

codex alimentarius commission



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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

1) This paper describes FAO/WHO capacity building activities on food safety and quality issues, including food standards and regulations that have been implemented since the 15th Session of the Codex Committee for Africa and are relevant to member countries in Africa.

B. NEED FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

2. As is well known, a new international food and agriculture trade environment has emerged as a result of the Uruguay round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and subsequent agreements on the application of SPS measures and on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

3. The evolution of the conditions for international trade in relation to food and agriculture affects numerous cross-cutting sectors in every country, including human, animal and plant health, environmental welfare and economic development. The regulatory systems and infrastructure needed to conform to the new international trading environment are weak in many developing countries. This puts these countries at a competitive disadvantage in the international trade arena and constitutes a major limitation to the effective participation of these countries in the discussions and decisions taken at the level of international standardisation bodies.

4. Both the SPS (article 9) Agreement and the TBT (article 12) Agreement make specific reference to increasing the capacity of developing countries and remaining cognisant of the unique needs of developing country Members. Specifically section 12.3 of the TBT states "Members shall, in the preparation and application of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures, take account of the special development, financial and trade needs of developing country Members, with a view to ensuring that such technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles to exports from developing country Members". Reinforcing these views, the Executive Heads of FAO, WHO, WTO, WB and OIE, in a joint statement issued at the occasion of the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Doha in November

2001, expressed their commitment to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to meet the requirements of the SPS agreement.

5. In keeping with these mandates, FAO and WHO engage in diverse capacity building activities designed to assist developing countries to improve their food safety and plant and animal health systems. Together with international organisations, national governments, international and regional financial institutions and NGOs, various capacity building and technical assistance initiatives have been undertaken. This often involves a review and analysis of the institutional set up for food control: evaluating its effectiveness, identifying main weaknesses, and formulating recommendations and proposals for the establishment of technically sound food control systems which are harmonised with current international standards. Specific activities falling within the realm of capacity building include, training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts) in the form of seminars, workshops and study tours to broaden in-country skills and increase the ability of local governments to implement comprehensive food control systems, enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, preparation of training manuals and guidelines, support in establishing and strengthening National Codex Committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks.

C. RECENT AND ONGOING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT GLOBAL LEVEL

International Events

6. As a follow-up to the successful first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and with the support and approval of the FAO and WHO member countries, the FAO Food Quality and Standards Service (FAO/ESNS) and WHO held the Second Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators (GF-2) in Bangkok, Thailand from 12-14 October 2004, under the main theme of: "Building Effective Food Safety Systems". The forum focused on the two following sub-themes: 1) Strengthening official food control services and 2) Epidemio-surveillance of foodborne diseases and food safety rapid alert systems. A number of related side events were also held before, during, and after the Forum, the reports of which are available from the forum website. More information on the First and Second Global Fora, including the final report when available, can be found at:

www.foodsafetyforum.org/index_en.htm

7. FAO/ESNS and the Institute de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) facilitated a Conference on Food Safety Under Extreme Conditions (Jaen, Spain, 6-8 September 2004) to address the issues of food-borne pathogens, anti-nutritional and toxic factors in fermented foods produced in small-scale producing units. This conference promoted sharing of information and viewpoints between scientists and experts from Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean countries on progress in scientific and regulatory knowledge of small-scale units. More information is available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_fermented_en.stm

8. FAO/ESNS co-sponsored the XI international IUPAC symposium on mycotoxins and phycotoxins from 17 to 21 May 2004 in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. The symposium assessed progress or advances made since the previous symposium in 2000 in relation to overall goals of the series and the evolving global perspective of food safety. Topics addressed included: advances in methodology; the value of risk assessment and its regulatory use; laboratory quality assurance and quality control, accreditation and method validation, particularly in developing countries. Advances in genomics for detection and evaluating the impact of mycotoxins and phycotoxins on human and animal health, as well as control strategies were also discussed. More information on the symposium is available from:

www.aoac.org/meetings1/iupac/main.htm

9. FAO/ESNS and WHO, in collaboration with ILSI facilitated a workshop on 5 March 2004 on the Detection of Protein and/or DNA in Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology. The workshop was held in the same venue and immediately prior to the 25th Session of CCMAS and was attended by 23 participants from 9 countries. The purpose of this workshop was to give an introduction to the tools,

information and experiences available to test for protein/DNA from foods derived from modern biotechnology to the CCMAS delegates and other interested parties. Emphasis was placed on similarities and differences among chemical analytical methods available, with particular attention to how biological factors can affect measurement results. Current efforts in methods development, standardization and validation, including those within ISO, were described. The complete workshop programme can be accessed from: www.fao.org/es/esn/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm

10. FAO/ESNS held a Ministerial Round Table on 3 December 2003, on the occasion of the 32nd session of the FAO Conference, on the Dimension of Food Safety in Food Security. The background document and final report for this round table discussion can be accessed from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_mrt_en.stm

11. FAO/ESNS and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) jointly facilitated a workshop on the subject of: "Strengthening Capacities for Implementing Codex Standards, Guidelines and the Recommended International Codes of Practice for Control of the Use of Veterinary Drugs" from 20-24 October 2003 in Vienna, Austria. Technical training courses for scientists/ technicians/ laboratory managers to complement these workshops have also been held in various regions of the world. More information on this workshop and training courses can be found at www.iaea.org/programmes/nafa/d3/index.html.

12. FAO is involved in a number of events relating to Good Agricultural Practices and food safety. These include: a Food-Feed Safety Conference jointly with the International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF) in Rome, from 29 to 31 October 2004; an International Symposium on Dairy Hygiene and Safety with the International Dairy Federation (IDF), in South Africa, 2-5 March 2004; and an International Workshop on Good Practices for the Meat and Livestock Sector in Windhoek, Namibia from 6 to 8 April 2004. A workshop related to Echinococcosis was held in Morocco on the 19 September 2003 and another on Fascioliosis, diagnostics and control in Egypt on the 12 of January 2004. A presentation on Cysticercosis: FAO perspectives - FAO support possibilities, was presented on the 19th International Conference of the World Association of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP), USA on the 12 August 2003.

13. FAO/ESNS and WHO jointly facilitated an international seminar on Acrylamide in Food: Current State of Affairs in Arusha, Tanzania on 16 March 2003, held immediately prior to the 35th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. This seminar provided for the exchange of views, an update on ongoing research, and identification of gaps in the area of acrylamide in foods. Presentations were given by representatives of FAO/WHO, the US, JIFSAN, the EU, Australia, Japan, and Norway and are available for viewing from FAO's website at: www.fao.org/es/ESN/jecfa/acrylamide_en.stm.

Global Projects

14. FAO/ESNS- implemented a global project for the Enhancement of Coffee Quality through the Prevention of Mould Formation, which started in December 2000 and is due to end in June 2005. This project is being carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Uganda, with ongoing collaboration from the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC), and earlier collaboration with the University of Surrey, U.K. The project is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities and the Dutch Government. An additionally funded component for training and dissemination of best practice in ochratoxin A (OTA) control in Ecuador was incorporated, and completed in 2002.

15. The project approach emphasises capacity building in coffee-producing countries, with the aim of formulating codes of practice for the coffee industry. Key initial activities under the project involve defining mould formation mechanisms, identifying critical control points, evaluating optimal drying conditions, and developing the necessary tools (e.g. GAP, GMP and HACCP) to control and monitor

both mould formation and OTA production. Specifically, the project builds capacity at the national level within the industry and responsible government agencies in the application of internationally-agreed principles of food hygiene and a HACCP-based approach to food safety throughout the coffee production and processing chain. The project also builds the analytical capacity and capability required to support national programmes for prevention and control of OTA contamination of coffee.

16. FAO/ESNS is involved in a number of capacity building and technical assistance activities to develop food safety policies and to build local capacities for fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV) in developing countries and has recently implemented the global project PFL/857 "Global Inventory, Reference Materials and Food Safety Training Programme for Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables", targeting Latin American and Caribbean countries. The project focuses on the application of good practices (GAP, GMP, and GHP) to prevent hazards at appropriate points in the fresh fruits and vegetable chain (production and post-harvest stages-food chain approach "*from farm to table*"). Under the project, approximately 150 national staff professionals have been trained as multipliers through sub-regional workshops "to train the trainers" carried out in: Santiago, Chile (March 2003); Antigua, Guatemala (July 2003); Cochabamba, Bolivia (March 2004); Bridgetown, Barbados (May 2004).

