

## INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia held its Twenty-second Session (CCASIA22) virtually on 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 21 October 2022 at the kind invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China. Ms Jing Tian, Researcher, China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA), chaired the session, which was attended by 12 Member Countries, 5 Member Countries and one Member Organisation from outside the Region, and 2 Observer organizations. The list of participants is included in Appendix I.

## OPENING<sup>1</sup>

2. Dr Haichao Lei, Vice Minister of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, opened the meeting and welcomed participants on behalf of China. through a pre-recorded audio message. After introducing the national efforts and achievements in terms of food safety control and the transformation from a "safe diet" to a "healthy diet" in China, he commended the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for its efforts in evolving its working modalities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and exploring the relevance of new trends of global economic development to its standard setting work. He also expressed the commitment of the Chinese government to serve as the Regional Coordinator for Asia and actively perform its duties with the support of Asian countries.
3. Dr Masami Takeuchi, Food Safety Officer, Food Systems and Food Safety Division, FAO, and Mr. Gyanendra Gongal, Senior Public Health Officer, WHO Regional Office for South East Asia, welcomed the attendees on behalf of FAO and WHO respectively. The meeting was also addressed by Mr Steve Wearne, Chairperson, CAC and Mr Tom Heilandt, Secretary, CAC.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>2</sup>

4. CCASIA22 adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session and agreed to consider the following topics under Agenda Item 13 (Other Business) subject to the availability of time:
  - Development of a regional standard for cooked rice (Proposal of the Republic of Korea)<sup>3</sup>; and
  - Development of a regional standard for canned congee (Proposal of China)<sup>4</sup>

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS: EMERGING ISSUES IN FOOD SAFETY IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 2)<sup>5</sup>

5. The Representative of FAO, speaking on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced the item, recalling the role of the keynote address to stimulate and promote active discussion and information sharing on common, emerging or topical issues of interest to the region related to food safety and Codex work.
6. The keynote address was delivered by two speakers, Professor Purwiyatno Hariyadi, Department of Food Science & Technology, IPB University (Bogor Agricultural University), Indonesia and Dr Ning Li Director-General of the CFSA who together brought different perspectives to the topic of emerging issues on food safety in the region.
7. Professor Hariyadi highlighted the challenges the world is facing in terms of ensuring availability of sufficient safe and nutritious food, stressing among these challenges the three "Cs" of climate change, COVID-19 pandemic and conflict. Considering how we might respond to such challenges, he reflected on the role of new technologies in an effort to produce more with less and the use of new or underutilized food sources including both terrestrial and aquatic plant species and edible insects.
8. In responding to the challenges, he also emphasized that food safety needed to be a prerequisite, whatever the food source. He further addressed the changing demands related to food safety which no longer just related to physiological safety in terms of causing no harm to the body, but also their psychologically safety, in that they do not negatively affect, culture, beliefs or religion. From the perspective of Codex work, he underlined the importance of finding the balance between domestic and international needs in terms of food safety efforts and that it was important that the stringency of standards did not lead to increased food prices, which could affect food availability.
9. Finally, in looking to the future, he highlighted the needed to consider Codex work in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and their impact on global sustainability in terms of food loss and

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<sup>1</sup> CRD1 (Opening remarks)

<sup>2</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/1

<sup>3</sup> CRD5 (Republic of Korea)

<sup>4</sup> CRD9 (China)

<sup>5</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/2

waste, human and planetary health, promotion of local and traditional foods as well as healthier diets.

10. Dr Li reflected on the great efforts that had been made in recent years to collect data to better understand both the current and emerging food safety challenges. In this context, she noted that what were considered traditional risks continue to remain a challenge for example microbial hazards, poisonous fungi as well as pesticide residues and contamination with environmental contaminants such as heavy metals.
11. In addition, she drew attention to some of the emerging risks related to changes in eating habits and increased consumption of raw foods, the impact of climate change such as an increase in paralytic shellfish poisoning and the need for more research and data to better understand food allergens and how they can be managed. Recognizing the emergence of new foods such as cell-based foods, she underscored the need for risk assessment approaches to ensure that even as new food sources and production technologies emerge, the trade in safe food can be ensured. In this context, she highlighted the investment China is making in surveillance and risk assessment.
12. As a final issue, she noted the challenges posed by the current infodemics, and how the rapid spread of information through social media can cause unfounded panic about the safety of the food supply. Moving forward she underlined the role of social governance where all players involved in the food chain were aware of their role; the importance of being to respond to innovation from a regulatory perspective; the need to establish trusted communication channels with consumers; and the opportunity for cooperation across the region in terms of data, risk assessment approaches, ideas and insights in order to be able to manage emerging issues in a timely manner.

### **Discussion**

13. Members welcomed and appreciated the keynote addresses and in the subsequent discussion among delegates, FAO, WHO and the keynote speakers, the following aspects were highlighted:
  - the increasing importance of psychological aspects of food safety, also in relation to food trade;
  - how data collection at the national level can contribute to food safety worldwide, and the importance of ensuring the quality of that data, noting that good quality data collection in the region was possible as had been shown in the case of arsenic in rice;
  - the need to consider how to work better together as a region to address data collection for example through the establishment of a centre of excellence on data collection to facilitate harmonization of approaches and methodologies;
  - the importance of having more information on disease burden and the economic impact unsafe food and foodborne disease in order to gain political attention;
  - the value of also looking at the economic benefits to taking action to apply standards and improve food safety;
  - the increasing relevance of climate change and the need to collect more data on its impact on food production, food safety and food security;
  - the ongoing challenges posed by chemical contaminants in food including for international trade and market access; and
  - the need to work on fundamental food safety communication, not only “risk” communication, noting that if the authorities are not communicating effectively to consumers and building trust, information, which is not necessarily reflective of the food safety situation, will be provided from other sources and that better understanding of consumer through the use of behavioural science could be useful in this regard.

