and education was especially important to assist consumers in making healthy diet choices.

60. The Committee recognized the work undertaken by Codex to address the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Members were urged to participate in the Committee on Food Labelling and the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses to ensure that challenges faced by countries in the region were being addressed.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 8)¹⁶

61. On the proposal by the Delegation of Zambia, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Ghana be reappointed Coordinator for Africa. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Ghana for the excellent work done during its first term as Coordinator.

¹⁵ CX/AFRICA 09/18/7, CRD 2 (information from Morocco), CRD 5 (information from Malawi), CRD 6 (information from Uganda); CRD 8 (information from Cameroon).

¹⁶ CX/AFRICA 09/18/8

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 9)¹⁷

62. When adopting the provisional agenda the Committee had agreed to add a number of issues for information under this item (see para. 4).

Product Labelling

63. The Delegation of Nigeria referring to its submission in CRD11 informed the Committee that its national food labelling regulations did not permit the inscription of: *For Export Trade*. The Committee noted that this was to ensure that products destined for the Nigerian market were of the same quality and safety standards as those offered for free sale in the country of origin of the product.

Methods for the Detection and Identification of Foods Derived from Biotechnology and Labelling of Genetically Modified Foods

64. The Committee noted that both issues would be discussed at the forthcoming sessions of the Committees on Methods of Analysis and Sampling and Food Labelling, respectively. The Committee was informed that the Proposed Draft Criteria for the Methods for the Detection and Identification of Foods Derived from Biotechnology had been circulated for comments.

Traceability

65. The Committee was informed that at the recently held 17th Session of the Committee on Food Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), a discussion paper on development of guidelines for traceability/product tracing (check French) in the context of food import and export inspection and certification systems had been discussed and that that Committee had agreed to request the 32nd Session of the Commission to request Coordinating Committees to discuss whether there was a need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing.

Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food

66. The Committee noted that this matter was under discussion in the Committee on General Principles.

Proliferation of Private Standards

67. The Committee noted that the Codex Secretariat continued to monitor the discussions on private standards in the SPS Committee in which Codex had observer status and that the matter would be discussed at the next 62nd Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Other matters

68. The Observer of the African Union informed the Committee of the forthcoming Better Training for Safer Food in Africa and the High Level Conference scheduled for 30 March – 2 April 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Observer encouraged the chairperson of the Coordinating Committee to participate in this event.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

69. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 19th Session would be held in approximately two years time (2011) and that the exact date and venue would be communicated to Members at a later stage, on the basis of consultation between the Coordinator to be appointed by the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.

¹⁷ CRD 11 (Submission by Nigeria)

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APPENDIX II

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the role and enhance the participation and effectiveness of CCAFRICA within the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex African region

TIME FRAME: 2007-2013

Objective 1: To foster effective and dynamic communication amongst the CCAFRICA members and other regions, other Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations

Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
1.1 Maximize the use of electronic communication systems in countries of the region, and encourage the development of a webpage for each National Codex Contact Point.	Encourage development of websites for each National Codex Contact Point. - have a standardized format for contents. - include details on NCC composition, input and update database on national food control system.. Make requests to AU to host website	Member Countries of the region Coordinator	Jan 2009 to 2010	Current working websites in Member Countries Codex Contact Points by December 2008	determine the frequency of use of electronic communication against other forms of communication	All Codex Contact Points are operational
1.2 Encourage countries to continuously provide updated contact details of national Codex Contact Points to the Codex Secretariat	Each country to continuously update contact details, in order to facilitate communication, and inform the Codex Secretariat and the Regional Coordinator	Member Countries of the region	Yearly	Evidence of details of Codex Contact Point provided to Coordinator half yearly	Members to copy the coordinator on updated information on National Contact Point for Coordinator to collate information	Operational Codex Contact Point
1.3 Organize a virtual chat room with the primary objective of exchanging information prior to Codex meetings, among CCAFRICA members as well as other regional coordinating Committees or Codex members	Conduct a trial run with an initial discussion topic and the Coordinator acting as moderator	Coordinator	Jan 2009 onwards	Records of documents of chat sessions	Determine the number of responses through the chat rooms prior to Codex meetings	Systems available chat sessions. Evidence of use of chat room especially on discussions prior to and after Codex committee sessions

