

# C O D E X   A L I M E N T A R I U S   C O M M I S S I O N



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations**



**World Health  
Organization**

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**REP11/AFRICA**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **C O D E X   A L I M E N T A R I U S   C O M M I S S I O N**

*Thirty-fourth Session  
Geneva, Switzerland, 4 – 9 July 2011*

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

*Accra, Ghana, 1 - 4 February 2011*

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 34<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 65<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

#### The Coordinating Committee:

- did not make any specific recommendations on the need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing (paras 8-12);
- agreed to submit a number of recommendations regarding measures that the Commission and FAO/WHO could take in connection with private food safety standards (paras 13-21);
- noted that a worldwide standard for processed cheese was necessary, but that if that was not possible, a regional standard for Africa should be developed (paras 22-23);
- took note of the written replies submitted on Activities 4.5 and 5.5 and that mechanisms had been established to promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national level as specified under Activity 4.5 and to enhance participation of NGOs at the national level as specified under Activity 5.5 (para. 24);
- provided answers and information to the questionnaire seeking suggestions for the development of the Codex Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 (paras 25-32);
- did not support the options proposed to limit participation in physical working groups (paras 33-34);
- agreed that there should be a gradual shift from Objective 1 to Objectives 2 and 3 of the Codex Trust Fund; that there was a need for capacity building and that it should complement the work of FAO/WHO; that there should be a mechanism to assist graduated countries to continue receiving support from the CTF; that the current criteria should be retained; and that the lifespan of the Trust Fund should be extended (paras 43 – 50); and
- unanimously agreed that Cameroon should be appointed as Regional Coordinator for Africa (para. 81-84).

### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### The Coordinating Committee:

- expressed appreciation to FAO and WHO for their work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice (paras 35-42);
- agreed that the coordinator, Ghana, would undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA for discussion in the margins of the 34<sup>th</sup> CAC on how to further implement the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan (para. 58); and
- exchanged information on national food control systems, consumer participation in food standards setting, use of Codex standards at national and regional level and nutritional issues in the region (paras 59-80).

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa held its Nineteenth Session in Accra, Ghana from 1 to 4 February 2011, by courtesy of the Government of Ghana. The Session was chaired by Professor Samuel Sefa-Dedeh, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences University of Ghana Legon. The Session was attended by 176 delegates, advisors and observers representing 36 Member Countries, 2 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 the Honourable Minister of Health, Mr Joseph Yileh Chireh, on behalf of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, who welcomed delegates to Ghana for the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of CCAFRICA and noted that the session provided a unique opportunity to address food safety challenges facing the continent. He further noted that despite efforts by Governments as well as multilateral and bilateral agencies, weaknesses still exist in national food control systems in the African region and emphasized the shared responsibility and involvement of all stakeholders. It was stressed that to improve food safety in the region, more financial commitment was needed on the part of Governments and donor agencies in the work of CCAFRICA to achieve real progress and that it was necessary for African Governments and Agencies to show their commitment by providing support to national Codex activities. He also emphasized that the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was changing and that the African region couldn't afford to lag behind and commended the African Union's InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) for providing support for the coordination of African positions on some Codex issues.

3. In concluding, he noted that by the next session of CCAFRICA it would have a new coordinator and that it was an honour for Ghana to have served as the current coordinator. He stated that the cooperation received from member countries provided an impetus for the work undertaken to bring CCAFRICA to its current level and that the Region was at a crucial point in its history and visionary leadership on the part of the next coordinator was imperative.

4. Mrs Hannah Clarendon and Dr Daniel Kertesz welcomed delegates to Ghana on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO), respectively.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)<sup>1</sup>

5. The Committee agreed to a proposal by the chairperson to report back on the "friends of the chair" meeting on ractopamine in the provisional agenda under Item 7 (Other business and future work).

6. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the Session with the above proposal.

