



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

**Thirty-second Session**

**Virtual**

**16– 20 May 2022**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

**A MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (CAC43, CAC44)**

**MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

***Language policy in CCEURO***

1. CAC43<sup>1</sup> agreed that CCEURO would work in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Russian) and that the Codex Secretariat would propose how to accommodate the additional costs sustainably.

***Appointments***

2. CAC43<sup>2</sup> re-appointed Kazakhstan as Regional Coordinator for Europe (second term) to hold office from the end of CAC43 until the end of the first regular session of the Commission following CCEURO32.
3. CAC44<sup>3</sup> re-elected Germany as Member from Europe of the Executive Committee for the period from the end of its present Session to the end of the second succeeding regular Session of the Commission (CAC46).

***Codex and the pandemic***

4. CAC43<sup>4</sup> recommended:
  - that CCEXEC80<sup>5</sup> share its recommendations based on the report of the sub-committee on Codex and the Pandemic – Strategic Challenges and Opportunities with all subsidiary bodies for their information and further consideration as appropriate;
  - to all subsidiary bodies and Members and Observers to make full use of existing remote working mechanisms such as Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) and Circular Letters (CLs) and to plan their virtual committee meetings in such a manner as to optimize the possibility to complete their agendas.
5. CAC44<sup>6</sup> recommended that Rule XI (7) and (8) continue to be interpreted in a manner that includes a virtual setting with respect to sessions of Codex Subsidiary Bodies including CCEXEC and that application of this should take into consideration the criteria outlined by CCEXEC80.

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<sup>1</sup> REP20/CAC, paragraph 148

<sup>2</sup> REP20/CAC, paragraph 164

<sup>3</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraph 133

<sup>4</sup> REP20/CAC, paragraphs 20(i-ii), 31(ii) and 32

<sup>5</sup> REP21/EXEC1, paragraphs 35-36

<sup>6</sup> REP21/CAC, para 12(iii)

**Proposed draft MRLs on zilpaterol hydrochloride<sup>7</sup>**

6. CAC44 requested the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission to undertake informal consultations with all relevant parties to encourage and enable sustained effort to build consensus in advance of CAC45.
7. CAC44 directed the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission to submit a report two months in advance of CCEXEC83 to inform its further monitoring and critical review, and then to inform further discussion at CAC45.

**CCEXEC sub-committee on the application of the Statements of Principle concerning the Role of Science in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account (SoP)<sup>8</sup>**

8. The importance of this work was highlighted by several Members who with reference to their written comments emphasized the value of completing the guidance to Chairpersons and Members of Codex to ensure the scientific basis of Codex standards development and decision making, and the extent to which other factors are taken into account to facilitate consensus in standards setting.
9. CAC44 welcomed the ongoing work on guidance for Chairpersons and Members on the operationalization and the consistent application of the SOP and encouraged CCEXEC to complete this work in an expeditious manner.

**60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (1963-2023)**

10. CAC44<sup>9</sup> agreed that the celebration of the Codex 60th Anniversary would be a wonderful occasion to raise awareness about food safety and quality and encouraged all Members and Observers to use the opportunity of the Codex 60th Anniversary to plan and implement activities to build awareness of Codex and to engage high level political support for Codex work.
11. CAC44<sup>10</sup> noted that Codex already had a number of tools at its disposal to facilitate engagement and planning for the Anniversary including the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (RCCs). The Codex Secretariat also maintains the CCEURO webpage which can be used to share information on and promote Codex related activities and events in the region.
12. The Codex Secretariat has issued a video call to all Members and Observers to share their memories, experiences of key moments, successes and challenges and people that have defined Codex and international food standard setting over the last six decades. Members are invited to submit their ideas to [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) by 30 September 2022.
13. A paper outlining the proposals for celebration of the 60th Anniversary will be presented to CCEXEC82. This will include an invitation to each of the regions to organize an event with a specific theme in the course of 2023 to mark the 60th Anniversary.

**Dissolution of TFAMR**

14. CAC44<sup>11</sup>, noting that TFAMR had completed its mandate, agreed to dissolve the task force.

**B MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES****MATTERS FOR INFORMATION****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (CCEXEC78, CCEXEC80, CCEXEC81)****Implementation of CAC42: Feedback on Changes and Proposals for Further Improvements**

15. CCEXEC78<sup>12</sup> requested that Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies and CAC together with the Secretariat:
  - develop strategies to prevent or mitigate technical discussions at CAC on topics for which there was no consensus and communicate these strategies to Members. Such strategies may include short adjournments of the session for informal discussions or suspension of discussions on items that

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<sup>7</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraph 29(v and vi)

<sup>8</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraphs 13-14

<sup>9</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraph 150

<sup>10</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraph 143

<sup>11</sup> REP21/CAC, para 101

<sup>12</sup> REP20/EXEC1, paragraph 30(ii)

override the planned time limit; and

- ensure that, at meetings of CAC, written comments received were given due consideration and the technical basis of reservations were included in meeting reports.

**Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2018-2019: Critical Review Process<sup>13</sup>**

16. CCEXEC78 concluded that the Critical Review was overall an efficient and effective work management tool and that there was no urgent need to revise it substantively while recognizing that improvements could be further discussed.

17. In this regard, CCEXEC78 also recognized that CCEXEC could provide guidance and advice to subsidiary bodies and that subsidiary bodies could also seek advice from CCEXEC and that such exchange could take place outside of the Critical Review process.

**Follow-Up to Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2017-2018: Periodic Review of Codex Standards**

18. CCEXEC78<sup>14</sup> concluded that the current approaches to standards review were working for active subsidiary bodies, and encouraged these bodies to continuously enhance their work management processes to consider the need for reviewing existing Codex standards.

**Report of the CCEXEC Sub-Committee on Codex and the Pandemic - Strategic Challenges and Opportunities<sup>15, 16</sup>**

19. CCEXEC80 recognized that CAC43 had agreed on the possibility of holding virtual meetings in 2021 and endorsed the proposals from the sub-committee on Codex and the pandemic to operationalize this decision, noting that this did not at present require any change to formal Codex procedures.

20. CCEXEC81 commended the huge efforts of the Codex family to deliver the 2021 work programme in a pragmatic and effective manner, making optimal use of all the tools available to them with the highly effective support of the Codex Secretariat.

21. In order to ensure that Codex can continue to quickly and effectively respond to the ongoing uncertainties related to the pandemic or any new/emerging challenges, particularly in 2022, CCEXEC81 recommended that

- CAC44 agree that Rule XI (7) and (8) continue to be interpreted in a manner that includes a virtual setting with respect to sessions of the Codex Subsidiary Bodies including CCEXEC; Application of this should take into consideration the criteria outlined by CCEXEC80 (para 35.iv).
- Chairpersons and Host Secretariats collaborate closely with the Codex Secretariat in their efforts to establish a meeting schedule that is realistic to implement and ensures adequate time between meetings to facilitate the work of both the Codex Secretariat and the preparation and participation by Members and Observers over the next year.
- the Codex Secretariat together with Chairpersons and the larger membership further consider how EWGs and/or other inclusive and transparent mechanisms can continue to be strengthened, playing an even more fundamental role in Codex as a flexible mechanism to prepare work and ensure that discussions in subsidiary bodies is only held when there is a need for guidance or the work it is ready for progression in the step process.

22. CCEXEC81 agreed to establish and lead a process to develop the blueprint for the future of Codex for consideration by CAC on its 60th anniversary in 2023. It was noted that the process would begin in the first quarter of 2022 with communication and outreach to Members and observers to collect general views on what a future Codex should look like. CCEXEC Members would then consider the input from Members and Observers; review the information available in the CCEXEC81 document as well as in post-meeting and event surveys; develop a zero-draft proposal; and define the subsequent steps in the process.

**Sub-Committee on the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (SP)<sup>17</sup>**

<sup>13</sup> REP20/EXEC1, paragraphs 46 and 51

<sup>14</sup> REP 20/EXEC1, paragraph 57(i)

<sup>15</sup> REP21EXEC1, paragraph 35(iii)

<sup>16</sup> REP21/EXEC2, paragraphs 83-85

<sup>17</sup> REP21/EXEC2, paragraph 91(iii), b), c), d)

