

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Forty-fifth Session
Ottawa, Canada, 13-17 May 2019

OPENING REMARKS ON BEHALF OF CAC CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS TO CCFL45

Deputy Minister, representatives of FAO and WHO, Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends.

My thanks to the Committee Chair, Kathy Twardek and our hosts in the government of Canada for providing me with the opportunity to speak briefly to you on behalf of the Codex Alimentarius Commission chair, Guilherme da Costa, and my fellow vice-chairs Mariam Eid and Professor Purwiyatno Hariyadi.

I am honoured to be representing the Commission chair and vice-chairs at the opening of this forty-fifth session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling. When we took office in 2017, we wrote to all member countries setting out our intention to be close to member countries, to understand their viewpoints, and to work tirelessly to promote consensus within Codex. The subsidiary bodies of Codex are where the hard work on standards development is done, under the skilled chairmanship of Kathy Twardek and her fellow chairs across the Codex family. Following these opening remarks I will revert to being part of my national delegation. Nevertheless, I remain at the Chair's service and at your service too.

And we have some serious work to do here this week. Our agenda is wide and varied and will require discipline from all of us to complete the work.

I am heartened that this agenda reflects significant inputs from a wide range of member countries who have led or co-chaired the work, and who have contributed their views in the development of these papers. We now need to focus on timely progression of the work that the Codex Alimentarius Commission has mandated to us, and the identification of our next priorities – so that this Committee and Codex in general remains relevant in a changing world.

One of the tasks I am also engaged in this week is the review of the draft Codex strategic plan for 2020-2025 in the light of comments received from members in response to the recent circular letter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all member countries and observers that have commented. One theme that emerges frequently in member country comments is the need for Codex texts to be science-based. In relation to the work of this committee, I suggest we should also recognise the robust insights that may be provided by the economic and other social sciences, both in terms of regulatory design, and also in evaluation of the impacts of different interventions in different national settings.

In conclusion, I wish us all a productive week. And I stand ready to support the building of consensus in whatever way I can.

Thank you.