

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 13

CX/CAC 22/45/20
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION Forty-fifth Session Virtual

60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission: 1963-2023

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The 44th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (2021) requested the Codex Secretariat to include the Codex 60th Anniversary (Codex@60) on the agenda of the upcoming sessions of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).
2. It further requested the Secretariat in cooperation with FAO, WHO, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission and CCEXEC (including the Regional Coordinators) to reach out to all Members and Observers in their preparations for the Codex 60th Anniversary and provide regular updates.
3. A paper outlining the proposed areas of activities was prepared and considered by CCEXEC82¹ with Members sharing ideas on how the anniversary could be celebrated as well as efforts underway at national level². The issue was also considered in each of the Coordinating Committees³ that met in 2022 and when time allowed there was a discussion and exchange of ideas on proposals and plans for Codex@60.

A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

4. Codex@60 will not be marked by a single occasion but rather a series of events that will take place in the course of 2023 at national, regional and global level. Members have already been sharing their plans for Codex@60 through the coordinating committees and discussions are underway in several regions on what a regional event or regional day or celebration may envisage. To capture the many initiatives of Members and Observers, an events calendar will be made available on the Codex webpage. In planning events there is a need to be mindful of the need to build awareness regarding Codex and to engage high level political support.
5. The theme of World Food Safety Day 2023 (7 June 2023) will be about standards. This provides a natural celebration point in the calendar with planning for the day already underway in FAO and WHO. There will be a launch of WFSD2023 on 7 March 2023 which will provide Members and Observers with guidance and information to help them plan their own activities.
6. CCEXEC84 which will take place in Geneva on 11-14 July (with virtual report adoption on 19 July) 2023 will be the occasion to celebrate Codex@60 in home of one of the parents of Codex, the World Health Organization. The 46th session of the Commission, scheduled for 27 November to 2 December 2023, will mark the occasion in the home of the other parent of Codex, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the

¹ CX/EXEC 22/82/9

² REP22/EXEC1, para 122 - 129

³ REP22/EURO, para 19 and 21iii; REP22/AFRICA, paras 18, 85 and 89v; REP23/ASIA, paras 21 - 22; REP23/LAC, paras 23, 24, 96

United Nations. Members and observers alike are invited to contribute in the further development and implementation of these events.

7. The Secretariat has also been looking to external events and wider audiences to share the work of Codex. The first such event confirmed will be an expert panel at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture 2023 in Berlin, Germany which will take place on 20 January 2023 and will address the question “Is the Codex system fit for the future?”.

8. In line with the recommendation of CAC44 to encourage 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, the Codex Secretariat will make available a suite of assets (e.g. posters, video animation, merchandise) with the visual identity of Codex@60 to support the efforts of Members and Observers.

CELEBRATING OUR CORE ASSETS - THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

9. Sixty years of international food safety standard setting has bequeathed a Codex Alimentarius catalogue of immense value. Work is underway to present the full collection of Codex texts in time for Codex@60 (English initially with other languages to follow) with a completely revised format that will be attractive, useable and also stored digitally to deliver data regarding citations and other analytics. In addition work is underway to also launch a reformatted and more user-friendly version of the Codex Procedural Manual

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Codex@60 – Magazine Anniversary edition

10. The annual Codex magazine in 2023 will focus on the 60th anniversary, reflecting on the past, present and future of Codex. The Codex Secretariat is working to research and identify topics that could be considered “greatest achievements”. The digital publication will in addition cover the history of each Codex committee through the eyes and memories of experts, delegates, chairpersons and host secretariats; underline the value of Codex standards and related texts; and act as a promotional vehicle for global awareness raising for a broad audience. The digital nature of the publication will allow for rich media content (video, stories, infographics etc.) bringing to life the wide spectrum, the realities and the effectiveness of Codex standard setting over the last 60 years.

Case studies

11. This short format publication is another valuable tool for advocacy and for showcasing how countries can harness the technical work carried out by Codex committees when designing and implementing their own legislation, or how industry can ensure it is aligned with international standards and is in line with Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

12. As part of each region’s celebrations the Regional Coordinators are encouraged to identify a Codex text that has been integrated into national legislation or informed national standard-setting work and tell the story of that journey and its outcomes for Codex@60.

13. Observers are also encouraged to develop short case studies and explain how they make use of Codex standards or contribute to their development. This could be from an industry perspective or through the eyes of the specialist networks and consumer groups who are recognized as observers in Codex.

14. The subject and the details for such case studies can only come from the front line. The Codex Secretariat while following up on several proposals strongly Members and Observers to use this opportunity to showcase the value of Codex and increase its recognition and impact.

Codex web site

15. Technology has been a key part to the success of Codex and this has been particularly apparent in recent years due to the pandemic. Updating the core infrastructure and platforms underpinning the virtual presence of Codex and an extensive update of the Codex web site, both in terms of its visible interface and underlying structure is underway. This will be launched in 2023.

CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

16. The people that support the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission are often referred to as the Codex family. Feedback from Members to date has highlighted the importance of bringing Codex Members and Observers together for the 60th Anniversary - a family reunion as such and hence CAC46 has been confirmed as a physical session of the Commission in FAO Headquarters⁴. Members and Observers are encouraged to begin immediately to plan for their participation in CAC46.

17. The future of Codex will involve the youth of today. Special attention will be given in all the different events, initiatives and activities planned by the Codex Secretariat to hear the voice of youth, whether from food production, science, technology and innovation, government, academia or civil society. All those in the Codex family should also consider youth participation in their activities and combine this with the experience the elders and leaders in Codex can offer.

Reflecting on the past, learning from the present, building for the future

18. 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. Consultations on this topic have already begun with chairpersons of committees and working groups, host countries and regional coordinators and will continue with Members and observers in 2023. This issue has also been considered by coordinating committees that met in 2022. The aim is to have the blueprint for the future of Codex ready for consideration by CAC46

CONCLUSIONS

19. The goal of 2023 is to deliver a Codex 60th Anniversary to be proud of and that can inspire new generations to work within the Codex world. At the same time the plans aim to be realistic and pragmatic, mindful of resources and the need for flexibility and highlight the importance of engagement at all levels, national, regional and global. The Codex Secretariat appreciates the outreach of some Members in working to achieve the above and encourages and welcomes direct collaboration from more Members and Observers to ensure the goal of the Codex 60th Anniversary is achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. CAC45 is invited to:
- i. note and support the main features of the planned celebrations;
 - ii. encourage Members and Observers to fully engage in the celebrations and to share information on their plans and activities directly and/or through the Codex Secretariat;
 - iii. consider those areas where Members and Observers can provide specific support to Regional Coordinators to fully engage in early planning to identify their own contributions, and
 - iv. commit to advocacy at all levels to ensure widest possible participation in and promotion of the anniversary.

⁴ Remote participation option will also be provided for core sessions