### **Conclusion**

14. CCASIA22:
  - i. expressed appreciation to Prof. Purwiyatno Hariyadi and Dr. Ning Li for their keynote addresses and to the participants for the open discussion;
  - ii. recognized that this region had the capacity to make greater contributions to food safety in the global context based on their existing expertise and practices;
  - iii. highlighted the importance of ongoing cooperation and capacity development in terms of the generation and collation of good quality data and ensuring its availability for use at international level (e.g. GEMS/food, Codex);

- iv. noted the importance of information and studies on the burden of foodborne disease and the related economic impact including the positive impact of food safety measures to support policy makers in investing in food safety and make informed decisions in the context of food systems transformation and the achievement of the SDGs; and
- v. noted the importance of working to build trust among consumers, through behavioural studies and improved communication to increase confidence in the safety of the food supply and provide trusted communication channels for consumers.

### **FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN THE REGION: TOWARDS A BETTER NORMAL. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC AND VIEWS FROM THE COUNTRIES (Agenda Item 3)<sup>6</sup>**

15. The Representative of FAO introduced part A of the working document, highlighting the results of a short informal survey conducted by FAO and WHO among Members in the region entitled CCASIA22: towards a better normal, which tried to check the pulse of the region in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food safety. She highlighted that from among the respondents which equated to 60 percent of Members in the region, almost everyone noted some kind of silver lining in terms of food safety, for example increased awareness of hygiene, improved hand washing, sanitization, etc. However, challenges were also identified, in particular, there was confusion regarding the food safety risk from COVID-19 and communication challenges in addressing this were identified. Moving forward, she noted the importance of reflecting on the lessons learned to ensure preparedness for future pandemics or other crises.
16. The Representative of WHO, recalling both the positive and negative effects of the pandemic on food safety underlined that there was now an opportunity to promote and retain good practices developed during the pandemic, such as some of the public health social measures related to hygiene (e.g. mask wearing and hand washing) in different types of food business, including traditional food markets, which had multiple benefits beyond food safety. He underscored the huge challenges posed by the infodemics during the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty on the scientific findings as an important contributor and recalled the words of the WHO Director General that our greatest enemy was not COVID-19 but fear, stigma and rumours spread through social media. He underlined the efforts of FAO and WHO in the region, including the use of World Food Safety Day (WFSD), to address food safety and COVID-19 myths, noting that rumours negatively affected food businesses and presented new challenges for regulators. He also highlighted positive developments during the pandemic such as the innovation areas of online shopping and food delivery and noted the challenge now was how to regulate these areas. Moving forward, the importance of enhancing risk communication to dispel and eventually prevent rumours and facilitating experience sharing among Members in the region to support each other's efforts was underlined.

### **Discussion**

17. Discussions focused on the three questions presented in the working document, related to lessons learned from the pandemic, the identification of any pandemic/food safety related issues unique to the region and whether there was a need for more technical guidance and support in certain areas. Some concerns were expressed at the late publication of the working document and the status of the information in the survey. The Representative of FAO confirmed that the survey information was only intended to provide topics for discussion and not to be considered the official position of any Members and agreed to revise the working document with insertion of a disclaimer to this effect. During the discussions, Members raised the following points.

### Lessons learned

- While having a negative economic impact, the pandemic drove innovation and change, which warrants further discussion and follow-up.
- There was a need for better understanding on the impact of the pandemic which drove changes in the food industry, e.g. pre-cooked foods, in response to customer needs when dining outside the home was no longer option and this now presents a challenge for regulation. In this context it was noted that two of the new work proposals for consideration by CCASIA22 were pre-cooked foods and that it may be appropriate to consider whether an overarching and future-proof approach, focussing on the technology rather than individual products might be more appropriate.
- The pandemic led to a greater focus on personnel in the food industry and the interaction between personnel and food. This has led to changes in regulation in some countries in the region, particularly in relation to personnel working in the food cold-chain.
- The pandemic has led consumers to pay more attention to personal hygiene and sanitation, like hand washing before dining, and there is a need to promote maintenance of such habits.

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<sup>6</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/3 Rev.

- The pandemic highlighted the need to follow in particular the Codex horizontal standards and it could be useful to share country experiences in use of these texts. Reference was made to a case study illustrating the implementation of the *Codex General Principles on Food Hygiene* (CXC 1- 1969) in one country in the region<sup>7</sup>.
- It was considered a good idea to find ways of sharing best practices applied and experiences of Members during the pandemic to facilitate the uptake of lessons learned.

#### Pandemic/food safety related issues unique to the region

- The food safety related challenges faced during the pandemic were not considered unique to the region and some of these issues are now been addressed internationally e.g. remote audits, internet sales reflecting the international nature of the issues.

#### Technical guidance and support in certain areas

- Similarly, while considering issues such as hygiene in the online ready-to-eat food retail sector and traditional food markets, no regionally specific work was identified in terms of technical guidance, and CCASIA was reminded that there was a proposal for new work related to traditional food markets<sup>8</sup> up for consideration by the 53rd Session of Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH53) later in the year in December 2022 and Members were encourage to review the proposal and provide comments.

### **Conclusion**

#### 18. CCASIA22:

- noted both the positive and negative aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighted the importance of maintaining some of the good hygienic practices implemented during the pandemic e.g. hand washing and mask wearing, which could have broader health benefits beyond food safety;
- acknowledged that experiences during the pandemic were not unique to the region and there was an opportunity to work internationally on areas of follow-up should needs arise;
- noted the innovation in food processing and technology, food sales and distribution and inspection and audit driven by the pandemic and highlighted the need to consider how to address these within Codex (e.g. processing innovation related to cooked foods) and engage in ongoing relevant Codex work for example in Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) (remote audit) and Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) (internet sales/e-commerce); and
- recognized the usefulness of sharing good practices and country experiences on addressing food safety in the context of pandemic, as well as in the application of Codex texts at national level and capturing lessons learned through, for example, concrete case studies for future reference, and agreed to explore possible ways to collect and share such case studies.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 4)<sup>9</sup>**

19. CCASIA22 took note of the matters for information provided in document CX/ASIA 22/22/4 and noted the additional information presented and/or made comments as follows:

#### **Matters for information**

#### Application of the Statements of Principle Concerning the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-Making Process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account (SoP)

20. Mr Raj Rajasekar, the Vice-Chairpersons: of CAC, introduced the work on the application of the SoP undertaken at the Executive Committee of CAC (CCEXEC)<sup>10</sup>. He recalled that, despite the fact that the SoP had been around for years, there were few cases where the SoP was practically applied in the standard-setting work when there was general agreement on science but were different views on other factors. He emphasized that the intention of the CCEXEC work was to provide practical guidance and a flowchart to support operationalization of the SoP for use by the CAC and its subsidiary bodies when encountering such situations

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cb8770en/cb8770en.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 1 of CX/FH 22/53/9 available at <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/it/?meeting=CCFH&session=53>

<sup>9</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/4; CRD10 Rev. (Proposed amendment to the labelling provisions for non-retail containers in relevant CCASIA regional standards); CRD14 (Republic of Korea)

<sup>10</sup> REP22/EXEC1 para 69

where there were different views on factors other than science. He encouraged the Members of CCASIA to reflect on this work and actively contribute to discussions to address the application of the SoP.

