

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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ALINORM 07/30/28

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirtieth Session
Rome, Italy, 2 – 7 July 2007

REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

Rabat, Morocco, 23-26 January 2007

Note: This document includes Codex Circular Letter CL 2007/5-AFRICA

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CX 3/5.2

CL 2007/5-AFRICA
February 2007

TO: - Codex Contact Points
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA (ALINORM 07/30/28)

The report of the 17th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa is attached and will be considered by the Thirtieth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (2 - 7 July 2007).

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

1. Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (see Appendix II)

Governments and interested international organizations are invited to provide their comment on the following: (i) elements for inclusion in a regional plan of action, (ii) appropriate indicators for conducting periodic evaluations, (iii) mechanisms whereby countries report their achievements to CCAFRICA through the Coordinator and (iv) proposals for a regional project to be funded by FAO/WHO or other donors and should do so in writing to: Mr Mohamed Majdi, Chef de la Division de la Répression des Fraudes, Ministère de l'Agriculture, du Développement Rural et des Pêches Maritimes, B.P. 1308, 10100 Rabat, Maroc (Fax No.: +212 37298150/ +212 37297544, email: mohammed_majdi@yahoo.fr / cnc_ma@yahoo.fr, with a copy to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153, Rome, Italy (fax: +39 06 570.54593 or e-mail: codex@fao.org) **not later than 1 May 2007.**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 30TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 59TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Coordinating Committee:

- endorsed the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding the role and activities of Regional Coordinating Committees (para. 6);
- endorsed the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (para. 11);
- unanimously agreed that Ghana be appointed as Regional Coordinator for Africa (para. 61).

MATTERS REFERRED TO CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Coordinating Committee:

Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)

- generally agreed that the current terms of reference of the Coordinating Committees should be kept unchanged (para. 21);
- did not express any particular view on the respective roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members Elected on a Geographical Basis (para. 22).

OTHER MATTERS

The Coordinating Committee:

- thanked the Codex Trust Fund for facilitating the record attendance of delegates to the CCAFRICA (para. 9) and expressed its appreciation to the FAO and WHO and other donor agencies for the work done in the Region and the usefulness of training manuals, guidelines and other recommendations (para. 30);
- endorsed the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA and agreed: i) to request by means of a Circular Letter, comments on elements for inclusion in a regional plan of action; appropriate indicators for conducting periodic evaluations; mechanisms whereby countries report their achievements to CCAFRICA through the Coordinator; and proposals for a regional project to be funded by FAO/WHO or other donors (para. 44); ii) to establish a Working Group, led by Morocco, in its capacity as Regional Coordinator, followed by the next Regional Coordinator, which would meet in the margins of the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to consider replies to the abovementioned Circular Letter; and would through electronic communication (a) draft a regional plan of action together with a set of indicators for evaluation and a mechanism for monitoring progress and (b) develop a proposal for a regional project that would support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for review by the next session of the Coordinating Committee (para. 44);
- noted the reports on national food control systems and consumer participation in food standards setting and the problems experienced by some countries in the region. It further noted that technical expertise existed in many parts of the region and that challenges relating to technical capacity could be overcome through cooperation of countries within the region (South-South cooperation) (para. 49);
- noted the reports on the use of Codex Standards at national and regional levels and noted the difficulty in adapting Codex standards to local needs due to lack of technical expertise; lack of microbiological specifications in Codex standards; difficulty in obtaining access to certain international markets due to the requirements of trading partners being more stringent than Codex standards (paras 53-57).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO (Codex) Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa held its Seventeenth Session in Rabat, Morocco from 23 to 26 January 2007. The Session was chaired by Mr Mohamed Majdi, Chef de la Division de la Répression des Fraudes, Ministère de l'Agriculture, du Développement Rural et des Pêches Maritimes, Morocco. The Session was attended by 98 delegates, advisors and observers representing 37 Member Countries, 4 Observer Members from outside the Region, and 3 international organizations. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariat and representatives of FAO and WHO, is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr A. Hilali, Directeur de la Protection des Végétaux, des Contrôles Techniques et de la Répression des Fraudes welcomed the delegates to Morocco. Opening statements were made by Mr Mohamed Laensar, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, accompanied by the Minister for Health, Mr Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah and Mr Mohamed Mohattane, Secretary of State to the Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, and Mr M.H. Halila, the FAO Representative in Morocco on behalf of the FAO and WHO. Both speakers reiterated the importance of Codex in protecting consumer health and facilitating international trade in food and the unique opportunity that the Coordinating Committee afforded members in exchanging experiences in the field of food safety. The Committee was further encouraged to finalize and adopt the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCAFRICA in order to strengthen the role of the Committee and enhance participation by members of the Region in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

