

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 7**

**CX/LAC 06/15/7  
October 2006**

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

### **FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**15<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13-17 November 2006**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (CCLAC)**

#### **STATUS REPORT (Prepared by Argentina)**

#### **BACKGROUND**

1. At the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Argentina was elected chair of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, it has responsible for carrying out the actions set out in the Strategic Plan for the CCLAC, which was adopted at this meeting.
2. At the 14<sup>th</sup> Session (December 2004) of the CCLAC, the Delegation of Argentina presented the Members of the Region with an updated report of the activities conducted up to date.
3. At the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Argentina was re-elected chair of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean for another term. Thus, Argentina presents CCLAC Members with a report on the activities.

#### **STATUS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

4. In accordance with the activities of the CCLAC Strategic Plan, Argentina carried out a number of initiatives to make progress towards the objectives set out.
5. It is worth highlighting that this will be the report of the second term and the last prepared by Argentina as CCLAC Coordinator. Nevertheless, some ongoing actions will continue to be carried out until the new elected Coordinator is confirmed at the next session of the Commission. During the transition, the Coordination intends to gradually transfer information and provide direct advice to the new Coordination, so that the experience obtained can be taken advantage of and will not be wasted. Progress can thus be made towards attainment of the objectives, instead of starting the process from the beginning.

#### **REVIEW OF THE ACTIONS ON AN OBJECTIVE-BY-OBJECTIVE BASIS**

##### **1. COMMUNICATION**

**“To foster effective communication between the CCLAC Members, and with other regions and Members of Codex, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.”**

##### **Translation**

6. As expressed on several occasions, Argentina wishes to reiterate that one of the major problems that prevent Members from participating actively in the work of Codex Alimentarius is the language barrier. Therefore, in order to reduce the difficulties associated with this issue, the CCLAC Coordination has provided the services of a translator, who has made it possible to send CCLAC Members all correspondence both in Spanish and in English since the beginning of the term.

7. In addition, the Coordination has also sought to translate documents of some working groups that do their activities in only one language in order to facilitate Members' access to information and thus help enhance participation in Codex work.

8. Translation services have also been considered for the CCLAC web page, which is available in both languages. Of course, in this case, Codex documents appear only in the language version circulated by the Codex Secretariat.

### **Use of IT systems**

9. As a result of the survey prepared by the Coordination and completed by a large number of CCLAC Members, work has been undertaken on the CCLAC web page and other virtual spaces of easy access by the members of the Region, as outlined below:

### **CCLAC Web Page**

10. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Session, the Committee noted the creation of the CCLAC web page ([www.cclac.org](http://www.cclac.org)), the purpose of which is to enhance communication between the Members of the Region, providing access to updated information on Codex activities.

11. After hard internal work, which involved the cooperation of areas of the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food other than the Codex Alimentarius Coordination, the development of this web page has been completed. It is worth remembering that the web page needs weekly updating and people available for this. In Argentina's specific case, the development of this web page has aroused interest in creating a similar one for the National Codex Committee, where we can include other information that helps us add transparency to the decisions taken in connection with Codex Alimentarius negotiations.

12. At regional level, the ultimate goal of this tool is to increase CCLAC Members' effective communication and active participation in discussions, to promote the development and strengthening of national committees' capacities and to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the activities, as is clear from the objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan.

13. The web page contains CCLAC Members' contact information, documents related to the FAO/WHO Trust Fund (e.g. application forms), a weekly updated table with deadlines for circular letters, negotiating documents and discussion papers, official country position papers and the agendas of forthcoming meetings. The page also provides helpful information for officials travelling abroad to attend a meeting. Further, there are papers relating to CCLAC Seminars, as well as to other activities in the Region. Also, the page contains a section with weekly updated information on additions to the web site. Besides, information is provided on the creation, roles and terms of reference of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies. We have included information about the working groups of every committee and the documents developed where Argentina participates in the preliminary drafting stages. In this sense, as Argentina does not participate in all Codex Committees, we often lack the information produced by the working groups until Codex sends this in circular letters for country comments. We therefore request those who note gaps to submit the information to us in order to upload it to the web page. More information provided in Annex I.