#### The 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

21. The Codex Secretariat introduced the 60th Anniversary of CAC (Codex@60), recalling that CCEXEC82 encouraged Members and Observers to fully engage in celebrating Codex@60<sup>11</sup>. The Secretariat highlighted the plans underway, noting that; the central theme of World Food Safety Day (WFSD) in 2023 would be “standards” and that events to celebrate Codex@60 would be held in conjunction with WFSD as well as CAC; that the annual Codex magazine in 2023 would be dedicated to Codex@60, and would include articles on the history of the Committees, and some of the key standards that Codex have developed over the past 60 years among others; and that an update of the design of Codex texts and the way they are referenced to ensure they are fit for purpose and digitally robust was underway. The Secretariat also recalled some proposals made by CCEXEC82 to celebrate Codex@60 ranging from the products that could be developed, the types of initiatives that could be implemented at national level and high-level events to confirm political support for Codex (which were already underway in two regions).
22. Members provided information on the various plans underway to celebrate the 60th anniversary and WFSD in 2023. These included:
  - implementation of symposia workshops and capacity building activities to raise awareness among national level stakeholders;
  - provision of historical records of engagement in and support of Codex work;
  - sharing experiences on the use of Codex texts;
  - showcasing Codex successes including those of the Codex Trust Fund (CTF);
  - using the opportunity of Codex subsidiary bodies in 2023 and WFSF to celebrate the 60th anniversary; and
  - designation of a single day of celebration for all Members in the region and the organization of a regional event to mark Codex@60.

#### Monitoring the use and impact of Codex Standards

23. The Codex Secretariat provided an overview of the work being undertaken to build a mechanism to monitor the use and impact of Codex texts. He explained that this work was in line with the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Goal 3 “increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex Standards”, and that the development of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework as a means of assessing the use and impact of Codex texts was progressing in three directions:
  - A survey on the use of selected Codex texts and their impact to all Codex Members to be issued annually.
  - Work with the WTO Secretariat to explore a collaborative monitoring and reporting framework in which Codex Texts have been highlighted in trade negotiations, SPS, TBT notifications, specific trade concerns, and disputes, but also for disputes that were prevented thanks to Codex texts.
  - Tailored case studies to assess the use and impact of specific Codex texts within the context of a Member Country or observer.
24. The Secretariat encouraged Members of CCASIA to respond to the survey and ensure the involvement of their stakeholders at national level.

#### **Matters for action**

#### Adoption of the General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail containers of Foods and consequential amendments to the Procedural Manual

25. CCASIA22 agreed on the proposed revisions to the labelling provisions, to align with the recently adopted *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021), in the *Regional Standards for Gochujang* (CXS 294R-2009), *Fermented Soybean Paste (Asia)* (CXS 298R-2009), *Edible Sago Flour (Asia)* (CXS 301R-2011) and *Chilli Sauce* (CXS 306R-2011), to replace the labelling provision for non-

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<sup>11</sup> REP22/EXEC1 para 129

retail containers of foods with the standardized text:

“The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods (CXS 346-2021)*”

26. CCASIA22 further agreed that the *Regional Standard for Laver Products (CXS 323R-2017)* contained a paragraph related to edible foreign matters, which was not covered by CXS 346-2021 that needed to be retained in addition to the standardized text.
27. CCASIA22 noted that these revisions would be forwarded to CAC46 for adoption due to insufficient time between CCASIA22 and CAC45.

### Conclusion

28. CCASIA22:
  - i. took note of the information provided in the working document and the additional information provided by the Vice-Chairperson and the Codex Secretariat during the session;
  - ii. encouraged Members of CCASIA and Observers to actively plan and implement activities to celebrate the 60th anniversary to build awareness of Codex;
  - iii. encouraged Members of CCASIA and Observers to contribute to the discussions at CCEXEC including the operationalization of the SoP, the future of Codex, new food sources and production systems and monitoring the use of Codex standards, and engage in informal discussions about zilpaterol hydrochloride; and
  - iv. agreed to forward the revision to section on labelling of non-retail containers in the *Regional Standards for Gochujang (CXS 294R-2009)*, *Fermented Soybean Paste (Asia) (CXS 298R-2009)*, *Edible Sago Flour (Asia) (CXS 301R-2011)*, *Chilli Sauce (CXS 306R-2011)* and *Laver Products (CXS 323R-2017)* to CAC46 for adoption (Appendix II).

### CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 5)<sup>12</sup>

29. The Coordinator presented this item and explained that in order to collect information regarding the engagement of Members in Codex work over the past two years (2020-2021), a survey had been conducted and 13 Members had responded. The Coordinator had summarized these responses and prepared the document which contained three parts: (i) Participation of CCASIA Member Countries in Codex Meetings, Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) and Virtual Working Groups (VWGs); (ii) Items that CCASIA Member Countries mainly focused on for meetings of the Codex committees; and (iii) Member Countries' opinions and comments on specific questions regarding Codex work.
30. The Coordinator highlighted the key findings pertinent to the questions on “Cross-cutting Topics for the Region and Possible Ways for Cooperation Regarding those Topics”, “Current and Emerging Issues” and “Difficulties/challenges in participation of the Codex work” and made corresponding recommendations.
31. Members expressed appreciation to the Coordinator and indicated their concurrence with the analysis.
32. In addition, Members made the following comments:
  - A harmonized definition for “new food sources” or “novel foods” should be developed; a safety assessment guideline and a systematic management system to the similar products in the future on these products should be established accordingly.
  - Some products included in CL 2022/06/OCS-CCEXEC (e.g., seaweed and edible insects) were commonly consumed in the region; these products should not be considered “new” foods and development of standards for these products should not lead to any trade disruption.
  - Some food ingredients (e.g., herbs) were traditionally treated as food and had been fully evaluated and consumed for a long time in some Asian countries so a mechanism could be explored to accelerate the assessment process and approval time for these products in other Asian countries.
  - Experiences on how to deal with the challenges of current and emerging issues e.g., antimicrobial resistance (AMR), online/e-commerce food business could be shared among Members.
  - The virtual format of meetings should be maintained as it could facilitate the discussion with a lower cost for participants; both informal meetings and work by correspondence could be used as efficient communication tools among Members; the frequency of informal meetings on important topics relevant to the region should be increased.

<sup>12</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/5; CRD14 (Republic of Korea)

- Codex working documents should become available in a timely manner to ensure effective participation as Members need sufficient time to consult with stakeholders.
- Efforts related to capacity building should be made not only in each country but also in the whole region.

33. The issue of lack of engagement of some countries in the region in Codex was also raised and it was considered that for the region to be more effective in Codex and have the regional voice heard, there was a need to be more active. This could be achieved through more efforts on awareness raising and capacity development, some of which had been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the CTF provided an opportunity for certain Members in the region to get support on building their capacity to engage in Codex and there were also opportunities to work with FAO and WHO in the region on this.

### **Conclusion**

34. CCASIA22:
- i. noted that “novel foods” (e.g. plant-based meat, cultivated meat and fermented meat) had been promoted, produced and tested in many Asian countries and regulating these foods was an emerging issue; in this regard, Members in this region could provide more valuable information;
  - ii. encouraged Members to actively participate in and effectively utilize the CCASIA informal meetings and share common and long-term concerns or interests on Codex committee agenda items or other topics;
  - iii. recommended the Coordinator work together with the CTF Secretariat and WHO country offices to organize a webinar for Members to better understand the relevant mechanism, application process and diagnostic tool to encourage and assist eligible countries to apply for CTF projects; and
  - iv. agreed to bring to the attention of CCEXEC to the views of the Members on the Format of Codex Meetings, New Food Sources and Production Systems and the Application of the Statements of Principle concerning the Role of Science for consideration by the Committee and its respective sub-committees.

### **MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025 (Agenda Item 6)<sup>13</sup>**

35. The Coordinator presented the working document highlighting the progress that had been made to implement the regional work plan, despite the challenges such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. She recalled that the region had agreed to focus on Goal 1 (Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner); Goal 2 (Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles) and Goal 3 (Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards). She presented examples of some of the efforts that had been made under each of the priority goals including; the efforts to promote engagement in priority technical areas such as a Score Sheet to Prioritize the CCASIA Regional Issues and Needs; the leading efforts in the region with regard to new food sources and the development of the relevant science (e.g. cell-based food production systems); and the efforts within trade blocs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to raise awareness on Codex texts and promote their adoption.
36. The Codex Secretariat presented the progress that had been made in the implementation of the regional communications work plan, which specifically supports Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and commended the good progress of the region in this regard. She noted that there was still scope for improvement with currently only about 60 percent of the countries in the region active in supporting the communications work plan and presented the outcome of the survey undertaken among Members in the region to measure progress in implementing the plan (Appendix IV). In terms of communication approaches in the region, email was highlighted as the most used tool, and the importance of regular informal meetings was also highlighted.

### **Discussion**

37. Members expressed appreciation for the work undertaken and then proceeded to discuss each of the appendices included in the working document (CX/ASIA 22/22/6) as well as the communications work plan for the next two years (CRD11).

<sup>13</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/6; CRD11 (Codex Secretariat and Regional Coordinator)

Appendix I Activities implemented in the CCASIA region between 2020 and the first half of 2022 to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025

38. Members were appreciative of the efforts undertaken to implement the regional work plan and the progress made despite the challenges of COVID-19. It was clarified that the activities reported should cover the years of the implementation i.e. from 2020, and it was not appropriate to include activities that had taken place in 2019.

Appendix II Score Sheet to Prioritize the CCASIA Regional Issues and Needs

39. There was agreement in principle to the prioritization score sheet with a number of comments shared as follows:
- It was important that activities focused on the mandate of Codex and simply using the total score might not be optimal for prioritization and it might also be important to consider more contextual information.
  - It might be difficult to provide quantitative answers to all questions and the quantitative result should be supported with relevant background material.
  - Other committees had applied (e.g. CCFH) or are developing (e.g. Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU)) similar approaches to prioritize their new work proposals.
  - It could be useful to pilot test the approach for new work proposals although that was not considered feasible or necessary at this session.
  - Further discussion on the score sheet via correspondence would be useful.

Appendix III Possible activities to be implemented in the CCASIA region between 2022 and 2024 to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025

40. There was general agreement with the proposed work plan and in addition to some editorial changes for clarity; support for the inclusion of a regional activity in relation to Codex@60 was noted; and the importance of advising Members well in advance of any such event captured in the work plan.

Regional communications workplan for 2022-2024

41. There was general agreement to the work plan as proposed in CRD11, with editorial corrections to clarify the reporting timeframes.

**Conclusion**

42. CCASIA22:
- i. noted with appreciation the activities conducted in the region between 2020 and the first half of 2022 to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025;
  - ii. agreed, upon further improvement of the score sheet for prioritization, to use it as a tool to facilitate discussions among Member Countries on issues of interest to the region and prioritization of these issues;
  - iii. agreed the proposed regional work plan for 2022-2024 to support implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Appendix III);
  - iv. noted the outcome of the CCASIA22 satisfaction survey on regional communications (Appendix IV); and
  - v. agreed the regional communications work plan for 2022-2024 (Appendix V).

**PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR SOYBEAN PRODUCTS FERMENTED WITH *BACILLUS SPECIES* (Agenda Item 7)<sup>14</sup>**

43. Japan, as Chair of the Electronic Working Group (EWG) and Virtual Working Group (VWG), introduced the item. He recalled that the scope of this work had been expanded from a single commodity i.e. *Natto* to a group of commodities with similar traits to ensure an inclusive approach before being approved as new work. He further recalled three rounds of consultations had been undertaken within the EWG followed by a VWG prior to CCASIA22 organized to address outstanding issues and stated that most of the issues had been resolved. The report of the VWG together with the updated text was presented in CRD2.

<sup>14</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/7; CX/ASIA 22/22/7 Add.1 (Comments of Egypt, Malaysia, Philippines and Saudi Arabia); CRD2 (Report of the VWG meeting); CRD7 Rev. (Revised proposed draft regional standard (prepared by the EWG chair)); CRD12 (Indonesia); CRD13 (Thailand)



44. CCASIA22 agreed to consider CRD2 as the basis for discussion of this item.

#### **Discussion**

45. CCASIA22 considered the proposed draft standard section by section, introduced editorial corrections as appropriate, and made the following comments and decisions on respective sections.

#### Section 3.2. Quality Criteria

46. One Member proposed adding a definition of visible foreign matter to provide more clarity. While there was no standardized format for such a definition, CCASIA22 agreed to add a footnote to read “any visible objectionable foreign detectable matter or material not usually associated with the raw material used” to be consistent with the proposed draft regional standard for quick frozen dumpling.

#### Section 3.3. Component Requirement

47. CCASIA22 agreed on the deletion of the word “composition” in the sentence since the overarching title already included reference to Composition and specific aspects of composition were addressed in section 3.1.

#### Section 3.5. Lot Acceptance

48. CCASIA22 agreed to insert “with an Acceptable Quality Level (AQL) of 6.5” at the end of the sentence to be in line with the sampling plans included in CRD2.

#### Section 4. Food Additives

49. In response to a question on whether there was a need to forward the food additive provisions to Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) for endorsement when no food additives were permitted, the Codex Secretariat clarified that procedurally endorsement was needed by CCFA even if in this case it was more a matter of information for CCFA.

#### **Conclusion**

50. CCASIA22 agreed to forward:
- i. the proposed draft standard for soybean products fermented with *Bacillus* species to CAC46 for adoption at Step 5/8 (Appendix VI); and
  - ii. the provisions on food additives, food labelling, and methods of analysis and sampling to CCFA, CCFL and Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) for endorsement respectively.

#### **PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR QUICK FROZEN DUMPLING (Agenda Item 8)<sup>15</sup>**

51. China, as Chair of both the EWG and the VWG, introduced the item and recalled the new work proposal on development of a regional standard for quick frozen dumpling submitted by China had been first considered at CCASIA20. CCASIA21 had agreed to recommend undertaking this new work, which had been approved by CAC43. He explained that after CCASIA21, the EWG had conducted three rounds of consultation and all comments received had been carefully studied. It was noted that consensus had been reached at a VWG convened prior to the session, the report of which was presented as CRD3.
52. CCASIA22 agreed to consider CRD3 as the basis for discussion of this item.

#### **Discussion**

53. CCASIA22 considered the proposed draft standard section by section, introduced editorial changes as appropriate, and made the following comments and decisions on respective sections.

#### Title

54. One Member proposed to include the dumpling product produced under normal freezing process since this type of product had been traded internationally and the scope of this standard should be made as broad as possible.
55. The EWG Chair explained that: (i) according to the project document approved by CAC43, the scope of the standard was limited to “quick frozen dumpling”; and (ii) it was hard to ensure the product quality under normal freezing process since the dumpling wrappers could crack easily in the normal frozen process resulting in greater mechanical damage to the product, food cell rupture and juice outflow, thus affecting the maintenance of food flavour. This view was supported by other Members.

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<sup>15</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/8; CX/ASIA 22/22/8 Add.1 (Comments of Japan, Malaysia, Philippines and ICUMSA); CRD3 (Report of the VWG meeting); CRD6 (Revised proposed draft regional standard (prepared by the EWG chair)); CRD12 (Indonesia); CRD13 (Thailand); CRD15 Rev. (Food additives for quick frozen dumpling)

56. CCASIA22 agreed to retain the title of the standard unchanged.

#### Section 2.2. Process Definition

57. Noting the view that the temperature at the thermal center after thermal stabilization for some types of dumpling might be -5°C to ensure the quality of the product and prevent it from dehydrating, CCASIA22 agreed to remove the text that indicated “The quick freezing process shall not be regarded as complete unless and until the product temperature has reached -18°C at the thermal center after thermal stabilization.” and instead made reference to the definition in the *Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* (CXC 8-1976) as follows:

“Quick frozen dumpling shall be subjected to a quick freezing process, and maintained at -18°C or colder at all points in the cold chain, subject to permitted temperature tolerances.”

#### Insertion of a new section on Handling Practice<sup>16</sup>

58. Given the particularity of this product, one Member proposed to include the provision on handling practice, referring to such a provision in the *Standard for Quick Frozen Vegetables* (CXS 320-2015).
59. Another Member was of the view that the requirement on handling had been included in Section 6 Hygiene and it was unnecessary to repeat it.
60. The Codex Secretariat clarified that in some Codex standards such as the *Standard for Quick Frozen Vegetables* (CXS 320-2015), there was a difference between the section on hygiene and the section on handling practice, and with the section on hygiene related to the safety of the product while the section on handling practice was relevant to product quality. The Secretariat suggested CCASIA22 consider whether this situation was also applicable to the product covered by the standard.
61. CCASIA22 agreed to add a new section on handling practice as follows:

“The product shall be handled under such conditions as will maintain the quality during transportation, storage and distribution up to and including the time of final sale. It is recommended that during storage, transportation, distribution and retail, the product be handled in accordance with the provisions of the *Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* (CXC 8-1976).”

