



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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#### COMMENTS OF PANAMA

Panama appreciates the work carried out and the opportunity to participate in this meeting. We value the effort and dedication of all members in preparing the documents and managing the issues discussed. We are committed to the improvements in regulations that affect the food safety and quality, and we hope that this meeting will be an opportunity to strengthen our strategies and collaborate in the continuous improvement of international standards.

#### Agenda item 3

Panama appreciates the publication of the 29th edition of the Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual and recognizes the efforts made to translate it into its various official languages, which facilitates accessibility and understanding of the documents by member countries. We value the importance of the continuous promotion of linguistic coherence in the editions of the Manual done by the Commission, which guarantees that the principles and standards are understood accurately and consistently in all official languages.

Regarding the amendments proposed in this edition, Panama supports the changes made in Section 2, particularly regarding the formalization of the submission of provisions on the labeling of non-retail containers to the Codex Committee on Food Labeling. We consider that this measure will contribute to improving clarity and effectiveness of labeling regulations, which are crucial to ensure transparency and consumer protection worldwide.

Panama also supports the changes in the wording of Section 2, Section 3, and Section 7, as detailed in Annex I of document CX/CAC 23/46/2. We appreciate that these changes are aligned with the need to keep the relationships between the committees and relevant organizations up to date, ensuring that Codex guidelines and procedures are effective and in tune with the global dynamics of trade and food security.

The correction in paragraphs 75 and 96 of the English version, which addresses the linguistic error related to international trade, is an accurate measure. We welcome the attention paid to this detail, ensuring consistency and precision of used terms, thus facilitating a correct interpretation of the documents in all official languages.

Panama reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the international standards of the Codex Alimentarius and supports the process of continuous improvement of the procedures that guide the work of the Commission. We are convinced that the implementation of these amendments and corrections contributes to the advancement of food safety, consumer protection and fair trade at a global level.

#### Agenda item 4.1

Panama supports the work of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), highlighting the importance of approving the standards and related texts that are presented for consideration.

With reference to the new work related to regulations for sweet marjoram, coriander, large cardamom and cinnamon, we consider that the implementation of standards developed at an international level, supported by scientific and technical tests, constitutes a fundamental basis for countries like ours to ensure compliance with requirements that guarantee the quality and safety of products. These products are of particular interest to Panama, since some of them are imported and consumed in the country.

#### Agenda item 4.2

Panama supports the adoption of the revisions to the standards for oils and fats proposed by the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO), emphasizing the inclusion of oils such as avocado, camellia and sacha inchi, as well as the need to establish limits on trans fatty acids to protect public health.

Panama supports the recommendation of CCEXEC86 on the extension of the deadline to complete the work

related to the elimination of industrially produced trans fatty acids and the development of a standard for microbial omega-3 oils, aligning these initiatives with the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

#### Agenda item 4.3

### 1. Approval of Standards and Texts Submitted for Final Approval (Part 1)

#### Standards on fresh leafy vegetables, sprouted seeds, and control of *Escherichia coli* (ECTS) in food products:

- We support the progress towards final approval of the annexes on fresh leafy vegetables and sprouts, especially in relation to the guidelines for the control of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC). These regulations are crucial to mitigate the risks associated with microbial contamination in fresh produce and must be adopted to protect global public health.
- We reiterate the need for effective implementation of these guidelines, with rigorous monitoring of the production and marketing of these foods, especially in markets with less infrastructure for sanitary control.

#### Guidelines on the safe use of water in food production (CXG 100-2023):

- We support the adoption of Annex III on milk and dairy products within the framework of the guidelines for the safe use and reuse of water in food production and processing. It is crucial that these standards take into account the realities of developing countries, where water quality can represent a significant challenge to food security.

#### Hygiene control measures in traditional markets:

- We consider it crucial to approve guidelines on food hygiene control measures in traditional markets, which are common in many emerging and developing economies. The implementation of appropriate standards in these markets will improve sanitary conditions and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses, particularly in rural areas.

### 2. Approval of Texts in Procedure 5 (Part 2)

#### Revision of the Guidelines on the Control of *Vibrio* Pathogens in Seafood:

- We support the revision of the guidelines on the control of pathogenic *Vibrio* species in seafood products. Given the increase in global seafood consumption and the risks associated with *Vibrio* contamination in aquatic environments, it is crucial to strengthen hygiene recommendations in the production chain of these foods.