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

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2008 – 2013 (Agenda Item 2b)<sup>2</sup>

7. The Committee noted matters arising from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and

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<sup>1</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/1

<sup>2</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/2, CL 2010/43-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 11/19/2-Add.1 (comments from Mali and IDF), CRD 1 (comments from Ghana), CRD 2 (comments from IFT), CRD 5 (comments from Uganda), CRD 7 (comments from Nigeria), CRD 8 (comments from Kenya), CRD 11 (comments from Cameroon).

the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on General Principles as summarized in the working document and discussed in particular the following matters:

### **Traceability/Product Tracing**

8. Following the request of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission, the Committee discussed whether there was a need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing.

9. Some delegations noted that the current *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool Within a Food Inspection and Certification System* were very general and expressed the view that further guidance of a more practical nature was needed in the framework of Codex for food control purposes at the national level, especially as regards non-packaged food. It was suggested to follow the same approach as in the case of the application of the HACCP system.

10. Several delegations pointed out that countries should not focus on the safety and quality of exports only but that their priority should be ensuring the safety of food for domestic consumption in order to protect the health of their consumers, including through adequate import control.

11. The Representative of FAO indicated that FAO and WHO were ready to work with countries to develop specific guidance adapted to their needs at the national or regional level in order to implement traceability/product tracing in the framework of food control systems. The Observer of the African Union also drew the attention of the Committee to the need for coordination of cooperation activities on various aspects of food control systems, including traceability.

12. The Committee agreed to inform the Commission of the above discussion and did not make any specific recommendation.

### **Private standards**

13. The Committee discussed the issue of private standards based on replies given and other interventions made on the questions contained in CL 2010/43-AFRICA.

### **Question 1 – have food producers/processors in your country experienced any problems in meeting private standards?**

14. Several members informed the committee that due to the more stringent and prescriptive nature of private standards, their implementation was difficult especially for small-scale farmers, which in turn limited their access to markets. Members also questioned the lack of transparency in the way private standards were developed and the lack of harmonization between these private standards. Members reiterated the view that all food safety standards should be harmonized with Codex.

### **Question 2 – What are the financial implications of meeting private standards, especially implications for SMEs?**

15. In general the financial implications were linked to the high cost of certification, especially for small holders which further limited their access to markets. There were also huge financial costs for providing assistance and training to farmers.

### **Question 3 – What measures have been taken to overcome / ease the problems in implementing private standards?**

16. It was noted that several measures had been put in place by some members to provide assistance to small holders, such as the provision of financial assistance, training and organization of producers into groups to allow for group certification. These interventions were either public or through public-private partnerships.

**Question 4 – What should the CAC/FAO/WHO do in the context of private standards?**

17. In noting the concerns and impact of private standards, the Committee agreed to submit the following recommendation to the Commission:

18. Taking into account the principle articulated in Article 1(b) of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission: *promoting coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations* that the Commission initiate a mechanism to promote coordination with private standard-setting organizations through the establishment of a physical working group or forum to look at issues raised on the impact of private standards to especially smallholders and that could lead to engagement with these external bodies.

19. The Secretariat clarified that non-governmental organizations could participate in the work of Codex if they met the criteria for observer status in Codex.

20. The Representative of WTO informed the Committee that there was ongoing discussion on private standards in the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee. The SPS Committee had created in 2008 an ad hoc working group on SPS-related private standards to bring more structure to discussions on private standards within the SPS Committee. This group discussed the subject of SPS-related private standards and possible future work of the Committee based on a questionnaire survey on the effects of SPS-related private standards, a descriptive report summarizing the responses received, and a report on possible actions for the SPS Committee regarding private standards. In March 2011, as part of its final report, the ad hoc working group will forward six actions to define the scope of SPS-related private standards and promote information exchange to the Committee for endorsement. In addition, the SPS Committee will examine the other issues on which the working group could not reach consensus and also consider how to address private standards in the future. More information on documents related to SPS-related private standards which have been submitted to the SPS Committee is available in the WTO SPS Information Management System (<http://spsims.wto.org>).