17. A training package has been produced by FAO/ESNS to support the national training courses and is available in English, French and Spanish (CD-Rom and hardcopies), and is freely available on the FAO web site. The training package/manual was validated through the sub-regional workshops and contains: power point presentations, gallery of pictures, complete documents, recommended readings, etc. regarding safety and quality issues for FFV. In January 2004, the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Safety and Quality Database was launched as part of the FAO/ESNS strategy to improve sharing information amongst the food chain actors.

18. Nineteen countries in Latin America have received FAO financial support to implement National Action Plans, involving 60 national institutions (public and private sector). Through these National Plans, approximately 3.300 food chain actors have been trained by the multipliers through national courses, a total of 1000 CD-ROM manuals have been distributed to support the national trainers courses, local training materials have been produced and, in some countries, initiatives have led to the creation of national groups (national commissions) to address quality and safety matters in the FFV sector. More information is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm

Global Initiatives

19. FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO, and the World Bank established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in 2003 to coordinate the capacity building efforts of these organizations in the areas of food safety, plant, and animal health and to provide a funding mechanism for countries and stakeholders to improve in meeting WTO SPS standards. The STDF has already and will continue to facilitate or support information exchange, development of databases, tool kits, and learning materials on trade-related SPS issues. It facilitates consultations to better coordinate inter-agency capacity building projects and funding of projects in capacity building in individual countries or through regional initiatives, including activities involving both public and private sectors. The specific projects supported with funding by the Facility are identified by partner institutions in consultation with the developing countries concerned. An FAO (ESNS) /WHO project to assist the low income countries in Developing Food Standards within a Risk Analysis Framework- pilot application in Asia and the Pacific was approved for funding from this Facility in 2004 and will be implemented in late 2004. Interested countries and stakeholders are encouraged to propose projects and submit them to the STDF for consideration. More information on the STDF is available from: www.standardsfacility.org

20. In February 2003, FAO and WHO launched a Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex to increase the participation of developing countries and countries in transition in the vital work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The fund provides financial support to

increase their ability to participate in the establishment of global food safety and quality standards, as well as improve their capacity to implement those standards in their own countries. Thanks to the generosity of several donors, the minimum threshold of US\$ 500 000 was reached at the beginning of March 2004, allowing the Fund to become fully operational. By the end of 2004, about 90 countries will have benefited from the Fund. More information and application forms for 2005 are available from www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/ in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

21. In early 2004, FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) launched a joint initiative entitled a “Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases” (GF-TADs). Some of the diseases addressed in GF-TADs are of public health interest and the FAO-OIE activities will have a global objective of re-enforcing Veterinary Services.

22. In response to resolutions of the World Health Assembly calling for enhanced communication between WHO and its Member States on matters of food safety, WHO, in collaboration with FAO, is now establishing an official International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to be used for targeted and rapid distribution of various information for the protection of public health. One part of INFOSAN will be dedicated to food safety emergency situations (INFOSAN EMERGENCY) where imminent risk of serious injury or death is present.

23. WHO also manages a global network of laboratories and individuals involved in surveillance, isolation, identification and antimicrobial resistance testing of *Salmonella* (Global Salm-Surv). The network, which links around 800 members from nearly 500 institutions in 138 countries, is currently being extended to include other major foodborne pathogens, e.g. *Campylobacter*. The Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food) has now been introduced to 13 francophone countries, mainly from Africa, through the Third International Total Diet Study Workshop and Training Course held in May 2004. The workshop presented the latest developments in methods and technology which continue to make total diet studies the most cost-effective exposure assessment tool available for assessing human exposure to chemicals in food.

Global Tools Available

24. Apart from the direct implementation of activities in the area of food quality and safety in developing countries, FAO and WHO elaborate guidance and technical materials to be used by other implementing agencies working in these areas. This ensures broader and more sustainable impact of the technical assistance provided in the tools. Several tools are also under development. Some of the tools developed on food quality and safety include:

25. FAO, often in collaboration with WHO, convenes ***Expert Consultations/ workshops*** to provide guidance and advice to the Codex system and to national governments on specific issues such as Safety Assessment of Foods from Genetically Modified Animals (www.fao.org/es/esn/food/risk_biotech_animal_en.stm), Non-human Antimicrobial Usage and Resistance (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_antimicrobial_en.stm), the use of a Good Agricultural Practice Approach (www.fao.org/prods/GAP/gapindex_en.asp), and Pathogens of concern in powdered infant formula (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/risk_mra_riskassessment_entero_en.stm). Some of these Expert Consultation reports are available electronically from the FAO website and printed copies of most are available in multiple languages from the FAO publications page: www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm.