3. A minute's silence was observed in memory of Mr David Nhari, the former Vice Chair of the Commission and former Coordinator for Africa.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

4. The Coordinating Committee agreed to the proposal by the Delegation of Morocco to discuss under Agenda Item 8 'Other Business and Future Work' for information purposes, the proposed amendments to the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products as well as fortification of foodstuffs with vitamins and minerals. With these additions, the Provisional Agenda was adopted as the agenda for the Session.

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

5. The Coordinating Committee noted matters arising from the 28th and 29th Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and from the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles, as summarized in the working document and discussed in particular the following matters:

Review of the Regional Coordinating Committees (28th CAC)

6. The Coordinating Committee noted and endorsed the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding the role and activities of Regional Coordinating Committees. The following specific remarks were made:

7. The Committee acknowledged that the establishment of the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCAFRICA would serve as a starting point for the preparation of a work plan for this Committee.

8. The Committee was informed that in order to improve communication and coordination in the region, in particular between sessions of the Committee, Morocco had created a website including a discussion forum in English and French (www.codexafrique.org). All participants were encouraged to make active use of these tools.

¹ CX/AFRICA 07/17/1

² CX/AFRICA 07/17/2

9. The Committee noted the record attendance at the present session and thanked the Codex Trust Fund for the successful organization of the three-day training course on Codex held prior to the start of this Session and supported future organization of workshops and seminars including in conjunction with the Coordinating Committee meetings. It was proposed that Codex seminars be more open to accommodate additional participants from countries showing added interest to participate at their own cost.

Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (29th CAC)

10. The Coordinating Committee recalled the recommendation made by the 58th Session of the Executive Committee, agreed by the 29th Session of the Commission, inviting the Coordinating Committee to comment on the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the Commission contained in ALINORM 06/29/3A, Appendix II.

11. The Coordinating Committee considered the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and supported the adoption of the plan by the forthcoming session of the Commission in its entirety.

12. Clarification was sought on the budget for the implementation of the Plan as well as the lack of numerical indicators. It was clarified that adoption of the plan did not automatically indicate a Codex budget for its implementation and that Member Countries were urged to continue its work in the decision making bodies of FAO and WHO to stress the importance of the work of Codex and its need for adequate funding. With regard to indicators to monitor progress, the Committee noted that the checklists based on Part 3 of the Plan will contain a short narrative in terms of whether objectives had been achieved or not for periodic review by the Executive Committee.

13. The Committee further agreed that there needed to be synergy between the Codex-wide Strategic Plan, the one for the Coordination of CCAFRICA and the Strategic Plan for Food Safety in Africa adopted by the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe, 3 – 6 October 2005).

Review of the Codex Committee Structure and Mandate of Codex Committees and Task Forces (29th CAC)

14. The Coordinating Committee discussed the proposals contained in paragraphs 1 to 28 of document ALINORM 06/29/9B Part II Add.1 “Review of the Codex Committees Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces”, prepared by the Codex Secretariat for the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

15. The Committee had no specific comments on the proposals presented, but it was recalled that at the present moment the deadline for the submission of comments to CL 2006/29-CAC requesting governments and observers’ comments on the same subject was 31 January 2007 at the latest. Countries were invited to submit their comments by the deadline.