#### Section 4. Food Additives

62. In response to a question on whether the use of food additives in “fillings” and their “skins” was considered separately in the *General Standard for Food Additives* (GSFA, CXS 192-1995), the Codex Secretariat explained that in the GSFA, there were two Notes (i.e., Notes 370 and 349) specifically indicating the food additives were only for use in “skin” or “fillings”.
63. Noting that further discussions on the appropriateness of food category(ies) in the GSFA, the necessity to separate the use of food additives in the dough and the fillings, provide technological justifications for those food additives not covered by the GSFA, and include additional text to address the use of food additives in the ingredients in Section 3.1, CCASIA22 requested the EWG Chair to hold an informal in-session virtual meeting to clarify these questions and revise the section accordingly.
64. The EWG chair introduced the outcome of in-session virtual meeting in CRD15 Rev. and highlighted that based on the discussions at the in-session virtual meeting and the follow-up consultations with relevant Members, the following decisions had been recommended for consideration by the plenary:
- food category 7.1.5 “Steamed breads and buns” in the GSFA was considered to be the most appropriate food category for the product, and those food additives which had not been included in the GSFA or had different maximum use levels were listed in the table under this section;
  - the use of food additives should be managed in the dough and the fillings separately although in China they were treated as a whole product and there was no such separation;
  - all the food additives not included in the GSFA were proposed by Members based on their national experience which meant that their uses were technological justified; and
  - it was unnecessary to include any additional text to address the use of food additives in the ingredients mentioned in Section 3.1 of the proposed draft standard as the carry-over principle had been explicitly described in Section 4.1 of the preamble of the GSFA.
65. Members expressed the following views:
- there were some gaps between the description of the product covered by this standard and food

<sup>16</sup> This section is numbered as Section 2.3 in the final proposed draft standard (see Appendix VIII). Other Section numbers elaborated under this agenda items reflect those numbers in CRD3.

category 7.1.5. For example, the standard did not mention whether dough was leavened or not while the description of food category 7.1.5 stated “Oriental-style leavened wheat or rice product...”; additionally, the standard did not limit the cooking method while the description of food category 7.1.5 stated “Oriental-style leavened wheat or rice products that are cooked in a steamer”;

- another Food category such as 06.4.3 “Pre-cooked pastas and noodles and like products” could be added as an additional food category together with an explanation in the standard that the food additives under this food category referred to dumpling skins only;
- the decisions of the in-session working meeting should be maintained as they had been thoroughly considered at the meeting and furthermore, as requested by the EWG Chair, all the relevant Members had further considered the section and provided their inputs, which had been incorporated in CRD15 Rev; and.
- in light of the concerns raised that the description of category 7.1.5 in the GSFA did not describe all the characteristics of the quick frozen dumpling, (i.e. unleavened dough for skin) a footnote could be added to the standard to differentiate the use of food additives.

66. In view of the difficulties to reach consensus on the section, CCASIA22 agreed to retain the food additives section in square brackets for further consideration.

#### Section 7. Weights and Measures

67. CCASIA22 agreed to delete Sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 and insert a new Section 7.2 as follows:

“The requirements for net weight should be deemed to be complied with when the average net weight of all containers examined is not less than the declared weight, provided that there is no unreasonable shortage in individual containers”

#### Section 8. Labelling

68. In response to a suggestion on inclusion of a provision on the labelling requirement related to quality maintenance during transportation, storage and distribution, CCASIA22 noted that this requirement had already been covered in the new inserted section on handling practice as well as Section 8.3 Storage Instruction.
69. CCASIA22 agreed not to include the proposed provision.

#### **Conclusion**

70. CCASIA22 agreed to:
- i. forward the proposed draft standard for quick frozen dumpling to CAC46 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix VIII); and
  - ii. establish an EWG chaired by China, working in English, to consider the section on food additives as well as the replies to the request for comments at Step 5 and provide a revised version for consideration at CCASIA23.

#### **PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR COOKED RICE WRAPPED IN PLANT LEAVES (Agenda Item 9)<sup>17</sup>**

71. China, as Chair of both the EWG and the VWG, introduced the item and recalled the new work proposal on this subject submitted by China had been first considered at CCASIA20, and CCASIA21 had agreed to recommend the new work, which had been approved by CAC43. He explained that after CCASIA21, the EWG had proactively worked on this matter and conducted three rounds of consultation. It was noted that consensus had been reached at a VWG convened prior to the session, the report of which was presented as CRD4.
72. CCASIA22 agreed to consider CRD4 as the basis for discussion of this item.

#### **Discussion**

73. CCASIA22 considered the proposed draft standard section by section, introduced editorial changes for the purpose of clarify or correctness, and made the following comments and decisions on respective sections.

#### Section 2.1. Product Definition

74. CCASIA22 agreed to insert the words “for flavour” in the fourth line of this section after the words “contact materials” to further describe the function of the plant leaves.

<sup>17</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/9; CX/ASIA 22/22/9 Add.1 (Comments of Malaysia and Philippines); CRD4 (Report of the VWG meeting); CRD8 (Revised proposed draft regional standard (prepared by the EWG chair)); CRD12 (Indonesia); CRD13 (Thailand)

Section 2.3.1. Plant Leaves

75. CCASIA22 agreed to include one sentence at the end of the section to read “Where plant leaves are secured with strings, the strings should not impart any toxic substance to the food.” to avoid the potential migration of contaminants from the strings (e.g., fungicides from cotton strings and melamine or crystal violet from raffia strings).

Section 2.3.4. Vacuum Packaging

76. CCASIA22 agreed to amend the title of this section from “Vacuum packing” to “Sterilization process” to be consistent with the content of the description.

Section 3.1.1. Basic Ingredients

77. CCASIA22 agreed to delete “Plant leaves” from this section as they were not edible and Section 2.1 Product definition also stated that the plant leaves were used as a food contact material and not for consumption although they were an essential part of the product.

Section 3.2.1. Quality Factors

78. CCASIA22 agreed that the maximum level for the peroxide value should be applicable to products with edible fats and oil and make consequential amendments to the section.

Section 3.2.3. Defects and Allowances

79. CCASIA22 agreed to insert a footnote to describe “visible foreign matter” for clarity and also to align with other standards discussed at this session.

Section 4. Food Additives

80. CCASIA22 agreed to add the following standardized provision for flavouring under this section as flavourings may be used in the production process:

“The flavourings used in products covered by this standard should comply with the *Guidelines for the use of flavourings* (CXG 66-2008).”

