



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Thirty-first Session

Bordeaux, France, 11 - 15 March 2019

Opening Remarks

Mr Guilherme da Costa Junior

(Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission)

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to be in France and for the first time in the beautiful region of Bordeaux to participate in the 31st Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP).

I would like to welcome all Codex Members, Observers, authorities, and all Delegates from the different regions of the world.

It is a great honour for me and the Vice-Chairs, my friends Mariam Eid, from Lebanon, Purwiyatno Hariyadi, from Indonesia and Steve Wearne from UK to be together with you all here. Steve is going to join us later this week due to other commitments.

I would also like to express my great pleasure for having my colleague Jean-Luc Angot as Chair of this important Committee. I would like to welcome you to the Codex family. For sure, your experience in the areas of food safety and fair practices in food trade will be paramount to the success of the Committee work.

I would also like to congratulate the Codex and CCGP Secretariats for their efforts to make this Session here possible as well as the Parent Organizations, namely FAO and WHO.

One of the big challenges we all face is the need to feed 9 billion people in 2050. That said, the element of food security immediately comes to our minds, and consequently the element "amount of food". However, the food security issue is much broader than food quantity. To guarantee food security it is essential that we combine food quantity with at least two other elements: food safety and trade. We cannot have food security if the sufficient amount of food is not safe. Equally, we cannot have food security if we cannot trade sufficient safe food from production to consumption areas.

The Codex Alimentarius is therefore absolutely paramount to achieve this combination between these three elements. It is not possible to think in food security without food safety and trade.

The figures on serious problems due to lack of food safety control cause annually thousands of foodborne diseases, deaths, unemployment and economic crisis in different countries.

We have much responsibility with the global society related to food safety. It is essential to do our best to further develop and disseminate Codex standards to ensure food safety and quality for everyone everywhere in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which are related to the Codex mandate.

In this context, science-based standards provide transparency for market access, inclusiveness and economic development. The foundation of Codex standards is sound scientific evidence. From the very beginning, Codex Alimentarius has been a science-based activity. Experts and specialists in a wide range of disciplines have contributed to every aspect of Codex Alimentarius to ensure that its standards withstand the most rigorous scientific scrutiny. As a risk-management Organization, Codex Alimentarius must have science as its basis because it is not **conceivable** to manage risk without evaluating them. Therefore, the work developed by the scientific FAO/WHO expert groups is paramount for Codex.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the most important multilateral organization dealing with food safety and fair practices in food trade.

Despite its negotiation characteristic, the Codex work should be focused on mutual cooperation, strengthening participation for all Members, especially those which have more difficulty to participate, consensus-building and especially on the interests of the world where food safety and fair practices in food trade are concerned.

To build consensus, it is necessary to keep in our minds, among other aspects, the following question:

"How can my country as a Codex Member cooperate so that the other Member State, my commercial partner, can also guarantee protection for the health of its consumers and have room in the trade which might generate foreign exchange and jobs for its population?"

This is a question that, I suggest, we really keep alive in our working process. This is one important way in which, I understand, we have to try to continue working in this Committee and also in the elaboration of the Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025, with the real and practical willingness to build a better Codex for the world, to prevent foodborne diseases and foodborne deaths, to generate employments and incomes for all Codex Members.

In this CCGP Session we have important matters in front of us which we will have the opportunity to discuss, for instance:

- Procedural guidance for committees working by correspondence;
- Use of examples in Codex Standards, and others.

This year has special significance for the Codex family.

On 7th of June we will celebrate our first World Food Safety Day already established by the General Assembly of the United Nations last December.

Every 7th June will be a time to celebrate the many benefits of safe food.

We will have a chance to make others aware of those benefits, which we know well.

For instance, the benefits of Codex standards to help manage food safety risks, protect the health of consumers and facilitate international trade.

On World Food Safety Day we can inspire practical actions in accordance with the real needs of the Member Countries.

Safe food is critical, not only for better health, improved livelihoods and food security, but also for economic development, trade and the international reputation of every country.

So now we will have a dedicated day to publicize the importance of food safety from production to consumption.

Let's repeat the 7th of June every day in our lives.

Having said that, and on behalf of my dear colleagues Vice-Chairpersons of the Codex Alimentarius I would like to reiterate the honour of being here with you, Mr. Chairman and wish you all an excellent CCGP Session

Thank you very much for your attention.