26. FAO/ESNS and WHO publish a series of guidelines on topics related to ***Microbiological Risk Assessments***. For example, the third publication in this series, Hazard Characterization for Pathogens in Food and Water guidelines, (MRA Series No. 3) endeavours to provide a practical framework and a structured approach for the characterization of microbiological hazards. It is aimed at assisting

governmental and research scientists in identifying the points to be addressed, the methodology for incorporating data from different sources, and the methodology of dose-response modeling. These guidelines are available from: www.fao.org/es/esn/food/risk_mra_hazard_en.stm

27. FAO/ESNS and WHO have jointly prepared and published (2003) *Assuring Food Safety and Quality - Guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems* to enable national authorities, particularly in developing countries, to improve their food control systems. This publication replaces the previous (1976) guidelines. The guidelines seek to provide advice on strategies to strengthen food control systems to protect public health, prevent fraud and deception, avoid food adulteration and facilitate trade. In addition to national authorities, the guidelines will also be of assistance to a range of other stakeholders including consumer groups, industry and trade organizations, farmer groups and any other groups or associations that influence national policy in this area. The guidelines are now available electronically in English (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/control_FCS_en.stm) and Spanish (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/guideFCS_es.pdf) and will soon be available electronically in French and Arabic. Printed copies can be ordered in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_control_en.stm.

28. An example of a possible *structure of a food law* has been developed by FAO/ESNS and WHO and is based on a number of food laws currently in force in developed and developing countries. Since different countries place responsibility for food control with different Ministries or agencies, the draft has been prepared in a general way so that it can be adapted to local conditions. It has been reviewed and endorsed by Joint FAO/WHO meetings of countries of the Africa and Asia regions and is available from FAO's website at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/foodlaw.pdf>

29. *Food Quality and Safety Systems - A FAO/ESNS Training Manual on Food Hygiene and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System* is available electronically in English (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/W8088E/W8088E00.htm>),

French (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/HACCPManual_fr.pdf),

Spanish (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/HACCPManual_es.pdf), and

Russian (<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/006/W8088R/W8088R00.HTM>) or as a printed publication in these four languages from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_quality_en.stm.

30. *FAO(ESNS)/IAEA Manual on the Application of the HACCP System in Mycotoxin Prevention and Control* is available electronically in English (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/mycotoxin_manual.pdf) and Spanish (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/haccp_micotoxinas.pdf) or as a printed publication (in En, Fr, Es) from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_quality_en.stm. The manual will soon be available electronically in French as well.

31. Training manuals and guides on *food safety in the street food sector* are also available in multiple languages in publication format from the FAO publications page: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm. A *Training of Street Food Vendors didactic guide*, materials designed for training courses are available electronically in English and Spanish from: www.rlc.fao.org/prior/segalim/accalim/Guias/faoguias.html

32. FAO/ESNS has also published many *manuals on food inspection*, including a series of fourteen Manuals on Food Quality Control. Printed copies of these manuals are available in multiple languages from the FAO publications page: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm.

33. FAO/ESNS has developed a *training package and manual* as well as a *database of resources* available in the area of *Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*, which are freely available from FAO web pages or as a CD-ROM in English, French, and Spanish from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm

34. FAO/ESNS and WHO provide a platform for the exchange of current information on the topic of Acrylamide through an electronic *Acrylamide InfoNet*, which is operated by the Joint (United States Food and Drug Administration and the University of Maryland) Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN). The Research Database now lists more than 100 projects and a "Call for Data on Levels of Acrylamide in Food and the Total Diet" was issued in July 2003. The Infonet is available from www.acrylamide-food.org/

35. FAO has prepared a series of *fact sheets on trade-related issues* for the 2003 WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference. Sheet # 14 in this series deals with the prevalence of non-tariff measures, such as food standards, and FAO's activities to assist countries in dealing with these measures. The entire series of fact sheets is available from: www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4852e/y4852e00.htm

36. In January 2004, FAO, jointly with IDF, published a *Guide to Good Dairy Farming Practice*. FAO is finalizing the publication of a "*Manual on Good Practices for the Meat Industry*", with funding from the private sector. The manual will provide practical guidelines for primary producers and is also intended to guide managers of abattoirs and the meat industry. The manual takes a risk analysis approach and will be of value to veterinarians, with their supervisory roles in meat hygiene. The book covers topics such as application of risk management principles to the meat sector, meat hygiene applying to primary production, animals transport, handling, stunning, traceability and control of processing operations.