### **Virtual Chat Rooms**

14. The web page contains a space for "online" meetings, which will enable us to provide information on the progress of Codex sessions, particularly aimed at the countries that do not have the opportunity to physically participate in the meeting; to reach common positions on issues of interest to the Region before Committee sessions; to decide on future actions; etc. For a rational, responsible use of this tool, a user name and password enabling all participants to identify the country have been sent to CCLAC Codex contact points. Contact points should ensure that those who participate in online chats represent the country position on the issues discussed.

15. In accordance with the proposed scheme, the CCLAC Coordination shall provide information on the web page and via email about the date and time of every chat session.

16. As CCLAC Members get used to this communication tool, we will be able to carry out multiple activities. Although the current chat system is very preliminary, there are plans to make changes based on more advanced programs. To this end, we have assessed different IT programs, and we are making arrangements to purchase one that would enable changes, during chat sessions, in Codex documents of interest to the Region in order to work together on some initiatives. More information provided in Annex II.

## **Virtual Fora**

17. With the cooperation of the Codex Secretariat, the CCLAC web page has incorporated spaces for virtual fora, which we believe will be very helpful to the countries of the Region. Ongoing developments involve the creation of three different spaces intended to serve different purposes and engage different stakeholders in the CCLAC region, all of which are aimed at reaching the main objectives of our CCLAC Strategic Plan. More information provided in Annex II.

## **Updated National Codex Contact Point List**

18. Since Argentina became the Regional Coordinator, a list of contact points of Codex Members of the Region. New addresses other than those on the official Codex list have been added in order to ensure wider dissemination of the activities of the Committee so that the delegates from CCLAC Members participating in the different Committees can keep up to date with the progress of CCLAC. However, some information is only submitted to contact points, and only formal comments by CCLAC Members' contact points are accepted.

## **2. MEMBERS' EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION**

**“To achieve the active and effective participation of all countries of the Region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly in the CCLAC.”**

19. Active participation means understanding the issues discussed in Codex regarding food safety, consumer health protection and fair trade practices, as well as assessing the technical and economic feasibility of taking decisions at national level. Although Codex standards are recommendations, it is hoped that countries can adopt them. For this reason, knowledge of our production systems and our control systems as well as the feasibility of implementation should be considered. Active participation also means submitting comments on circular letters and actively defending them at the sessions we participate in.

20. Codex work grows at such a fast pace that the countries that have limited capacities and scarce human resources find it hard to meet this increasing demand. As a result, priority setting is a major issue. For this reason, at its 14<sup>th</sup> session, the Committee agreed that CCLAC Members should use electronic means to exchange information on Codex strategic issues in the Region so as to reach common positions whenever possible.

21. Thus, the Coordination has sought to strengthen the exchange of information via email. The Coordination has followed up on the initiative adopted in its first term in connection with promoting the exchange of information between the countries before Codex sessions and CCLAC informal meetings. We have confirmed that although this task requires dedication, the fruits of the work can be seen, such as what happened with the comments on some initiatives of non-CCLAC countries – i.e. that ISO should address issues for which Codex Alimentarius is responsible – which will be mentioned in another agenda item for this CCLAC session.

22. Effective participation means being able to intervene in Codex sessions, but this exceeds our interest and commitment and our governments'. Unfortunately, the expectations associated with the announcement of the creation of the Trust Fund have fallen over time as, clearly, our participation in Codex negotiation sessions in the last four years has declined proportionately to the reduced support for participation.

23. CCLAC countries are building capacities to respond to Codex Alimentarius demands internationally. However, our 33 developing countries united have not been able to achieve greater consideration of our claims associated with the fund distribution criteria of the Trust Fund. The figures considered do not reflect, in the case of our countries, the underlying reality. The criteria used to classify us hardly reflect the reality of national public expenditure priorities, which does not mean that countries are not interested in participating in Codex sessions.