### 3. Proposals for New Work or Revision of Standards (Part 3)

#### Revision of the Guidelines on the Control of Viruses in Foods (CXG 79-2012):

- We support the proposal to revise the guidelines on virus control in food. The global health crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the need for clear and updated guidelines on virus control in food, especially those consumed raw or minimally processed.

#### Revision of the Guidelines for the Control of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in Chicken Meat (CXG 78-2011):

- Given the prevalence of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* infections associated with chicken meat consumption, we support the revision of these guidelines. Updating the requirements for hygienic handling of chicken meat will contribute to significantly reducing the risks of foodborne illness.

#### Revision of the Guidelines on *Listeria monocytogenes* in Foods (CXG 61-2007):

- We support the revision of the guidelines on *Listeria monocytogenes*. This revision is particularly important for dairy products and ready-to-eat foods, which are susceptible to contamination by this bacterium. Emphasis should be placed on control strategies throughout the production process, from source to final consumption.

#### Agenda item 4.4

### 1. Maximum Levels (ML) for Lead for Spices, Dried Aril and Other Food Products:

- **Spices and dried aril (ML of 0.9 mg/kg):**
  - Panama supports the adoption of an ML of 0.9 mg/kg for spices and dried aril.
- **Dry seeds (ML of 0.9 mg/kg, excluding celery seeds):**

- Panama supports the proposal for an ML of 0.9 mg/kg for dry seeds, excluding celery seeds.

- **Dried celery seeds (ML of 1.5 mg/kg):**

- Panama supports the adoption of an ML of 1.5 mg/kg for dried celery seeds. We consider that, given the precautionary principle and the ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) approach, an adjustment of these levels could be appropriate if new scientific data emerge.

## **2. Maximum Lead Levels for Other Spices and Products:**

- **Dried rhizomes and roots (ML of 2.0 mg/kg):**

- Regarding the proposed ML of 2.0 mg/kg for dried rhizomes and roots, we support the adoption of an ML in line with current scientific recommendations.

- **Dried bark and dried floral parts (ML of 2.5 mg/kg):**

- Regarding the ML of 2.5 mg/kg for dried bark and dried floral parts, we support the ML proposal.

## **3. Spices, Sweet Paprika and Sumac (ML of 0.6 mg/kg and 0.8 mg/kg):**

- **Spices, dried fruits and berries (ML of 0.6 mg/kg, excluding some products):**

- Panama supports the proposal to establish an ML of 0.6 mg/kg for these categories

- **Dried sweet paprika and sumac (ML of 0.8 mg/kg):**

- We support the proposal for an ML of 0.8 mg/kg for dried sweet paprika and sumac.

## **4. General Proposals on Cadmium and Lead in Quinoa:**

- **Cadmium and lead in quinoa (ML of 0.15 mg/kg for cadmium and 0.2 mg/kg for lead):**

- We support the establishment of separate maximum levels (MLs) for cadmium and lead in quinoa. These levels seem appropriate, and we support the adoption of these values at Step 5/8, given the growing concern about contaminants in food.

## **5. Sampling Plans and Future Work:**

- **Revised sampling plan:**

- Panama supports the continuation of the works of the EWG chaired by Brazil and co-chaired by India, that are focused on lead in dried bark and fresh culinary herbs. In addition, we support the review and distribution of the revised sampling plan for consideration at the 18th CCCF meeting. It is important that work in this area continues in an open manner and with the active participation of all countries involved.

- **Review of cadmium contamination in food:**

- We support and endorse the creation of a Code of Practice to prevent and reduce cadmium contamination in food, led by the United States. We believe that this proactive approach will help mitigate the risks associated with cadmium and strengthen food safety measures globally.

## **6. Code of practice to prevent Ciguatera poisoning.**

- Panama supports and endorses the approval of this Code of Practice, which has been unanimously supported by the Codex Committee on Food Contaminants.

### **Agenda item 4.5**

Panama considers it essential to approve the standards and related texts submitted for final validation, which include specifications for the identity and purity of food additives, as well as revised provisions of the General Standard for Food Additives (CXS 192-1995). In accordance with the comments received from the CCFA at its 54th meeting, Panama supports the proposals for the harmonization of regulations, provided that they take into account the needs of developing countries and ensure a balanced approach to the control of additives, aligned with the best scientific practices.

