



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Forty-ninth Session

Ottawa, Canada

11 – 15 May 2026

THE USE OF “COUNTRY OF HARVEST” IN ADDITION TO THE MANDATORY DECLARATION OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN FOOD LABELLING OF SPICES

Comments by Burundi, El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia

Burundi

Burundi supports a balanced and practical labelling approach in which “Country of Origin” remains mandatory, while “Country of Harvest” is declared on an optional and commodity-appropriate basis, including for spices such as saffron and mixed spice products.

Burundi recognizes that including Country of Harvest may, in certain cases, enhance transparency, strengthen traceability, support fraud prevention, and promote informed consumer choice, particularly for internationally traded spices of export significance. At the same time, Burundi notes the implementation challenges associated with mandatory harvest declarations, especially for blended or multi-stage processed products where cleaning, sorting, packaging, and sourcing from multiple countries may make a compulsory declaration impractical and potentially burdensome.

Burundi supports further clarification by CCSC on the distinction between Country of Origin and Country of Harvest, the specific circumstances under which Country of Harvest adds value, and the rationale for any commodity-specific mandatory requirements. Burundi also supports capacity-building initiatives, including workshops or side sessions, to promote a common understanding of Codex labelling texts and origin-related principles.

El Salvador

TEMA 2a): Utilización de “país de cosecha” además de la declaración obligatoria del país de origen en el etiquetado de las especias.

Comentarios generales:

El Salvador agradece el documento CCFL preparado por el Grupo de Trabajo Electrónico, presidido por Canadá e Irán, encargado del tema, y copresidido por la India y Madagascar.

El Comité Espejo del Codex sobre Etiquetados de los Alimentos (CCFL) ha revisado el Informe del Grupo de Trabajo Electrónico (GTE). Tomando en cuenta las conclusiones de la 1 a la 9 que brinda el GTE en el documento CX/FL 26/49/2 Add.1 y se comenta lo siguiente:

Se apoyan las recomendaciones a y b siguientes:

- a. La posibilidad de remitir al CCSC las conclusiones 1 a 9 mencionadas anteriormente, en las que se describen los principios fundamentales que deben tenerse en cuenta a la hora de determinar el etiquetado específico de los productos en relación con su origen;
- b. La posibilidad de organizar un taller o una sesión paralela al CCSC sobre los textos del CCFL relativos al etiquetado, incluidas las conclusiones 1 a 9;

Se considera que la información de conclusión 3, ofrece orientación suficiente sobre lo que constituye un “cambio en la naturaleza” de un alimento y, por lo tanto, el país de origen para los fines del etiquetado.

Se apoya la recomendación d, sobre lo mencionado en la conclusión 6, se está de acuerdo que si existe necesidad de establecer el concepto de “país de cosecha” el CCFL no es el órgano del Codex adecuado para hacerlo.

Se considera que, si se puede realizar un trabajo futuro respecto sobre etiquetado de las mezclas de una misma especia procedente de múltiples orígenes según la información de la conclusión 7, elaborar este trabajo en Codex es importante y brindará claridad en el etiquetado de estos productos.

Así también El Salvador, considera que la indicación del país de cosecha se enmarca principalmente en un ámbito de diferenciación comercial, por lo que no resulta necesario establecerla como un requisito obligatorio en el etiquetado. En este sentido, su uso podría contemplarse de manera opcional, permitiendo a los países destacar el origen del producto cuando lo consideren pertinente, por ejemplo, mediante menciones en las etiquetas, siempre que dicha información sea veraz y no induzca a error y/o engaño al consumidor final.

Por otra parte, es fundamental mantener coherencia entre las normativas emitidas por CCSCH. En este contexto la Comisión de Codex Alimentarius ya ha emitido normas para estos tipos de producto como el caso del: orégano, jengibre, clavo, albahaca y nuez moscada, en dichas normativas se detalla que el país de origen es de carácter obligatorio y país de cosecha es de carácter opcional.