24. Although this objective cannot be attained merely with our will, we should continue working to find a response within the Trust Fund itself in order to achieve responsiveness in donor countries or in other spheres which may provide funding. To do this, we should be able to raise awareness and understanding of the seriousness of the situation; i.e. the fact that even though our Region, which is among the best positioned, has sought to show that – although made up of developing countries – it has assimilated the changes of this globalized world and made great efforts to train our public and private structures associated with Codex issues, cannot participate in sessions, which means having little or no influence on Codex decisions.

### 3. STRENGTHENING OF CAPACITIES

**“To promote the development and strengthening of the capacities of the National Codex Committees and/or Codex Contact Points in CCLAC Member Countries.”**

25. At its last session, the Committee agreed that the exchange of information and experience as well as the organization of joint activities such as training programmes on specific issues between countries with different levels of specialized knowledge might help move forward in the development and strengthening of the capacities of national bodies participating in Codex activities.

26. In order to reach this objective, the Coordination has fostered and cooperated with the organization of these activities:

#### ***FAO/CCLAC Coordination Seminar on Traceability/Product Tracing***

27. This seminar was held on 21-23 March 2006 in Buenos Aires. FAO and Argentina designed an agenda for this Seminar intended to provide a realistic approach to the issue based on national experiences relating to different production sectors.

28. There were experts from different areas such as fish products, fruit, milk products, meat, organic products, honey and GMO food. The Seminar also provided the opportunity to evaluate different options for traceability implementation based on the objectives pursued and the resources available to improve existing practices.

29. There were also experts from the Islamic and Jewish communities, the participation of whom was intended to help understand and evaluate whether traceability is necessary to ensure ethical, religious or cultural matters.

30. The Seminar was aimed at CCLAC Spanish-speaking countries, as Caribbean countries had set other priorities with FAO as to interesting issues for Seminars. At the seminar, CDs with the speakers' power point presentations, and the books containing the papers will be available at the next session. With the aim of making this material accessible to the Caribbean, the Coordination agreed to publish the material in English, so the texts and the CDs are available in English for Caribbean delegates.

#### ***Codex Technical Seminar in Rio de Janeiro***

31. An informal meeting of CCLAC countries was held on 1 – 3 June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This meeting was carried out with the support of the government of the United States, in collaboration with the coordination of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

32. We would like to thank the United States for its support for the participation of the countries of the Region in these events that provide CCLAC Members with the opportunity to interact fluently.

33. The seminar had three objectives: updating the needs of the countries of the Region in connection with the issues discussed at the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an analysis of the progress of the items outlined in the Regional Strategic Plan for the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and a wide discussion on the Equivalence of Sanitary Measures and Food Control Systems. More information on the matters addressed can be found on the CCLAC web page.

#### ***FAO/WHO-PAHO – CCLAC Coordination Seminar on the Judgment of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures and Control Systems***

34. The Seminar organized by the FAO/WHO/PAHO, in collaboration with the CCLAC, is part of the priority issues pointed out by our delegates at the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean. This Seminar is aimed at all CCLAC Members and intended to provide training on the judgment of equivalence of sanitary measures and control systems. In this sense, a varied agenda has been developed including experts from FAO/WHO/PWHO and experts from different regions of Codex, who have willingly accepted to provide their expertise and views on one of the issues that has created the highest expectations in recent years for developing countries. The presentations and conclusions will soon be available on the CCLAC web page. We will evaluate, however, together with the next CCLAC Coordinator, the possibility of editing a book and a CD with the presentations of this seminar.

### **Distance Training Courses on Codex**

35. In collaboration with the Codex Secretariat, based on Training Package for enhancing participation in Codex activities, the CCLAC Coordination has designed an introductory course on Codex. Its value for the countries which are creating their Codex structures lies in the experience obtained in understanding the dynamics and achieving greater efficiency in Codex work. Although the contents have been prepared, the IT services have not provided us with the support. The courses will be taught “on line” and the program will also facilitate direct access to other reference documents indicated in the lessons, which help them better understand the implicit contents of every issue addressed. The courses will be taught in English and Spanish, and there are plans to carry out two in each language, with trainers who guide them every week.