37. In an effort to allow users to access complete information on international standards, national regulations, scientific evaluations, and other supporting official information on sanitary and phytosanitary measures from a single source, FAO is leading an interagency initiative to develop and maintain an internet-based portal - *the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health*. This portal allows users to by-pass secondary (interpreted) information, as well as material which may be out of date – both of which can be found using typical internet search tools - and focus on the definitive official sources across the three main disciplines of food safety, animal health and plant health.

38. As of November 2004, the portal contains references to over 15,000 items, drawn from the three SPS-recognized standard setting bodies, as well as from CBD, FAO, WHO, and WTO. It also includes demonstration 'nodes' of nearly 400 items each from the US and the EU, and smaller data sets from selected developing countries. Version 1.0 of the portal was formally launched on 25 May 2004, on the occasion of the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific (Seremban, Malaysia). It is now freely accessible from the FAO Biosecurity PAIA webpage (www.fao.org/biosecurity) or directly from www.ipfsaph.org. Interested users are invited to utilise the portal, share the link with other users, and provide feedback to the FAO project team on the portal content and usability. Work is now underway to include more detailed information from the current sources, including from Codex, JECFA and JMPR, as well as data from additional countries. A capacity building programme related to the portal is also planned. More information on the portal project is available as CAC27/INF/4.

39. In an effort to improve information exchange and communication with stakeholders in food safety and quality, FAO/ESNS distributes a monthly electronic newsletter, the *Food Safety and Quality Update*, to over 2,500 subscribers to provide information on recent developments and upcoming activities of FAO and Codex that are related to food safety and quality. Other parties interested in receiving the newsletter can also subscribe by following the simple instructions listed in the newsletter itself. The current newsletter and an archive of past newsletters are available from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/fsqu_en.stm. WHO also periodically sends an electronic newsletter, the

Food Safety News, to interested parties regarding the activities of WHO in food safety, available from: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/newsletter/en/>.

Global Tools Under Development

40. FAO/ESNS is involved in the work which has commenced with the newly created IDF/ISO/AOAC lactic bacteria action team on **methods for the assessment of probiotic microorganisms** as a follow up of the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Health and Nutritional Properties of Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria, held in Cordoba, Argentina 2001.

41. FAO/ESNS and WHO are in the process of finalising a CD-ROM training package on **Food Safety Risk Analysis**, which includes a framework and overview manual, a training module presentation, case studies in risk analysis, and access to FAO/WHO resources related to food safety risk analysis. An FAO(ESNS)/WHO workshop was held in Bali, Indonesia on 4 March 2004 to introduce the package to some potential users and to provide participants with practical tools for risk analysis. The workshop report is available from the following: ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/meetings/bali_report_mar04.pdf

42. In order to assist countries in **Evaluating Capacity Building Needs for Food Control**, FAO/ESNS and WHO are preparing a joint publication on the subject to assist countries to identify and prioritise the areas where capacity building is needed. This publication is in the final stages of approval and printing.

43. FAO/ESNS and WHO are currently developing a training manual on **Improving Participation in the Work of Codex**, designed to strengthen national food safety and quality systems through enhanced participation in the Codex process. It has been field-tested in Africa and the Pacific and it is expected to be available in final form in late 2004. The manual provides information on the Codex process and the development of national Codex programmes. It should serve both as a reference document for those involved in national Codex activities and as a training tool for national/regional training courses on Codex. In addition, the manual is an important capacity building tool within the ongoing FAO and WHO programmes to increase effective participation in Codex activities, and it is anticipated that it will be of great support when used in conjunction with direct participation in Codex meetings of increasing numbers of countries through the funds of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund.

44. As part of a field project on the safety of street foods, FAO/ESNS is in the process of preparing a **Training of Trainers Manual in Street Food Safety** to assist countries in improving the safety of this important source of nutrition for many cultures.

45. FAO is finalizing publications on the following topics:

-A manual on the **Prudent Use of Antimicrobials**.

-An FAO/ESNS manual on **Marine Biotoxins**

-**Worldwide Regulations for Mycotoxins in Food and Feed in 2003** (FAO/ESNS)

46. In recent years, WHO has elaborated rules to promote the production and handling of safe food, the **Five Keys to Safer Food**: keep clean, separate raw and cooked food, cook food thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw material. WHO is now developing a food safety training manual based on the Five Keys to Safer Food. The purpose of this manual is to facilitate implementation of the Five Keys at country level. The manual will provide relevant food safety information when disseminated.