16. In relation to a concern of the Delegation of Nigeria with regard to the busy timetable of meetings of Codex concentrated in certain periods of the year, it was noted that the session planning was constrained by several factors including annual sessions of the Commission and that proposals 1 and 2 were meant to address this matter.

Terms of Reference of Regional Coordinating Committees (23rd CCGP)

17. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the matter had been referred to the Committee from the Committee on General Principles for its view, subsequent to the proposal from the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) to amend its terms of reference.

18. Many delegations that spoke were not in favour of amending the terms of reference of CCLAC and other Coordinating Committees, since i) the current terms of reference were broad enough to allow Coordinating Committees to adopt regional positions and thus there was no need to amend the terms of reference, ii) the proposed amendment might turn the Codex Commission into a Commission comprising “regional blocs” instead of “sovereign states”, iii) it was difficult to distinguish between what constituted “strategic subjects” and what did not, and iv) the regional positions, once adopted by a Coordinating Committee, might be taken as legally binding on all countries of the region. These delegations further noted that the terms of reference of all Coordinating Committees should remain harmonized to keep aligned the roles and functions of these committees within the Commission.

19. Some delegations stated that the discussions in Coordinating Committees should be sensitive to economic issues involving food trade faced by countries of the region, and should take into account the concerns of those countries, including the request to develop a new Codex text, to be voiced and heard in the Commission.

20. Some other delegations stated that the intent of the proposal made by CCLAC required further clarification and that the Commission should defer any amendment to the terms of reference of Coordinating Committees until more experience was gained by CCLAC.

21. The Coordinating Committee agreed to advise the Committee on General Principles that the terms of reference of all Coordinating Committees should remain unchanged since there were no imperative reasons that justify the proposed amendment.

Respective Roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members of the Executive Committee Elected on a Geographical Basis (23rd CCGP)

22. The Coordinating Committee, noting that further discussion would pursue in the Committee on General Principles, did not express particular views on this issue.

23. In relation to the current arrangements according to which up to two advisors may accompany the members of the Executive Committee elected on a geographical basis, the Delegation of Cameroon suggested that improved coordination within the African region might allow advisors to be chosen from among countries other than the member and the coordinator and that such an arrangement would facilitate the expression of a wider range of views from the region in the Executive Committee. The Delegations of Congo, Gabon, Nigeria and Uganda indicated their willingness in principle to assist as advisors to the member of the Executive Committee elected on a geographic basis. The Committee noted that it was the prerogative of the member of the Executive Committee to designate its advisors and that no financial assistance was available for participation of the advisors.

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING (Agenda Item 3)³

24. The Representatives of FAO and WHO informed the Committee of both Organizations' activities to build capacity in member countries to strengthen public health and food control systems. Information was provided on the outcome of FAO/WHO expert meetings providing scientific advice on issues of food safety concern to Codex and member countries, such as the consultations on *Enterobacter sakazakii* in infant formulae and on the benefits and risks of the use of the lactoperoxidase system. A progress report on the FAO/WHO Consultative Process on the Provision of Scientific Advice and the current table of requests to FAO/WHO for scientific advice were also provided.

25. The Committee was advised that FAO and WHO continued to actively build capacity in the CCAFRICA region, including national and regional projects on food safety and food control, seminars and training courses on risk assessment, Codex Alimentarius and the “Five Keys for Safer Food”. A range of FAO/WHO training manuals and tools are available to support these activities. The International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) were highlighted as important information exchange mechanisms.

³ CX/AFRICA 07/17/3, Part 1 and Part 2.

26. As a follow-up to the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe, 3 – 6 October 2005), the Committee was informed that a second informal meeting of the bureau of the Conference would be organized during the current session of the Committee to discuss funding opportunities for the project proposal to implement the Recommended Five-Year Plan for Food Safety in Africa and agree on initiatives to be taken by FAO, WHO and member countries to accelerate its implementation.

