



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

41st Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 2 - 6 July 2018

MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO¹

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

1. Introduction

This document highlights evolving policies and related matters of FAO and WHO that could be of interest or relevance to the work of Codex.

2. Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO:

2.1 *FAO/WHO International Food Safety Conference*

2.1.1 FAO and WHO are planning to hold the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Conference in Geneva on April 16-18 2019. It is being organized in collaboration with WTO which will be the venue of the Conference. The Conference aims to raise awareness of a number of policy and strategic issues affecting food safety globally and to strengthen commitment at the highest political level to address emerging challenges, and scale up food safety in the global agenda. Once the concept note has been finalised it will be available on the FAO and WHO food safety webpages².

2.1.2 The conference will consist of:

- (i) an opening plenary session (welcome remarks from the executive heads of FAO, WHO and WTO),
- (ii) a high-level ministerial segment(2 or 3 Panels involving ministers representing agriculture, health, food security and), and
- (iii) a number of thematic panel discussions. The panel discussions will cover strategic and policy issues affecting global food safety.

2.1.3 The themes tentatively identified for the panel discussions include:

- The costs and the burden of unsafe food and FBD: scaling up food safety in the global agenda
- Food safety and the challenge of climate change and sustainable intensification
- Improving the safety of food supplies through effective partnership locally and globally
- Science and innovation at the service of food safety
- Food safety and global trade in a digital age
- Evolving role of food standards
- Engaging the consumer: Working towards safe and nutritious diets and sustainable food systems.

2.1.4 An International Advisory Panel, co-chaired by FAO and WHO, will be established to provide recommendations on the thematic areas and overall structure of the Conference. Its membership will comprise: senior representatives from other UN/ International Organizations and key regional bodies with an interest in food safety (WTO, OIE, UNIDO, WB, WFP, AU, EU); representatives of donors, distinguished food safety leaders from regulatory, academic, development and trade sectors. The membership should not exceed 20 and equitable geographic representation will be sought.

¹ This document has also been included in the agenda of CCEXEC75 under agenda item 12

² FAO <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/home-page/en/>; WHO <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/>

2.2 World Food Safety Day

The FAO Conference adopted Resolution 11/2017 in July 2017. The Director General of WHO communicated to the FAO DG the support of WHO on this initiative. In April 2018, FAO submitted the proposal to the United Nations secretariat with a view to including an agenda item to the forthcoming UN General Assembly. If adopted by the UNGA, the first World Food Safety Day of the United Nations is likely to be celebrated on 7 June 2019.

3. Matters arising from FAO

3.1. *Issues Arising from 158th Session of FAO Council*

3.1.2 Selected recommendations from the 158th Session of the FAO Council (December 2017) that could be of particular interest to the Codex Alimentarius Commission are noted here. Additionally, selected activities involving strategic guidance on issues of importance to food safety, have also been identified. Concise explanations of the issues noted in this Section are provided in the Section that follows.

3.1.3 The Council:

- a) approved the modalities recommended by the Joint Meeting of the FAO Programme and Finance Committees pertaining to the use of some funding from the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations to support the FAO food safety scientific advice programme;
- b) noted the recognition of agriculture and food security during the 23rd Conference of the Parties (COP23), including the KORONIVIA Joint Work on Agriculture, and encouraged FAO's efforts in that regard;
- c) welcomed the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO4) and endorsed action proposed by Management to address them;
- d) noted the importance of the work of the CFS Open-ended Working Group on Nutrition that had been asked to develop terms of reference for submission to Plenary at the 45th Session of CFS in 2018 for the policy convergence process leading to voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition
- e) welcomed the decision of the CFS to hold a Global Thematic Event on the use of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security in 2018 at its 45th Session.

3.1.4 In addition to the above-listed recommendations of the FAO Council, FAO also participated in the organization and implementation of the World Water Forum in March 2018 and in the Global Soil Symposium in May 2018. Both of these meetings were relevant to safety of foods along the food chain and may be of interest to the Codex community.