47. All these materials, once finalized, will be issued in multi-lingual form for wider use by member countries.

D. RECENT AND ONGOING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Regional Workshops

48. A workshop on Food Control Systems: Practical Approaches for the Southern African Region was implemented on 1 September 2003 by FAO(ESNS)/WHO, in collaboration with ILSI. The workshop was held in Pretoria, South Africa, immediately prior to the South African Association of Food Science and Technology (SAAFoST) Congress and Exhibition held in the same location from 2 to 4 September 2003. Participants from each of the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as local delegates, participated in the workshop. Presentations were given by representatives of FAO, WHO, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, South African Department of Health, the Tanzanian Bureau of Standards, the Mauritius Ministry of Agriculture, and the World Bank Programme for Capacity Building on Trade, Standards and Food Safety. More information on the workshop is available from:

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2003_en.stm.

49. FAO also held a seminar on Feed Safety in Africa, in connection with the Animal Feed Manufacturers Association Forum (AFMA), on 9 March 2004 in South Africa.

FAO Regional Projects

50. An FAO/ESNS project designed to train private small/medium size industries in HAACP/Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) covering Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal began in September, 2001. The main objective of the project is to support the member states in their efforts to improve food quality to protect consumers and facilitate access to international markets. This objective will be supported through training courses at the regional level for Training of Trainers in GHP and HAACP and at the national level for industry. One regional training course and six national courses were implemented, the last of which took place from 10 to 19 June 2003 in Dakar, Sénégal. More information is available at: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_projects_africa_en.stm

51. A Special Regional Program for Food Security covering the Union Economique et Monetaire Oest Africaine (UEMOA) countries, was initiated in December of 2001 and will continue through December 2004. The project was implemented by several divisions within FAO. The objectives of the activities undertaken by the Food Control and Consumer protection group under phase one were to improve harmonisation of regulation and upgrade the institutional capacity of food control institutions. The activities of the project include review of existing food legislation and regional harmonisation, training of food control inspectors and upgrading laboratory facilities. The review of the existing food control systems (including legal and regulatory texts, inspection procedures, and analytical techniques and capacities) has been completed and regional proposals for short, medium, and long-term improvements were presented in a technical meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 16 to 18 June 2003. Pilot activities of training and provision of analytical equipment followed this meeting.

52. In early 2004, FAO launched a project to improve the quality and quantity of acacia gum (used in making Gum Arabic, a natural multi-functional food additive) to help the rural poor who live in the semi-arid zones of six African countries bordering the Sahara to achieve self-sufficiency.

53. A project to reduce post harvest losses and increase the safety of milk and dairy products in sub-Saharan Africa has been approved and is in the initial stages of activities. The overall objective of the project is to increase the supply and marketing of safe milk and dairy products with emphasis on

the informal dairy sector and street vendors. The project will be implemented by the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) with technical assistance provided by the Food Control and Consumer Protection Group (of ESNS). The project aims to increase technical capacity in terms implementation of Good Hygiene and Manufacturing Practices (GHP and GMP) and improved inspection techniques. Consumer awareness will be heightened through relevant communication channels using a variety of media to promote appropriate messages. At the end of the project, a stakeholder's workshop will be held.

54. FAO implemented a project in March 2004 to assist the countries which are members of the African Union in the establishment of a Common Market for basic food products. The project is scheduled to conclude in September 2005 and is implemented jointly by the Basic Foodstuffs Service and the Food Quality and Standards Service of FAO.

WHO Regional Projects

55. In the African Region there is concern about campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis, shigellosis, brucellosis, hepatitis; food poisoning due to *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*; infections due to *Escherichia coli* and rotavirus. Cholera, which has been shown to be often foodborne, is also endemic in the Region. Other food safety problems include pesticide residues, mycotoxins, other naturally occurring toxins and physical contaminants in foods.

56. The WHO Regional Office conducted a survey on food safety, which analysed the health risks associated with food handling. An awareness-raising workshop was organized in Bamako for food safety focal points. The results of the regional survey were discussed at this workshop. There were 60 participants from 30 countries.