21. The Committee noted the ongoing work of the WTO SPS Committee and recommended the Commission continue working closely with WTO on this matter.

**Processed Cheese**

22. The Committee recalled that the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission had deferred its decision on discontinuation of work on a standard for processed cheese and had requested interested coordinating committees to discuss the necessity and scope of a regional standard.

23. Some delegations indicated that they supported a world-wide standard but that if it was not possible, a regional standard for Africa should be developed as a basis for national standards which would facilitate production and trade of processed cheese.

**Strategic Plan 2008 - 2013**Activities 4.5 and 5.5

24. The Committee noted that, as it appeared from the comments received, several countries had established mechanisms to promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national level as specified under Activity 4.5, and to enhance participation of NGOs at the national level as specified under Activity 5.5. The Committee also recalled that the participation of NGOs was addressed in the framework of the Strategic Plan for Africa.

**Development of a new strategic plan for 2013 - 2018**

25. The Committee discussed the questions put forward in Circular Letter CL 2010/43-AFRICA in order to prepare the revised Strategic Plan and made the following comments and recommendations.

**Question a)**

26. The Committee agreed that the five goals of the Strategic Plan were still relevant and should be retained and noted a proposal to add a new goal on addressing emerging food safety issues arising from, for example, new technologies and climate change.

**Question b)**

27. The Committee agreed that measurable indicators should be included in the Strategic Plan, that the current format should be retained and that ongoing activities should be tracked.

**Question c)**

28. Several delegations pointed out that one of the main challenges was the proliferation of private standards which were sometimes more stringent than Codex standards without scientific basis, and referred to the recommendations made earlier under the current item.

29. Some delegations pointed out that several important challenges existed for developing countries: the implementation of Codex standards at the national level; the need for political support to address food safety issues; the need to generate scientific data in order to increase the input of developing countries in the process on a scientific basis; and the application of risk analysis by countries. The Committee recognized the need for continued capacity building by FAO and WHO in these areas in order to improve participation in the Codex process as a whole.

**Question d)**

30. In addition to the issues identified under c) some delegations proposed that an evaluation of the participation of developing countries be carried out and it was noted that this issue would be considered when discussing the Trust Fund.

**Question e)**

31. The Committee noted a proposal to review the current 8-Step Procedure with a view to accelerating the elaboration process.

**Question f)**

32. The Observer from the African Union informed the Committee about its programme on risk analysis of climate change insofar as it affected food safety, including the emergence of new pests and related risks of increased use of chemicals; promotion of exchange of information among countries in the region; and the establishment of centres of excellence.

**New Options for Physical Working Groups**

33. Many delegations expressed the view that participation in working groups should remain open to all members. As regards the limitation of the size of working groups, it was suggested to consider limiting the number of delegates per country, but not the number of delegations by region. Several concerns were expressed on the opportunity and feasibility of designating regional representatives, taking into account that there were several sub-regions. As regards funding, the Representative of WHO clarified that the possibility of funding for participation in working groups through the CTF already existed and that it was for countries to decide in which meeting of committees or working groups they wished to participate.

34. The Committee concluded that it did not support the options proposed to limit participation in working groups.

**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3a)<sup>3</sup>**

35. The Representative of FAO introduced the new work of FAO of interest to members: development and testing of new guidance on imported food control programmes; the launching of EMPRES-food safety programme and the technical assistance for improved management of food safety emergencies at national level; and the investment in and benchmarking of food control programmes. The Representative further gave examples of technical support available to member countries, such as strengthening of national Codex committees; set up of risk-based food control systems and improvement of technical services in relation to food control; support to specific value chains to allow implementation of Codex Standards; and improved sharing of SPS and food standards information among concerned stakeholders. In response to member countries queries the mechanisms to access FAO technical assistance were clarified.

