

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - Fax: (+39) 06 5705 4593 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

REP15/NASWP
October 2014

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty-eighth Session

CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

6 – 11 July 2015

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

Kokopo, Papua New Guinea

23 – 26 September 2014

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Thirteenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Coordinating Committee:

- Agreed on the need for revitalisation of RCCs and made comments on several proposals for the revitalisation of RCCs (para. 26);
- Agreed to suspend the Circular Letter requesting information on food control systems, participation in food standards setting and the use of Codex standards at the national level (para. 32);
- Returned the proposed draft Standard for Fermented Noni Juice at Step 2/3 (para. 53);
- Adopted the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2014-2019 (para. 56 and Appendix II);
- Noted that the monitoring of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2014-2019 would provide information on the contribution of CCNASWP to the implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan and that, therefore, it would not be necessary for CCNASWP to report on the status of implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan, separately (para. 58); and
- Unanimously agreed to recommend that Vanuatu be appointed as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific (para. 76).

Matters referred to other Committee

The Coordinating Committee:

- Requested advice from the Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) on a safe maximum level for scopoletin as well as a method of analysis (para. 51).

Other matters for information

The Coordinating Committee:

- Agreed to revise the discussion paper on the development of a Regional Standard for kava product that can be used as a beverage when mixed with water for consideration at its 14th Session (para. 62); and
- Agreed on a process to identify priority areas for new work of interest to the Region (para. 64).

INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) held its 13th Session in Kokopo, from 23 to 26 September 2014 at the kind invitation of the Government of Papua New Guinea. The Session was chaired by Dr Vele Pat Ila'ava, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Livestock and attended by delegates from 14 Member countries, two Member countries outside the Region, one international organization and Representatives of FAO and WHO. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariats, is given in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Honourable Peter O'Neill, Prime Minister, Papua New Guinea, opened the Session. The Prime Minister in his opening speech highlighted the importance of the production of safe and quality food for people's health, food security and the agriculture sector and how Codex contributes to this.
3. The Honourable Ereman Tobaining (Jnr), MP Governor of the East New Britain Province; Ms Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr Dirk Schulz, Food Safety and Nutrition Officer, FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, and Mr Peter Hoejskov, Technical Officer, Food Safety & NCD, WHO Division of Pacific Technical Support, also addressed the delegates. These speeches are presented in [CRD2](#).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

4. The Coordinating Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES (Agenda Item 2)²

5. The Coordinating Committee noted matters arising from the 36th and 37th Sessions of the Commission.

FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE REGION, IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS (Agenda Item 3)³

6. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/3](#) on FAO/WHO activities relevant to the region, identifying priorities and capacity development needs. Particular attention was given to the challenges identified during the process of capacity development in the area of food safety and quality in the region.
7. Delegations noted the range of FAO and WHO activities implemented in the region, including support for the development of food safety legislation in Samoa, and a food safety policy in Papua New Guinea. One delegation suggested that it would be useful for FAO and WHO to share plans for capacity development with other development partners in advance. The Representative of WHO stressed the importance of using existing mechanisms for such information exchange and mentioned the Food Safety Corporation Working Group (FSCWG), as one example.
8. With regard to the need for awareness-raising, delegations noted that the new Codex communication strategy could play an important role in gaining the recognition of Codex by high level decision-makers and help resource mobilization and allocation towards Codex related activities.
9. Delegations also acknowledged the growing importance of street food in the region and the need to develop some guidance in order to ensure food safety and quality and to protect consumers' health. In this respect, it was noted that Codex regional codes of practice for street vended food as well as the FAO Manual on Good Hygienic Practices in the Preparation and Sale of Street Food in Africa would be important resources in capacity building and future work in this field, such as a code of practice for the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Furthermore, the challenge of small and medium size food enterprises (SMEs) in PICs in meeting international food safety requirements was raised as a key concern.

Conclusion

10. The Coordinating Committee thanked FAO, WHO and other partners for the technical assistance and scientific advice provided to the countries of the region. The Coordinating Committee agreed on the need for continued resource mobilization and capacity development to address national and regional priorities in the area of food safety and quality.

¹ [CX/NASWP 14/13/1](#).

² [CX/NASWP 14/13/2](#).

³ [CX/NASWP 14/13/3](#); [CX/NASWP 14/13/3 Add.1](#), [CRD4](#) (comment of Solomon Islands).

Successor Initiative to the Codex Trust Fund

11. The Representative of FAO introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/3 Add 1](#), on behalf of FAO and WHO, highlighting the current ideas and potential features of the successor initiative to the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund (CTF). This initiative will be further informed by the results of the ongoing final evaluation of the CTF, which will be presented to the 2015 sessions of the Commission and Executive Committee. Delegations were encouraged to continue to contribute to the discussion in developing the successor initiative.
12. One delegation, recognizing the importance of the final evaluation of the CTF in developing a more meaningful successor, requested that adequate time be allowed for translation into all official languages and the findings to be fully considered to inform the successor initiative. In their opinion an extension of the existing CTF would allow for this.

Conclusion

13. The Coordinating Committee acknowledged the valuable support of the CTF to the region, and expressed broad support for the successor initiative.

REVITALISATION OF FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEES - PROPOSALS ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND PLATFORM OF RCCs (Agenda Item 4)⁴

14. The Codex Secretariat introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/4](#) and highlighted that the document had been prepared for all six FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (RCCs) to stimulate discussion on how RCCs could be revitalized to contribute more effectively to Codex, food safety and quality needs of countries, and the related work of FAO and WHO, including capacity development.
15. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, also highlighted that this is an important discussion to continue to strengthen the role of RCCs in global food safety governance. RCCs provide a unique opportunity as they bring together country delegations, with the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO. It was suggested that an important step for the Committee would be to agree on an overall vision for revitalization of the Committee, recognizing that the discussion will take time to evolve and time to implement.

General Discussion

16. Delegations were in support of the revitalisation of RCCs to enhance countries' engagement; maximize the use of resources; debate issues of relevance to the region and use of Codex standards. Delegations noted that the document prepared was timely, offered a good opportunity to analyse the RCCs work and discuss future opportunities. It was also noted that the discussion in RCCs should not lose track of the specificity of CCNASWP, not be over ambitious and that working modalities of RCCs should take advantage of advancements in technologies.

Specific Discussion

17. Delegations commented on the proposals put forward in the document (Section 3) as follows:
RCCs as improved food safety and quality fora: aligning RCCs (3.1)
18. Delegations supported the proposal of aligning the agenda of the six RCCs, as this would allow a comparison of their discussion and activities. However, delegations highlighted the need that RCCs agendas should allow addressing specific regional issues.
19. One Observer organization was of the view that the agenda and work of RCCs should allow for dialogue between Codex members and observers.
20. Delegations supported the identified common agenda items but expressed caution on the mechanisms for collecting information, which should not result in an additional burden to countries. It was also mentioned that data should be collected in a timely manner to allow for their analysis, which would contribute to a more informed discussion at RCCs.

