

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-third Session

Comments from Thailand

Intermediate report of the CCEXEC Sub-committee on Codex and the Pandemic -Strategic challenges and opportunities

Thailand appreciates the great effort of the Sub-committee of CCEXEC in preparing a very comprehensive document.

In general, Thailand supports Codex to continue working under COVID19 pandemic or similar situations. We understand that the pandemic brings great impacts on several countries.

The limitation on country control measures and economic situation lead the difficulty in working face-to-face or holding a physical meeting. So, it is necessary to find a way, such as creating virtual meeting, to achieve the progress of Codex works as international food standards are needed for facilitating international trade.

To implement and organize virtual meeting effectively, we would like to provide recommendations as follows:

Thailand proposes that Codex should establish a clear guideline for continuation of the work of Codex virtually in pandemic situation to be included in Procedural Manual. The guideline must ensure that in the virtual meeting, the development of the Codex standards is still based on science and adhere to the core values of Codex, inclusiveness, collaboration, transparency and consensus building.

In addition, the clear rules regarding running the meeting virtually, e.g. voting and participating, must be established. Appropriate measures to facilitate consensus for virtual meetings that may be different from current measures addressed in Procedural Manual should be identified.

While the approach taken to run virtual meeting should ensure inclusiveness and transparency, concerns should be taken into consideration is on the security of information to create the confidence of member countries in sharing important information.

An additional user-friendly manual or guidance may be developed to provide members any necessary information that support the process of virtual meeting, e.g. the infrastructure needed and the tips to make a clear intervention.

Virtual meetings could be an alternative for all levels of Codex works (Commission, subsidiary bodies, working groups and consultation). Its implementation and organization should consider specific factors or criteria that might differ among situations.

In addition, we support Codex to develop approaches or mechanisms to ensure equity among Codex members. The meeting documents, namely CRDs, CX, CLs, should be prepared in advance so that all member countries can provide their views appropriately. The arrangement of order of speakers and the limitation of time for intervention should be implemented and properly controlled in order to allow member countries to express their views equally. The period of a meeting may be separated into a number of short periods, of which at the end of each period there will be a short summary of what have been discussed.

Codex members are strongly encouraged to participate in the meeting actively in order to reach consensus, especially in working group and the Committee meetings. An approach may be taken is to allocate Codex Trust Funds to build capacity needed to participate in the virtual meeting of the Codex members or to strengthen the potential of National Codex Contact Points to support inclusiveness and transparency.

Thailand is of the view that an appropriate process of running the virtual meeting allow the work of Codex to continue in the pandemic or similar situations. Nonetheless, in general, the physical meeting is still important for the standard development process of which achieve the 4 core values of Codex.