36. The Representative of WHO reminded the Committee of the importance of scientific advice as provided by FAO and WHO as basis for safety standards developed by Codex, but also its importance to strengthen decision making on national and regional level. The output of the scientific advice programme is freely accessible through the respective FAO and WHO websites, and efforts to improve accessibility are being undertaken.

37. Some examples of current activities were mentioned and the process on how to request scientific advice and how to contribute to it were briefly described. In this context the importance of working through the respective Codex Committees and their priorities working groups was emphasized, as well as the importance to respond to calls for data in a more comprehensive and timely manner. The Committee was informed that information on calls for data are being widely distributed and also sent to Codex Contact Points and that it is important that these calls are forwarded to individuals and institutions or organizations which may have relevant data to submit.

38. A project to improve the database for scientific advice was briefly mentioned which would entail a survey on the types and amounts of mycotoxins occurring in sorghum, with the aim to evaluate the need for establishment of a Codex standard for this important commodity.

39. The Representative of WHO also informed the Committee that the sixty-third session of the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA63.3 on Advancing Food Safety Initiatives as well as various regional policy documents to guide food safety work. The capacity to conduct laboratory-based foodborne disease surveillance has been strengthened in several countries and Centres of Excellence have been established in three countries. Twenty-eight countries have evaluated their food control systems and programmes towards the development of policies. Countries were supported to strengthen coordination mechanisms including National Codex Contact points. Further food safety activities in various countries using the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food were reported on.

40. Training in various areas of food safety has been conducted including HACCP, foodborne disease surveillance and a number of guidelines have been developed to facilitate capacity building.

41. In the discussions that followed delegations shared experiences and sought clarification on a number of issues including the assessment of food safety systems and development of laboratory capacity. There was a request to coordinate activities of WHO and FAO in countries for effective use of resources.

42. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their support to building capacity of members in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/4, CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria).



**FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX (Agenda Item 3b)<sup>4</sup>**

43. The Representative of WHO introduced the item and recalled that the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission and the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee had discussed and reached conclusions on 5 strategic questions in the framework of the mid-term review of the Codex Trust Fund (CTF), as presented in Annex 1 of CL 2010/43-AFRICA.

44. The Committee noted that its feedback on the strategic questions could further guide FAO and WHO in the planning and implementation of the CTF activities over the next 6 years.

**Question 1**

45. The Committee agreed that there should be a gradual shift from Objective 1 to Objectives 2 and 3 having noted that while participation in Codex had increased that this participation should be strengthened and that Objectives 2 and 3 could lead to more effective and quality participation. It was however acknowledged that Objective 1 was still important due to the varying level of development of members of the region.

**Question 2**

46. The Committee agreed that there was a need to address capacity building activities, but that this should complement and not duplicate the core capacity building activities of FAO and WHO.

**Question 3**

47. The Committee agreed that a mechanism should be developed to assist graduated countries to continue receiving support from the CTF. A possible mechanism could be through matched/shared contributions by CTF and national governments. Such support should however be limited to deserving graduated countries that could be selected on more specific criteria such as timely response to circular letters and the frequency of their participation. The issue of possible twinning of more experienced countries with those less-experienced was further proposed to ensure a sharing of expertise gained from participation in Codex.

48. Some delegations raised concern about the communication of the CTF with members to alert them of their impending graduation and that such communication could be useful to ensure continued support by their national governments for their participation in Codex. It was however noted that while good communication between the CTF and members was important that members also had a responsibility to ensure that they understood the terms of the CTF and when they would graduate.

**Question 4**

49. The Committee agreed that the current criteria should be retained. One delegation however proposed that the burden of disease should be taken into account especially for those countries with a high burden of HIV to which budgets were directed.

**Question 5**

50. There was general agreement that the lifespan of the CTF should be extended, but that in the main, least-developed countries should benefit from this extension.

**General**

51. Several delegations raised concern with the functioning of the secretariat of the CTF. It was clarified that an additional staff member has been hired to assist with the day to day work of the CTF.