3.2 *Concise explanation of FAO Policy and related issues of relevance to Codex*

3.2.1 Allocation of a proportion of the FAO Unspent balance to FAO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme

As reported to the 40th CAC, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) established an informal open-ended working group (OEWG) to consider options for increased and sustainable funding for FAO's programme of food safety scientific advice. The OEWG met twice and developed a series of considerations for discussion at the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and 169th Session of the Finance Committee (November 2017). The Joint meeting recommended:

- "The allocation, with agreement from resource partners, of 10 percent of the unspent balances of the MAFAP/FMM³ Trust Funds, up to a maximum of USD 0.5 million, for the blind Trust Fund aimed at supporting a sustainable funding solution to the FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius;" and
- "The allocation of fifty percent of unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations above a threshold of USD 5 million, up to a maximum of USD 1 million, towards the blind Trust Fund".

The FAO Council at its Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session Rome, 4-8 December 2017 subsequently approved the above-stated recommendation. As of April 30th there was yet no information on the amount, if any, of the unspent balance that would be allocated. Discussions are ongoing within FAO to propose a trust fund mechanism that is appropriate for receiving funds from FAO's RP, from member countries as well as from non-state actors. The discussion focusses on the development of firewalls that would provide confidence that

³ These are Trust Fund Programmes for Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies (MAFAP) and the Multi-partner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM).

donors do not influence decisions on the work to be undertaken within the FAO Programme of Scientific Advice. Given the joint nature of the Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme, FAO has initiated discussion with WHO on the issue.

3.2.2 KORONOVIA Joint Work on Agriculture

The relevance of the global commitments to climate change adaptation and mitigation to food safety was underlined in the paper CX/CAC 17/40/16 presented last year. At the Bonn Climate Change Conference in November 2017 (COP23) the Parties agreed to the [Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture](#). The decision recognizes the importance of agriculture in responding to climate change as well as the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and the critical role of effective adaptation strategies in achieving food security. FAO is a key partner in working with countries to implement and to increase the ambitions of their nationally determined commitment (NDCs) linked to the agriculture sector. FAO is presently working with 25 countries⁴ to support the implementation of these programmes which deal with both adaptation and mitigation. Climate change can negatively affect food safety in a variety of ways. Therefore, it is important for food safety specialists to develop and implement national measures that ensure the effective management of all the risks to food safety that are triggered by climate change. Codex delegates are encouraged to identify climate change focal points in their countries (link provided below) and to promote the integration of food safety perspective into NDCs. It should be recalled that ongoing work in Codex on ciguatera, water quality and mycotoxins are all linked to climate change.

http://unfccc.int/parties_observers/parties/national_focal_points/items/9336.php

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/tools/country-directory>

FAO's engagement with the GCF forms an integral part of the broader climate-related support the organization provides for its member countries, all of which is guided by FAO's Climate Change Strategy.

3.2.3 Evaluation of FAO Strategic Programme on Inclusive and Efficient Food Systems (SP4)

The FAO Strategic Programme on Inclusive and efficient food systems (SP4) embraces many food safety issues. An independent evaluation of SP4 was implemented in 2017 and includes an annex which focuses on the contribution of food safety to the Programme. It draws upon evidence obtained from relevant documents and interviews of FAO staff and other stakeholders, including during field missions to a selection of countries. The evaluation concluded that food safety is an important area of FAO's contribution to sustainable development. Good results were found in all five areas of the FAO food safety strategy⁵, particularly in supporting science-based food safety governance and decisions; support to national food control regulatory capacities; and enhancing food safety management along food chains. Each of these areas are key elements in enabling trade flows for safe food. Thus, FAO's food safety programme has made clear contributions towards SP4. The evaluation noted, however, that notwithstanding the effectiveness of support, there are concerns regarding FAO's limited capacities to service the growing magnitude and complexity of demands. The evaluation report can be found at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bd712e.pdf>

3.2.4 CFS: Voluntary Guidelines for food systems and nutrition

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. The Committee reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to FAO Conference. At CFS 44 in 2017, the Committee decided the main thematic area of its work in the next two years will be on nutrition, intended to result in a global, multi-stakeholder consensus on a policy instrument to positively shape food systems and sustainably-based diets. A High Level Panel of Experts ([HLPE report on nutrition and food systems](#)) provided the evidence base for CFS in this work.