Section 6. Hygiene

81. CCASIA22 agreed that under Section 6.4, it should be clarified that the commercial sterility requirements should comply with the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low Acid and Acidified Low Acid Canned Foods* (CXC 23-1979).

Section 7. Weights and Measures

82. CCASIA22 agreed to delete Section 7.1.1 and renumber Section 7.1.2 as Section 7.2 to be consistent with other standards discussed at this session.

**Conclusion**

83. CCASIA22 agreed to forward
- i. the proposed draft standard for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves to CAC46 for adoption at Step 5/8 (Appendix VII); and
  - ii. the provisions on food additives, food labelling, and methods of analysis and sampling to CCFA, CCFL and CCMAS for endorsement respectively.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE REVISED DRAFT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR CCASIA (Agenda Item 10)<sup>18</sup>**

84. India, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and recalled that, in order to improve effectiveness of informal meetings of the CCASIA Member Countries on the sidelines of Codex meetings, CCASIA20 had requested the then Coordinator (India) develop a draft standard operating procedure (SOP) for CCASIA. The draft SOP had been discussed at CCASIA21 under the agenda item “Codex work relevant to the region”, and it had been agreed to establish an EWG to further revise the SOP. The EWG Chair explained that after CCASIA21, two rounds of consultations had been conducted and based on the comments received from four Members, the draft SOP had been revised and included in CX/ASIA 22/22/10. The EWG Chair highlighted several issues in the draft SOP for particular consideration by CCASIA22: (i) presenting a Member’s written position in the plenary session in the absence of their physical participation in the concerned Codex meeting which had been

<sup>18</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/10; CRD13 (Thailand)

included in the responsibilities of the Coordinator; and (ii) the scope on co-chairing CCASIA meetings had been broadened from least developed countries to countries with less experience in Codex.

### Discussion

85. Members expressed their appreciation to India for leading this work which provided clear guidance for Members and the Coordinator.
86. CCASIA22 considered the draft SOP section by section, introduced a few editorial changes as appropriate (e.g., to use the terms “CCASIA Member Countries” and “Commission and subsidiary bodies” throughout the document), and made the following comments and decisions on respective sections.

#### Scope and Objective

87. CCASIA22 agreed to replace the word “responsibilities” with “recommendations” since the requirements put forward in the SOP were not mandatory to either the Members or the Coordinator.
88. CCASIA22 also noted that the word “responsibilities” in the following sections should be retained in order to remain aligned with the corresponding contents.

#### Objective 1: To facilitate sharing Members’ positions in the region

89. CCASIA22 agreed to make some amendments to 1.3a and 1.3b to ensure that informal meetings through video conferencing before the plenary meeting should be organized while informal meetings on the sidelines of the Codex plenary meeting could be organized should the need arise.
90. CCASIA22 further agreed to insert a new section relating to deliberation of common regional concerns/positions which described how common regional concerns/position might be formulated, distributed and presented as well as their responsible parties.

#### Objective 3: To enhance effective involvement in Codex and other food safety related work to facilitate trade

91. In response to a question from one Member regarding whether activity 3.1 pertinent to capacity building was beyond the mandate of CCASIA and Codex, the Codex Secretariat expressed the view that FAO and WHO might play a more important role in this regard.
92. The Representative of WHO explained that they were trying to help Members to understand how they could receive support from other Members in this region, and many capacity building activities on different aspects such as CTF project, food safety emergence response, risk assessment and impact of climate change on food safety had been organized. The Representative further indicated that they had received a request to have training course on how to regulate novel food, cultivated meat and some Members in this region had expressed their willingness to contribute in capacity building for other Member.
93. While Members recognized the importance of capacity building and also in some cases their willingness to support and indeed their ongoing efforts in this area, they were of the view that CCASIA was not the leader in the region in this area but could play a supporting role.
94. In view of the discussion above, CCASIA22 agreed to delete activity 3.1 under this objective.

#### Others

95. The SOP identified several areas where there would be a benefit from having a list of Member Countries with experience in certain areas who were willing to support others. In this regard, CCASIA22 agreed with the suggestion to first seek input on the willingness Member countries and then generate a list of willing Member Countries in activities 2.1, 2.3 and 3.3<sup>19</sup> that could be called on to provide support, noting that the list of willing Member Countries might vary depending on different needs.

### Conclusion

96. CCASIA22 agreed to publish the SOP as an information document on the Codex website for internal use by CCASIA (Appendix IX).

### **PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR TRADITIONAL SWEETS (Agenda Item 11)<sup>20</sup>**

97. India presented the item, explaining that the scope of the standard had been expanded from dairy based sweets as contained in the initial project document submitted at CCASIA21 to a wider range of sweets made from raw materials consumed traditionally in the region in order to fully ensure inclusiveness. He referred to

<sup>19</sup> These activities numbers reflect those numbers in CX/ASIA 22/22/10, which are different in the final SOP as contained in Appendix IX

<sup>20</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/11; CRD14 (Republic of Korea)

Indian traditional sweets exported within the region and also outside of the region. He further clarified that the traditional sweets intended to be covered by the standard could be categorized as i) milk based sweets, which were subcategorized as milk concentration based and heat/acid coagulated milk based; ii) non-milk based sweets, which were subcategorized as grain based, fruit/vegetable based and dry fruits/nuts/seeds based; and iii) composite sweets which included sweets not falling under milk based sweets and non-milk based sweets.

### Discussion

98. Members expressed the following views:

- The name and scope of the standard should be refined to specify what kind of sweets were included in the standard since the current proposal seemed quite broad in nature and could be interpreted to cover products that were produced and traded internationally, rather than just regionally.
- The wide variety of ingredients including milk, vegetables and fruits, used in the sweets to be covered by the standard presented challenges for standard setting and thus as currently proposed it did not seem to be amenable to standardization.
- The issue of distribution of adulterated sweets should be addressed by enhancing national regulation and inspection activities rather than establishing international standards.
- Current Codex standards related to food additives and hygiene addressed the issues raised in the project document. If there were issues that the existing standards failed to address, then these should be addressed by the relevant committees such as CCFA and CCFH. Therefore, it was necessary to specify what provisions should be covered by the standard.
- The traditional sweets presented in the project document were not well known in some countries in the region and some of the examples provided in the project document were not considered as sweets in other countries in the region.
- More refined trade data of the specific product types to be covered by the standard were needed. A more specific definition of non-milk based sweets was needed to facilitate inclusion of similar products in the region.