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<sup>4</sup> CL 2010-43-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 11/19/5 (comments of Mali), CRD 5 (comments of Uganda), CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 8 (comments of Kenya).

### **ACTIVITIES OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 3c)<sup>5</sup>**

52. The Observer of the African Union (AU) referring to its report in CX/AFRICA 11/19/6 highlighted the “Participation of African Nations in sanitary and phytosanitary standard-setting organizations” (PANSPSO) project which was jointly implemented by the AU-IBAR, the AU-IAPSC and 7 African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which aims at facilitating effective participation of African countries in the activities of Codex, OIE and IPPC. This project had helped put in place a mechanism to coordinate common positions on animal, plant and food safety standards and that through this mechanism coordinated positions were presented at the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods and Pesticide Residues, respectively. The Committee was further informed that the AU was in the process of setting up a secretariat to assist with coordination of Codex matters. In relation to financing of SPS activities in the region, the Committee was informed of PPDA within Africa and that there was a mechanism by which partnerships could be set up to provide assistance for activities in all areas including nutrition, that this was managed through the RECs..

53. The Committee was also informed by the Delegation of the European Union of its activities being undertaken in the region, in particular its support to the PANSPSO project and the Better Training for Safer Foods (BTSF) as described in CRD 6. The Delegation noted that while resources were available for capacity building and assistance in the region, better coordination was necessary.

54. The Observer of the WTO informed the Committee of some of its upcoming activities, including a three-week advanced course on the SPS Agreement (Geneva, October 2011) and two 4-day regional workshops for Africa in 2011. The Committee was informed that more information would be made available during the STDF/WTO seminar scheduled to be held during the present session of CCAFRICA.

### **STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCAFRICA (Agenda Item 4a)<sup>6</sup>**

55. The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed on a number of priority activities for the implementation of the strategic plan; a format for country reports on this implementation and that the Coordinator would prepare a summary report of progress for consideration by the next session.

56. The Delegation of Ghana as coordinator introduced its report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and highlighted the main aspects and achievements, as follows:

- A website had been established for CCAFRICA in order to facilitate coordination on issues of interest to the region and exchange of information.
- Working groups had been set up to consider the issues related to the Committees on Contaminants in Food, on Pesticide Residues, and on Food Hygiene and regional experts had been identified in these areas.
- Several issues requiring expertise had been identified in the meetings of Codex Contact Points organized by AU-IBAR in Nairobi in 2009 and prior to the current session for the following areas of work: (i) fish and fishery products, (ii) fresh fruits and vegetables; (iii) food additives; and (iv) food labelling.

57. The Delegation of Ghana also referred to the annual country report presented in CRD 13, summarizing the information received from several countries on national Codex structures; participation

<sup>5</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/6 (Report by the AU (IBAR)), CRD 6 (comments of EU).

<sup>6</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/7, CX/AFRICA 11/19/7-Add.1 (comments of Benin, Mali, Mauritania, Seychelles and Zambia), CRD 1 (comments of Ghana), CRD 2 (comments of Somalia), CRD 4 (comments of Angola), CRD 5 (comments of Uganda), CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 9 (comments of Burkina Faso), CRD 10 (comments of Malawi), CRD 11 (comments of Cameroon), CRD 12 (comments of South Africa), CRD 13 (Annual country report prepared by Ghana).

in Codex meetings and contribution to working groups; Codex activities supported by FAO/WHO; country issues that require specialized expertise; needs for capacity building; and other Codex activities in the region.

58. The Committee expressed its thanks to Ghana for the preparation of the reports and agreed that countries in the region should meet in a side event in conjunction with the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (July 2011) in order to consider further the implementation of the Strategic Plan. For this purpose the Chairperson encouraged the delegations who had not yet submitted their reports to do so as soon as possible in order to facilitate the evaluation and follow-up of the implementation.

#### **INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION AND USE OF CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 4b)<sup>7</sup>**

59. The Committee was informed of the updates in food control systems, consumer participation and use of Codex standards presented in written comments and oral presentations at the session. The main aspects of the information provided and issues raised in the discussion are summarized below.