⁴ [CX/NASWP 14/13/4](#); [CRD3](#) (Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019); [CRD6](#) (Draft template to collect information on official Government control for food safety and quality).

Platform for information sharing on food control systems and roles and responsibilities in food safety (3.2)

21. Delegations agreed on the importance and value of continuing to exchange information on food control systems, in particular to support countries' continuing efforts to strengthen their systems. When considering [CRD6](#), delegations agreed that more time was needed to consider the type of information to be exchanged. In doing so, consideration needs to be given to how this information would be used and analysed. Delegations were of the view that it was premature to determine a mechanism for collecting information and that this would be informed as the discussion evolves.
22. The Coordinating Committee agreed that continued discussion on the type of information to share on food control systems/food safety and quality issues should take into account the ongoing work at the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) on the burden of multiple questionnaires directed at exporting countries.

Identification of needs and priorities in regions (persistent and emerging food safety/quality issues) (3.3)

23. Delegations agreed that this is an important task of RCCs and raised the need to reflect on the mechanisms to be put in place and the ability to identify needs and priorities. It was noted that opportunities exist through enhanced information exchange and linkages with other regional organizations and fora. Delegations also asked if mechanisms other than Circular Letters would better serve the purpose and highlighted the need to have in place a clear process to identify issues for discussion. In this regard, delegations noted the proposed process to identify priority areas for new work on matters of interest to the region in [CX/NASWP 14/13/9](#).

Regional strategic planning (3.4)

24. Delegations supported work on the regional Strategic Plan noting that it was used by some countries for developing their national strategies for Codex, identifying capacity development needs; planning for capacity development activities; and soliciting funding for Codex programmes.
25. Delegations supported aligning the timeframe of the regional Strategic Plan and the global Codex Strategic Plan; however, it was noted that some flexibility was needed to take into account the different schedules of RCCs and the Commission.

Conclusion

26. The Coordinating Committee:
 - Agreed on the need for revitalisation of RCCs to improve their effectiveness in achieving both regional and global goals of Codex, FAO, WHO and countries concerning food safety systems, food trade, consumer information, and food and nutrition.
 - Supported the proposal for the alignment of the agenda across the six RCCs and agreed that the common items identified were acceptable, but noted that the specificities of CCNASWP should not be lost in the process.
 - Expressed support for exchange of information on food control systems, but considered that further reflection was needed on the type of information that should be collected, the purpose, and the mechanism for collection.
 - Expressed general support for maintaining regional Strategic Plans that serve in support of development of national strategies for Codex and for the planning of capacity development activities and resource mobilisation.
 - Acknowledged that the current mechanism of the Circular Letter to collect information on national food control systems, consumer participation in standards-setting and Codex at national level could be improved. The Coordinating Committee agreed to suspend the use of this Circular Letter until a replacement mechanism was found.
27. The Coordinating Committee noted that the outcome of the discussion of the six RCCs on the "Revitalisation" would be presented at the next Session of the Commission.

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (REPLIES TO [CL 2014/19-NASWP](#)) (Agenda Item 5)⁵

28. Replies received showed that there had been some developments in food control systems, in particular development or amendment of food acts or bills as well as food safety and quality standards or regulations to ensure a safe and quality food supply.
29. It was noted that countries in the region were harmonising their national standards with international standards, such as Codex, to the extent possible; and in some cases where there were no standards at national level, by default Codex standards were used.
30. Stakeholder awareness of the importance of Codex was encouraged through several mechanisms, ranging from publication of information on websites to holding of informative and educational workshops, and discussion websites, e.g. food standards networks.
31. There was continued support and interest in Codex activities but challenges remained in terms of budgetary and other resources. Countries had to be more strategic in prioritizing their participation in Codex and participation should not be limited to physical participation in Codex sessions.
32. The Coordinating Committee recalled the conclusion of the discussion on “Revitalisation” (Agenda Item 5) that further discussion was needed on collection of data and information relevant to Codex and on food control systems in the region, the type of information required and the mechanism for collection of this information and to suspend the use of the Circular Letter.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR FERMENTED NONI JUICE (Agenda Item 6)⁶

33. The Delegation of Tonga introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/6](#) and highlighted the key issues addressed by the EWG as well as issues which needed further discussion, namely, the need for scientific advice and identification of methods of analysis.

General Discussion

34. The Coordinating Committee considered the requests for scientific advice identified in the Project Document ([CX/EXEC 13/68/4](#)) as well as a request for the determination of safe intake levels for scopoletin.
35. The Coordinating Committee was reminded that requests for scientific advice needed to be clearly scoped to allow FAO/WHO to respond appropriately.
36. In order to progress the discussion during the session, the Coordinating Committee agreed to consider the proposal for scientific advice once it had considered the provisions in the proposed draft Standard in order to determine whether such advice was still warranted.
37. The Coordinating Committee further noted that methods of analysis could only be finalized once all the provisions in the Standard were clearly identified; that the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) could be requested to assist in the identification of methods of analysis; and that a Standard could progress in the Step procedure even if all the methods were not finalized.

Specific comments*Product Definition*

38. The Coordinating Committee agreed to indicate the variety of the fruits to be used in the production of fermented noni fruit juice as *Morinda citrifolia* L. var *Citrifolia* of the Rubiceae family noting that these were the fruits traditionally used for the production of these products.

Noni Fruits

39. The Coordinating Committee considered a proposal by one delegation to exclude “noni fruit seeds” in the production of fermented noni fruit juice to alleviate food safety concerns in relation to anthraquinones. It was clarified that whole fruits, including the seeds were traditionally used in the production of the fermented noni fruit juice and would be removed after fermentation.

⁵ [CX/NASWP 14/13/5](#) (Replies to [CL 2014/19-NASWP](#) from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and the United States of America); [CX/NASWP 14/13/5 Add.1](#) (Cook Islands); [CRD7](#) (Tonga); [CRD8](#) (Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and Samoa).

⁶ [CX/NASWP 14/13/6](#); [CX/NASWP 14/13/6 Add.1](#) (Comments of Australia, Canada, Solomon Islands, Tonga and United States of America).

Quality factors

40. The Coordinating Committee agreed to delete patulin as not relevant to the product. Lucidin, alizarin and rubiadin were also deleted as the way they were expressed implied a zero tolerance that would make identification and endorsement of a method difficult. The Coordinating Committee noted that to determine if a method was fit for purpose or to calculate performance criteria, a numerical value was needed. Therefore, should there be a need for these provisions, it would be necessary to provide a corresponding value.
41. Sections on definition of defects and methods of analysis were amended accordingly.