### **Maximum Residue Limits**

36. This issue, like all matters discussed in Codex, has been a concern of the countries of the Region for years. At its first session as CCLAC Coordinator, Argentina said that if we were concerned over this issue, we could not continue saying – at all Codex sessions – that we did not have our own data to comment on these matters but should take actions and make specific, well-grounded requests. Nobody can help us if we do not know what we specifically want. For this reason, jointly with Brazil – chair of the Working Group on MRL – we have agreed to propose a set of actions that help us better understand the dynamics of the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and the Committee on Pesticide Residues, which we will address below.

### **FAO/WTO Cross Training**

37. In spite of our efforts, we have not been able to obtain WTO courses to Codex delegates’ addresses. However, we know that some countries include Codex delegates in the courses taught by the WTO, particularly in those related to the SPS Agreement. However, we believe that this request should continue. Codex has two aims; namely, consumer health protection associated with food safety and fair trade practices, which means knowing WTO SPS and TBT Agreements.

38. In a number of countries there is no interaction between Codex contact points/national Codex Committees and SPS/TBT Notification Points, so training is often decoupled. International organizations should take this into account, as Codex contact points and Codex delegates are usually the ones who actually apply measures or develop national standards.

## **4. USE OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CAPACITIES**

**“To take advantage of the technical and scientific capacities existing in CCLAC Member Countries.”**

39. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Session, the Committee agreed on the development of a set of criteria for the selection of experts available in the Region. For this, the FAO/WHO procedures established for the selection of experts assisting CCLCAC Members as technical or scientific advisors in preparing country comments or regional positions on Codex issues of regional interest.

40. No progress has been made in this matter. However, it is very important to work on it. Our country has been consulted by several countries of the Region for nomination of experts in different issues in order to participate in calls for international projects. This should be an incentive for us to define our selection criteria and post – on the CCLAC web page – a list of those we believe are sufficiently qualified at national level, so that the country that needs them can make a first selection from the page and then contact them in order to determine whether they effectively meet the requirements.

## **5. CONTINUITY OF THE COMMITTEE’S TASKS**

**“To ensure the continuity, development and sustainability of the committee’s tasks.”**

### **Biennial Plan**

41. At the last session of the Regional Committee, this Coordination requested that the Committee provide further guidance to develop the Operational Plan, since – this Coordination believes – the “Strategic Plan for CCLAC” has set out, in detail, the relevant actions that should be carried out. For this reason, on that occasion the Committee agreed that the evaluation of the Plan should start as from its adoption by the CCLAC at its previous session. With this aim, it agreed to establish a working group to monitor the fulfilment of the objectives set out in the Regional Strategic Plan. The Working Group would be led by Mexico as Regional Representative at the Executive Committee of the Commission (CEXEC).

### **Follow-up and regular evaluation of the Strategic Plan Actions**

42. The CCLAC Coordination keeps a record of the activities and actions carried out to date. It also has information on the degree of response expressed by CCLAC Members.

### **Mechanism for transferring information during the Coordination transition**

43. The CCLAC Coordination has developed a method to file information electronically, which is easy to access and to understand. It is considered that the best way to transfer this information to the next CCLAC chair is by means of CDs.

## **6. TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION**

**“To attain technical co-operation and funding mechanism to allow CCLAC to develop and sustain its activities.”**

44. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Session, the CCLAC agreed to continue identifying international and regional organizations that could assist the countries of the Region in increasing their participation in Codex and related activities. With this purpose, it encouraged Member States to consult with their official competent institutions in order for governments to explore the possibilities of entering into cooperation agreements with these organizations for training activities related to Codex issues, thus ensuring the effective participation of CCLAC Members in Codex activities.

### **Standard and Trade Development Facility (STDF)**

45. To achieve cooperation is an objective that CCLAC pursues for the effective implementation of the health and control measures required to ensure the appropriate level of consumer protection and fair trade practices.