57. Botswana conducted workshops in six communities. Kenya and Gambia were supported to develop tools for foodborne disease surveillance; and food inspectors and other relevant officers were trained in Algeria, Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Nigeria and Chad conducted a situation analysis of their national programme. The Gambia reviewed its Draft National Food Act and Madagascar carried out a number of advocacy activities.

58. The WHO Regional Office participated in the Joint FAO/WHO workshop on Food Control Systems – Practical Approaches by SADC and presented a paper entitled 'Foodborne disease surveillance – a tool for priority setting in food control programmes'. Others were the establishment of a healthy market place in Mozambique and WHO Global Salm-Surv International Training Course for Francophone countries held in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

59. The WHO Regional Office created an information series on the Codex which summarised important decisions by the Codex Committees. A training guide for the informal food trade on the causes of foodborne disease and safe food handling was developed and will be finalised in 2004. It will be used in training activities aimed at improving street food safety in the Region.

60. The 53rd Regional Committee, held in Johannesburg South Africa in September 2003, adopted a resolution on Food Safety after discussion of a paper entitled 'Food Safety and Health - Situation Analysis and Perspectives'.

61. The resolution urged Member States: i) to develop or update food safety policies and legislation that are based on scientific risk assessment and prevention along the entire food chain; ii) to ensure the harmonization of food safety regulations with international food standards and norms, including active participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its committees; iii) to incorporate or strengthen food safety education and information into training programmes for food handlers at all levels, consumers, producers, and farmers; iv) to integrate or strengthen food safety matters in the curricula from the primary school level to higher learning institutions; v) to provide functional laboratory facilities, adequate resources and networks as part of the national

surveillance system ensuring the preparedness and response of countries to food hazards; vi) to ensure national, inter-country and regional coordination and networking among the various stakeholders, including the private sector.

62. It requested the Regional Director to: i) continue to advocate for inclusion of food safety in the overall national development goals and strategies; ii) to provide technical support for the development and implementation of food safety policies and legislation; iii) to promote food safety research and surveillance; iv) to strengthen collaboration with other international partners and relevant bodies to make scientific decisions on food safety and health issues relating to new technologies, including genetically modified foods.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

FAO Field Projects

63. Under its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the FAO Food Quality and Standards Service has implemented numerous projects on critical aspects of food control in many countries. FAO/TCP is designed to assist Member Nations in solving their most pressing development needs. In the field of food safety these include: strengthening of national food control systems, enhancing laboratory facilities and analysis capacities and improving the ability of member countries to comply with new trade regulations. TCP projects are generally of one to two year duration, with the possibility for a second phase of funding if warranted. Some of the projects are conducted with other groups within FAO, as indicated.

64. A project to assure the quality of food products in Benin was approved in September 2003 and will continue until June 2005. The project will support the implementation of a system of management and quality assurance of agricultural products.

65. FAO has also begun a project to improve the quality of street foods in Benin. The expected project outputs are mainly to reduce the negative impact of urban pollution on consumer health and to improve the food safety at all the production-to-consumption levels. This project contains an important training component to horticulture producers, wholesale and retail food vendors and to food inspectors. A national strategy will be drawn to define the actions to be taken by the relevant governmental institutions to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes. The project was approved in September 2003 and is scheduled to continue until February 2005.

66. The first phase of a project to improve the Quality of Street foods in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso began in September of 2002 and continued through December 2003. The second phase of the project is being implemented from January to December 2004. The main activities of the project are to undertake a survey on the quality and safety of street foods, provide training on Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) to street food vendors and on food control techniques to the inspectors; and to formulate a municipal strategy for further improving the safety of street foods.

67. An FAO TCP project was approved in May 2004 to support the implementation of a strategy to control and monitor the quality and safety of food products in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project is scheduled to continue until October 2005.

68. A project to strengthen the National Food Control System of Gabon began in October 2003 and is scheduled to continue through late 2004. The objective of the project is to help the country to develop the efficiency of the control of commercialized foodstuffs by the training of food inspectors and laboratory staff. Another objective is to define the necessary strategies to ameliorate the quality of prepared street food.

69. A project to improve the quality and safety of street foods in Guinea Bissau was funded in October 2002 and will continue through late 2004. The project objectives are to identify practical

actions to ensure the quality and safety of street foods and protect consumers and to better integrate the street food sector into the socio-economic context of the city's urbanisation. These objectives will be met through the conducting of diagnostic studies of street food sector in terms of prevalent hygienic practices, sanitary infrastructures, legal framework and socio-economic aspects to develop a plan of action for improving the environmental conditions where street foods are sold and ensure hygienic preparation of the food. A series of workshops will be conducted to improve control of the sector. Vendors and others will be engaged in training to improve environmental and hygienic practices and educational campaign will be conducted to increase the awareness of consumers to street food safety issues.