27. The Committee was informed that subsequent to the re-organization of FAO placing emphasis on decentralization, the FAO African region would be served by one regional office based in Accra (Ghana) and four subregional offices located in Accra (Ghana), Harare (Zimbabwe), Libreville (Gabon) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

28. In relation to a concern raised by several delegations with regard to the lack of scientific data from developing countries for the conduct of risk assessments by FAO/WHO expert bodies, the Committee was informed of new approaches to increase the participation of experts, as well as the generation and use of data from developing countries. Scientists from the region were encouraged to apply through the regular calls for experts in order to achieve better geographic balance in the selection of qualified experts.

29. Several Delegations highlighted the need for funding and technical assistance to conduct total diet studies as well as to effectively participate in INFOSAN and wondered whether funding could be sought from the Standard and Trade Development Facility (STDF). It was clarified that the STDF's objective primarily was to assist countries in the implementation of international standards in food safety, animal and plant health and a trade component was required in project proposals to the facility.

30. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the FAO and WHO and other donor agencies for the work done in the Region and the usefulness of the training manuals, guidelines and other recommendations. It was recommended to increase their availability and language coverage in member countries.

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COORDINATION OF CCAFRICA (Agenda Item 4)⁴

Content of the Draft Strategic Plan

31. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the draft Strategic Plan, which was discussed at its last session, was revised by a working group led by Morocco taking into account the comments made at that session and those subsequently sent by correspondence. The revised draft Strategic Plan was circulated for comments in October 2006 and further comments received were reproduced in document CX/AFRICA 07/17/4 Add.1.

32. The Committee took note of several proposals being made during the present session and of the goodwill of member countries to further improve the draft Strategic Plan. However, the Committee agreed that opening a fresh discussion on this matter would result in delaying the adoption of the strategic plan and that discussion should focus on the written comments in the working document. The Committee therefore agreed to examine the written proposals on the basis of CRD 8.

33. The Committee decided that the overall timeframe for the strategic plan should be from 2007 to 2013, in order to allow for immediate implementation of certain actions while making the timeframe consistent with the Codex-wide Strategic Plan 2008-2013. Furthermore, the Committee agreed to insert specific timeframes for certain actions listed under Objectives 1 and 2.

34. The Committee, bearing in mind the need to sensitize national leadership, agreed to insert a new Action as the first item under Objective 2, to the effect that the Coordinator and member countries of the region should carry out actions targeted at responsible parties at the national level that will lead to higher priority and enhance support for Codex activities.

⁴ CX/AFRICA 07/17/4; CX/AFRICA 07/17/4 Add.1; CRD 8 (Submission from Morocco: compilation of comments included in CX/AFRICA 07/17/4 Add.1)

35. In relation to renumbered Action 3 (formerly Action 2) under Objective 2, the Committee decided to refer to English, French and Arabic and not to add other languages. The Committee was reminded that the working languages of CCAFRICA currently were English and French, and the budgetary situation of the Codex programme did not allow the extension of language coverage in the immediate future.

36. Some delegations stated that Portuguese should become a working language of CCAFRICA, referring to the fact that the 33rd Session of the FAO Conference, in November 2005, approved the provision of simultaneous Portuguese interpretation in future FAO Regional Conferences for Africa, having considered the recommendation made by the Twenty-third Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, as well as the estimated cost related thereto. It was stated that Portuguese was one of the working languages of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa.

37. In this regard, the Coordinating Committee was advised that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission required that the languages of the Commission were to be determined by the Commission from among the working languages of both FAO and the Health Assembly of WHO, and in all circumstances, from among the working languages either of FAO or of the Health Assembly of WHO.

38. The Coordinating Committee agreed to delete the fourth action under Objective 4, noting that this point was covered by Action 2 under Objective 6.

