

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 SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS

Sixth Session

Virtual

26-30 September and 3 October 2022

Opening remarks

Mr. D. Sathiyam IFS, Secretary, Spices Board

Hon. Chairman of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs, Dr. M. R. Sudharshan,

Hon. Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. Steve Wearne,

Respected Chairperson of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Mr. Rajesh Bhushan, IAS,

Beloved Officer-In-Charge, FAO Representation in India, Mr Konda Reddy Chavva,

Mr. Patrick Sekitoleko, Dr. Hilde Kruse and Mr. Goro Maruno, officials from Codex Secretariat who have joined us in India for the session,

Other distinguished colleagues from Codex Secretariat who have joined us virtually,

Esteemed and distinguished heads of the delegations and delegates from member countries and observers,

Dear colleagues and friends,

Namaste, and a very Good morning / good afternoon / good evening to all of you!

It is with great honour and pleasure that I wish you, on behalf of the Government of India, and on behalf of the CCSCH secretariat being held by Spices Board India, a warm welcome to this sixth session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs.

In April 2021, the fifth edition of CCSCH became the first Codex Commodity Committee to take the full online route. It turned out to be a successful venture and witnessed the participation of around 275 registrants from 65 member countries.

The current session is also being held virtually, and we note with gratification that the level of participation has gone up even higher, with nearly 400 participants registered from 60 countries.

This interest shown by the global Codex community in the CCSCH committee is heartening and encouraging, and it is also a sign of how much spices and culinary herbs have become entrenched in the life of people all over the world.

We are hopeful and confident of having a fruitful session of CCSCH6. There are six draft standards that await to be taken up for discussion by the plenary session over the next five days, and some of these may advance to the next stages of the Codex step procedure. It is also worthy to note that this committee has already achieved adoption of eight codex standards in the past five sessions.

This session is poised to see the first major attempt in CCSCH at grouping of spice standards. Given the large number of spices and culinary herbs awaiting standardization, grouping was recognized as a logical way forward as early as CCSCH1 in 2014. However, it took us some time to attempt this as we gathered experience from developing various individual standards, and now the time is ripe for moving ahead with the grouping strategy. We are awaiting with great interest to see how this work progresses in the upcoming days.

With these words, I would like to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of Government of India, as well as CCSCH secretariat to all distinguished participants in this online session.

I wish all of you very effective, constructive and productive deliberations in the coming days of the CCSCH6.

Thank you, Jai Hind!

Mr. Steve Wearne, CAC Chairperson

Your excellencies, distinguished representatives of FAO and WHO, Mister Chairperson, Codex secretariat colleagues, distinguished delegates – good morning, good afternoon and good evening to you all.

It is my great pleasure and honour to join you and to address you briefly at the opening of this, the sixth session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs. Warmest wishes to you all from me and from vice-chairpersons Allan Azegele, Diego Varela and Raj Rajasekar. Together, we are keen to demonstrate our continuing commitment to work in the service of the Codex membership, ensuring we are close to members, to committees and committee chairs, so that we understand your issues and the debates and can help guide the Codex family through them.

Our work continues to be facilitated by our virtual working environment and our continuing adaptation to it. It has allowed greater levels of participation by members in our discussions, contributing to enhanced transparency and collaboration. We must retain these benefits, which are vital for a vibrant and inclusive Codex.

But as we look forward, we should also ensure that we nurture, renew and grow the personal and professional relationships, and the opportunities for informal discussion, that characterise the Codex family when working at its best. We will be discussing this topic at the Codex Executive Committee next month, and with the wider Codex membership. The experience of this Committee will be key as you are one of a small but growing number of Committees to meet for a second time virtually. I will be keen to hear your reflections on this session and how it has developed from the previous virtual session and how, as part of our continuing adaptation, together we can ensure that this Committee goes from strength to strength.

I say that as although this is one of the newest Codex committees, it is also one of our most productive under the expert chairpersonship of Dr Sudharsan, supported by the committee secretariat in the Spice Board of India. I would like to record the appreciation of the Codex family for all the work undertaken by this committee and its working groups to develop standards and texts and prepare for their adoption.

I recognise the active engagement there has been in the pre-session working groups over the last two week and also the appetite there is across many delegations to move forward the standards under discussion at this session, in the interests of Codex and of the people everywhere that our work will protect. I wish you every success in this work.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson.

Mr. Konda Reddy Chavva, Officer in charge, FAO representation in India

Namaste!

Hon'ble

Chair of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Mr. Steve Wearne

Chair of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs, Dr. M. R. Sudharshan

Mr. Rajesh Bhushan IAS, Chairperson FSSAI

Shri D. Sathiyam, Secretary, Spices Board India, the Indian Secretariat for CCSCCH committee,

Esteemed Delegates from Codex Members Countries, Colleagues and Friends.