Fermented Noni Fruit Juice

42. The Coordinating Committee noted that quantitative methods for deacetylasperulosidic acid and scopoletin should be identified. In the case of "acidity", the Coordinating Committee noted that for purposes of analysis, the specific acid to be determined should be stipulated.
43. The Coordinating Committee also noted the need to clarify the type of fermentation being referred to in the Standard.
44. One delegation noted the need to determine the recommended maximum daily intake of fermented noni juice as the safety data referenced in the project document were based on 30 ml whereas a typical juice serving size is identified as 240 ml. This could be dangerous and misleading and could pose adverse health effects to susceptible populations when consumed in quantities typical of fruit juices. In response to this concern it was explained that 30 ml related to the serving size of the concentrated fermented noni juice.

Definition of Defects

45. The Coordinating Committee further noted that the defects: bacterial aerobic total viable count, yeast and mould counts needed further consideration as to their appropriateness as defects and that it was necessary to establish whether the defects were applicable before or after pasteurization. In addition, the Coordinating Committee agreed to include presence of seeds as a defect in the final product.

Food Additives

46. The Coordinating Committee agreed to indicate that flavouring substances should be in accordance with the *Guidelines on the Use of Flavouring* (CAC/GL 66-2008) and that the inclusion of a provision for carry-over was not necessary.

Hygiene and Packaging

47. The Coordinating Committee noted that clarification was necessary on whether the *Code of Practice for Aseptically Processed and Prepackaged Low Acid Food* (CAC/RCP 40-1993) was applicable to the products, since the products were considered low pH and not low acid foods.

Minimum Fill

48. The Coordinating Committee noted that consideration should be given to reference OIML R871⁷ instead of the current detailed procedure plus whether an average requirement and individual package requirements should be specified.

Methods of Analysis and Sampling

49. The Coordinating Committee agreed to replace the proposed method for the determination of ash with AOAC 940.26.

Conclusion

50. Noting that several issues needed further discussion and the proposed draft Standard was not ready to progress in the Step process, the Coordinating Committee agreed to reconvene the EWG, led by Tonga, to redraft the proposed draft Standard taking into account the discussion and decisions taken by the Coordinating Committee as well as all written comments submitted to the session.
51. The Coordinating Committee also agreed to request advice from the Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) on a safe maximum level for scopoletin as well as a method of analysis. No further scientific advice was needed at this time.

⁷ International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), Bureau International de Métrologie Légale 11, rue Turgot – 75009 Paris – France, Publication OIML R87 Edition 2004 (E).

52. One delegation was of the view that once this information was received, the question on the recommended maximum daily intake of fermented juice could be resolved.

Status of the Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Fermented Noni Juice (N01-2013)

53. The Coordinating Committee agreed to return the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for redrafting by the abovementioned EWG, circulation for comments and consideration by the next session of the Coordinating Committee.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP (Agenda Item 7)

Status of Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013⁸

54. The Coordinating Committee noted the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2008-2013, as presented in [CX/NASWP 14/13/7](#). It was further noted that activities that were not completed had been transferred to the new draft Strategic Plan.

Draft new Strategic Plan 2014-2019⁹

55. The Coordinating Committee considered the report of the physical Working Group (PWG) on the new Strategic Plan for CCNASWP ([CRD1](#)) with a particular focus on a number of issues that remained to be solved. In particular, the Coordinating Committee amended the draft prepared by the PWG:
- Indicated the linkage of each of the six Objectives with the activities of the global Strategic Plan 2014-2019;
 - Aligned the terminology with that of the global Strategic Plan 2014-2019;
 - Clarified the text of a number of outcomes and measurable indicators to be consistent with the corresponding activity and to better differentiate between the two;
 - Removed some repetitions and redundant texts;
 - Broadened the scope of Objective 6, which was limited to the development of standards for food products produced by Pacific Island Countries, to include work on other food related issues.

Conclusion

56. The Coordinating Committee agreed to adopt the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2014-2019 (see Appendix II) and to inform the 38th Session of the Commission.
57. The Coordinating Committee requested the Coordinator to present a report on the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP at its next session and noted that this will give an opportunity to CCNASWP to review the implementation status of the plan.
58. The Coordinating Committee noted that in view of the clear linkages established with the global Codex Strategic Plan, the monitoring of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP would provide information on the contribution of CCNASWP to the implementation of the global Strategic Plan. Therefore, it would not be necessary for CCNASWP to report on the status of implementation of the global Codex Strategic Plan, separately.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR KAVA PRODUCT THAT CAN BE USED AS A BEVERAGE WHEN MIXED WITH WATER (Agenda Item 8)¹⁰

59. The Delegation of Vanuatu introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/8](#) and noted that the issue of kava was a very complex one, and that the import ban on kava products in general by certain Codex member countries contributes to the misunderstanding of the safety of the product.
60. The Delegation also pointed out that the EWG did not have sufficient time to consider in detail the FAO/WHO Technical Report on Kava: a review of the safety of traditional and recreational beverage consumption. The Delegation proposed that the Coordinating Committee consider reconvening the EWG to revise the discussion paper and project document taking into account the FAO/WHO report as well as other available information. At the same time, the Delegation proposed that countries could use the information available to develop an industry standard.

⁸ [CX/NASWP 14/13/7](#).

⁹ [CX/NASWP 14/13/7 Add.1](#); [CX/NASWP 14/13/7 Add.2](#) (comments of Australia and Solomon Islands); [CRD1](#) (Report of the Physical Working Group on the CCNASWP Strategic Plan 2014-2019).

¹⁰ [CX/NASWP 14/13/8](#).

61. There was general support to continue developing the discussion paper in view of the importance of kava in PICs. Kava is a major crop in Pacific Island countries, while in other countries of the NASWP region it is imported and consumed.

Conclusion

62. The Coordinating Committee agreed to reconvene the EWG, led by Vanuatu:
- To further develop the discussion paper taking into account the FAO/WHO report and other available information; and
 - To consider the possibility of other risk management options, such as a code of practice.
63. The Coordinating Committee recalled the agreement of CCNASWP12 that the scope of work would apply only to kava as a dried product that can be used as a beverage when mixed with water.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON PRODUCTS OF THE REGION THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED BY REGIONAL STANDARDS AND MECHANISM FOR THEIR PRIORITISATION (Agenda Item 9)¹¹

64. The Coordinating Committee agreed to use the process outlined in Attachment A of [CX/NASWP 14/13/9](#) to identify priority areas for new work of interest to the Region. It was noted that this decision was in line with proposal 3.1.4 of the "Revitalisation" document ([CX/NASWP 14/13/4](#)).
65. One delegation noted that in other Codex committees the circular letter has been an effective mechanism and could help the Coordinating Committee prioritize its work.

