

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CL 2012/20-LAC
July 2012

TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission

SUBJECT: Request for comments and updated information on: national food control systems, Codex Contact Points and other national structures for Codex matters including consumer participation in food standards setting; use of Codex standards and related texts at national level; nutrition issues in the region; and participation in Codex work and in FAO/WHO activities on scientific advice.

DEADLINE: 30 September 2012

COMMENTS:

To:

Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153
Rome, Italy
Fax: +39 06 57054593
E-mail: codex@fao.org

With a copy to:

Codex Contact Point of Costa Rica,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry,
Directorate of Regulatory Improvement and Technical
Regulation,
Sabana Sur, 400 meters west of the Comptroller General's
Office,
PO Box 10216-100, San Jose, Costa Rica,
Tel: +506 2291 -1936, +506 2291-2115, Ext: 248, 263, 265
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BACKGROUND

1. The present Circular Letter aims to collect information on developments since the 17th Session of the Committee at the national level in the countries of the Codex Latin America and the Caribbean region to facilitate discussion of issues relating to national food control systems, consumer participation in food standards setting and the involvement in Codex work and use of Codex standards at the national level. A questionnaire is attached to the present Circular Letter to continue gathering information on the status of food control systems development, current priorities and capacity development/training needs.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

2. In preparation of the 18th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), members of the CCLAC region and relevant international organizations are requested to **provide updated information** since the 18th Session of the Committee, using the template for the submission of information, preferably by e-mail, as indicated above.

3. Codex Members and Observers are invited to submit the information in a clear and concise way in order to facilitate the translation of comments and their consideration by the Committee. In particular for updating of national legislation cross-references to addresses where the information can be obtained (e.g. websites) rather than detailing such information in the paper is preferred.

Template for the submission of information of CCLAC countries

(updated information since the 17th Session of the Committee)

Item 5 – National food control systems, national structures for Codex matters and consumer participation in food standards setting**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems**

1. Please describe any significant development/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems since the 17th Session of the Committee. These may include actions relating to:
 - a. National food law and regulations;
 - b. Food safety policy/strategy (e.g. risk analysis);
 - c. Food control management (e.g. food control administration structures);
 - d. Inspection services;
 - e. Laboratory infrastructure and activities;
 - f. Trade facilitation agreements;
 - g. Information dissemination; and
 - h. Training/capacity building
2. Please describe recently established mechanisms/structures for inter-sectoral/multi-disciplinary collaboration for risk assessment, risk management and/or risk communication purposes at national level (including or other than National Codex Committee) as well as the effectiveness of these mechanisms/structures.
3. Please provide information on initiatives since the 17th Session of the Committee at national and regional level to promote coordination of work on food standards with other international and regional organizations.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex structures at the national level

1. Please describe any significant actions that your country has taken since the 17th Session of the Committee to strengthen Codex structures at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex.
2. Please describe the structure, composition and operation of the National Codex Committee (or equivalent or similar structure), or plans for its establishment.
3. Please describe:
 - a. any specific actions taken since the 17th Session of the Committee aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point (i.e. inter-sectoral consultative processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders) ;
 - b. current shortcomings identified for the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee (or equivalent or similar structure); and
 - c. identified need for capacity development to strengthen the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee (or equivalent or similar structure).

Question 3: Scientific activities (risk-based approach) and data collection activities

1. Please describe developments since the 17th Session of the Committee regarding:
 - a. areas of risk-based approach application (e.g. monitoring programmes, sampling programmes, inspection, scientific basis of food safety decisions);
 - b. key data collection activities ongoing to identify or monitor relevant food safety hazards and contaminants in the food supply and to identify or monitor foodborne disease and outbreaks;
 - c. use of data collected through inspection and control or monitoring by institutions/agencies involved in food safety risk assessment and/or management;
 - d. mechanisms for identifying national food consumption data in relation to consumer exposure assessment for food safety hazards; and
 - e. ongoing activities or interests in relevant scientific advice on risk assessment, such as risk/benefit analysis (e.g. food safety risk vs nutritional benefit).

Question 4: Priority areas for capacity building in food safety

1. Please describe:
 - a. Current priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally;
 - b. Current priority areas for capacity building (ongoing and for future); and
 - c. what additional support through capacity building is required.

Item 6 - Use of Codex standards and related texts at national and regional level**Question 5: Codex Standards: national priorities, interests and implementation**

1. Please describe:
 - a. which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already existent) are currently of most importance and interest to your country;
 - b. what are the current priority areas for setting national standards;
 - c. status of inclusion of Codex standards in national regulations and their implementation;
 - d. difficulties in the inclusion of Codex standards in national regulations and their implementation (e.g. difficulties in the interpretation of Codex standards, shortcomings in the food control system, etc.); and
 - e. ways forward to strengthen the inclusion of Codex standards in national legislation and their enforcement – possible needs for capacity building in this regard

Item 7 - Nutritional issues at national and regional level**Question 6: Issues related to nutrition in the region**

1. Please describe any developments since the 17th Session of the Committee regarding issues related to nutrition, such as: obesity, overweight, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies and any public health-oriented actions undertaken, including nutrition education and the use of nutritional labelling and claims, and implementation of the WHO *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*.
2. Please describe:
 - a. Current priority nutrition issues to be addressed nationally and regionally;
 - b. Current priority areas for capacity building (ongoing and for future); and
 - c. what additional support through capacity building is required.

Item 8 - Participation in Codex work and in FAO/WHO activities on scientific advice**Question 7: Participation in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies**

1. Please describe:
 - a. priority committees for your country and the rationale;
 - b. difficulties encountered in participating in Codex meetings (e.g. lack of financial resources, human resources, etc.); and
 - c. Identified need for capacity building to strengthen participation in Codex work in addition to the Codex Trust Fund.

Question 8: Participation in FAO/WHO activities on scientific advice

1. Please describe:
 - a. Participation of national experts in, and submission of national data to, FAO/WHO meetings providing scientific advice (e.g. JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA, *ad hoc* expert consultations, etc.);
 - b. Difficulties encountered in participation of experts and generation and submission of data; and
 - c. Identified need for capacity building to strengthen participation in FAO/WHO activities related to the provision of scientific advice to Codex.