39. The Coordinating Committee agreed to refer to both the Coordinator and member countries of the region as responsible parties for Objective 5 and clarify the language of Action 3 under the same Objective.

40. Concerning Objective 7, the Coordinating Committee decided to rephrase Action 1 so that it addresses both economic and food safety issues of priority and also to clarify the description of Action 3.

41. With the amendments mentioned above and several other editorial changes made on the English and French versions of the strategic plan respectively, the Coordinating Committee decided to adopt the strategic plan and inform the Commission accordingly. The adopted Strategic Plan is attached to the present report as Appendix II.

42. The Committee noted that the Codex Secretariat, while not appearing as a responsible party in the Strategic Plan, would continue its efforts to provide assistance to Codex members through the exchange of information, timely distribution of documentation, and providing general advocacy materials on Codex work.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

43. The Coordinating Committee held discussion on how to implement its Strategic Plan and the mechanism through which the progress made in its implementation should be monitored. Several delegations stressed the pivotal role of the Coordinator in overseeing progress and coordinating actions taken by member countries, which were identified as key players in implementing the Strategic Plan. The need to develop an action plan (Objective 5, Action 1) between the current and next sessions of CCAFRICA was highlighted.

44. After an extensive exchange of views, the Committee agreed to establish a working group to follow up on the implementation of the strategic plan until the next session of the Committee. The Committee further agreed to take the following steps:

- A Circular Letter would be sent to Codex members of the region to solicit comments on (i) elements for inclusion in a regional plan of action, (ii) appropriate indicators for conducting periodic evaluations, (iii) mechanisms whereby countries report their achievements to CCAFRICA through the Coordinator and (iv) proposals for a regional project to be funded by FAO/WHO or other donors;

- The working group would hold a physical meeting in the margins of the 30th Session of the Commission in Rome in order to consider the comments received in reply to the above Circular Letter and would pursue its work through electronic communication with a view to (i) drafting a regional plan of action to be circulated for comments by governments prior to the next session of CCAFRICA, together with a set of indicators for evaluation and a mechanism for monitoring progress and (ii) developing a proposal for a regional project that would support the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The project proposal would be reviewed by the next session of the Coordinating Committee before being presented to potential donors willing to fund the project.

45. The Coordinating Committee noted that the working group would be open to all members of the region and would be led by Morocco, as actual Coordinator, until the end of the 30th Session of the Commission, succeeded by the next Coordinator thereafter. The Committee also agreed that the business of the working group should be conducted in English and French as much as practicable, mobilizing the resources available within the working group members.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING (Agenda Item 5)⁵

46. The Coordinating Committee in noting the information provided in written form in the working papers or Conference Room Documents (CRDs) agreed to focus discussion on common problems and possible solutions to these problems. It further noted that all CRDs containing country information would be made available to members of the Committee.

47. Several challenges and common problems were highlighted by delegations which included the following:

- The need to accord a higher priority to food safety within national programmes;
- the insufficient expertise in the areas of risk assessment and risk communication;
- the lack of analytical capacity in some countries;
- the limited experience in dealing with emerging and re-emerging foodborne diseases, food safety crises and biosecurity considerations which were stretching the already limited capacity of countries.

48. The Committee acknowledged that effective food safety control relied on an overarching national food safety policy embodying a food-chain approach; complete sets of legislation based on international standards and requirements; a functioning food control system with coordination amongst all stakeholders with clearly defined well-structured roles; qualified technical staff that require ongoing training; and proper surveillance systems, all of which require adequate funding.

49. Delegations were also of the opinion that technical expertise did exist in many parts of the region and that challenges relating to technical capacity could be overcome through cooperation of countries within the region (South-South cooperation). The Delegation of Morocco indicated that it was already cooperating with several neighbouring countries especially in the field of foodborne disease surveillance and laboratory analysis capacity and was willing to strengthen this cooperation through several of their technical institutes. A suggestion that information on accredited laboratories and other expertise available in the region be published in the form of a database on the CCAFRICA website was noted.