NCDs ISSUES IN THE NASWP REGION (Agenda Item 10)¹²

66. The Representative of WHO, on behalf of WHO and FAO, introduced [CX/NASWP 14/13/10](#) on noncommunicable disease (NCD) issues in the NASWP region. The Representative highlighted that the Pacific region has been declared to be in a health and development crisis due to the NCD epidemic. It was highlighted that an unhealthy diet is a major risk factor for NCDs and that food standards and regulations are a key policy instrument to influence the composition of foods and labelling and the exposure to diet-related risk factors for NCDs.
67. The Representative stressed that many activities have been implemented since the CCNASWP12, but action needed to be scaled up. A number of potential areas for interventions and challenges associated with measures to address food and diet related NCD risk factors were presented.
68. The Coordinating Committee expressed its gratitude to FAO and WHO for preparing the paper and bringing this important issue to their attention. The Coordinating Committee noted the importance of urgent action to address NCDs and vitamin and mineral deficiencies (VMD) in the region and the need for multisectoral approaches to prevent and control these health challenges. The Coordinating Committee further noted that an effective strategy to address these issues should comprise a range of complementary interventions at national and regional level
69. The Coordinating Committee took note of countries' different approaches in their ongoing efforts to address NCDs and VMDs and highlighted the need for interventions to be tailored to specific country needs and contexts. Member countries were encouraged to share best practices and experiences in developing and implementing programmes to improve diets.
70. The Coordinating Committee highlighted the need for countries to use Codex and a harmonized approach in the development, revision and updating of national food policies, laws, regulations and standards.
71. One Observer organization also drew attention to the potential benefits associated with biofortification as a means to address VMD in the region.

Conclusion

72. The Coordinating Committee acknowledged the support provided by FAO and WHO to address the NCD and VMD issue but highlighted the need for continued support to build capacity among beneficiaries at various levels of government as well as civil society. In this regard, the Coordinating Committee was advised that FAO and WHO with support from the Codex Trust Fund, will conduct a workshop for PICs in early 2015 on nutrition and diet related NCD challenges in the Pacific and the role of Codex.

¹¹ [CX/NASWP 14/13/9](#); [CRD5](#) (comments of Papua New Guinea).

¹² [CX/NASWP 14/13/10](#).

CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 11)¹³

73. The Coordinating Committee noted that Attachment A of [CX/NASWP 14/13/11](#) included useful information that could assist countries of the region to identify and prioritise issues under discussion in Codex that could be pursued at national or regional level in the coming years.
74. With regard to the prioritization of Codex work, the Coordinating Committee recalled the three priority issues, i.e. date marking (CCFL), proposed revision of the general principles of food hygiene including HACCP (CCFH) and principles and guidelines for elaboration and management of questionnaires directed at exporting countries (CCFICS), which were identified during the FAO/WHO Technical Workshop on Developments in Codex relevant to Pacific Island Countries (Kokopo, Papua New Guinea, 21 September 2014). Members were encouraged to submit written comments on these issues which would further enhance their participation.
75. It was also noted that some suggestions as to the mechanisms to develop regional positions on Codex work (para. 11 of the document) deserved serious consideration and were in line with proposal 3.3 of the "Revitalisation" document ([CX/NASWP 14/13/4](#)).

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 12)¹⁴

76. On the proposal of the Delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 38th Session of the Commission that Vanuatu be appointed as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific. The Delegation of Vanuatu thanked all the Countries for their support and accepted the nomination.
77. The current Coordinator expressed gratitude to all Countries of the region and the Government of Papua New Guinea for the support received to undertake this important task.
78. The Coordinating Committee expressed its thanks to Papua New Guinea for the excellent work carried out as Coordinator for the NASWP region.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 13)

79. The Coordinating Committee noted that no other business had been put forward during the adoption of the Agenda.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 14)

80. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 14th Session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 38th Session of the Commission.

¹³ [CX/NASWP 14/13/11](#).

¹⁴ [CX/NASWP 14/13/12](#).

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY:	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (REP15/NASWP)
Proposed Draft Standard for Fermented Noni Juice	2/3	EWG led by Tonga 14 th CCNASWP	para. 53
Implementation Status of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2014-2019	-	Coordinator 14 th CCNASWP	para. 57
Discussion paper on kava	-	EWG led by Vanuatu 14 th CCNASWP	para. 62
Areas for new work of interest to the Region	-	Codex Secretariat/ Coordinator 14 th CCNASWP	para. 64

Appendix I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

Chairperson: **Dr Vele Pat ILA'AVA, PhD**
Président: Secretary Department of Agriculture and Livestock
Presidente: P. O. Box 2033
 Konedobu, Port Moresby, National Capital District,
 Papua New Guinea.
 Tel: +675 321 3302
 Fax: +675 321 2236
 Email: vjm0962@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA / AUSTRALIE**Ms Ann BACKHOUSE**

Director, Codex International Standards
 Department of Agriculture
 GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601
 AUSTRALIA
 Tel: +612 6272 5692
 Fax: +612 6272 4389
 Email: ann.backhouse@agriculture.gov.au

Ms Kate SLATER

Executive Officer
 Department of Agriculture
 GPO 858
 Canberra, Australia
 Tel: +61 262 724542
 Email: Kate.Slater@agriculture.gov.au

CANADA/ CANADÁ**Mr Allan McCARVILLE**

Deputy Codex Contact Point for Canada
 Food Directorate
 Health Canada
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway
 Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
 K1A 0K9
 Tel: +1 613 941 4616
 Fax: +1 613 941 3537
 Email: allan.mccarville@hc-sc.gc.ca

COOK ISLANDS/ ÎLES COOK/ ISLAS COOK**Mr Ngatoko NGATOKO**

National Codex Contact Point
 Ministry of Agriculture
 P O Box 96
 Rarotonga, COOK ISLANDS
 Email: nngatoko@agriculture.gov.ck

Ms Tae NOOTUTAI

Health Protection Officer
 Ministry of Health
 PO Box 109
 Rarotonga, COOK ISLANDS
 Email: t.nootutai@health.gov.ck

**MICRONESIA (FEDERATED STATES OF)
 MICRONÉSIE (ÉTATS FÉDÉRÉS DE)/ MICRONESIA
 (ESTADOS FEDERADOS DE)**

Mr Moses PRETRICK

Environmental Health Coordinator
 Environmental Health & Preparedness Unit
 Division of Health Services
 FSM Dept. of Health & Social Affairs
 PO Box PS-70
 Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941
 FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
 Tel: +691 320 8300
 Fax: +691 320 8460
 Email: mpretrick@fsmhealth.fm

Mr Adelino LORENS

Chief of Agriculture
 Office of Economic Affairs
 Pohnpei State
 Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941
 Federated States of Micronesia
 Tel: (691) 691-320-2400
 Email: pniagriculture@mail.fm

FIJI**Ms Miliakere NAWAIKULA**

Director Research
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Koronivia Research Station, P.O. Box 77
 Nausori
 FIJI
 Tel: +679 347 7738
 Fax: +679 347 7546
 Email: miliakere.nawaikula@govnet.gov.fj

Ms Taina WAQALIVA

Senior Assistant Health Inspector
 Food unit/ Competent Authority, Suva, Fiji
 Tel: +679 3215790
 Fax: +679 3215814
 Email: trauvala@yahoo.com /
taina.waqaliva@govnet.gov.fj

