



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

73rd Session

WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland

10 - 13 July 2017

CODEX AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

INTRODUCTION

1. CCEXEC72 recommended including an agenda item on Codex and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for CCEXEC73. This was timely as Codex, as a body operating within the framework of the United Nations, would need to demonstrate clear linkage between the SDGs and the next Codex Strategic Plan (2020-25)¹.
2. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs²) were developed for 1990 to 2015. Although the linkage between Codex and MDGs was never discussed in Codex, at least three of the MDGs were directly relevant to the work of Codex: MDG 1: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, MDG 4: reduce child mortality, and MDG 8: develop a global partnership for development (especially Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system).
3. In 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³ were launched, calling on countries to begin efforts to achieve 17 SDGs over the next 15 years. Each SDG is accompanied by a number of concrete Targets⁴. FAO and WHO, like all other UN agencies, are increasingly requested to link their work with SDGs and communicate such links actively to Member States and other stakeholders. Codex, as a joint FAO/WHO programme, is no exception.
4. This document highlights and analyses the main SDGs and their relevant Targets to the attainment of which Codex is considered able to contribute or at least have a role to play, from all aspects of ensuring food safety, improving nutrition (including the prevention of diet-related noncommunicable diseases), protecting consumers' health and fair practices in the food trade.
5. The linkage between Codex and SDGs can be considered in three different categories depending on how closely they relate to the work of Codex. The SDGs and Targets reproduced in the following however remain indicative as there are no SDGs that are totally disconnected from the work of Codex.

¹ [Report of CCEXEC72](#)

² <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

³ UN Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. 70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

CATEGORY 1: SDGS TO WHICH CODEX CONTRIBUTES DIRECTLY

6. Codex makes direct and significant contribution to the following goals:

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Target 2.1: *By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round*

7. Codex contributes to both consumer health protection and food security by setting standards, guidelines and code of practices related to food safety and nutrition which also take into consideration the need to prevent diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCD). Codex texts are developed based on science-based risk assessment and informed by the normative evidence-informed guidelines and policy actions of FAO and WHO, which take into account vulnerable populations (e.g. infants, children).

Target 2.2: *By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons*

8. Codex develops and updates various standards and guidelines on food commodities that are consumed by the general population (including adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons) and on foods marketed for infants and young children (e.g. infant formula, follow-up formula, formulated complementary foods, and processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children). These standards and guidelines are informed by normative evidence-informed guidelines and policy actions developed by FAO and WHO. FAO and WHO are addressing malnutrition in all its forms to achieve the global nutrition and diet-related NCD targets adopted by the World Health Assembly and subsequently by the 2nd International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in 2014 and by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as targets for SDGs in 2015. In April 2016, UNGA proclaimed a UN Decade of Action on Nutrition that will run from 2016 to 2025 to further the implementation of the ICN2 outcomes.

Target 2.3: *By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment*

9. Safe and effective use of pesticides and other chemicals are important for increasing productivity and sustainable agriculture. Codex contributes through science-based standard development on pesticides and other chemicals, and recommendations to safe agricultural practices.

Target 2.b: *Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round*

10. Codex texts are considered by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the international reference for food safety and nutrition standards. Codex contributes as an international standard setting body for food safety standards which are used to ensure fair practices in food trade and facilitate international trade in food.

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Target 3.2: *By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births*

11. WHO estimates of foodborne disease⁵ indicate children under five years of age account for almost one third of deaths from foodborne disease. Codex contributes to Target 3.2 by setting standards that lessen the risk of death and illness from unsafe food, including for vulnerable groups such as children under five. Codex standards and guidelines for foods for infants and young children are developed and updated based on science-based risk assessment and informed by the normative evidence-informed guidelines and policy actions developed by FAO and WHO. Vulnerable populations (e.g. infants, children) are specifically taken into account in the science-based risk assessment which these standards are based on.

Target 3.4: *By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing*

12. Since 2007 Codex has been working to implement the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, in particular in CCNFSDU and CCFL, ensuring that relevant standards and guidelines are developed or updated with consideration of actions that help prevent diet-related NCDs. Codex Standards to

⁵ http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/foodborne-diseases/ferg/en/

limit exposure to certain contaminants that can cause cancer or contribute to cardiovascular diseases can be an important contribution to NCD prevention.

Target 3.9: *By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination*

13. Codex contributes by setting science-based standards that address risks to human health from contamination of food by chemicals pollution etc. Codex work on Antimicrobial Resistance also contributes to reducing the effect of antimicrobials used in the food producing sector. Codes of practices elaborated by Codex can also contribute to limit the use and introduction into the environment of hazardous chemicals.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Target 12.3: *By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*

14. Food additives are helpful in conserving foods. Codex contributes by setting science-based standards for food additives. Also, Codex Codes of Practices contribute to producing hygienic and non-contaminated foods which reduce unnecessary food waste. Codex also recommends appropriate labelling practices and addresses the aspect of date marking (e.g. sell-by-date and use-by date) of pre-packaged foods to reduce food waste.

Target 12.4: *By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment*

15. Codex contributes to sound management of chemicals by setting science-based standards for chemical contaminants and antimicrobials that address risks to human health from contamination of food by chemicals, pollution, antimicrobials etc.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Target 17.10: *Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda*

16. Codex texts are considered by WTO as the international reference for food safety and nutrition standards. Codex contributes as an international standard setting body whose food safety standards are developed on a scientific basis.

CATEGORY 2: SDGS TO WHICH CODEX CONTRIBUTES INDIRECTLY

17. Codex indirectly contributes to the following goals:

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

18. Codex work on ensuring food safety and fair practices in the food trade, improving nutrition (including the prevention of diet-related NCDs), protecting consumers' health, and providing support to eligible countries through the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund contributes to poverty reduction by enabling farmers to produce safe foods according to international standards and participate in food trade.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

19. Codex supports economic growth through setting standards that enhance access of food producers to both national and international markets thus promoting economic growth in countries and employment in the agricultural and related trade sectors.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

20. Codex develops standards on hazards that are potentially augmented by climate change including mycotoxins, *Vibrio spp* in seafood and ciguatera and also considers broader issues such as better definition of clean water in recognition of the challenges in accessing potable water. Codex standards provide countries with risk management guidance to promote adaptation to food safety impacts of climate change.

CATEGORY 3: SDGS TO WHICH CODEX COULD CONTRIBUTE FURTHER

21. The following goals relate to sustainable use of water and land. Since sustainable and clean water and sustainable use of land are important for the production of safe and nutritious food there may be a contributing role Codex could play.

- SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. The Committee is invited to express its view on the way FAO and WHO has taken an analysis on the relations between SDGs and Codex work, as presented above.

23. The Committee is invited to make concrete proposals to the Commission on

- (i) How Codex can contribute more proactively to the attainment of SDGs 2, 3, 12 and 17 (category 1);
- (ii) Whether and how Codex can contribute (more) to the attainment of SDGs 1, 8, 13, 14 and 15 (category 2 and 3).

24. The Committee is further invited to recommend to the Commission that:

- (iii) The contributions that Codex can make to the SDGs are clearly articulated in the new Codex Strategic Plan (2020-25) to highlight the linkage between Codex and various SDGs;
- (iv) Communication and information materials produced by FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat illustrate connections between the work of Codex and SDGs.