23. CCEXEC81 considered an interim report on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 which included the workplans<sup>18</sup> that had been developed by the RCCs and reports from Regional Coordinators on the major achievements and challenges in implementing the workplan in their regions and the next steps they envisage. In considering this report, CCEXEC81 made a number of recommendations, including that
- i. a substantive discussion of implementation of the SP should take place at CAC45 as part of the first biennial review of the SP, informed by the relevant report on SP implementation and any discussion by CCEXEC.
  - ii. the agenda for each of the upcoming FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees, due to meet in 2022/23, should include:
    - the review of the relevant regional implementation plan for 2020 and 2021; and
    - the development of regional implementation plans focusing on priority activities to be undertaken in 2022 and 2023; and
  - iii. the Codex Secretariat should report annually to CCEXEC on further progress in the delivery of activities to support implementation of Strategic Goals 3 and 5, and in particular its continuing work to develop a mechanism to measure the use and impact of Codex standards.
24. CCEXEC81<sup>19</sup> also noted that CCGP had referred an item for the attention of the Sub-committee on the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, on monitoring the use of Codex standards. In the context of Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan and development of a mechanism to monitor the use and impact of Codex standards, the Codex Secretariat provided an overview of the work being undertaken to design such a mechanism noting that the results of this work would be reported at CCEXEC82. Given the broad interest of Members in this work, the Codex Secretariat noted that following the report to CCEXEC82, other committees could also be updated on the work in progress.
25. In undertaking this work, the Codex Secretariat has carefully considered the experience of the RCCs in undertaking surveys on the use of Codex standards and the feedback from Members in terms of both the challenges and benefits of such surveys. As we are now in a transition phase to development and implementation of a new mechanism to assess use and impact of Codex standards, the usual survey on use of Codex standards issued in conjunction with RCCs has been suspended. Updates on the options for a replacement and timeframe for the development and rollout will be communicated to CCEXEC. Close collaboration with Members through the RCCs and other channels will continue to facilitate roll-out and implementation of a new approach.

***New food sources and production systems: need for Codex attention and guidance***<sup>20</sup>

26. CCEXEC81 established a sub-committee to investigate potential mechanisms to address cross-cutting, overarching and emerging issues in Codex such as new food sources and production systems. An initial round of input from all Members and Observers has been sought through a Circular Letter (CL 2022/06/EXEC).

***Report on implementation of the harmonized agenda and proposed approaches for the next cycle of the coordinating committees***<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> CX/EXEC 21/81/5 Appendix I and II

<sup>19</sup> REP21/EXEC2, paragraph 90

<sup>20</sup> REP21/EXEC2, paragraph 110

<sup>21</sup> REP21/EXEC2, paragraphs 113 – 115; CX/EXEC 21/81/8

27. CCEXEC81:
- i. noted the information provided on this issue including
    - a. the need for adjustments to the harmonized agenda at each new round of the coordinating committees to reflect any changes and that the way agenda items were developed and discussed would need to continue to evolve;
    - b. that the Codex Secretariat planned to facilitate regular meetings among the Regional coordinators (RCs) to strengthen cooperation between the regions and facilitate sharing of experiences and lessons learned;
    - c. that this round of RCCs had been delayed due to the pandemic; and
    - d. that the evolving role of RCCs could be deliberated as part of the process considering the future of Codex which was being led by the CCEXEC; and
  - ii. expressed appreciation for the efforts of the RCs and the Codex Secretariat during the pandemic to maintain and build engagement in Codex.
28. The working document considered by CCEXEC also noted that RCCs could significantly benefit from new and emerging technologies and working methodologies. This is an aspect which CCEURO may wish to consider further in their work planning in the context of the Codex Strategic Plan implementation and in their inputs to the CCEXEC work on the development of a blueprint for the future of Codex.

### **MATTERS FOR ACTION**

#### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING (CCFL46)**

29. CAC44<sup>22</sup> adopted at step 8 the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021), which had been forwarded by CCFL46<sup>23</sup> and requested Commodity Committees and the Codex Secretariat to review the labelling provisions for non-retail containers in existing and draft standards in light of the new standard for the labelling of non-retail containers.
30. CCEURO has one regional commodity standard under its purview, namely the *Regional Standard for Chanterelles* (CXS 40R-1981). This standard has a provision for labelling of non-retail containers (section 8.2), which needs to be amended to reflect CXS 346-2021.

#### **Recommendations**

31. CCEURO is invited to:
- note the information provided in paragraphs 1 – 30;
  - in relation to the 60th anniversary of Codex, encourage Members and observers to plan and implement activities to build awareness of Codex, to engage high level political support for Codex work and consider the proposal to implement a regional event to mark the 60th anniversary;
  - to highlight the issues that CCEURO would like to be considered by CCEXEC in their discussions on the future of Codex, including on future models and use of technology for progressing Codex work;
  - to actively engage in opportunities to contribute to the discussions on the future of Codex and on how to address cross-cutting, overarching and emerging issues in Codex; and
  - propose amended text for section 8.2, labelling of non-retail containers, in the *Regional Standard for Chanterelles* (CXS 40R-1981) that will be forwarded to the Commission for adoption.

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<sup>22</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraphs 83 and 86

<sup>23</sup> REP21/FL, paragraph 60