

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 6**

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## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

*Seventeenth Session*

*Rabat, Morocco, 23-26 January 2007*

#### **INFORMATION ON THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS**

##### **Reports from Ethiopia, Mali and Morocco**

##### **Ethiopia**

Concerning the adoption of Codex standards, priority is given when Codex standards are available. Most Ethiopian standards in the food sector are adopted from Codex.

##### **Mali**

##### **Use of Codex standards and related texts at national and regional level**

Most of the standards currently in use in Mali have been adapted from Codex standards. Where no Malian standards exist, the control and inspection services use Codex standards to assess the quality of products for export. Codex standards are also adopted by national companies that focus especially on quality.

The national workshop on standards identified Codex standards to be adopted as national standards and the procedures needed to convert selected Codex standards into mandatory national regulations.

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) is discussing the establishment of a regional Codex committee to represent and defend the interests of the eight member countries and elaborate regional standards.

##### **The difficulties encountered in using Codex standards and related texts are of two kinds:**

- Organizational:
  - legislative and regulatory texts that are obsolete or difficult to apply;
  - occasional overlapping of mandates of inspection and control services;

- absence of a framework law to govern food safety with clear distinction of roles and areas of competence.
- Technical:
  - limited capacity of analytical and testing laboratories;
  - limited capacity of standards and inspection agencies;
  - inadequate technical competence in the fields of standard setting, legislation, inspection, evaluation audit, risk assessment, risk communication, certification and accreditation.
  - limited organization of agrifood sectors;
  - limited organization of consumer associations;
  - insufficient resources for the functioning of the Codex focal point.

**The relevance of Codex standards and related texts to underpin legislative and regulatory harmonization is highlighted by:**

- the liberalization of world trade and dismantling of tariff barriers;
- the harmonization of food legislation and regulations among WAEMU members;
- insufficient human and material resources to formulate national standards;
- the subregional, regional and international, regulatory and legislative requirements (SPS, TBT, WTO, Codex, OIE, IPPC); client and consumer demands.

Faced with the new challenges of globalization and the requirements of SPS measures and WTO agreements, Mali needs to have a body of law that complies with the international guidelines and recommendations of international organizations, including the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This recommendation was underscored by the national workshop held in 2005 to review food safety legislation and regulations.

## **Morocco**

### **Use of Codex standards**

Codex Alimentarius standards continue to be very useful, especially for developing countries without the resources to develop their own regulatory references and for exporting countries keen to avoid obstacles to trade of their products. Morocco has been heavily engaged in the harmonization of national standards and for many years has paid unparalleled attention to the work of Codex.

Morocco now has a sizeable body of law for agricultural and agrifood products which it is constantly updating as the sector develops. It bases its work on international standards and in particular, on Codex Alimentarius standards which serve as an essential technical and scientific basis for the drafting of national standards and as points of reference for Morocco's trade with other countries.

### **Relevance of Codex standards and related texts**

The Marrakech Agreements of 15 April 1994, which concluded the Uruguay Round and spawned the World Trade Organization, considerably boosted the international impact of Codex standards. Indeed, the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures uses the Codex Alimentarius as an important reference to determine the limits within which a member country can adopt food safety, animal health and plant protection measures that have an impact on international trade.

By granting higher priority to the scientific elaboration of food safety standards and health and nutrition issues, Codex standards have become a global reference for food consumers, producers and processors and for national food control agencies and the international food trade.

The work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which draws upon the principle of risk analysis in food safety is a source of reference for research and scientific studies on food and nutrition. Codex scientific advice is based on the tenets of excellence, independence, transparency and universality.