##### **Food control systems**

60. Some delegations indicated that they had established a single food safety authority, especially in the sub-region of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), taking into account the recommendations of UEMOA in this respect. In other countries, the responsibilities were carried out by several entities, especially the ministries of agriculture, health, trade, fisheries, and national bureau of standards. In some cases, the mechanism of coordination for food safety legislation was also used for Codex purposes and preparing national positions. Some delegations referred to their difficulties to organize an efficient food control system due to the fragmentation of responsibilities between various official authorities and lack of coordination.

61. Another important issue identified by several countries related to the difficulties of establishing and maintaining laboratories for the purpose of food control, and to obtain accreditation. Some delegations indicated that the UEMOA programme on food quality provided assistance to the countries in the sub-region on laboratory accreditation.

62. Some delegations indicated that their countries are mainly importers of foodstuffs and drew the attention to the specific problems and requirements for capacity building as regards import control.

63. Several countries indicated that they had benefited from assistance of FAO or WHO to develop or update their food legislation and develop their food control systems (as presented under Agenda Item 3). In addition, the Committee was also informed about sub-regional initiatives such as the UEMOA quality programme and the development of regional standards and inventory of laboratories in the East African Community.

##### **National Codex structures**

64. The Committee noted that most countries have established a national Codex structure which may be a national Codex committee or a national committee responsible for food safety and food legislation matters, including Codex issues, or that they are in the process of establishing such mechanisms.

65. Some countries informed the Committee that their national Codex committee was structured in sub-committees according to the subjects addressed in Codex Committees and involved all experts and stakeholders for each area of work.

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<sup>7</sup> CL 2010/45-AFICA, CX/AFRICA 11/19/8 (comments of Benin, Mali, Mauritania, Seychelles, Zambia), CRD 1 (comments of Ghana), CRD 2 (comments of Somalia), CRD 4 (comments of Angola), CRD 5 (comments of Uganda), CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 9 (comments of Burkina Faso), CRD 10 (comments of Malawi), CRD 11 (comments of Cameroon), CRD 12 (comments of South Africa).

66. Some delegations indicated that they had established a Codex national committee but needed technical assistance to make it operate efficiently in order to improve coordination between official authorities and stakeholders. It was noted that several countries had benefited from FAO or WHO training in order to develop their capacity to deal with Codex issues.

67. The Committee recognized the importance of coordinating activities related to the SPS Agreement at the national level and noted that many countries participated in the AU-IBAR PANSPSO programme for all SPS issues, animal health and plant protection as well as food safety.

68. As regards consumer participation, the Committee noted that many countries involved consumers in Codex coordination and in the development of national legislation on food safety. This was complemented by actions to develop consumer awareness in food safety matters. The main limitation to the participation of consumer organizations was lack of resources.

### **Use of Codex standards**

69. The Committee considered the use of Codex standards as recommended by the Executive Committee following the abolition of the acceptance procedure.

70. The Committee noted that in many countries, Codex standards were integrated into national legislation as regulations or used as voluntary standards, and the following areas were mentioned in the discussion: food hygiene, food additives, food labelling, milk and milk products. Some delegations indicated that Codex labelling texts had been used extensively at the national level to develop regulations on nutrition labelling, and nutrition and health claims in order to provide adequate information to consumers.

71. The Committee noted that some countries also used Codex standards in the absence of national standards or as a reference for export and import purposes at the regional level.

72. Some delegations indicated that limitations to the use of Codex standards were related to lack of knowledge of standards by the industry and other stakeholders. The difficulties in implementation as regards inspection capacities and the technical possibilities of laboratories were also put forward.

73. The Chairperson thanked all participants for their contributions and recalled that the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA monitored the situation and allowed for identification of challenges and difficulties in order to improve food control systems in the region.