⁵ CX/AFRICA 07/17/5 (Information of Ethiopia, Mali and Morocco submitted in response to CL 2006/30-AFRICA, Part A); CRD 1 (Information of Ghana); CRD 2 (Information of Kenya); CRD 3 (Information of Uganda); CRD 4 (Information of South Africa); CRD 5 (Information of Morocco); CRD 9 (Information of Nigeria); CRD 10 (Information of Swaziland) and CRD 11 (Information of Tanzania).

50. The Delegation of the United States of America indicated its willingness to provide assistance in capacity building and informed the Committee of a joint initiative of the FAO, USDA and EPA to hold a Global Minor Use Summit in Rome (3 – 7 December 2007) which would focus on bringing countries together to address challenges in speciality crops; to define requirements for residual trials and residue data generation; to discuss approaches on a harmonized data generation programme and ways to share residue data developed for minor and speciality crops and to support countries' access to advanced residue programmes. More information on the Summit can be obtained from the following websites: www.ir4.rutgers.edu or www.fao.org/AG/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid.

51. The Representatives of FAO and WHO reconfirmed their commitment to assist countries where necessary and emphasized that Africa was a priority and that efforts were being made to provide training on risk analysis and foodborne disease surveillance, amongst others. However, while noting the needs of countries, it was emphasized that technical assistance depended on concrete requests from countries.

INFORMATION ON USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS (Agenda Item 6)⁶

52. The Coordinating Committee recalled that following the abolition of the notification procedure of the acceptance of Codex texts, the 57th Session of the Executive Committee agreed to add a new agenda item for Regional Coordinating Committees regarding the use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level. Coordinating Committees were thus tasked to monitor the use/non-use of Codex texts and identify related problems. It was further noted that this item was important in meeting the aims of Objective 7 of the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCAFRICA.

53. The Committee noted the information provided in the working paper and CRDs and was informed that all CRDs would be made available to members of the Committee.

54. Most delegations that spoke indicated that Codex standards were used as a basis for developing their national legislation and voluntary standards approved within the framework of their national standardization systems and that national conditions or needs were in many instances taken into account when developing standards. Several delegations however informed the Committee that they were experiencing difficulty in adapting Codex standards to meet national needs due to lack of technical expertise. Delegations also informed the Committee that although they had standards based on Codex, they were experiencing difficulty in monitoring the implementation of these standards or lacked laboratory facilities to verify compliance of food samples with relevant standards.

55. The Delegation of Cape Verde indicated that at this point it had no standards based on Codex in place and that three draft standards had been developed based on Codex, but that these had not yet been adopted.

56. The lack of microbiological specifications in Codex standards were highlighted as another difficulty for some countries. It was clarified that with the new approach to base standards on quantitative microbiological risk assessments, development of specific microbiological criteria would take time. For this purpose, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessments (JEMRA) was established to conduct such risk assessments for use by the Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH). Several risk assessments were already under consideration by the CCFH and delegates were advised to follow closely the work of this Committee.

⁶ CX/AFRICA 07/17/6 (Information of Ethiopia, Mali and Morocco submitted in response to CL 2006/30-AFRICA, Part B); CRD 1 (Information of Ghana); CRD 2 (Information of Kenya); CRD 3 (Information of Uganda); CRD 4 (Information of South Africa); CRD 10 (Information of Swaziland) and CRD 11 (Information of Tanzania).

57. Difficulty in obtaining access to certain international markets due to the requirements of trading partners being more stringent than Codex standards was highlighted. In this connection, the Committee recalled that in terms of the SPS Agreement, WTO members were allowed to set requirements that were more stringent than international standards provided these requirements were based on science (Article 3). The Committee's attention was also drawn to Article 9 of the SPS Agreement with regard to the obligation of importing countries to provide technical assistance to developing countries to assist such countries in meeting measures necessary to achieve the appropriate level of protection in their export markets.