1.4 Establish a mechanism whereby the Codex Contact Points and/or national Codex Committees in the region can share Information and expertise	Create opportunities for countries from the same region to share their experiences. Support from the Trust Fund is possible.	FAO/WHO and Member Countries of the region	Starting from February 2008	Countries exchange reports of stakeholders Committee meetings or National Codex Committee meetings. Evidence of system whereby related organizations provide database on work done and expertise to be uploaded unto National website.	Request that the Coordinator be copied on information shared between countries	
Objective 2: To achieve an active and effective participation of all countries in the Region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly CCAFRICA¹						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
2.1 Undertake actions targeted at responsible Parties at national level that will lead to a higher priority and enhanced support to Codex activities	Conduct awareness programmes at national and regional level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include advocacy programmes for political leaders, parliamentarians, policy makers. - consultant for preparation of documents / materials for advocacy, preferably at national level to account for national differences. - special delegation to make presentations on Codex at FAO/WHO Regional meetings, regional economic bodies, and also AU. 	Coordinator / Member Countries of the region	From January 2008 onwards	Documentary evidence of collaboration from political figures, NGOs, Parliamentarians and outcomes at the national level annually	Request for annual reports from NCCs, report to include information on activities of NCCs	Funds available to organize workshops for Political leaders

¹ To ensure effective participation in CCAFRICA, there is a need for commitment from all stakeholders. However, stakeholders must be aware/informed before they can commit.

	<p>-Draw up a 2008 annual report on the participation of members in the different Codex meetings, with a breakdown of the share funded by the public administration, the private sector and the Trust Fund</p> <p>-Countries which are able to provide information for 2008 should do so</p>					
2.2 Search for financial assistance from possible sources to support Codex activities (trust funds, WHO, FAO, UNDP, International Organizations, etc.)	Similar to Activity 2.1	Member Countries of the region	From June 2009	NCCs must have documented plans to solicit for funds through workshops, appeals etc and evidence of monies received accounted for	Collate information on fundraising activities of NCCs (to be included in annual report)	
2.3 Ask for collaboration in the translation of relevant information into English, French and Arabic	-Create an electronic information exchange, in order to share each country's experience with translation, and establish a list of potential translators by language	Member Countries of the region/FAO/WHO	From June 2009	List of collaborators ready to assist in translation	Evaluating the translation done from/into English, French and Arabic	
2.4 Establish working groups responsible for examining strategic aspects of Codex activities	-Continue to request the holding of workshops in the margins of the CCAFRICA meeting	Coordinator	From June 2009	Evidence of database of Experts, Research conducted	Determine the number of working groups established	Countries willing to provide information to Coordinator
2.5 Involve all countries in the region in the activities CCAFRICA		Coordinator	From June 2008	Codex Contact Points established in countries of the region	Compare the number of Codex Contact Points with January 2009 as the reference point	Countries show national commitment to set up Codex Contact Points
2.6 Hold in conjunction with sessions of CCAFRICA, seminars/workshops on food safety and matters of concern to the region		Coordinator and FAO/WHO	From June 2008	Reports of seminars, workshops held in conjunction with CCAFRICA	Determine the number of Workshops/Seminars held	Funds available for Workshops and Seminars

2.7 Encourage countries that have a common interest to coordinate their position and present it as a common position at Codex Committee meetings.		Member Countries of the region	From June 2008	Evidence of meetings. Joint reports and communication with countries before every Codex meeting	Determine the number of issues that at least two Member Countries present with a common position	Position developed well in advance of meeting and shared with countries
2.8 Give support to countries of the Region in organizing Codex related events		FAO/WHO	From June 2008	Reports of activities/events undertaken	Assess the number of Codex related events organized with support from FAO/WHO	FAO and WHO provides funds
Objective 3: To promote the development of and to strengthen National Codex Committees and/or Codex Contact Points in member countries of the region						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
3.1 Identify needs for capacity building with other Organizations and look for possible financial sources	Establish a National Codex Committee for member countries which do not currently have an NCC. - Strengthen structures of existing NCC. Each NCC to conduct a needs assessment and submit it to the FAO, through the Coordinator, duly supporting the request with information on how this matches government priorities	Member Countries of the region and Coordinator	Continuous	Diagnostic reports of capacity needs. Identified possible financial sources for capacity building activities	Determine the number of capacity building activities undertaken in Member Countries	Available funds
3.2 Encourage and support CCAFRICA Member Countries of the region to establish a National Codex Committee	-Invite countries with an NCC to supply a detailed report on the organisational structure and operation of their NCC -Encourage and support the other countries to create their own NCC	Member countries of the region	June 2007 to Dec 2008	National Codex Committees established in all Member countries by December 2008	Write to each member country to provide the status of NCC and their activities	National commitment and support from FAO and WHO