En consecuencia, El Salvador considera que la indicación del “país de cosecha” puede representar un elemento adicional de información en el etiquetado, particularmente en un ámbito de diferenciación comercial. En este sentido, no se estima necesario establecer su obligatoriedad; sin embargo, se está de acuerdo en que el uso es de carácter opcional, siempre que la información declarada sea veraz, comprobable y no induzca a error al consumidor.

Comentarios específicos: N/A

Kenya

Kenya supports a balanced and practical labelling approach in which “Country of Origin” remains mandatory, while “Country of Harvest” is declared on an optional and commodity-appropriate basis, including for spices such as saffron and mixed spice products.

Kenya recognizes that including Country of Harvest may, in certain cases, enhance transparency, strengthen traceability, support fraud prevention, and promote informed consumer choice, particularly for internationally traded spices of export significance. At the same time, Kenya notes the implementation challenges associated with mandatory harvest declarations, especially for blended or multi-stage processed products where cleaning, sorting, packaging, and sourcing from multiple countries may make a compulsory declaration impractical and potentially burdensome.

Kenya supports further clarification by CCSCH on the distinction between Country of Origin and Country of Harvest, the specific circumstances under which Country of Harvest adds value, and the rationale for any commodity-specific mandatory requirements. Kenya also supports capacity-building initiatives, including workshops or side sessions, to promote a common understanding of Codex labelling texts and origin-related principles.

Nigeria

Nigeria wishes to thank the Electronic Working Group chaired by Canada and Iran and co-chaired by India and Madagascar on the use of “country of harvest” In addition to the mandatory declaration of country of origin in food labelling of spices

Paragraph 52

Nigeria supports Africa’s position to make the declaration of the country of origin mandatory and country of harvest voluntary on labelling.

Rationale: country of origin which is already captured in General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods covered all the issues (transparency, traceability, fraud prevention, consumer information, accurate labelling) raised by the use of country of harvest.

Paragraph 57 a

Nigeria supports all the conclusions 1-9 in paragraph 52 made by the EWG which outline key labelling principles to consider when determining commodity specific labelling related to origin

Paragraph 57 b

Nigeria supports the EWG consideration in promoting a workshop or side session at CCSCH on CCFL labelling texts, including conclusions 1-9.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea appreciates the efforts of the electronic working group and the constructive discussions so far.

The Republic of Korea supports referring relevant aspects of these conclusions, as appropriate, to CCSCH for further consideration in a commodity-specific context, without implying support for the introduction of “country of harvest.”

The Republic of Korea has no objection to the idea of a workshop or side session at CCSCH on CCFL labelling texts.

The Republic of Korea considers that the current provisions of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (GSLPF) already provide a sufficiently established framework for country of origin labelling.

With regard to the concept of “country of harvest,” the Republic of Korea has concerns that introducing it at the CCFL level could raise a number of practical and systemic issues, including the possibility of its broader application beyond spices.

The Republic of Korea also notes that this issue may have implications extending beyond labelling practices, particularly regarding trade, origin determination, and classification systems.

In this respect, the Republic of Korea does not see a clear need to establish a separate definition of “country of harvest” and considers that, if such work were pursued, it would be more appropriately addressed outside CCFL.

The Republic of Korea would also like to share that, under its national system, the country of origin of ingredients is already required to be declared.

In addition, the Republic of Korea notes that existing Codex provisions already allow flexibility for voluntary information, where appropriate, within the existing framework.

Therefore, the Republic of Korea sees value in further exploring how existing labelling approaches could be applied, where relevant, to single spices and mixed spice products, rather than introducing a new general concept at the CCFL level.

Senegal

Contexte :

. L'utilisation du pays de récolte (COH) dans l'étiquetage des épices fait l'objet de discussions depuis plusieurs années au sein de plusieurs comités du Codex.

. Le CCFL46 a approuvé les dispositions d'étiquetage figurant dans les cinq projets de normes concernant l'origan, le gingembre, les clous de girofle, le basilic et la noix de muscade, tous à l'étape 8, prévoyant l'obligation d'indiquer le pays d'origine et la possibilité d'indiquer, de manière facultative, le pays de récolte.