KIRIBATI**Ms Tearo OTIUEA**

Principal Agricultural Officer
 Agriculture & Livestock Division
 Ministry of Environment, Lands & Agricultural
 Development
 Kiribati
 Email: tatenairi@gmail.com

Ms Eretii TIMEON

Ag. Deputy Director of Public Health / Nutritionist
 Ministry of Health & Medical Services
 Kiribati
 Tel: +686 28549
 Email : eretiitimeon@yahoo.com

NAURU**Mr Vincent SCOTTY**

Food Inspector
 Nauru Department of Health
 Tel: +67 5573147
 Email: Vincent.scotty2004@yahoo.com

Mr Tremaine DICK

Senior Quarantine Officer
 Ministry of Boarder Control
 Yoren District
 Nauru
 Tel: +674 557 3079
 Email: tremainedick@yahoo.com

**NEW ZEALAND/ NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE
NUEVA ZELANDIA****Mr Raj RAJASEKAR**

Senior Program Manager (Codex)
 Ministry for Primary Industries
 25 The Terrace Wellington 6011
 NEW ZEALAND
 Tel: +64 (4) 894 2576
 Email: Raj.rajasekar@mpi.govt.nz

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA/
PAPOUASIE-NOUVELLE-GUINÉE/
PAPUA NUEVA GUINEA****Mr Pascoe KASE**

Secretary
 Department of Health
 National Department of Health
 P. O. Box 807, Waigani, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 301 3601
 Fax: +675 301 3601
 Email: pascoe_kase@health.gov.pg

Mr Ian ONAGA, MBE

Chairman of National Codex Committee PNG and
 Director for Science & Technology Branch
 Provincial Agricultural Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P O Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Tel: +675 7262 2590
 Email: ianonaga@gmail.com

Mr Michael Wakan AREKE

Biosecurity Officer, Operations Division
 National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority
 P. O. Box 741
 NCD 121
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 7016 4278 / +675 7642 0316
 Fax: +675 325 1674
 Email: areke.michael12@gmail.com

Ms Josephine KOMBOI

Audit Certification Officer
 National Fisheries Authority
 P O Box 2016, Port Moresby
 Tel: +675 7193 7602 / 3090 444
 Email: jkomboi@fisheries.gov.pg

Mr Dou BOLLY

Standard Development Officer
 National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology
 P O Box 3042, Boroko, NCD
 Tel: +675 323 1852 / +675 7262 6290
 Email: dou.bolly@nisit.gov.pg

Mr Jonathan SILAS

Co-ordinator – Food Safety
 National Capital District Commission
 P O Box 7270, Boroko, NCD
 Tel: +675 323 3212
 Email: SilasJ@ncdc.gov.pg

Ms Hilda SIM

Quality Control Manager
 National Agriculture Research Institute
 P O Box 8277, Boroko, NCD
 Tel: +675 321 2690
 Fax: +675 320 2411
 Email: hilda.sim@nari.org.pg

Mr Aaron GWAMATAE

Program Officer – Food Safety & Quarantine
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 7214 9378
 Email: aaron_gwamatae@health.gov.pg

Mr Bede TOMOKITA

Acting First Assistant Secretary
 Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry
 P O Box 375, Waigani
 National Capital District
 Tel: +675 311 2001
 Fax: +675 325 6108
 Email: b.tomokita@dc.gov.pg

Mr Potaisa HOMBUNAKA

Deputy Secretary, PATS
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P.O Box 2033, Port Moresby, NCD
 Tel: +675 321 4096
 Fax: +675 321 1373
 Email: phombunaka@gmail.com

Mr Francis DAINK

Deputy Secretary, Policy Planning and Coordination
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P O Box 2033, Port Moresby, NCD
 Tel: +675 321 4096 / +675 7694 9427
 Fax: +675 321 1373
 Email: fdaink85@gmail.com

Mr Brown KONABE

Director, Food Security Branch
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P O Box 2033, Port Moresby
 Email: bkonabe@gmail.com

Mr Joel KOLAM

Manager – Environmental Health Branch
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 301 3700
 Fax: +675 301 3604
 Email: joel_kolam@health.gov.pg

Ms Diane KAVE

Technical Officer – Quarantine & Food Safety
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 301 3704
 Fax: +675 301 3604
 Email: dianekave@gmail.com

Mr Frank PAULUS

Technical Officer – Quarantine & Food Safety
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 301 3704
 Fax: +675 301 3604

Mr Johnson PETER

Technical Officer – Quarantine & Food Safety
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 301 3704
 Fax: +675 301 3604

Ms Lawrencina KUMIS

Technical Officer – Quarantine & Food Safety
 National Department of Health
 P O Box 807, Waigani
 Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive
 Tel: +675 301 3704
 Fax: +675 301 3604

Ms Madrias LEGAS

Senior Environmental Health Officer
 National Capital District Commission
 P O Box 7270, Boroko, NCD

Tel: +675 323 3212

Email: MadriasL@ncdc.gov.pg

Mr Joel ALU

Acting Managing Director
 National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority
 P O Box 741, Port Moresby, NCD
 Tel: +675 311 2100
 Fax: +675 325 51673
 Email: jalu@naqia.gov.pg

Dr Nime KAPO

General Manager – Technical Services
 National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority
 P O Box 741, Port Moresby, NCD
 Tel: +675 311 2100
 Fax: +675 325 51673
 Email: nkapo@naqia.gov.pg

Mr Andy YOMBO

Principal Epidemiologist – Animal Health and Quarantine,
 Technical Services
 P O Box 741, Port Moresby
 National Capital District, PNG
 Tel: +675 311 2100
 Fax: +675 325 1673
 Email: Kyombo@naqia.gov.pg / andy.yombo@gmail.com

Mr Farrell MAGTOTO

Regional Veterinary Officer – New Guinea Islands Region,
 Technical Services
 National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority
 Tel: +675 982 5380 / +675 7238 2156
 Email: fmagtoto@naqia.gov.pg

Ms Annastasia KAWI

Regional Plant Protection Officer
 National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority,
 Kokopo
 P O Box 817, Kokopo
 Tel: +675 7166 8794
 Email: annaprisilla.kawi@gmail.com

Dr James KAIULO

Kokonas Industri Koporesen
 P O Box 81
 Port Moresby

Mr Geno GENOLAMAR

Kokonas Industri Koporesen
 P O Box 81
 Port Moresby

Dr Arnold C. PARAPI

Executive Manager – Field Services
 Cocoa Board of PNG
 P O Box 532, Kokopo, ENBP
 Papua New Guinea
 Tel: +675 982 8915
 Fax: +675 982 8917
 Email: aparapi@gmail.com

