

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 Indonesia

INTERMEDIATE REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION - "CODEX AND THE PANDEMIC - STRATEGIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"

Indonesia appreciates the Sub-committee of the Executive Committee for preparing document CX/CAC 20/43/2 Intermediate Report for the Codex and the Pandemic - Strategic Challenges and Opportunities. This document is very important to be developed as the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the Codex work management, particularly on the schedule of Codex sessions. No physical Codex meeting in 2020 so far, except for CCEXEC78 in February 2020. We also congratulate the effort that has been done by Codex Secretariat, Chair and Vice Chairs of the Commission in order to ensure that the work of Codex continues in this difficult situation.

Indonesia is of the view that virtual meeting is the best solution for the current pandemic situation and/or for any similar future emergency situation which prevent Codex members to meet physically. We do not believe that the implementation of a hybrid meeting (*physical and online*) is appropriate because it will be unfair, both in terms of time (considering the differences in time for participants in the difference part of the globe and duration of meeting time) and level of participation in the deliberation process. It might be also difficult to have equal opportunity to intervene for those participated in the physical meeting and those linked virtually.

Virtual meeting will give an alternative way for Codex to maintain the schedule of the meeting while facilitate more members to involve in the Codex standards setting process. Virtual meeting should be explored and developed to have the same role as physical meeting of the Codex subsidiary bodies and Commission, to take decision for the advancement of the proposed draft standard. Therefore, it might be needed to review the rules of procedure to accommodate the virtual meeting, both in the emergency situation or normal condition, for Codex subsidiary bodies and Commission to take decision.

Some obstacles and constraints that might be faced when we hold a virtual meeting should be carefully considered. For examples, it will be challenging for Chairs to play their roles to manage time and give the same opportunity to all Members to deliver their comments during the meeting. Mechanism and criteria of reaching consensus for certain complex matters will be also an important issue to be solved.

The experiences of holding virtual meeting for CCEXEC79 and CAC43 can be important inputs to review the effectiveness of virtual Codex meeting in order to ensure that the core value of Codex (inclusiveness, collaboration, consensus building and transparency) can still be achieved.