Objective 4: To take advantage of available technical and scientific expertise and experiences of the member countries of the region						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
4.1 Identify and establish a list of specialists and competent institutions in the region based on the information provided by each country that could provide support and specialized advice to CCAFRICA	<p>Identify, train and reorient experts in the region.</p> <p>- orientation needed to redirect current research activities to be more relevant to Codex activities in order to provide the needed data for Codex requests.</p> <p>Draw up a list of potential experts to involve in international specialist groups (JECFA, JEMRA etc) and make the call for expert candidates more transparent</p>	Member Countries of the region/ Coordinator	June 2007-2008	Database of specialists, competent institutions	Determine the number of Experts identified and participating in Codex activities in respect of scientific advice	Member countries should be willing to provide information for database creation
4.2 Establish a regional risk assessment body that will coordinate communication of expert data with FAO/WHO expert bodies	<p>Create a centralized database on relevant data with input from all member countries.</p> <p>Draw up a list of potential experts to involve in international specialist groups (JECFA, JEMRA etc) and make the call for expert candidates more transparent</p>	Member Countries of the region/ Coordinator	Dec 2009	Risk assessment body established by December 2009 in each country	Invite countries to indicate Risk Assessment Body established and legal framework if any	Each Member country should take steps to train and make funds available for training
4.3 Identify and prioritize issues that require Specialized expertise	Organize regional consultative workshops to identify areas of priority.	Member Countries of the region/ Coordinator	June 2007 to Dec 2008	Diagnostic report on priority issues requiring specialized expertise	From annual report	Availability of funds and Experts

Objective 5: To ensure the continuity and sustainability of CCAFRICA activities						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
5.1 Design a biennial plan of action to be implemented between CCAFRICA meetings		Coordinator	June 2007 to Oct 2007	Evidence of annual plan of action to be implemented between CCAFRICA	Review of plan of action at CCAFRICA meeting	
5.2 Conduct periodic review and follow up on the actions in the strategic plan		Coordinator	Half yearly	Report by Coordinator annually	Request information from CCAFRICA Members on actions taken	
5.3 Establish information transition procedures to ensure a better transition of the Coordinatorship		Coordinator	Continuous	Guidelines for transmission of Coordinatorship developed by end of 2008. A draft to be presented at 2009 meeting	Presentation of proposed procedures at 2009 CCAFRICA meeting	
5.4 Present a progress report on the achievements in the key areas of the Strategic plan at meetings of CCAFRICA		Coordinator	Quarterly	Progress report available at CCAFRICA meeting in 2009	Progress report available at CCAFRICA	
Objective 6: To obtain technical cooperation and develop a funding mechanism that would enable CCAFRICA to develop and sustain its activities in accordance with its objectives²						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
6.1 Elaborate a list of organizations that could provide technical and financial cooperation		Coordinator /Member Countries of the region	June 2007-Dec 2008	A database of organizations that can provide technical assistance. Establish by end of 2008.	A database of organizations that can provide technical assistance. Establish by end of 2008.	

² Related to Objective 2; as part of awareness programmes, there is a need to identify all relevant stakeholders and present proposals for funding.