Regarding the proposal to suspend certain projects and revoke provisions on food additives, Panama recognizes the importance of such decisions to maintain the coherence of the Codex regulatory system and avoid the creation of unnecessary barriers to international trade. It therefore supports the CCFA recommendations to suspend those works that do not have a sufficient scientific basis or that may generate conflicts with other regulations already established. Likewise, it is essential that amendments to existing

provisions, such as the review of descriptors and editorial corrections, be carried out based on updated scientific evidence to strengthen food safety and ensure that regulations are effective and applicable globally.

Panama supports the proposal to initiate new work related to food additives, such as the development of a specific standard for baker's yeast, recognizing the growing importance of these products in international trade and their impact on food safety. We believe that the international standardization of products such as yeast will not only facilitate trade but will also contribute to the standardization of quality and food safety criteria. In this regard, Panama emphasizes the need to establish a regulatory framework that considers advances in production technology and international trade practices, aligning with Codex principles and guidelines to ensure effective and uniform implementation.

#### **Agenda item 4.6**

Panama strongly supports the activities of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS), recognizing the importance of having accurate and effective scientific analysis and sampling methods to ensure food safety and quality globally. In this regard, Panama supports the final approval of the analysis methods and related texts that have been submitted for validation, as detailed in Part 1 of the document.

We support the inclusion of methods of analysis and performance criteria related to the provisions of Codex standards, as set out in CXS 234-1999, which will contribute to strengthening existing methodologies and improving accuracy in food assessment. Furthermore, the incorporation of a specific sampling plan for methyl mercury in the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CXS 193-1995) is a significant step forward in the fight against contaminants in food products, especially for those countries that, like Panama, are committed to reducing the exposure of their populations to hazardous substances.

We consider the inclusion of "Nitrogen to protein conversion factors" as an annex to the recommended methods of analysis (CXS 234-1999) to be a positive step, as it will strengthen the consistency and applicability of methods in the nutritional assessment of foods. These developments contribute to the overall objective of harmonizing analytical and sampling methods, ensuring comparability and reliability of results internationally.

Regarding the proposed revocation of the standard on general methods for the detection of irradiated foods (CXS 231-2001), Panama considers that any decision in this regard must be based on a thorough technical analysis and on the evaluation of the impact of this measure on public health and international trade. In principle, Panama supports the review and possible revocation of obsolete standards or those that have been superseded by scientific advances, provided that the availability of equally effective alternative methods is guaranteed.

Panama highlights the relevance of the provisions proposed in Part 3 of the document, particularly those referring to incineration temperature and the acceptability of ashes in the standards for cereals, pulses and legumes. We consider that the continuous improvement of these methods is crucial to ensure that residue assessments in food products are effective and aligned with international standards. In this regard, Panama is willing to actively collaborate with CCMAS to provide advice and contribute to the development of methodologies that allow for a more accurate and fair assessment in international food trade.

#### **Agenda item 4.7**

Panama supports the final approval of the standards and related texts presented in Part 1 of the document, in particular the proposed amendments to the MRLs (Maximum Residue Limits) for pesticide/product(s) combinations, and the inclusion of additional products in Category D of Processed Foods of Plant Origin. These modifications will contribute to greater precision in the regulations on pesticide residues, allowing for more effective control of residues in food products and, therefore, ensuring food safety at a global level.

We support the proposal submitted at Step 5 for the adoption of the Guidelines for monitoring the stability and purity of pesticide reference material and stock solutions during long-term storage. These guidelines are essential to ensure the reliability of pesticide analysis methods and their consistency over time, which will contribute to improving the quality of food products on the international market.

Panama supports the list of priorities proposed for the evaluation of pesticides by the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPPR), as detailed in Part 3. This list is crucial to ensure that the most relevant pesticides for food safety are evaluated in a timely manner and based on sound scientific criteria, thus guaranteeing that food products that reach the consumer do not present risks derived from the presence of pesticide residues.

Regarding the revocation of certain provisions on pesticide residues proposed in Part 4 of the document, Panama supports the revocation of provisions related to MRLs for different pesticide/product(s) combinations, as recommended by the CCPR. The revocation of obsolete or unnecessary provisions will contribute to the simplification of the regulatory framework and will allow the system to focus on issues more relevant to public health and international trade.