Part of this work is the development of voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition. A technical task team that includes a range of UN agencies is currently developing TORs for this work. The TORs are expected to be agreed by an Open Ended Working Group of the CFS at a meeting in June 2018, discussed by the CFS bureau in July and sent to plenary in October 2018. The work to develop the voluntary GLs will be taken forward by the Working Group on Nutrition during 2019. All interested stakeholders are welcome to participate in the process.

⁴ Work has been initiated in the following countries: Paraguay, El Salvador, Cuba, Bolivia, Guyana, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Tanzania, Benin, Mozambique, The Gambia, Kenya, Congo, Sudan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan.

⁵ The FAO strategy for "improving food safety globally" was endorsed by the 24th Session of COAG in 2014. It included 5 main areas of work: i) strengthening national food control systems; (ii) support to science-based global food safety governance; (iii) enhancing food safety management along value chains; (iv) providing food safety platforms; (v) developing food safety intelligence and foresight.

The draft TORs include coverage of food safety and quality and also make reference to the use of all previously agreed GLs. The Codex “community” could therefore have significant interest in participating in this work. Updates on the progress of this work can be found at the CFS website: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/en/>.

3.2.5 Global Thematic Event on the use of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food

The voluntary guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (RtF) were endorsed in 2004 and are one of five main policy products of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The CFS monitors its key policy products through holding a Global Thematic Event in Plenary every two years and the upcoming 45th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 45), due to be held in Rome, Italy from 15-20 October 2018, will convene a Global Thematic Event on the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security. The objective of the thematic event in 2018 is to share experiences and take stock of the use and application of the RtF. Noting that the RtF emphasize Food safety and consumer protection (Guideline 9) as an essential component of the enabling environment for Realization of the Right to Adequate Food, the deliberations and outcomes of the thematic event on guideline 9 may be of interest to Codex. The preparation of the Global Thematic Event in plenary will be under the oversight of the CFS Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group, and the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on monitoring. Previous global thematic events have had the following objectives: (i) Foster the adoption, adaptation and scaling up of good practices and learning from experience in the application of the GLs; (ii) Monitor progress in implementing the GLs at national, regional and global levels; and (iii) Increase awareness and understanding of the GLs.

3.2.6 AMR

Recruitment processes are ongoing in FAO for the two additional posts that were created in 2017 to support the implementation of the corporate AMR programme (a P2 position based in AGAH and a P3 based in AGFF). In addition FAO will provide a post in the Inter Agency Coordination Group (IACG) secretariat, thereby supporting the activity of the IACG sub groups in their development of recommendations for UN progress in tackling AMR.

FAO is contributing, as part of the tripartite, to development of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework on AMR, intended to assess delivery of the Global Action plan on AMR (GAP) and the resultant impact. The framework articulates the indicators for which data will be collated to measure progress. It has been developed in collaboration with relevant experts, including the IACG, and via open public consultation. The tripartite are now working together to initiate piloting of the framework before finalizing for publication. One of the core vehicles through which data will be collected against the indicators is the tripartite country self-assessment [questionnaire](#), which has now completed the second round of responses.

FAO is also contributing to compilation of the tripartite Development and Stewardship Framework; this framework will support the development, control, distribution and appropriate use of new antimicrobial medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions, while preserving existing antimicrobial medicines, and promoting affordable access to existing and new antimicrobial medicines and diagnostic tools, taking into account the needs of all countries and in line with the GAP. This framework is currently undergoing revision following a member state consultation hosted by WHO last November.

3.2.7 Global Soil Symposium

Animal production and food processing, as well as waste from other anthropogenic activities (municipal and hospital sewage, industrial discharge, etc.), are sources of microorganisms and chemicals that contaminate soils. As a result, pathogenic and antimicrobial resistant bacteria, antibiotic residues, pesticides, and heavy metals enter the food chain through contaminated animal feeds, water used in agriculture, and crops grown for human consumption. This interconnectivity between soil contamination and food production therefore has direct and significant impacts on food security and underscores the importance of role of FAO's Food Safety Programme's collaborations with Land and Water Division in addressing this critical problem. To better understand and define this relationship, several cross-cutting thematic areas that explore the role of soils as both reservoirs and sources food contaminants were included in the agenda of the Global Soil Symposium, to be held May 2-4, 2018, at FAO HQ in Rome.