. Le CCFL47 a convenu de renvoyer les dispositions relatives au pays d'origine et au pays de récolte au CCSCH (Comité du Codex Alimentarius sur les épices et les herbes culinaires) pour un réexamen, et a demandé au Comité de clarifier la distinction entre ces deux notions, de fournir les justifications pour lesquelles la déclaration du pays de récolte devrait être obligatoire, ainsi que d'expliquer en quoi une telle exigence contribuerait à la prévention de la fraude.

. Lors du CCSCH7 (2024), le Comité a examiné la demande du CCFL et a élaboré une réponse à son intention. Celle-ci indiquait que la définition du « pays d'origine » figurant dans la Norme générale sur l'étiquetage des denrées alimentaires préemballées (CXS 1-1985) est généralement large et, à ce titre, applicable à toutes les denrées alimentaires. Le CCSCH7 a également noté que le Codex ne comporte pas de définition du terme « pays de récolte », mais que le glossaire des termes, élaboré par le Comité pour faciliter ses travaux, inclut une définition du terme « récolte ». Dans sa réponse au CCFL, le CCSCH a aussi souligné que, même si le pays d'origine et le pays de récolte coïncident pour de nombreuses herbes et épices, il s'agit de deux notions distinctes.

. Le CCFL48 (2024) a examiné la réponse du CCSCH ainsi que la demande de confirmation des dispositions d'étiquetage pour le safran séché. Le CCFL48 n'est pas parvenu à un consensus concernant l'obligation de déclarer le pays de récolte et a donc renvoyé la question au CCEXEC87 (2024) et à la CAC47 (2024) pour examen.

Position :

Le Sénégal préconise de rendre obligatoire aussi bien « le pays d'origine » que « le pays de récolte » dans la NGEDAP.

Justification :

La mention du pays d'origine revêt une importance capitale dans la mesure où si on parle de label c'est en fonction du savoir-faire du fabricant certes, mais surtout il dépend fortement de l'indication géographique. Les

épices sont appréciés le plus souvent pour leur goût un peu relevé. Ce goût dépend pour beaucoup du pays de récolte d'où la nécessité de la rendre obligatoire.

Sur le plan national, des inspections ont révélé que certaines unités de transformation importent des épices qu'elles reconditionnent. Des manipulations sont parfois constatées pour tromper la vigilance des consommateurs sur l'origine du produit. Si cette pratique est observée à l'intérieur du territoire, à plus forte raison au niveau international. L'objectif recherché pour le producteur est de gagner des parts de marché.

Ainsi, rendre obligatoire la mention « du pays de récolte » renforce davantage la confiance du consommateur et renseigne sur la traçabilité du produit.

Thailand

Thailand would like to congratulate the Chairs and Co-chairs as well as the working group on the achievement so far and to come about the 9 comprehensive conclusions provided in CX/FL 26/49/2 Add.1. In principal, Thailand supports these conclusions as they provide a path forward with the long-standing issue on the declaration of country of harvest. We support the declaration of "country of harvest" should be optional, and the overall labelling provisions should follow the Codex Procedural Manual.

We have additional comments about the 9 Conclusions as follows:

- Thailand supports the any collaboration efforts, including organizing a workshop, to enhance understanding of the labelling provisions for commodity committees.
- Thailand views that the explanation of "change of nature" provides useful guidance for country of origin requirements, particularly if there are additional examples on physical changes of a product that are or are not deemed as change in nature.
- Thailand agrees with the conclusion regarding the common understanding of "country of harvest" in Conclusion 6 and considers that it is sufficiently clear and does not require further definition.
- Regarding the blends of a single type of spice or culinary herb from multiple origins, Thailand views that the current provisions of CXS 1-1985 are applicable. New work may not be a priority at this stage.

United Republic of Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) supports a balanced and practical labelling approach in which "Country of Origin" remains mandatory, while "Country of Harvest" is declared on an optional and commodity-appropriate basis, including for spices such as saffron and mixed spice products.