46. With this in mind, and taking into account the *Standard and Trade Development Facility* program created jointly by the WTO SPS Committee, FAO, WHO, OIE, IPPC and the World Bank, we have developed a project platform for the improvement of food safety in the Americas. For further details, please visit the CCLAC web site.

47. The program is aimed at the implementation of sanitary measures consistently with SPS principles and according to the international standards of the three sister organizations (OIE, IPPC and Codex). This project, which is under consideration of the Membership, is intended to help countries make progress towards the definition of their own projects with the assistance of the relevant international organizations, individually or jointly when the objectives of more than one country coincide. Further details on this issue will be introduced under Agenda Item 4. In addition, a brief description of the project platform is included in working document CX/LAC 06/15/4-Add.1.

### **FAO/WHO Trust Fund**

48. The Members of the Region have often stated that the indexes adopted by the Trust Fund do not reflect the complete domestic situation of Codex Members as regards their real capacity in terms of funds intended for their participation in Codex Alimentarius international negotiations. Therefore, many countries that have specific concerns and could express their opinion in Codex meetings cannot do so as desired because they have no adequate funding.

49. Consequently, the CCLAC Coordination requested the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Executive Committee that FAO/WHO take into account other selection criteria. In this regard, it was considered that those countries that apply for support to participate in a meeting should provide information on the reasons of their interest in the issues of the agenda, whether there are essential safety/quality problems at national level in relation to the issues to be addressed, and whether these issues cause trade problems in domestic or foreign markets. Moreover, it would be important that they submit their position concerning some documents of the agenda and specify the differences with their own legislation or control system in order for the Trust Fund to evaluate to what extent a country would benefit from participation in the required Committee session.

50. In this regard, the CCLAC Coordination stated that it might also be helpful if, on receiving the applications, the Trust Fund put applicants in contact with the Regional Coordinator of the Region to which they belong as a previous contact and specified a reference point with whom to consult in meetings and, most importantly, who might assist delegates so that they are not isolated due to ignorance.

51. In addition, at the sessions of the Executive Committee and the Commission, Argentina has often requested Trust Fund authorities to include, in the reports on the evolution of the Trust Fund, detailed information on the countries that have applied for support to participate in each session of the Codex Committees. This information is important to understand the annual prioritization performed by Codex Members on the basis of their interests for the participation and to evaluate whether those Members remain interested over time in the work of the Committees prioritized annually and whether such continuity is reflected in the evolution of the position documents that they submit or in subsequent changes that occur in their national legislation or practices as a result of their participation in Codex meetings and that are included in the annual reports. This element would be really helpful to determine the degree of substantiation of governments in connection with Codex activities, in addition to the mere participation of delegates in international meetings.

52. Trust Fund authorities were also requested to manage and inform on the progress of the Trust Fund and to submit, for transparency purposes, detailed information on which countries have applied for funding to participate in each Codex meeting, whether funding have been granted or not. This will also ensure transparency in the selection system.

53. Additionally, little knowledge and preparation has been noted in the new delegates that participated in Codex meetings. In this regard, Argentina has proposed to the Executive Committee that the Trust Fund organize meetings prior to the sessions of the Committees for all the delegates that participate in a Codex meeting for the first time, in order to explain to them the kind of documents that they will find in the meeting, how texts should be organized according to Agenda items, how to take part in discussions, how to define whether it is appropriate to participate in a working group, how decisions are taken, etc. It is believed that this request has been considered and that prior meetings are being organized, although no precise information is available.

54. The CCLAC Coordination has assisted several countries in the Region that received funding from the Fund to participate in Codex meetings and had difficulties with the Trust Fund Secretariat in arranging their trips. The Coordination has noted that many problems in our Region relate to the capacity or incapacity to communicate in English. In this regard, contacting FAO/WHO local representatives or those in other countries may be helpful, as in our case where they have acted as a link under certain circumstances. However, we urge Trust Fund authorities to continue working to facilitate the necessary steps to be taken by delegates and to send the information, air tickets and stipends for their participation in meetings duly in advance. This issue will be further discussed in Agenda Item 9.