Regarding the proposed suspension of certain pesticide residue provisions, Panama supports the decision to temporarily remove MRLs for pesticide/product combinations that have been suspended from the processing procedure, as detailed in Part 5. This measure will allow for a more detailed review of their applicability and ensure that pesticide residue regulations are consistent with scientific advances and international best practices.

Panama also notes the issue raised in Part 6 on expanding the scope of the Guidelines for monitoring the purity and stability of pesticide reference material and stock solutions to include pesticide mixtures. This aspect is relevant to ensure that pesticide residue management and monitoring are applicable to a wider range of products on the market, which will further strengthen global food security.

#### **Agenda item 4.8**

Panama supports the final approval of the regional standard for Lulo de Castilla (naranjilla) presented in Part 1 of the document, as proposed in REP24/LAC, paragraph 81. This standard will contribute to establishing uniform standards for the production and marketing of this product in the region, promoting its quality and safety, and allowing for better integration of regional and global markets. The approval of this standard is a fundamental step to regulate the production and trade of this emblematic fruit of the region, supporting both producers and consumers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Panama also recognizes the importance of the critical review of this text carried out at the 87th session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It is essential that the deliberations of this Committee consider the concerns and priorities of the countries of the region, and that a transparent process based on the best scientific evidence available is guaranteed.

#### **Agenda item 4.9**

Panama strongly supports the adoption of specific guidelines for the prevention and control of food fraud, understanding that this phenomenon represents a significant risk to the health of consumers, in addition to affecting confidence in food production and marketing systems. Food fraud can trigger adverse economic consequences, affect the reputation of products and endanger public health. In this regard, Panama suggests that the guidelines include the implementation of specialized training programs for inspectors, as well as the creation of an international collaboration network to monitor and mitigate the risks associated with fraud in food supply chains. This collaboration would strengthen national capacities, especially in developing countries, and contribute to a more transparent and secure global system.

The creation of an appeal mechanism for the rejection of imported foods is a fundamental measure to ensure transparency in decision-making related to food safety. Panama, as a country that promotes exports, values the possibility that exporters can file appeals before the competent authorities, which must be evaluated based on technical and scientific criteria, which will allow disputes to be resolved quickly and avoid unnecessary economic losses.

Panama supports the proposal to standardize the presentation of sanitary requirements for food products. The establishment of a common language for sanitary regulation would facilitate communication between countries and contribute to reducing trade barriers. Specifically, standardization would help exporters comply with import regulations more efficiently, reducing bureaucratic difficulties and improving the competitiveness of national products in international markets. Panama suggests that a differentiating approach be considered for developing countries, promoting technical assistance and training mechanisms during the implementation phase of these standards, which would facilitate their adaptation and compliance.

The review and improvement of the principles and guidelines on the exchange of information between importing and exporting countries is essential to optimize the management of global food trade. Panama supports the creation of digital platforms that allow for a more agile, efficient and accessible exchange of information, particularly for developing countries. This would facilitate access to relevant data on food safety and sanitary requirements, reducing waiting times and increasing efficiency in the import and export validation processes.

Regarding digitalization, Panama recognizes the transformative potential of digital technologies in national food control systems. The adoption of advanced technological tools can significantly improve transparency, traceability and efficiency in sanitary and phytosanitary controls. However, Panama notes that it is essential to establish clear principles that guide the digitalization of these systems, taking into consideration the technological capabilities and particularities of each country, especially in the context of developing countries. In addition, technical training and institutional support must be offered to ensure the correct implementation and operation of these tools.

#### **Agenda item 4.10**

Panama supports the approval of the standards and related texts submitted for final approval, as detailed in Part 1 of the document, in particular those relating to nutrient reference values for persons between six and

36 months of age, and the amendments to the Standard for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes (CXS 72-1981). The adoption of these regulations is crucial to ensure that food products aimed at these vulnerable population groups meet the highest standards of quality and nutritional safety.

Panama supports the recommendation made by the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 87th meeting regarding the extension of the deadline for the completion of the work. We believe that this extension of time will allow for a more thorough and detailed evaluation of the texts under discussion, ensuring that the most up-to-date and relevant scientific evidence is available in the development of the standards.

We support the proposal for new work to develop a standard for foods intended for infants and young children, as detailed in Part 2 of the document. The development of this standard will contribute to improving food security and nutrition in critical age groups, aligning with international efforts to reduce malnutrition and promote adequate diets in the first years of life.