URT recognizes that including Country of Harvest may, in certain cases, enhance transparency, strengthen traceability, support fraud prevention, and promote informed consumer choice, particularly for internationally traded spices of export significance. At the same time, the URT notes the implementation challenges associated with mandatory harvest declarations, especially for blended or multi-stage processed products where cleaning, sorting, packaging, and sourcing from multiple countries may make a compulsory declaration impractical and potentially burdensome.

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) supports further clarification by CCSCH on the distinction between Country of Origin and Country of Harvest, the specific circumstances under which Country of Harvest adds value, and the rationale for any commodity-specific mandatory requirements. The URT also supports capacity-building initiatives, including workshops or side sessions, to promote a common understanding of Codex labelling texts and origin-related principles.

Zambia

Zambia supports referring Conclusions 1-9 to CCSCH, as they provide a comprehensive framework of key labelling principles for determining commodity-specific origin labelling, ensuring consistency, clarity, and transparency across commodities. Africa also supports convening a workshop or side event at CCSCH on labelling, led by CCFL, to enhance understanding of horizontal labelling provisions such as COO, COH, and "change of nature". This would strengthen coordination between committees, support capacity building, and promote consistent, science-based interpretation of Codex texts, improving efficiency in developing and endorsing standards. Zambia considers that Conclusion 3 provides sufficient and practical guidance on what constitutes a "change of nature" for determining country of origin. Zambia supports the interpretation that processes creating a new and distinct product constitute a change, while routine processes (sorting, grading, drying, packaging) do not. This aligns with Codex texts, particularly the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985), and provides adequate clarity without the need for further guidance. Africa supports Conclusion 6 that "country of harvest" is generally understood as where a product is grown and collected and does not require further definition. We also agree that CCFL is not the appropriate body to define it, as its mandate is horizontal labelling; any definition, if needed, should be addressed by relevant

commodity committees with technical expertise. Africa is of the view that it may be valuable to explore work on clarifying labelling of blends of a single spice from multiple origins to enhance transparency and support fair trade. An interested Member could submit a proposal under Future Work outlining scope, objectives, and benefits to guide further discussion and alignment with existing frameworks.

Conclusions of the EWG provide sufficient clarity to finalize Section 8.2 without introducing unnecessary complexity and the proposed Text and may read as follows;

8.2 Country of Origin

8.2.1 The country of origin of saffron shall be declared in accordance with Section 4.5 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985).

8.2.2 Where saffron has undergone processing in a second country that results in a change in its nature, the country in which such processing occurs shall be considered the country of origin for the purposes of labelling.

8.2.3 Where saffron has not undergone a change in nature, including operations such as drying, sorting, grading, or packaging, the country of harvest shall be considered the country of origin.

8.2.4 The declaration of country of origin shall not be false, misleading, or deceptive, in accordance with Section 3 of CXS 1-1985. In particular, the country of packaging shall not be declared as the country of origin unless a change in nature has occurred.

8.2.5 Where saffron in a package originates from more than one country, all countries of origin may be declared.

8.2.6 The declaration of country of harvest may be provided as voluntary information, provided such declaration complies with Codex labelling provisions and is not misleading.

Rationale

Zambia is of the opinion that there is need to resolve the current matter in a way that is coherent with existing Codex texts, avoids unnecessary complexity, and remains practical for implementation by Members. The EWG conclusions already provide a workable basis for distinguishing COO from COH and for clarifying the role of “change of nature” in determining origin for labelling purposes. On that basis, Africa considers that Section 8.2 can be finalized without reopening broader definitional questions that may be more appropriately addressed, where necessary, by commodity committees.

Zambia also maintains that a voluntary approach to COH remains the more practical and proportionate option. This preserves transparency while avoiding unnecessary rigidity and implementation burdens in supply chains where harvest, processing, packing, and blending may occur across different locations. A voluntary approach therefore supports clarity and flexibility, while remaining consistent with the broader Codex objective that labelling should not be false, misleading, or deceptive.