## 7. IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF REGIONAL, STANDARD- RELATED NEEDS

**“To identify and prioritize the needs of the Region on food safety and other themes.”**

### **Maximum Residue Limits of Pesticides**

55. At the last CCLAC Session, several delegations expressed their concern over deviations from Codex maximum residue limits (e.g. for pesticides) caused by some Codex Members that had established maximum residue limits (MRLs) with no scientific grounds that justified the existence of limits under those set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, or their elimination. Moreover, several countries expressed their concern over the lack of Codex MRLs for certain pesticides in certain products widely disseminated at national level and in international trade, which has led to the unilateral establishment, under each country's own authority, of MRLs that do not follow the science-based principles of the WTO SPS Agreement and Codex. These delegations stated that the establishment of MRLs corresponding with the limit of detection of the method of analysis implied an additional burden for developing countries' exports to international markets, thus creating unjustified trade restrictions as they are based on economic considerations and not on scientific data. On this basis, a Working Group on MRLs chaired by Brazil, whose work will be discussed in Item 9.a) of the Agenda to this Session, was created.

### **Stevia Rebaudiana – Data Search and Generation for JECFA to Complete Work on the Establishment of a Permanent ADI for this Additive.**

56. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Session, CCLAC invited countries in the Region to provide scientific data on stevioside, so that JECFA could complete the reassessment of the substance and the assignation of a full ADI, and then the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) could consider its inclusion in the General Standard for Food Additives. The Committee agreed to create a working group coordinated by Brazil.

57. According to this, CCLAC Members, and other Codex Members, were contacted to determine whether the information needed by JECFA was available. Based on the results, a group consisting of different countries agreed to take a set of actions tending to develop the missing data in order for JECFA to evaluate in 2007 the new information provided. Further information will be considered in Agenda Item 9.b).

58. The CCLAC Coordination urges delegates to submit new proposals on regulatory needs in order to continue making progress on issues of interest to the Region. However, it should be made clear that mentioning issues is not enough, committing to work on them is needed.

#### **FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

59. Although there will be a transition period between this session, in which Argentina will cease to chair the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the next session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in which the new Coordinator will be ratified, it is true that Argentina will leave office.

60. Our country is really pleased and proud of having been supported by the Region twice to direct and coordinate the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. We would like to have done many other things, but we also have limitations.

61. Our commitment to the Region does not end here because, to us, integration is a reason of state. We strongly believe in the integration of the peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean and we have worked at all levels with this in mind. Therefore, we would like, as far as possible and with the consent of the delegates present and the future Coordinator, to complete some work of the Coordination that is already advanced. In addition, we would like to provide the new authorities with our full support in the future to continue proving that the regional Codex Committees are strategic and essential elements for the operation of Codex, when there are clear ideas and the will to materialize them.



**Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean**  
Current Host: **Argentina**  
CCLAC Chair: **Lic. Fernando Nebbia** - Contact Point Coord.: **Ing. Gabriela Catalani**  
English :: Español

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Buenos Aires, 31 October 2006
**CCLAC Chair Communications**

[Home](#)

**UNDERSTANDING THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS**



**WHAT IS CCLAC?**

[CCLAC MEMBERS](#)

[CCLAC NEWS](#)

[FAO/WHO TRUST FUND](#)

[CCLAC SEMINARS](#)

[TRAVELLER HELP WEB SITES](#)

[FAQ](#)

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[FORUM](#)

[e-LEARNING](#)

[SITE MAP](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

[Easy Access to Codex Committees](#)

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**CCLAC**

The **CCLAC**, *FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean*, is a *Codex Alimentarius* subsidiary body made up of all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and/or WHO.

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**FIRST VISIT TO THE SITE**

Welcome! This is the web page of the CCLAC, Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, the subsidiary body of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the region.