Panama considers it essential that the critical review of texts and new proposals be carried out in line with the Codex Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 and the criteria established for prioritizing work. This approach will ensure that efforts are strategic, effective and geared toward addressing global public health needs in nutrition, especially in developing country contexts.

#### **Agenda item 4.11**

Panama supports the approval of the standards and related texts submitted for final approval, as detailed in Part 1 of the document, in particular the proposed modifications to the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Like Products (CXS 94-1981). This includes the inclusion of the species *Sardinella lemuru* in the list of sardine species and the amendments to the scientific names of various species, such as the replacement of *Sardinops neopilchardus* and *Sardinops caeruleus* with *Sardinops sagax*, among other taxonomic corrections. These modifications are essential to maintain the scientific accuracy of the standard and ensure the correct classification of fishery species in the international market, thus contributing to global food security.

Panama also supports the amendments about the labelling provisions for non-retail packaging in the regulations on fish and fishery products. We believe that these amendments will contribute to greater clarity in the marketing and distribution of these products, aligning with international best practices in food transparency and traceability.

Regarding the matters presented for information in Part 2 of the document, Panama notes the inclusion of *Sardinella fimbriata* and *Amblygaster sirm* (previously known as *Sardinella sirm*) in the CXS 94-1981 standard, based on previous decisions of the Codex Commission. This update reflects the continuous progress in the classification and standardization of fishery species at the international level, which is essential to ensure consistency in the regulations applicable to fishery products.

Panama recognizes the considerable interest in future Codex work on seaweed and other algae, an emerging sector that is gaining relevance from both a nutritional and environmental perspective. Given the growing importance of seaweed in human nutrition, as well as in products derived from the food and pharmaceutical industries, Panama considers it appropriate for Codex to continue exploring the regulations necessary to regulate this sector and guarantee the safety and quality of these products.

#### **Agenda item 4.12**

Panama supports the adoption of the standards and related texts submitted for final approval, as detailed in Part 1 of the document, especially the proposed Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for various veterinary drugs, including clopidol, imidacloprid, and drugs for extrapolated use such as lufenuron and emamectin benzoate, among others. The adoption of these standards is essential for the protection of public health, ensuring that animal-derived food products do not present residue levels that may compromise food safety.

We support the adoption of the editorial amendments to the Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding (CXC 54-2004) as well as the revisions to the risk analysis principles applied by the CCRVDF. We believe that these updates will strengthen the assessment of risks related to veterinary drug residues, improving the consistency and application of international standards in the field of food safety.

Regarding the standards presented for adoption in step 5, Panama supports the inclusion of MRLs for fumagillin dicyclohexylamine (DCH) in products such as fish fillets and honey. These measures are key to ensuring that foods of animal origin are safe and do not contain residues of veterinary drugs that may have adverse effects on human health.

Panama takes note of the proposal for new work to develop a guideline on the actions to be taken by the competent authorities when a residue of a veterinary drug is detected in animal products not intended for consumption, associated with the unintentional transfer of residues through animal feed. This initiative is

pertinent, given the growing concern about the possible risks arising from cross-contamination in food systems and will contribute to improving traceability and risk management in food supply chains.

Regarding the proposed Priority List of Veterinary Medicines, Panama supports its establishment, considering that it will facilitate better management of medicines in animal production systems and will contribute to a more effective approach in the regulation of veterinary medicine residues, promoting global coherence in the applicable regulations.

#### **Agenda item 4.13**

Panama supports the adoption of the standards and related texts submitted for final approval, as detailed in Part 1 of the document. In particular, the country supports the revision of the General Standard for the Labelling of Packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985), with regard to the provisions on allergen labelling. The implementation of these provisions is essential to improve transparency and food safety, protecting consumers from adverse reactions caused by allergens, and ensuring that foods are marketed in a way that minimizes risks to public health.

Of importance are the Guidelines on the provision of food information for packaged foods intended for sale through e-commerce. The rise of e-commerce has transformed the food retail landscape, and it is essential that labelling rules are adapted to ensure that consumers receive the same quality of nutritional and food safety information, regardless of the sales channel. The proposed guidelines will help ensure that information on food products on e-commerce platforms is clear, accurate and accessible to consumers.