4. Matters arising from WHO

4.1. 13th General Programme of Work (GPW-13)

4.1.1 The 71st World Health Assembly (21-26 May 2018) is expected to adopt a new General Programme of Work, which will replace the 12th General Programme of Work (2014-2019) and will guide the work of WHO over the period of 2019-2022, together with the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030.

Key elements are as follows: there are three strategic priorities (1) Universal Health Coverage, (2) Health Emergencies, (3) Healthier Populations. Codex work will specifically contribute to several platforms within the 'Healthier Populations' priority, in particular on 'improving human capital across life course; NCD's Mental health and risk factors; combating AMR; Climate and environmental impact on health'. The control of foodborne disease specifically appears under Platform 5 related to climate change. The Programme Budget 2020-2021 will follow the new framework described in GPW-13.

4.1.2 The ambitious goals as laid out in the 13th General Programme of Work will be achieved through three strategic shifts: (1) Health in all policies, highlighting i.a. the need for intersectoral collaboration; (2) Countries at the Center; and (3) Focus normative work on impact. Codex work is already based on intersectoral collaboration, driven by country needs and a stronger focus will be given to implementation of Codex work at regional and country level.

4.2. Antimicrobial Resistance

4.2.1 In support of the Global Action Plan on AMR, WHO has launched new guidelines⁶ on use of medically important antimicrobials⁷ in food-producing animals, to help preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics that are important for human medicine by reducing their use in animals.

4.2.2. In September 2016, during the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Member States adopted the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance contained in Resolution A/RES/71/3.⁸ In accordance with the Political Declaration, an ad hoc Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (IACG) was established.⁹

4.2.3 The IACG is co-chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and the WHO Director-General. At the request of the UN Secretary-General, the tripartite Secretariat of FAO, OIE and WHO is hosted in WHO Headquarters in Geneva.

4.2.4 The seventh meeting of the IACG took place on the side of the Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) in Bangkok, 29 January-1 February 2018. More information about the IACG, including records of all previous meetings, is available at www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/en/.

4.2.5 WHO, in collaboration with FAO and OIE, has developed a global Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for AMR, taking a "One Health" approach to assess successful development of "One Health" National Action Plans.

4.2.6 WHO is currently developing, in collaboration with FAO and OIE, a Roadmap towards the establishment of a global framework for development and stewardship to combat antimicrobial resistance with the objective to facilitate access to antimicrobial agents in LMIC while preserving the effectiveness of existing ones.

4.3 Alcohol

4.3.1 Worldwide, more than 3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol and 5.1 % of the global burden of disease and injury is attributable to alcohol, as measured in disability adjusted life years (DALYs). Alcohol consumption causes death and disability relatively early in life: 25% of deaths among those 20-39 years can be attributed to alcohol, reducing the capacities of an economically productive cohort.

4.3.2 Harmful use of alcohol is a major obstacle to sustainable development, it has an impact on the health and well-being of the drinkers, their friends, family, colleagues and can damage the social and economic fabric of society. The harmful use of alcohol is a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions, affecting maternal health and child development, noncommunicable diseases and conditions such as cancer, violence, road safety and mental health and infectious diseases such as TB and HIV/AIDS.

4.3.3 The 2010 WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol, the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013 - 2020 and Health target 3.5 of the SDG 2030 Agenda to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including harmful use of alcohol, are clear commitments by the international community to step up action at all levels to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.

4.3.4 Expectations have recently raised substantially that standards will be set to protect consumer health, possibly through the definition of an alcoholic beverage, labelling of alcoholic strength, ingredients and calories as well as warning labels to inform consumers about the health risks associated with alcohol

⁶ http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/antimicrobial-resistance/cia_guidelines/en/

⁷ <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/antimicrobials-fifth/en/>

⁸ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/3

⁹ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2017-03-17/interagency-coordination-group-antimicrobial-resistance>

consumption. The ongoing work in the Codex Committee on Food Labelling on alcohol labelling is an opportunity to meet these expectations.

5. Recommendations

The Committee/Commission is invited to note the information given in this document and take necessary actions to best take into consideration of the policies of the parent organizations.