Mr Charles KOEL

Senior Project Officer
 Cocoa Board of PNG
 P O Box 532, Kokopo, ENBP
 Tel: +675 7318 1374
 Email: cphillipkoel@gmail.com

Ms Miriam NAMALIU

Standard Development Officer
National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology
P O Box 3042, Boroko, NCD
Tel: +675 323 1852 / +675 7262 6290
Email: miriam.namaliu.gov.pg

Mr Greg LIRIPU

Chief Executive Officer
Fresh Produce Development Agency
P O Box 958, Goroka, EHP
Tel: +675 532 3356
Fax: +675 532 3357
Email: greg.liripu@fpda.com.pg

Mr Robert LUTULELE

Divisional Manager, Production and Value Chain systems
Fresh Produce Development Agency
P O Box 958, Goroka, EHP
Tel: +675 532 3356
Fax: +675 532 3357
Email: robert.lutulele@fpda.com.pg

Mr Andrew MUNAP

Department of Trade, Commerce & Industry
Principal Trade officer, Trade Division
Tel: +675 325 6099
Email: Andrew.Munap@dc.gov.pg

SAMOA**Mr Sinei FILI**

Principal Environmental Health Officer
Health Protection & Enforcement Division
Ministry of Health
P. O. Box 2268
Moto'otua, Apia, SAMOA
Tel: +685 68 100/ +685 760 1688
Email: sineif@health.gov.ws

Mr Roger TOLEAFOA

Assistant CEO, Fair Trading and Codex Development
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour
Level 3 Acc, Building Matafele
Apia, Samoa
Email: roger.toleafoa@mcil.gov.ws

Mr Auelua Taito Samuelu ENARI

Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour
Level 3 ACC, Building,
PO B0x 862, Apia, Samoa
Email: aelua@mcil.gov.ws

**SOLOMON ISLANDS/ ÎLES SALOMON/
ISLAS SALOMON****Ms Ethel Lano MAPOLU**

Chief Health Inspector – Codex Contact Point
National Food Safety, Inspection & Certification Unit
Environmental Health Division, MHMS
PO Box 349 ; Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS
Tel: +677 28 166/ +677 758 2745
Fax: +677 28 166
Email: emapolu@moh.gov.sb / elano56@gmail.com

Mr James KAMALIGE

Senior Research Officer
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
department of Research, PO Box G13
Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS
Tel: +677 22 143
Fax: +677 28 365
Email: jnkamalige@gmail.com

TONGA**Dr Viliami Toalei MANU**

Codex Contact Point
Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forests and Fisheries
Research and Information Division
Vaini Research Station
PO Box 14
Nuku'alofa, TONGA
Tel: +676 23 038
Fax: +676 23 093
Email: mafsoils@kalianet.to

Dr Reynold OFANOA

Head of Public Health Department of Public Health,
Vaiola Hospital Tofoa
Ministry of Health
PO Box 59
Nuku'alofa, Tonga
Tel: +676 23-200 / +676 883 3179
Fax: +676 24 291
Email: reynoldofanoa@gmail.com

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/ ÉTATS-UNIS
D'AMÉRIQUE/ ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA****Ms Marie MARATOS**

International Issues Analyst
US Codex Office
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW 20250
Washington, DC 20250, USA
Tel: +1 202 690 4795
Fax: +1 202 720 3157
Email: marie.maratos@fsis.usda.gov

VANUATU**Mr Timothy TUMUKON**

P.O. Box 911
Port Vila, VANUATU
Tel : +678 779 3867
Email : ttumukon@vanuatu.gov.vu

Mr Michael Herve LOUZE

General Manager
 South Seas Commodity
 Kava Industry Working Group
 P O Box 803
 Port Vila, Vanuatu
 Email : louzemichael@yahoo.fr

Mr Viran TOVU

Codex Contact Point
 Acting Director General of the Ministry of Health,
 Government of Vanuatu
 Port Vila, Vanuatu
 Tel : +678 774 5120
 Email : vtovu@vanuatu.gov.vu

**OBSERVER COUNTRIES/ PAÍSES OBSERVADORES/
 PAYS OBSERVATEURS****JAPAN/JAPON/JAPÓN****Mr Makoto SAKASHITA**

Associate Director
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
 Department of Food Safety and Consumer Policy Division
 Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
 Tokyo, Japan
 Email: makoto_sakashita@nm.maff.go.jp

Mr Yukihiko OSUMI

Section Chief
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
 Department of Food Safety and Consumer
 Policy Division
 Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
 Tokyo, Japan
 Email: yukihiko_oosumi@nm.maff.go.jp

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE/SUIZA**Ms Awilo OCHIENG PERNET**

Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission
 Division of International Affairs
 Federal Office of Public Health, FOPH
 CH-3003, Bern, Switzerland
 Tel: +41 31 322 0041
 Fax: +41 31 322 1131
 Email: awilo.ochieng@blv.admin.ch

**INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL
 ORGANIZATIONS/ ORGANISATIONS NON-
 GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES/
 ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES NON
 GUBERNAMENTALES****IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute)****Dr Anne MACKENZIE**

Head, Standards and Regulatory Issues
 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
 6442 Aston Rd
 Ottawa, ON
 Canada, K4M1B3

Tel: + 1 613 692 0211
 Fax: +1 613 692 6020
 Email: a.mackenzie@cgiar.org

**INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL
 ORGANIZATIONS/ ORGANISATIONS
 GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES/
 ORGANIZACIONES GUBERNAMENTALES
 INTERNACIONALES****FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE
 UNITED NATIONS (FAO) – ORGANISATION DES
 NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION E
 L'AGRICULTURE (FAO) – ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS
 NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA
 ALIMENTACIÓN (FAO)****Mr Dirk SCHULZ**

Food Safety and Nutrition Officer
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 (FAO)
 FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands
 Apia, SAMOA
 Tel: +685 22127
 Email: dirk.schulz@fao.org

Ms Mary KENNY

Food Safety and Quality Officer
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 (FAO)
 Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 00153 Rome
 ITALY
 Tel: +3906 5705 3653
 Fax: +3906 5705 4593
 Email: Mary.Kenny@fao.org

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) -
 ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ (OMS) -
 ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LA SALUD (OMS)****Dr Peter Sousa HOEJSKOV**

Technical Officer – Food Safety and Non Communicable
 Diseases
 World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations
 Division of Public Technical Support (DPS)
 South Pacific Office, Level 4 Provident Plaza
 33 Ellery Street P.O.113, Suva, FIJI
 Tel +679 3234 100 & +679 3234 145 (Dir)
 Fax +679 323 4166
 Skype: peter.hoejskov
 Email: hoejskovp@wpro.int
 Website: www.wpro.who.int/southpacific

SECRETARIATS – SECRÉTARIATS- SECRETARÍAS**CODEX SECRETARIAT - SECRÉTARIAT DU CODEX - SECRETARÍA DEL CODEX****Ms Verna CAROLISSEN**