99. India responded that the project document was intended to cover sweets made from different categories of raw ingredients and that the names of sweets would be covered by the labelling provisions. Further details including quality requirements, and issues related to food additives, contaminants and hygiene would be considered by the EWG once the new work was approved. India further pointed out that the development of a regional standard would benefit the establishment of national regulations, and the subsequent monitoring of compliance through the national food control system.

### Conclusion

100. CCASIA22 agreed to request India to:

- collaborate with other countries in the region where similar products were produced; and
- further revise the discussion paper and project document taking into account the discussions at this session, and re-submit them for consideration at CCASIA23.

### NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 12)<sup>21</sup>

101. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item and recalled that China had been appointed as the Coordinator for Asia by CAC43, and having served for one term, was eligible for re-appointment.
102. CCASIA22 acknowledged the excellent work of China and unanimously agreed to recommend CAC45 to reappoint China for a second term as the Coordinator for Asia.
103. China thanked the Members of CCASIA for their support and accepted the nomination.

### OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 13)<sup>22</sup>

104. As agreed under Adoption of the Agenda two items were considered as follows:

- Discussion paper on development of a standard for cooked rice
- Discussion paper on development of a standard for canned congee

<sup>21</sup> CX/ASIA 22/22/12

<sup>22</sup> CRD5 (Republic of Korea); CRD 9(China)

**Discussion paper on development of a standard for cooked rice**

105. The Republic of Korea introduced the discussion paper on the development of a standard for cooked rice, highlighting the increasing popularity of this product, due to its quality and convenience, the increasing trade not only regionally but also globally and the importance of the production process in ensuring safety of the product.
106. Members expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea for preparing the discussion paper, and in their consideration of the proposal raised the following points:
- While the proposal raised the importance of the standard in terms of addressing safety and quality there were already Codex texts such as those related to contaminants and food hygiene which covered those aspects, hence a new standard was not needed for this purpose.
  - There was ongoing innovation in the way products such as cooked rice were produced, which may be protected by intellectual property rights. Such innovation was welcome and the development of any standard for a product such as cooked rice may stifle such innovation.
  - Further clarity was needed on the retort and aseptic packaging processes within the project document.
  - There were three cultivars of rice consumed in the region that have different properties when cooked. In addition, rice was consumed as either polished rice or husked rice. Due to this diversity, it was not clear whether it would be possible to establish quality criteria in a standard for cooked rice.
  - Currently there were no trade impediments or safety issues associated with this product, hence the need for, or added value of the standard was unclear, and it could be rather time consuming and challenging to develop and if developed even create a trade dispute.
  - Rice was a staple product in the region and there were more and more pre-prepared foods, based on rice, coming on the market, which also need to be monitored and, in this context, it may be necessary to consider whether the standard should cover a category of cooked or processed rice products rather than an individual product.
  - Cooked rice products have strong market potential, not only in the region but internationally, However, the title cooked rice was very generic and did not provide clarity on what the standard would cover and whether it was also relevant to rice cooked in catering or retail sectors or in the home.
  - It was important to consider the proposal in the context of the criteria for new work rather than discuss the details that will be elaborated during standard development.
107. The Codex Secretariat noted that many of the points raised were in line with the criteria established in the Procedural Manual (PM) for new work proposals for example volume of trade, market potential, and amenability to standardization. Other comments related to the clarity and scope of the work, which should be well defined before a proposal was sent to the CCEXEC for consideration under the critical review and subsequently to the CAC for approval. The importance of a gap analysis in terms of the aspects that were covered by existing Codex texts was also underlined as an important step in identifying the need for a standard.
108. The Chairperson noted the challenges raised in considering the new work proposal and the relationship to the criteria for the establishment of new work priorities. She further noted the importance of regional standards for CCASIA and the willingness of Members to develop them. She questioned whether the criteria for new work proposals in the PM were still appropriate for a rapidly changing world and proposed that some further clarity on this was needed from CCEXEC.

**Discussion paper on development of a standard for canned congee**

109. China presented the discussion paper on development of a standard for canned congee, highlighting the history and diversity of this product, its trade and consumption within the region and beyond, and the need for a standard to ensure the safety and quality of the product and prevent trade barriers.
110. Members expressed appreciation to China for preparing the discussion paper and in their consideration of the proposal raised the following points:
- There had not been adequate time to discuss the proposal with stakeholders at national level and in the interest of inclusiveness and transparency, Members should be given more time to consider this proposal.
  - There were several Codex standards that might be relevant to the product and should be considered in the proposal such as the *Standards for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes*

*Intended for Infants* (CXS72-1981), *Canned Baby Foods* (CXS-72-1981), *Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children* (CXS74-1981).

- Given that congee was also a cooked rice, consideration should be given to whether both proposals could be combined to a single proposal.

111. China explained that there were significant differences between the product proposed by China and that proposed by the Republic of Korea in terms of the ingredients, moisture content, microbial control requirements, viscosity, consumption manner and manufacturing processes.
112. The Chairperson noted the similarity of issues raised on the two discussion papers and proposed that the way forward be the same in both cases.

### **Conclusions**

113. CCASIA22 requested:
- both the Republic of Korea and China to revise the discussion papers and the project documents based on the comments received at the meeting and to re-submit them for consideration by CCASIA23; and
  - the Republic of Korea and China to work together to examine the possibility of combining both proposals.
114. In addition, CCASIA22, noting the concerns raised by some Members, as well as the desire to develop regional standards for processed products that are becoming increasingly popular, agreed to seek guidance from CCEXEC on:
- how to address new work proposals, which cover processed (and often ready-to-eat) products mainly produced in the region and traded globally and for which no appropriate commodity committee existed or was currently active; and
  - whether there was a need to develop standards for such processed products individually or take a more horizontal or group approach in light of the rapid developments in food processing technologies.

### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 14)**

115. CCASIA22 was informed that its 23rd Session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by CAC45 and subsequent discussions between the Coordinator and the Codex Secretariat.