70. A project to Support the Informal Food Sector in Guinea began in June 2003 and is scheduled to continue through January 2005. The objective of the assistance is to help the Government to define the strategies necessary to improve the quality of food prepared and sold on the street. The project will carry out research and pre-test feasible actions to improve the safety and quality of food sold on the street. Consumers will receive information on associations and other institutions working to protect the safety and quality of food and learn where further information on the subject can be found.

71. A project to provide capacity building and assistance in the review of sanitary and phytosanitary legislation in Namibia was funded in May 2004 and is scheduled to continue until November 2005. The project is being implemented by the FAO Legal Service and the Food Quality and Standards Service.

72. A project to implement a National Integrated Food Sanitation Program in Nigeria has been approved in September 2004. The project was proposed following a field mission to that country.

73. An FAO staff member went on mission to Rwanda in May 2004 to advise on the preparation of legislation covering the safety of foods of animal origin under Phase 2 of a TCP project on veterinary drug legislation.

74. A project has been approved to assist in the control of pesticide residues in fruit and vegetable products for export in Senegal. The project, funded in May 2003, is led by FAO's Plant Production Division, in collaboration with FAO's Food Quality and Standards Service.

75. A project to Strengthen the National Food Control System and National Codex Organisation began in Tanzania in February 2003 and is scheduled to continue through late 2004. The objective of the project is to improve the quality, safety and nutritional value of food produced in Tanzania and to ensure the acceptability of food imports/exports into/from the country. In particular, it aims at reviewing and improving the current food control administration; upgrading food inspection and food analysis through training programmes; and improving the capabilities of the Tanzania Codex Contact Point within the Tanzania Bureau of Standards.

Other Activities

76. A Training Manual for *Hygienic Practices in Street Food Production and Sale* is being prepared by FAO in collaboration with the University of Benin.

77. A Cooperative program between FAO and the World Bank is being undertaken in the region to develop a conceptual framework for improving regional food control systems. Two missions were undertaken, one to Ghana and another to Senegal.

FAO UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

78. FAO has received many requests by national governments for future projects.

79. At the request of the National Food Research Institute of Botswana for FAO assistance in strengthening its national food safety system, a project proposal has been prepared. This project is in the approval phase.
80. A request has been received from the government of Cote d'Ivoire to formulate a project to strengthen the food control system. This project is in the formulation stage.
81. A draft proposal has been prepared to assist the Government of Rwanda in the Hygienic handling of foods of animal origin. The project is being developed by the Animal Production service and the Food Quality and Standards Service of FAO.
82. The Government of Senegal has requested assistance in strengthening and supporting Quality Assurance Systems in Food Safety Laboratories. The request is currently in the approval process.
83. Funding is currently being sought for a sub-regional programme proposal developed by FAO to facilitate trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states through food standards and food safety management.
84. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and in line with the 123rd FAO Council's instructions, FAO and WHO have sought the views of the countries of each region on the interest in convening other regional food safety conferences. At the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa, preparations are underway for an FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa. A briefing meeting with the delegates of the region to the 27th Codex Alimentarius Commission Meeting was held on 29 June 2004 to further discuss the themes of the conference and specific papers to be presented. Further planning and the establishment of the date and location will occur in the upcoming months.

WHO future activities

85. The resolution by the Regional Committee forms the basis for future food safety activities in the region. The Regional Office promotes a holistic and integrated approach to reducing the high burden of foodborne diseases and associated economic consequences.
86. Member countries will be provided assistance to strengthen foodborne disease surveillance, food control systems and to enhance their participation in the health-related committees of the Codex Alimentarius.
87. Other planned activities include: i) A Pilot Project to improve food safety in schools; ii) A project for strengthening of food law and implementation of Codex Standards in selected countries.
88. The following workshops/consultations are also planned: i) Scientific Consultation on Health Impact of aflatoxins in foods; ii) Expert workshop on Codex Procedures and risk analysis; iii) Training of trainers in food safety for the informal food; iv) Workshop on foodborne disease surveillance and laboratory monitoring of foodborne pathogens.