Panama supports the Guidelines on the use of technology to provide food information on food labelling. The use of modern technology, without definitively replacing the physical label, facilitates access to more detailed information on the origin, composition and characteristics of food products, contributing to greater transparency and better decision-making by consumers. Panama considers these guidelines to be a progressive measure that encourages innovation, while protecting public health and ensuring that consumers have access to complete information on the food products they purchase.

Regarding the standard submitted for adoption in step 5, Panama supports the inclusion of guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling. This measure is particularly relevant given the growing number of people suffering from food allergies around the world. The inclusion of these guidelines in the General Standard for Labelling of Packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985) is an important step towards the harmonization of international labelling practices and a crucial advance in the protection of consumer health.

Panama supports the proposal for new work on the application of food labelling provisions in emergency situations. In crisis contexts, such as natural disasters or pandemics, it is essential to ensure that food distributed to affected populations is properly labelled, in accordance with international regulations, to ensure that consumers receive accurate information on food safety and quality. This proposal, aligned with the Codex Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, will contribute to improving preparedness and response to food emergencies.

#### **Agenda item 6**

Panama recognizes the importance of the Codex Alimentarius as a key international framework for establishing food standards that promote food safety, facilitate international trade and protect consumer interests. In this context, the proposed amendment to the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CXS 247-2005) regarding Brix levels for grape juice obtained from *Vitis labrusca* and its hybrids is a relevant topic that deserves careful analysis and balanced discussion.

Panama understands that one of the strengths of the Codex is its ability to reflect the conditions and needs of all member countries, regardless of their size or production characteristics. In this regard, the country supports Brazil's proposal, since it would contribute to improving the precision of the CXS 247-2005 standard by stratifying the minimum level of Brix degrees for grape juice from *Vitis labrusca* and its hybrids. This approach is consistent with the production reality of countries such as Brazil, whose climate and soil and climatic conditions affect the variability in the soluble solids content of grapes and their transformation into juice.

Panama recognizes that Brix levels in grape juice can vary significantly depending on factors such as grape variety, climatic conditions and cultivation techniques. In this regard, we consider that the proposal for a minimum Brix range of 14° Brix for *Vitis labrusca* grape juice and its hybrids is a reasonable measure that seeks to reflect the natural differences in the production of this type of juice without compromising product quality or safety. This amendment will allow greater flexibility for countries that produce grapes of this species, ensuring that their products are accepted in international trade without prejudice to natural variations in their soluble solids content.

Panama believes that concerns about the risk of food adulteration or fraud, often associated with the dilution of juices, must be addressed based on science and effective control measures. In this regard, analytical methodologies, such as isotopic analysis, are valuable tools to ensure the authenticity of products. Furthermore, as indicated in the discussions, the proposal does not introduce distinctions in labelling or create

confusion for consumers. Panama supports the idea that international standards should not unnecessarily burden producers, but rather facilitate trade and transparency.

Panama stresses the importance of maintaining the sensory characteristics of products at all stages of their production and marketing. In this regard, we consider that restoring the concentrated juice of *Vitis labrusca* and its hybrids to a value higher than 14° Brix could alter the natural balance between sugar and acidity, negatively affecting the organoleptic properties of the product. According to the scientific evidence presented during the debates, this modification will not compromise the sensory quality of the product, which reinforces the need to adopt the proposal in such a way as to protect the desired characteristics of the reconstituted juices.

**Based on the above, Panama recommends the following:**

1. Support for the proposed amendment: Panama supports the amendment proposed by Brazil, especially the modification of the Brix level for *Vitis labrusca* grape juice and its hybrids to 14° Brix, with the aim of adequately reflecting production conditions and ensuring greater inclusion of producing countries in the international market.
2. Ensuring transparency in labelling and certification: Panama believes that labelling and certification should not be an obstacle to the implementation of this amendment, and that international trade should not be affected by differences in the production conditions of each country.
3. Promote the use of authenticity controls: Panama urges the implementation of appropriate measures to control adulteration, such as advanced analytical methodologies, which ensure the transparency and authenticity of products without compromising trading conditions.
4. Recognizing productive diversity: It is important that international standards continue to reflect the diversity of production conditions in member countries, respecting the variability that exists due to climatic, geographical and technical factors.