Food Standards Officer
 Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
 Viale Delle Terme di Caracalla
 00153 Rome, ITALY
 Tel: +39 06570 55629
 Email: verna.carolissen@fao.org

Ms Annamaria BRUNO

Senior Food Standards Officer
 Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program
 Viale Delle Terme di Caracalla
 00153 Rome, ITALY
 Tel: +39 06570 556254
 Email: annamaria.bruno@fao.org

Ms Takako YANO

Food Standards Officer
 Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program
 Viale Delle Terme di Caracalla
 00153 Rome, ITALY
 Tel: +39 06570 55868
 Email: takako.yano@fao.org

**PAPUA NEW GUINEAN SECRETARIAT
SECRÉTARIAT DE LA PAPOUASIE NOUVELLE
GUINÉE- SECRETARÍA DE PAPUA NUEVA GUINEA****Mr Elias M.TAIA**

Codex Contact Point and Program Manager
 Agro-food Safety and Codex (PNG) Unit
 Provincial Agricultural Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture and Livestock
 Science & Technology Branch
 PO Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 341 8839 / +675 7188 3510
 Email: codexcontactpoint.png@gmail.com

Ms Daphne ONAGA

Senior Nutrition & Production Officer
 Agro-food Safety and Codex (PNG) Unit
 Science & Technology Branch
 Provincial Agricultural Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P. O. Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 7701 8839/ +675 7360 8850
 Email: daphneonaga@gmail.com

Ms Geno GENO

Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
 Agro-food Safety and Codex (PNG) Unit
 Science and Technology Branch
 Provincial Agricultural Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P. O. Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 341 8839/ +675 7123 5717
 Email: ggeno83@gmail.com

Mr Elias JOHN

Codex Information and Communication Officer
 Agro-food Safety and Codex (PNG) Unit
 Science & Technology Branch
 Provincial Agricultural Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P. O. Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel: +675 7203 8189/ +675 341 8839
 Email: john.elias49@yahoo.com

Mr Peter CORBETT

Codex Consultant
 Agro-food Safety and Codex (PNG) Unit
 Science and Technology Branch
 Provincial Agriculture Technical Services (PATS) Division
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P. O. Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel +675 341 8839 /71209020

Mr Soldier BURUKA

Media Officer
 Department of Agriculture & Livestock
 P. O. Box 2141, Boroko, NCD
 Port Moresby, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 Tel +675 341 8839 /71209020

Mr Nathan REMA

Telikom PNG Limited
 P O Box 4867, Boroko, NCD
 Tel: +675 7335 6321 / +675 7753 2216
 Email: nathan.rema@telikompng.com.pg

Appendix II**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC (CCNASWP) 2014-2019****INTRODUCTION**

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations in 1963. The main objective of CAC is to develop international food standards to protect health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. It also promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations; it publishes elaborated standards as Codex worldwide or regional standards and to amend published standards in the light of new developments.

The region is quite unique based on the heterogeneity of countries in terms of capacity to implement Codex standards in the food safety area and experience with participation in Codex work. This underlines the need in capacity development to increase the level of participation and the technical quality of contributions to Codex work, as well as to raise capacity for the utilization of Codex standards for strengthening food safety control systems and for ensuring the protection of domestic consumers and consumers in importing countries. The Strategic Plan for the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) responds with basic actions to address the need for ensuring more consistent technical inputs, promoting greater participation of CCNASWP countries to Codex work, and fostering the collection and provision of regional data for standard setting purposes.

The Strategic Plan 2014-2019 for CCNASWP contains the goal, strategic objectives and actions to achieve the expected outcomes within the five (5) year time frame. The Strategic Plan for CCNASWP has been aligned to support the global Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019, seeking to achieve better coordination and interaction among member countries for strengthening national food safety systems, promoting harmonisation of standards and equivalence of practices in ensuring food safety.

GOAL

The goal of this Strategic Plan is to increase and enhance the effectiveness of CCNASWP in achieving its responsibilities to its Member countries and enhancing the Region's contribution to the CAC.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies six strategic objectives of the region for the period 2014-2019. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of the Coordinating Committee to determine the status of the Plan and the continued appropriateness of the identified objectives.

Objective 1: To strengthen the communication among CCNASWP members and the coordination of the region's activities in Codex.				
Rationale: Meaningful consultation and coordination among the CCNASWP members including relevant stakeholders in the country is important to ensure effective operation of the region's activities within Codex.				
Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 3.2.3 "Where practical, the use of Codex meetings as a forum to effectively conduct educational and technical capacity building activities".				
Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators / Outputs
1.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all Members ¹ at Codex Committees, Task Forces, Working Groups and the Commission.	All members	Ongoing	Improvement made in the coordination and communication in the region.	Meetings held with maximum participation of all members.
1.2 Continue to promote the sharing of written comments to Circular Letters (CLs) and on other working documents, and subsequent discussion of issues of mutual interest as may be appropriate, including coordinating positions.	All members	Ongoing	Written comments are exchanged and member positions coordinated.	Increase in the number of comments shared.
1.3 Encourage information exchange among member countries through the use of electronic information systems.	All members	Ongoing	Maintain website and exchange information through internet.	Increase in contact among members and use of website.
1.4 Focus CCNASWP agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to the region.	Coordinator ² in consultation with FAO and WHO and members	Ongoing	Codex issues of interest to the region clearly highlighted.	Agenda for CCNASWP meeting strengthened.
1.5 Ensure a seamless transition between Coordinators.	New and previous Coordinators with assistance from Secretariat	Ongoing	Activities of CCNASWP continue in a seamless way among Coordinators.	Checklist prepared for new Coordinators.

¹ "All Members" refers to all CCNASWP members.

² "Coordinator" refers to CCNASWP Coordinator.

Objective 2: To promote maximum participation of all CCNASWP member countries of the region in the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the CCNASWP region.

Rationale: The participation of all member countries is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring issues identified as being significant to the region take into account of the full range of interest and viewpoints of members.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 3.2.2 “Encourage developing countries to identify and prioritize Codex committees and task forces of significance to them”.

Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
2.1 Encourage PIC member countries to continue to request funding assistance (e.g. the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhancing the Participation of Developing Countries in the Work of Codex and its successor initiative, as well as other funding sources such as WHO, FAO, UNDF, STDF and other national and international organizations).	All eligible PIC members countries	Ongoing	PICs more actively engaged in Codex activities.	Increase in attendance of PICs in Codex meetings, Task Forces and working groups to develop capacities.
2.2 Promote coordinated approaches for assistance from funding sources to maximise coverage of subject areas of interest to the region. PIC members should coordinate application to the various funding sources to ensure, to the extent possible, that members benefit from participation in a wider range of committees.	All eligible members and the Coordinator	Ongoing	Attend CCNASWP and other relevant Codex committees.	Increase in sources of funding used to increase participation at Codex meetings.
2.3 Members to participate in working groups (both electronic and physical) and to submit written comments on subjects of national and regional interest irrespective of whether members can physically attend the meetings.	All members	Immediate and ongoing	All members sharing their written comments with all members of the region to inform and assist them to formulate national positions/views.	All members submit written comments on issues of interest to them.
2.4 Ensure that the country comments from members of the CCNASWP region are considered by the committee including those not present at meetings.	All members	Ongoing	All members to submit country comments.	Comments submitted by members considered at meeting.