### **NUTRITIONAL ISSUES AT NATIONAL OR REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 5)<sup>8</sup>**

74. The Committee noted the replies to CL 2010/45-AFRICA and the information provided by FAO and WHO in CX/AFRICA 11/19/9-Add.1.

75. The Representative of FAO introduced activities in relation to food composition (publication of a food composition table for West Africa and a training course) as well as two projects: one in Malawi on complementary foods (young childrens' diet enriched by using locally available nutrient dense foods) and a regional project funded by Germany aiming at mainstreaming nutrition, food security and livelihoods into regional, national and local policies and programmes in Sub Saharan Africa.

76. The Representatives from WHO informed the Committee on activities to reduce the burden of malnutrition including the adoption of resolution WHA63.23 on Infant and Young Child Nutrition and follow-up actions towards its implementation. A number of countries have been supported to conduct landscape analysis and some have revised their nutrition strategies and action plans. Workshops on

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<sup>8</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/9 (comments of Benin, Mali, Mauritania and Seychelles), CX/AFRICA 11/19/9-Add.1, CRD 1 (comments of Ghana), CRD 2 (comment of Somalia), CRD 4 (comments of Angola), CRD 5 (comments of Uganda), CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 9 (comments of Burkino Faso), CRD 10 (comments of Malawi), CRD 11 (comments of Cameroon), CRD 12 (comments of South Africa).

policy development and flour fortification were organized. There are ongoing interventions to address micronutrient deficiencies including iron, vitamin A and iodine deficiencies. It was noted that two countries in Africa will be conducting research on the efficacy of neonatal Vitamin A supplementation in improving child survival. Ongoing work on nutrition surveillance, the WHO New Growth Standards and integrated management of Acute Malnutrition were mentioned.

77. In addition, the Representative of WHO informed that Committee of a number of initiatives related to nutrition advice and related activities. WHO recently established the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) to develop nutrition guidelines in accordance with the new WHO process for guideline development. A Global Network of Institutions working in the field of nutrition was established, and WHO is undertaking nutrient profiling work on country level.

78. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO, WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their support and work on nutrition and further noted that the presence of UNICEF to report on their work at the next CCAFRICA would be welcome.

79. Several delegations reported about the nutrition status in their countries, in particular, problems relating to micronutrient deficiencies, lifestyle diseases and malnutrition and the programmes being implemented to address these problems. In particular, food fortification, salt iodation, vitamin supplementation and school feeding programmes were put in place.

80. The Committee was further informed of the use of Codex standards in relation to nutrition labelling and claims and that many countries had adopted the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and developed national policies on infant feeding and related national standards. The Committee noted that many challenges still remained with regard to implementation of nutrition-related legislation, such as nutrition claims, due to, amongst others, lack of laboratory infrastructure and expertise. Some delegations however reported that they had undertaken improving laboratory infrastructure, training of technicians and inspectors.

#### **NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 6)<sup>9</sup>**

81. On the proposal by the Delegation of Tanzania and supported by other delegations, the Committee proposed to nominate Cameroon as Coordinator. The Delegation of Cameroon accepted the nomination and expressed its appreciation to the Committee for their support. The delegation committed itself to continue to build on the work initiated by Ghana in the framework of the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA.

82. The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Cameroon be appointed as Coordinator for Africa.

83. The Committee recalled that it had agreed on Guidelines for the Transfer of Coordinatorship (ALINORM 09/32/28, Appendix IV) at its last session and reminded Ghana and Cameroon to follow these Guidelines to ensure a smooth transfer of coordinatorship.

84. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Ghana for the excellent work done during both its terms as Coordinator.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 7)**

##### **“Friends of the chair” on ractopamine**

85. The chairperson informed the Committee that Ghana had participated in the “friends of the chair” meeting on ractopamine and invited interested members who wanted to provide further inputs and guidance on this work to consult with the coordinator on this matter.

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<sup>9</sup> CX/AFRICA 11/19/9

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 8)**

86. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 20<sup>th</sup> Session would be held in approximately two years time (2013) 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 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.

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