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**NEXT MEETINGS**

**CCFICS** 15th Session of the CCFICS in Mar del Plata, Argentina  
6 - 10 November 2006 - [\[more info\]](#)

**CCLAC** 15 th Session of the CCLAC in Mar del Plata, Argentina  
13 - 17 November 2006 - [\[more info\]](#)  
[\[Agenda and Documents\]](#)

**New Online Meeting on the CCLAC website 11 am (Buenos Aires Time)**  
Tuesday, October 31st 2006  
[more info](#)

**15th Session of the CCFICS 6 - 10 November 2006**  
The Session is due to be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina at the Costa Galana Hotel  
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[\[top\]](#)

**CODEX ALIMENTARIUS**




**Other Organizations**





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**Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean**  
 Current Host: **Argentina**  
 CCLAC Chair: **Lic. Fernando Nebbia** - Contact Point Coord.: **Ing. Gabriela Catalani**  
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Buenos Aires, 31 October 2006 **CCLAC Chair Communications**

[Home](#)

[What's New](#)  
 [Commission](#)  
 [Executive Committee](#)  
 [Committees](#)  
 [Meetings](#)  
 [Deadlines](#)

[Versión en Español](#)

**UNDERSTANDING THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS**



**WHAT IS CCLAC?**

**CCLAC MEMBERS**

**CCLAC NEWS**

**FAO/WHO TRUST FUND**

**CCLAC SEMINARS**

**TRAVELLER HELP WEB SITES**

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## News

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**New IT Survey to update information regarding to the CCLAC Chat**

We invite every country of the region to fulfill it.

[IT Survey 2006](#) 

**New Online Meeting on the CCLAC website**

Tuesday, October 31st, 11 am (Buenos Aires Time)

[Enter Virtual Meeting](#)
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**15 th Session of the CCFICS in Mar del Plata, Argentina**

The 15 th Session of the CCFICS is due to be held on **6 - 10 November 2006** in Mar del Plata, Argentina, at the **COSTA GALANA HOTEL**. For this reason, a **Travel Guide** has been elaborated including the most important information you should bear in mind when attending the meeting.

[Mar del Plata CCFICS Nov. 2006 Spanish \(FINAL\)](#)

[Mar del Plata CCFICS Nov. 2006 English \(FINAL\)](#)

**Equivalent Seminal - CCLAC Meeting - Mar del Plata, ARGENTINA November 12th, 2006**

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CCLAC COUNTRIES**

**15 th Session of the CCLAC in Mar del Plata, Argentina**

The 15 th Session of the CCLAC is due to be held on **13 - 17 November 2006** in Mar del Plata, Argentina. For this reason, a **Travel Guide** has been elaborated including the most important information you should bear in mind when attending the meeting.

**The Agenda and some Draft Documents are available for your consultation. [ Go ]**

**GUIA Mar del Plata - CCLAC - Nov. 2006 ESPAÑOL (FINAL)**

**GUIA Mar del Plata - CCLAC - Nov. 2006 INGLES (FINAL)**

**Meeting of the Working Group on the Labelling of Foods Derived from Biotechnology**

The meeting of the Working Group on the Labelling of Foods Derived from Biotechnology is due to be held in Oslo, Norway on 6 - 7 February 2007.

**The CCLAC Coordinator invites the Secretariat of the Commission and of Codex subsidiary bodies to electronically forward the conference room documents (CRDs) that are distributed at physical meetings only in paper.**

**The aim of this initiative is to facilitate access to information by all Codex Members and Observers that cannot attend meetings and to promote transparency -one of the guiding principles of Codex work.**

[\[top\]](#)

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## ANNEX II

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE CCLAC WEB PAGE

## CCLAC ELECTRONIC FORUM

1. It has been decided to undertake, with the support of the Codex Secretariat and FAO, another set of initiatives intended to further the work of the CCLAC Strategic Plan, by including new tools in the CCLAC web page to improve the use of resources and enhance interaction among CCLAC Members.
2. With this aim, the CCLAC Coordination, based on the experience obtained throughout these years, has proposed the addition of virtual fora to Codex and FAO. This idea has been approved.
3. The CCLAC electronic forum operates at [www.cclac.org](http://www.cclac.org), although at present is not yet visible as they are still some details to be finalized based on the view of the Committee.
4. The current format is made up of three different forum levels, intended to cover specific needs.
5. CCLAC contact points or their appointed delegates may enter with the user names and passwords submitted for access to the chat.