Good morning, good afternoon and Good Evening! I hope you and your families are safe and healthy.

On behalf of FAO, first I wish to thank the Government of India for hosting this 6th session of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary, and Spices Board, Ministry of Commerce, Govt of India, which is the Secretariat of this Committee.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international body jointly established in 1963 by FAO and WHO, with membership of over 188 countries, works for development and adoption of internationally accepted standards and guidelines pertaining to food.

The Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice pertain to the safety, quality in food and assures fairness of international food trade. While being recommendations for voluntary application by members, Codex standards serve in many cases as a basis for national legislation. Harmonization of national standards with Codex standards is ensuring widespread adoption of these documents which in turn contribute significantly in assuring global food safety and quality.

The reference made to Codex food safety standards in the WTO's SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures) Agreement means that Codex has far reaching implications for resolving trade disputes. WTO members that

wish to apply stricter food safety measures than those set by Codex may be required to justify these measures scientifically.

As we all know, India is known as the 'Spice Bowl of World' and the glory of Indian spices are recognized globally. Indian spices are widely known for their exquisite properties like aroma, texture, flavour, colour etc., both in domestic as well as in the international markets. Hence, it is only fitting that India has taken a preeminent role in establishing the **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)** committee in 2013, as a subsidiary bodies under Codex Alimentarius Commission tasked with elaboration of quality standards for spices and culinary herbs.

We also congratulate the Spices Board of India for its role in organizing the sessions of CCSCH with efficiency, enabling this committee to complete the development of eight Codex standards for spices and culinary herbs in just six sessions starting from 2014.

In this session, we anticipate that a few more draft standards will be examined and will hopefully progress further in the Codex step procedure.

We also congratulate Food Safety and Standard Authority of India for acting as a National Codex Contact Point of India

FAO is making efforts globally to improve and harmonize standards by implementing specific steps and building capacities at various level to ensure food safety and fair trade, and protecting producer and consumer interests, and encouraging deliberations towards harmonization of global quality standards.

In India FAO is partnering with Spices Board, with the support of STDF, World Trade Organization (WTO) aim to enhance capacities of key stakeholders in the Spice Value Chain to expand production and exports of safe and high-quality spices (based on Codex standards) in India and export markets.

Thus, the quality standards emerging from this committee ties directly with the work of FAO, and I wish the committee all success in the upcoming session of technical deliberations on draft standards for the spices and culinary herbs included in the agenda of the session.

Thank you very much.

Stay well and safe. Namaste.

Dr. A.B. Rema Shree, Director, Spices Board

A very good morning / good afternoon / good evening to all the distinguished and esteemed dignitaries, delegates and colleagues who have joined today in this online edition of the sixth session of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs.

Today, we had the privilege of hearing Mr Steve Wearne, Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Sir, your kind words of encouragement will provide a sense of direction to the upcoming CCSCH6 session. On behalf of all the participants, I would like to thank you for your gracious presence in this opening session.

Dr. M. R. Sudharshan has been at the helm of CCSCH committee since its inception, and under his guidance the committee has established itself as one of the most productive Codex Committees active today, with eight adopted Codex standards in spices and culinary herbs from just five committee sessions. I extend our warm gratitude to you sir, for your words of guidance in your opening remarks and I wish you yet another productive and efficient plenary session.

Mr Rajesh Bhushan IAS, the chairperson of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, and the head of the national codex contact point in India, graced us with a thoughtful and encouraging inaugural address which touched up on the importance of Codex activities and the relevance of Codex standards. On behalf of all of us, I thank you for your participation in this opening session.

Mr. D. Sathiyam IFS, as the head of the Spices Board, which functions as the Secretariat of CCSCH committee on behalf of India, has been the guiding force in all the activities that went into organizing this virtual session of the committee. I would like to place on record, on behalf of all the participants, our warm gratitude to you, Sir.

I thank Mr. Konda Reddy Chavva, FAO India for his participation in this opening session and for addressing the members of the committee.

Mr. Patrick, Dr. Hilde and Mr. Goro from Codex Secretariat are here with us at the head table for the session. There are also many colleagues from Codex Secretariat, Rome who are supporting us virtually for the session. I would like to place on record our gratitude to all the colleagues in Codex Secretariat, who have worked tirelessly with the Indian Secretariat of this committee and guided us with patience and encouragement.

I would like to thank all the distinguished delegates from all the member countries who have joined this session online. The fact that this sixth session is seeing the largest ever number of countries and delegates signifies the great interest that the members have for the work of this committee.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who are working behind the scenes to bring this committee together yet again in online mode; the interpreters who have joined us from Delhi, the officials who provide technological support for the online session, and all other colleagues who are working to make this session a success.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all once again for your participation in this opening session of CCSC6, and wish you successful and productive deliberations in the days ahead.