58. In response to the question of lack of information on withdrawal of Codex standards, the Secretariat explained that the Commission adopted, withdrew or replaced standards and that these were reflected in reports of the Commission and that those standards in force were published on the Codex website. It noted the request to investigate ways of indicating withdrawn standards on its website.

59. The Committee was informed that at a regional level, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) had a regional standards body to harmonize standards and that it had established a subcommittee charged with harmonizing standards for foodstuffs. Several delegations reported that there was cooperation with neighbouring countries in developing standards and that these could be extended to regional standards in future.

60. The Delegation of Canada encouraged countries to make use of the FAO/WHO Training Package on Enhancing Participation in Codex Activities which contained valuable information and could assist countries in building capacity that could result in Codex standards addressing the particular needs and situations of their region.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 7)⁷

61. On the proposal of the Delegation of Lesotho and supported by many other delegations, the Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Ghana be appointed as Coordinator for Africa.

62. The Delegation of Ghana accepted the nomination and thanked countries for their support. The delegation committed itself to seeking the necessary funds to fulfil its role as coordinator and to actively support the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan and its implementation.

63. The Committee noted the expression of interest by the Delegation of Cameroon to be considered for coordinator. In so doing, the Committee agreed that this would not be binding on future decisions of the Committee and that any other countries were welcome to stand as a candidate in future.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 8)⁸

64. When adopting the provisional agenda the Committee had agreed to add a number of issues for information under this item (see para. 4).

Amendment to the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products

65. The Delegation of Morocco informed the Committee of the importance of the canned sardine sector to the economy of Morocco and of the difficulties in reaching agreement on the inclusion of a new species in the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products. It further informed the Committee that in the spirit of compromise, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) at its 28th Session agreed to amend this Standard through the inclusion of *Clupea bentincki* to the list of species as well as to amend the section on labelling, while proposing to initiate new work on the revision of the Procedure for the Inclusion of Additional Species in Standards for Fish and Fishery Products. The members of the Committee were urged to support the adoption of these amendments and the proposal for new work at the forthcoming session of the Commission.

⁷ CX/AFRICA 07/17/7

⁸ CRD 6 and 7 (Submission by Morocco)

Fortification of foodstuffs with vitamins and minerals

66. The Delegation of Morocco informed the Committee that with the increase in fortification of staple foods in recent years, there was a need for countries to put in place appropriate control strategies based on risk analysis with the goal of protecting consumers' health against the risks associated with consumption of these products. It further informed the Committee that the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) would be considering a discussion paper at its next session on the non-traditional addition of vitamins and minerals to foods, the discretionary addition of vitamins and minerals to food and the addition of bioactive substances that are essential constituents to foods. The delegation urged the Committee to underline the importance of this activity for the countries of the region and that CCNFSDU should as one of its priorities develop Codex texts for the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods including purity specifications and labelling requirements so that countries can develop national regulations and associated strategies for the control of fortified products.

Proposed Draft Standard for Abalone

67. The Delegation of South Africa informed the Committee of the decision of the CCFFP to accept a proposal to develop a standard for abalone and pending approval of this as new work by the forthcoming session of the Commission, South Africa would be leading the development of this proposed standard.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

68. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 18th Session would most likely be held between October 2008 and March 2009 and that the exact date and venue would be communicated to Members at a later stage, on the basis of consultation between the Coordinator to be appointed by the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject matter	Step	Action by	Document Reference in ALINORM 07/30/28
The Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA	-	Member Countries of the Region, Coordinator, FAO/WHO	para 41, paras 43 – 45 Appendix II

APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCAFRICA

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the role and enhance the participation and effectiveness of CCAFRICA within the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex African region

