

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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COMMENTS OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATORS FOR AFRICA, NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC, ASIA AND NEAR EAST

Comments of the FAO/WHO Coordinator for Africa

In addition to the normative work, CCAFRICA25 agreed to inform CAC48 of the intention of CCAFRICA to amend the agenda for its next session to include matters of interest to the region (Africa) arising from other regional and international organizations as part of the efforts to extend the information sharing to ensure synergies and avoid duplication through inclusion of Observers, especially those from the region.

Africa has established eight Regional Economic Communities with six of them currently having observer status in Codex (COMESA, CEN-SAD, EAC, ECOWAS, IGAD & SADC). Considering that most of the trading in the region takes place within the different regional blocs which makes them very important structures to tap into in advancing food safety and quality matters. The coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area has also shone significant limelight to Codex. The African Union undertakes regional food safety and quality programmes in the continent as guided by the Food Safety Strategy for Africa which should be reported to members during CCAFRICA sessions.

Additionally, to achieve some of the commitments reflected in the Kampala Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), key actions that are expected to be undertaken include enhancing Sanitary and PhytoSanitary standards (SPS) and implementation of One Health protocols to safeguard food safety and protect human, animal, plant and environmental health.

Within the standardization field, the African Organization for Standardization continues to develop harmonized African standards that cover agriculture and food products which are mostly traded in the continent which calls for establishing stronger collaboration between Codex and ARSO in harmonization of standardization work for priority food products in the region to adapt existing standards or new work to regional priorities.

There is continued excellent work with FAO and WHO Regional Offices for Africa with several initiatives undertaken in order to improve the food safety and quality situation in the region as well as address the critical need for data to support risk assessment and standard setting. A number of members who completed assessment of their national food control systems using the FAO/WHO tool are progressively moving towards implementation of actions. Africa as the biggest beneficiary of Codex Trust Fund support, considering that up to 31 Countries received funding wish to appreciate the support from Codex members who have contributed to the fund and advocates for repurposing of the current funding approach to expand the scope and range in order to better deliver on the key capacity needs for several developing countries.

In the 2022–2024 biennium, there was significant progress registered with regard to the implementation of the regional communications work plan considering that CCAFRICA met and exceeded most of the indicators established in the work plan, becoming the most active contributor to news and information related to Codex work on the Codex website. This has ultimately increased visibility and contributed to raising the profile of Food safety and Codex on the Continent.

Following the establishment of an EWG chaired by Zambia and co-chaired by Gambia, Kenya, Morocco, and Senegal to develop a work plan to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, the task has been completed and the region is ready to start the implementation in 2026.

Finally, as will be presented in Agenda 12, the members in the region at CCAFRICA25 recommended The Gambia as the next Coordinator for Africa recalling that Uganda had been appointed by CAC43. Thank you.

Comments of the FAO/WHO Coordinator for North America and the South-West Pacific

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ni sa bula vinaka and greetings from Fiji and the North America and South West Pacific Region

It is an honor to share with you the outcomes of the 17th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific region meeting, held in Fiji, 3- 7 February 2025, which marked a milestone in advancing Codex engagement and regional collaboration.

CCNASWP17 was attended by representatives from ten Member countries, the Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO, and observer organizations. The meeting was officially opened by the late Hon. Vatimi Rayalu, Minister for Agriculture and Waterways of Fiji, who highlighted food safety as a key global and regional priority amidst emerging challenges such as climate change, global supply chain dynamics, and new pathogens. At the opening, Dr Allan Azegele, Chairperson of CAC, and Dr. Sarah Cahill, the Codex Secretary, emphasized the vital role of the coordinating committees in shaping Codex work and amplifying the voices of our diverse Members, especially those from small island developing states.

Please allow me now to draw your attention to some key areas that were discussed other than new work proposals from the NASWP region, which were addressed under item 5.

The keynote discussions on “Indigenous Foods – Food Safety and One Health Considerations” reminded us that traditional diets are not only a source of cultural pride but also a pathway to greater food security and trade. Delegates agreed on the need to build stronger safety frameworks for indigenous foods, deepen scientific research into their nutritional and safety aspects, and adopt a One Health approach. Preserving traditional knowledge and weaving indigenous foods into sustainable food systems emerged as a top priority for the region.

CCNASWP17 agreed that the Standard Operating Procedure for identifying kava varieties and its nobility needed further refinement in line with guidance from CCMAS, and welcomed ongoing regional work to validate HPLC and LC-MS methods to test scopoletin levels in noni fruit juice to support data submission to JECFA, with assistance from the AOAC International South West Pacific Section.

Members reported ongoing challenges including limited laboratory capacity, resource constraints, and the need for enhanced data sharing. CCNASWP17 called for renewed investment in national food control systems, a shift toward risk-based inspection models, and stronger regional cooperation under the One Health framework.

An In-Session Working Group, chaired by Canada, reviewed and endorsed the **Regional Work Plan and the Communications Plan** for 2025–2026. Recommendations included improved visibility through Codex web updates, stronger communication networks, and closer coordination with CTF to enhance participation from small island states.

The 2024 regional survey on **use and impact of Codex standards** highlighted the need to include regional standards, such as those on kava and fermented noni juice, in future surveys. Delegates recommended integrating trade considerations and flexible participation options to improve response rates.