6.2 Organize working groups tasked with formulating fundraising plans and ensure their follow-up		Coordinator / Member Countries of the region	Half yearly	Reports on formation of Working Groups prepared half yearly and presented by Members to Coordinator	Review annual reports and determine Member countries contributions to working Groups	
6.3 Develop and analyze proposals for the creation of trust funds and other means of financing within the codex domain, taking into consideration the region's interests		Coordinator /Member Countries of the region	Continuous	Report on creation of Trust Funds	The amount of funds generated to support the region's interest.	
Objective 7: Identify and prioritize regional needs in matters of food safety and other areas with a view to finding solutions to meet these needs						
Actions	Priority areas and actions	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Mechanism for monitoring progress	Assumptions
7.1 Identify priority economic and /or food safety issues for which consensus exist within the region for the elaboration of Codex standards		Member Countries of the region /Coordinator	Continuous	Reports on priority economic and /or food safety meetings of stakeholders available to Member Countries by end of 2008	Determine the number of economic and Food Safety issues for which consensus exist within the region	Member countries would provide information on priority needs
7.2 Elaborate standards, guidelines and other recommendations that have been identified as being of interest to the region		Member Countries of the region /Coordinator	Continuous	Reports of Member country Working Groups on standards, guidelines and recommendations by the end of 2008. Reports ready for Coordinator to present during the 2009 meeting	Determine the number of standards and guidelines elaborated	
7.3 Encourage contacts between other interested Parties regularly attending CCAFRICA meetings on food safety matters		Member Countries of the region /Coordinator	Continuous	List of contacts of interested Parties available to Coordinator by December 2008. Evidence of circulation of reports to relevant Members	Information on interested parties shared with CCAFRICA members	

FORMAT OF ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORTS FOR THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA¹

The report is to be completed by the National Codex Committee (NCC) in consultation with the Codex Contact Point and all interested parties and submitted on behalf of the country to the Coordinator by email at: XXXXX or fax XXXXX.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary should give the key outcomes on activities of National Codex Committee in the country.

2. INTRODUCTION

This section should provide the background to the NCC in the country, current composition of members and frequency of meetings.

3. MAIN BODY

The suggested sections to be included are:

- a. Composition, functions and activities of the NCC in the country (including information on what has worked). Interactions with other countries on issues of common interest. Indicate if you developed any common position in response to Codex meetings.
- b. Codex meetings your country has participated in (include number of Codex meetings, source of funding and names and addresses of participants)
- c. Codex activities supported by FAO / WHO in the country.
- d. Other capacity building activities
- e. The contribution of national experts to the provision of scientific advice on the work of Codex.
- f. Country issues that require specialized expertise.
- g. Contributions to working groups.
- h. Constraints and suggestions for the way forward

4. ANY OTHER ISSUES ON THE WORK OF CODEX IN THE COUNTRY

5. CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

¹ Proposed timeline: It would be appropriate to set timelines within which members should submit their Annual Report and the proposed deadline for submission of report is 31st October.

APPENDIX IV**GUIDELINES FOR THE TRANSFER OF COORDINATORSHIP**

Currently under Rule IV the Commission may appoint a Coordinator from among Members of the Commission for any of the geographic locations or for any group of countries specifically enumerated by the Commission, on the basis of a proposal of a majority of Members of the Commission which constitute the region or group, that work for the Codex Alimentarius in the countries concerned so requires.

Coordinators are nominated at each session of the Coordinating Committee established under Rule XI.1b(ii) and appointed at the following regular session of the Commission. Under Rule VI (2) it is stated that the Commission shall make such arrangements as may be necessary in order to ensure continuity in the functions of the Coordinators. It is proposed that for CCAFRICA the following transitional arrangements will be made to ensure this continuity.

- 1.0 The period between nomination by the Coordinating Committee for Africa and appointment as Coordinator by the next session of the Commission should be used to bridge the information and knowledge gap for the nominee Coordinator.
- 2.0 CCAFRICA Status report presented at the meeting of the Coordinating Committee where the nomination was done will serve as an initial document for consultation.
- 3.0 After members have discussed the report and mapped out the next steps the Nominee Coordinator should consult with the out-going Coordinator at the meeting where the nomination was done and agree on the steps to be followed after the appointment. These may include the following:
 - 3.1 The establishment of transition Teams by the out-going Coordinator and the Nominee Coordinator to facilitate the process.
 - 3.2 Sharing information and documentation on any special projects. Where there are follow-up activities on projects the Nominee Coordinator should be briefed on these activities and any further actions taken should be communicated to the Nominee Coordinator
 - 3.3 An update on the status of the strategic plan and the critical activities to be undertaken in the next 12 months should be discussed. Share database on membership of the CCAFRICA with contact address of CCP and other interested organizations.
 - 3.4 Information on other activities of CCAFRICA.
 - 3.5 Schedule a formal handing over at the next meeting of the Commission where the appointment is to take place.
 - 3.6 Within 2-4 weeks of the appointment of the Coordinator by the Commission, the new Coordinator may visit the out-going Coordinator and finalize the handing over.
 - 3.7 Any other activities and steps that will assist with smooth transition.