TIME FRAME: 2007-2013

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
1- To foster effective and dynamic communication between the CCAFRICA members and other regions, other Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximize the use of electronic communication systems in countries of the region, and encourage the development of a webpage for each national Codex Contact Point. 2. Encourage countries to continuously provide updated contact details of national Codex Contact Points to the Codex Secretariat. 3. Organize a virtual chat room with the primary objective of exchanging information prior to Codex meetings, among CCAFRICA members as well as other regional coordinating committees or Codex members. 4. Establish a mechanism whereby the Codex Contact Points and/or national Codex Committees in the region can share information and expertise. 	<p>Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator</p> <p>FAO/WHO and Member Countries of the region</p>	<p>June 2007-2008</p> <p>Yearly</p> <p>As soon as possible</p>

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
<p>2- To achieve an active and effective participation of all countries in the Region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, particularly CCAFRICA.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake actions targeted at responsible parties at national level that will lead to a higher priority and enhanced support to Codex activities. 2. Search for financial assistance from possible sources to support Codex activities (trust funds, WHO, FAO, UNDP, International organizations, etc.). 3. Ask for collaboration in the translation of relevant information into English, French and Arabic. 4. Establish working groups responsible for examining strategic aspects of Codex activities. 5. Involve all countries in the region in the activities CCAFRICA. 6. Hold in conjunction with sessions of CCAFRICA, seminars/workshops on food safety and matters of concern to the region. 7. Encourage countries that have a common interest to coordinate their position and present it as a common position at Codex committee meetings. 8. Give support to countries of the Region in organizing Codex related events. 	<p>Coordinator / Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator</p> <p>Coordinator and FAO/WHO</p> <p>Member Countries of the region</p> <p>FAO/WHO</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p>
<p>3- To promote the development of and to strengthen National Codex Committees and/or Codex Contact Points in member countries of the region.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify needs for capacity building with other organizations and look for possible financing sources. 2. Encourage and support CCAFRICA Member Countries of the region to establish a National Codex Committee. 	<p>Member Countries of the region and FAO/WHO</p> <p>FAO/WHO</p>	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
4- To take advantage of available technical and scientific expertise and experiences of the member countries of the region.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and establish a list of specialists and competent institutions in the region based on the information provided by each country that could provide support and specialized advice to CCAFRICA. 2. Establish a regional risk assessment body that will coordinate communication of expert data with FAO/WHO expert bodies. 3. Identify and prioritize issues that require specialized expertise. 	<p>Member Countries of the region /Coordinator</p> <p>Member Countries of the region /Coordinator</p> <p>Member Countries of the region /Coordinator</p>	
5- To ensure the continuity and sustainability of CCAFRICA activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design a biennial plan of action to be implemented between CCAFRICA meetings. 2. Conduct periodic review and follow up on the actions in the Strategic Plan. 3. Establish information transmission procedures to ensure a better transition of the coordinationship. 4. Present a progress report on the achievements in the key areas of the Strategic Plan at the meetings of CCAFRICA. 	<p>Coordinator / Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator / Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator</p> <p>Coordinator</p>	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
6- To obtain technical cooperation and develop a funding mechanism that would enable CCAFRICA to develop and sustain its activities in accordance with its objectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elaborate a list of organizations that could provide technical and financial cooperation. 2. Organize working groups tasked with formulating fundraising plans and ensure their follow-up. 3. Develop and analyze proposals for the creation of trust funds and other means of financing within the codex domain, taking into consideration the region's interests. 	<p>Coordinator /Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator / Member Countries of the region</p> <p>Coordinator /Member Countries of the region</p>	
7- Identify and prioritize regional needs in matters of food safety and other areas with a view to finding solutions to meet these needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify priority economic or food safety issues for which consensus exist within the region for the elaboration of Codex standards. 2. Elaborate standards, guidelines and other recommendations that have been identified as being of interest to the region. 3. Encourage contacts between other interested parties regularly attending CCAFRICA meetings on food safety matters. 	<p>Member Countries of the region /Coordinator</p> <p>Member Countries of the region / Coordinator</p> <p>Member Countries of the region / Coordinator</p>	