With Fiji completing its second term, CCNASWP17 unanimously nominated the Cook Islands as the next Coordinator for the NASWP region.

This is my last meeting as Coordinator for the NASWP region, and on behalf of the government of Fiji, I take this opportunity to thank the Chair, Vice Chairs, the Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO and the Members from the region for all your support and guidance to Fiji as the Coordinator over our last 2 terms.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the incoming coordinator for the NASWP region, the Cook Islands.

Vinaka Vakalevu and I thank you chair.

Comments of the FAO/WHO Coordinator for Asia

It is my honour to report on CCASIA23, held in Nanning, China, from 22 to 26 September, where I had the privilege of serving as Chairperson.

As the coordinator changed during the term, the session was co-hosted by China and Japan. I am sincerely grateful to the Government of China for co-hosting, and to Co-Chairperson, Ms. Claire Ding Hao, for her excellent collaboration and partnership. I also thank all Members and Observers for their active participation, which made CCASIA23 a great success.

CCASIA23 achieved several important outcomes beyond standard setting.

First, a keynote address and panel discussion on chemical food safety enabled experts from within and outside the region to share experiences and good practices. The session also featured a summary of the FAO/WHO

workshop on the risk assessment of food allergens, held just before the session. CCASIA23 reaffirmed that chemical food safety remains a regional and global priority, emphasizing high-quality and interoperable data for risk assessment, regional cooperation, laboratory capacity development, and the use of digital and AI tools, supported by appropriate governance frameworks. It also highlighted the need to strengthen consumer trust by addressing gaps between science and perception, through clear and empathetic communication and the integration of allergen management into food-safety systems.

Second, building on past progress and Members' needs, CCASIA23 developed a new Regional Work Plan for 2026–2027 in support of the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, to advance scientific advice, inclusive standard setting, capacity development, and the visibility of Codex standards, and identified some priority actions to guide focused regional efforts. It also expressed appreciation to FAO and WHO for their extensive capacity-building activities, including through the Codex Trust Fund, for its valuable support to training and national Codex activities.

Third, CCASIA23 developed a new Communication Workplan for 2025–2027 with higher targets for visibility and participation, following the successful implementation of the previous plan. I would like to encourage broader and more balanced contributions, not only from Members who are already active, but also from those less involved.

Fourth, I would like to highlight Members' strong interest in developing regional standards. The work on the Regional Standard for Quick Frozen Dumplings was successfully completed, and several new proposals are under discussion. These experiences underscored the need for practical guidance on submitting new work proposals to refine proposals, and we look forward to the new handbook being prepared by the Codex Secretariat, expected in 2026.

In conclusion, CCASIA23 featured active and constructive discussions true to Codex core values of inclusiveness, collaboration, consensus building, and transparency. As I closed, I said, "we are Codex family, and I hope we can continue to collaborate with each and keep in touch." expressing my hope that we will continue our close collaboration.

I deeply thank all Members, Observers, the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO for their continued support. I am confident that Asia will remain an active and collaborative region in Codex.

Thank you.

Comments of the FAO/WHO Coordinator for Near East

The Chairperson of the CCNE presented, on behalf of the Near East Region, an overview of the key outcomes of the Committee's Twelfth Session, held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 28 September to 2 October 2025. She highlighted that the session represented an important milestone in strengthening regional coordination, with Members demonstrating strong commitment to Codex work through active participation in in-session working groups and side events that addressed priority topics such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and innovation in food.

The Committee adopted an ambitious Regional Work Plan for 2026–2027, aligned with the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, and established an electronic working group to follow up on implementation and ensure coherence of activities with regional priorities and diverse needs. The Committee also launched a comprehensive initiative to review the sections on methods of analysis and sampling in all regional standards, aimed at addressing existing gaps, enhancing the reliability of regional texts, and ensuring alignment with relevant horizontal standards. This work represents a key step toward strengthening the quality and practical applicability of regional standards by national authorities.

The Chairperson reported that the Committee discussed the proposal submitted by Syria regarding the evaluation of the applicability of footnote (c) in the General Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils (CXS 33-1981), with the objective of collecting and analyzing scientific data on the suitability of established limits in relation to oils produced in Near East countries. The Committee welcomed the initiative as a scientific effort reflecting the specific characteristics of regional production, contributing to the integrity of standards and the facilitation of international trade, and emphasized the need for continued coordination with the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO).

The intervention noted that the CCNE demonstrated strengthened coordination and leadership through a collective commitment to enhancing Member engagement and contributions to Codex work. Members stressed the importance of unified regional positions, active participation in Codex deliberations, and reinforced collaboration with stakeholders and regional standardization bodies such as the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO) and the GCC Standardization Organization (GSO), in order to maximize impact and mobilize resources. The Region also reaffirmed its leadership in addressing emerging food safety issues and in promoting innovation-supportive regulatory frameworks, including guiding regulators on new and evolving areas such as food contact materials.

These initiatives reflect the Region's commitment to advancing toward a more integrated system that can effectively respond to the challenges facing food systems in terms of diversity, sustainability, and innovation, while ensuring continued alignment with the Codex Strategic Plan and the work of horizontal and commodity committees.

The Chairperson concluded by reaffirming the Near East Region's determination to maintain this collaborative approach to ensure increasingly effective and impactful contributions to Codex work, reflecting regional priorities in support of food safety and international trade.