

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 15

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-second Session

CICG, Geneva, Switzerland, 8-12 July 2019

REPORT ON SIDE EVENT: FAO AND WHO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Tuesday 9 July, 17:00 - 18:30

Salle 1

The representatives of FAO and WHO highlighted the capacity-development activities undertaken by FAO and WHO since CAC41 as presented in CX/CAC 19/42/16.

In their introductory remarks, the representatives of FAO and WHO emphasized the importance of developing a range of tools based on relevant Codex texts, which enable countries to better understand and apply the standards and related texts in their national context. The latest in the series is the Joint FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool, which has been piloted in numerous countries across several regions. In addition to the English version, it is currently undergoing translation into Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish and these versions will also be available shortly to facilitate its use globally. FAO and WHO noted that the capacity development programme is demand driven based on countries' needs as identified through national planning processes and expressed through the governing bodies of FAO and WHO. Key capacity development initiatives highlighted include recent work related to Whole Genome sequencing, Antimicrobial resistance and foresight for identification of emerging and critical issues in food safety. Upcoming events later this year include the second global meeting of INFOSAN members to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and the FAO GM Foods Platform global community meeting in Bangkok, Thailand. The representatives further informed the delegates that work is currently ongoing to develop a guide on risk categorization, guide on ranking of food safety risks, a manual for risk-based meat inspection and a publication on climate change and food safety.

In their response, several countries acknowledged support provided and expressed their appreciation to FAO and WHO. Key points from the interventions of delegates include:

- emphasized the importance of strengthening the collaboration and cooperation among relevant parties at the national level and requested to make available and share opportunities to join workshops and other FAO and WHO capacity development activities among these national authorities.
- highlighted the challenges to implement capacity development activities at country level in a number of areas; e.g. to standardize and harmonize inspection systems, to help meet standards set by the targeted markets, to coordinate integrated surveillance for monitoring of Antimicrobial resistance, and to strengthen the international legal framework to better handle issues such as food fraud.
- expressed concerns about the limitation of resources and technical supports available from FAO and WHO country offices and different mandates for both organizations and recommended that for such small programmes as food safety, a more integrated support be provided by the different levels of the 2 Organizations and the more resources should be put into support for prevention activities rather than for responses.
- highlighted positive experiences where safety policies and action plans have been put in place and are paving the way for focused priorities for activities including for example on standards and the strengthening of laboratories.

In concluding the side event, the representatives of FAO and WHO thanked delegations for their feedback and reiterated that the headquarters, regional and country offices of FAO and WHO will continue to work together to support countries taking a comprehensive approach with long-term strategic planning for capacity development activities.