Objective 2: To promote maximum participation of all CCNASWP member countries of the region in the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the CCNASWP region.

Rationale: The participation of all member countries is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring issues identified as being significant to the region take into account of the full range of interest and viewpoints of members.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 3.2.2 “Encourage developing countries to identify and prioritize Codex committees and task forces of significance to them”.

2.5 Identify items arising from other Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups that are of particular significance to the region to facilitate development of common position and advancement of regional interest in Codex work.	Coordinator in consultation with members	Ongoing	Careful consideration of matters arising from CAC and other Codex committees.	Identify issues of interest to the region.
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Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of the national Codex contact points, national Codex Committees, delegates and stakeholders especially for the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions

Rationale: In order for a country to participate effectively in the Codex process, it requires a functional Codex Contact Point (CCP), including an effective structure that supports stakeholder consultations and delegates development of national positions. This still presents a challenge to many of the Pacific Island Country (PIC) Members where effective Codex Contact Points, and their support infrastructures are needed to carry out the core functions. Regional networking could greatly benefit the newer members of the region to improve their understanding of Codex and help enhance their participation in Codex.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 3.1.1 “Encourage Members to develop sustainable national institutional arrangements to promote effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes”.

Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
3.1 Identify the capacity building needs of the Codex Contact Points to strengthen Codex structures at the national level and facilitate greater participation of members in Codex work.	FAO and WHO, Coordinator and members	Ongoing	Strengthen National Codex Contact Points and supporting structures of all members	Implement regional/national level training programmes-
3.2 Conduct national and/or regional workshops on developing effective administrative/consultative/participatory mechanisms to support for Codex Contact Points, delegates and National Codex	FAO and WHO and all members	Ongoing	Implement national /regional workshops with further workshops planned around regional meetings.	Hold regional /national workshops to strengthen national capacities.

Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of the national Codex contact points, national Codex Committees, delegates and stakeholders especially for the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions

Rationale: In order for a country to participate effectively in the Codex process, it requires a functional Codex Contact Point (CCP), including an effective structure that supports stakeholder consultations and delegates development of national positions. This still presents a challenge to many of the Pacific Island Country (PIC) Members where effective Codex Contact Points, and their support infrastructures are needed to carry out the core functions. Regional networking could greatly benefit the newer members of the region to improve their understanding of Codex and help enhance their participation in Codex.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 3.1.1 “Encourage Members to develop sustainable national institutional arrangements to promote effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes”.

Committee members.				
3.3 Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points /delegates to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.	Members with lead from Coordinator	Ongoing	Initiate networking with exchange of emails.	Increase networking of CCPs/ delegates in the region.
3.4 Organise training opportunities for all countries CCPs, stakeholders and/or delegates through work attachments and in country support to more experienced CCPs to observe the management and implementation of Codex work.	All members	Ongoing	Improve capacity building of CCPs/Secretariat/Technical personnel.	Provide on the job training to all members.
3.5 Encourage all members to mobilize national resources to enable them to participate effectively in Codex.	All members	Ongoing	Sustain or increase resource allocation to Codex activities.	Increased participation.

Objective 4: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise and information amongst member countries of the region.

Rationale: As a fundamental element of food control systems is good science, the exchange of scientific and technical expertise / information will contribute to enhancing the scientific basis of the various food control infrastructures in the region.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 2.1.2 “Encourage engagement of scientific and technical expertise of Members and their representatives in the development of Codex standards”.

Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
4.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/ analysis/evidence.	All members and FAO and WHO	Ongoing	Regional issues.	Provide technical expertise / information and guidance on the critical areas of interest in data generation, collection, analysis and storage.
4.2 Foster the establishment of communication links amongst the technical experts and the institutions in the countries of the region and promote the sharing of data and other scientific information as appropriate.	All members and FAO and WHO	Ongoing	Develop links between technical expertise / information to share data and collaborative efforts.	Codex Contact Points to provide or facilitate access to technical expertise / information.
4.3 Organize and conduct workshops/training courses-to facilitate the development of technical capacity of the members of the region to address any identified issues including the application of risk assessment processes.	All members and FAO and WHO	Ongoing	Ensure and facilitate appropriate workshops and training courses.	Conduct workshops on specific areas of interest.

Objective 5: To promote use of Codex standards, codes and guidelines as the basis for national standards development

Rationale: Increased harmonization of regulatory standards, policies and practices related to food would contribute to protect the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade; not only amongst members of the region, but also more broadly. Many of the PICs are unfamiliar with the full range of Codex standards and it would be helpful to their standards development and review process to identify those standards and guidelines that might be of greatest interest to them.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 1.2.2 “Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade”.

Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
5.1 Support practical training on the importance of international harmonisation and the development of national standards and regulations harmonised on Codex.	FAO and WHO and all members	Ongoing	Increased the number of workshops planned and conducted.	Increased number of national standards harmonised with Codex standards.
5.2 Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, industries, consumers, academia, professional bodies and NGOs).	All members	Ongoing	Increased engagements by relevant stakeholders.	Increased inputs in the development of country comments.

Objective 6: To promote the development of Codex standards for specific food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries and for other food related issues.

Rationale: To identify and prioritise specific food products and other issues of interest to the region, and in particular to the PICs, to ensure that their needs are taken into account in the development of worldwide and/or regional texts.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 1.2.1 “Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade”.

Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Measurable indicators/Outputs
6.1 Establish national mechanism for standard development process in the PICs to identify specific food products and other food related issues of interest to the region that require a standard to be developed in order to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.	All PICs	By 2019	Identify, prioritise and develop standards for food products in the PIC.	Establish national mechanisms.

Objective 6: To promote the development of Codex standards for specific food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries and for other food related issues.

Rationale: To identify and prioritise specific food products and other issues of interest to the region, and in particular to the PICs, to ensure that their needs are taken into account in the development of worldwide and/or regional texts.

Relationship with Global Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Activity 1.2.1 “Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade”.

6.2 Provide a mechanism for identifying standards development issues in Codex of interest to the PICs and establish sub-regional Working Group, as appropriate for PICs to address these issues.	Coordinator	By 2019	Identify Codex standard development issues and establish sub-regional working groups.	Establish electronic and physical working groups on kava, fermented noni juice and other food products and other food related issues of importance to the PICs.
6.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products and other food related issues of interest to the PICs to CCNASWP for consideration prior to submission to the Commission or other Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups.	PICs	Ongoing	New proposals of interest for the region accepted as new work.	Submit proposals for new standards to CAC and other committees through CCNASWP.