**Three Forum Levels**

6. **1) first level.** It is aimed only at contact points, national Codex coordinators or those appointed by them to discuss issues associated with ongoing Codex Alimentarius negotiations. This level is intended to alleviate the load of specific requests submitted to the Coordination given that they are actually transparency issues that should be circulated to other Committee members. The Forum will help keep a record of these concerns and discussions. Once a given discussion topic is over, the Coordination may even prepare a summary of the positions or a document containing the comments.
7. To finalize details, discussions may be closed with “online” chats to reach final decisions on the topics.
8. **2) second level.** It is only intended for public officials of the governments of the Region and the FAO if it believes it appropriate. This Forum will channel countries’ concerns over Codex Alimentarius standards and draft standards, etc. Similarly, it may be useful in calls for consultants, speakers, etc. of national public bodies, who have expertise in areas associated with Codex matters.
9. Basically, it is intended to cover all the issues that are usually brought up at the CCLAC Coordination and sometimes require broader consultation.
10. This initiative is expected to help bring together the technical bodies of the countries of the Region to discuss specific issues of interest to a country or group of countries or the whole session, associated with Codex aims, whether or not they are negotiation issues.
11. The Coordination will propose the use of this Forum to help reach another objective of the Regional Strategic Plan. In this respect, we believe it might be a good tool for communication and interaction through which countries can express their needs for specific training while other countries may provide the training required.
12. For example, country **A** needs laboratory training (detection methods for milk, peanuts, grain and processing). Country **B** replies that it has a first-class laboratory, where aflatoxin can be detected according to the methods recommended by Codex. Also, they would be willing to receive a maximum of three people, whom they could provide accommodation and food with within the institution. Later, countries A and B could continue with the arrangements for the exchange or even exchange information on potential funding sources for per diem and travel from one country to another.
13. We believe that this could be a practical way of bringing together those who express a specific need and those who can meet it. However, we should also consider the possibility of including these issues in level 3 where there are no satisfactory responses as the more advanced countries of the Region may not find an answer here.
14. **3) third level.** It is basically aimed at the civil society. The forum will propose a topic and will make surveys available intended to know the level of knowledge about this issue. The format of surveys will be “multiple choice” or “true or false” in order to measure the level of knowledge about the issue put forward.

15. Discussion topics should not address the need to set standards as although this kind of surveys by internet may provide information, the sample group is limited and has little or no representativeness since the surveyor does not choose the consultation methodology – the only way of ensuring there is an appropriate model representing all sectors. However, assuming that those who have internet access belong to a given population segment and that those entering our web page will be looking for specific issues associated with the matters covered by Codex, it might be helpful in order to know the level of knowledge about food safety issues, nutritional labelling or others.

16. The survey would be available for three months, and four would be conducted every year. Once the open consultation period is closed, the Coordination or the person entrusted with the task may analyze the level of knowledge and would make available the right answers as well as the grounds and explanations for each, so that it may also serve an educational purpose.

17. Thus, we propose that CCLAC provide guidance on the issues to be addressed this first period and define a working methodology to reach a consensus on the first initiatives that will be put forward in the fora.

### **Online Course**

18. This course has been developed with the support of FAO and the Codex Secretariat.

19. As we have stated in the report, the online course on Enhancing participation in Codex activities is intended to meet a clear need of the countries of the Region.

20. The course is designed to be delivered in 12 lessons (2 per week), with only one lesson for questions and assessment at the end of the first month and a final exam.

21. As we have pointed out, the course will be delivered separately in English and Spanish, with trainers in each language. First, two courses will be delivered in each language, with their future repetition pending consideration by FAO and the Codex Secretariat. The maximum number of participants will be 30 people. Participants' information should be submitted through the Codex Contact Point of each country.