#### Agenda item 7

Panama recognizes the importance of the Codex Alimentarius as the key international body for establishing standards that facilitate trade in food products and protect the health of consumers globally. In particular, the editorial amendments proposed by the Codex Secretariat for the 47th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC47) are essential to improve the consistency and precision of the standards and guidelines that govern the production and marketing of food. These types of amendments, although mainly technical and editorial in nature, play a crucial role in improving the clarity of standards and reducing drafting errors that can lead to confusion for both producers and consumers.

#### Proposed Editorial Amendments

The proposed editorial amendments to the texts of various food standards include adjustments to terminology, removal of transcription errors, updating of notes and clarifications, and improving the accuracy of descriptions. The proposals include amendments to commodity-specific standards such as the Standard for Dates (CXS 143-1985), the Standard for Sorghum Grains (CXS 172-1989), the Standard for Preserved Tomatoes (CXS 13-1981), and the Standard for Desiccated Coconut (CXS 177-1991), among others.

#### Appreciation of Editorial Amendments

From Panama's perspective, the proposed editorial amendments are a positive step towards ensuring coherence and clarity in international regulations. In particular:

1. **Improving technical accuracy and consistency:** Corrections, such as removing unnecessary symbols, correcting scientific terms, and adding explanatory notes, are essential to avoid confusion and misunderstanding in the interpretation of standards. For example, the correction to the note in the Standard for Dates and the updating of references to ingredient names are improvements that promote greater technical accuracy.
2. **Facilitating regulatory compliance** Editorial amendments also enable food producers, both large and small, to comply more effectively with international regulations, as the amendments simplify the interpretation of texts and provide greater clarity in technical requirements.
3. **Improvements in competitiveness and international trade** By improving the precision of the standards, the amendments help ensure that products from Codex member countries, including those from Panama, can be accepted more uniformly in international markets. This facilitates trade and allows Panamanian products to be aligned with international best practices.

#### Panama's Position on the Proposed Amendments

1. **Support for editorial amendments:** Panama supports the editorial amendments proposed by the



Codex Secretariat for food standards, as it considers them as an effective way to improve coherence and transparency in international standards, reducing the possibility of errors and increasing certainty for all actors in the food supply chain.

2. **Importance of clarifications on the use of food additives:** Amendments related to food additives, such as the correction of information on Dipotassium diphosphate (INS 450(iv)) in the General Standard for Food Additives (CXS 192-1995), are especially important for Panama, given the growing interest in the production and export of processed products containing food additives. Correction of the notes in this standard will allow Panamanian producers to comply with international requirements and ensure the safety of exported foods.
3. **Clarification on the labelling of ingredients derived from biotechnology:** Regarding the amendments related to the Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding (CXC 54-2004), Panama supports the elimination of note 5 on the labelling of animal feed ingredients derived from biotechnology, given that there is still no clear international regulation on this subject. This offers a more balanced and coherent approach until more specific guidelines are developed by the Codex Commission.
4. **Consideration of the productive diversity of Panama:** Panama highlights the importance of considering the particularities of developing countries, such as Panama, which may have different technical capacities and resources to comply with international standards. The amendments must be accessible and relevant to all Codex members, including those with developing food industries.

### Recommendations from Panama

1. **Adoption of editorial amendments:** Panama recommends that the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC47) adopts the proposed editorial amendments, as they will contribute to improving the quality and clarity of international standards, which will benefit both producers and consumers in member countries.
2. **Promotion of technical cooperation:** Panama suggests that technical cooperation among Codex members should continue to be promoted, especially in countries with fewer resources, to facilitate the effective implementation of the revised standards and ensure that all countries can benefit from the progress made in editorial amendments.
3. **Strengthening commitment to food safety:** Finally, Panama reiterates its commitment to international Codex standards, recognizing their fundamental role in protecting the health of consumers and promoting safe and fair trade in food products.

### Agenda item 8

Panama recognizes that efficient and transparent financial management is essential for the success of Codex Alimentarius activities and programs. Codex Alimentarius plays a crucial role in improving food safety and public health worldwide, as well as in promoting fair and equitable trade practices. However, since Codex activities involve significant financial resources from member countries and other stakeholders, it is essential to ensure that these resources are used optimally and in alignment with the strategic objectives of the organization.

Transparency in the use of resources is key to maintaining the confidence of member countries in the work of the Codex Alimentarius. As an active member of this body, Panama considers it essential to have access to detailed and updated financial reports that allow member countries to evaluate how available funds are being used and how they are allocated to the priority activities of the organization.

Proper management of resources, based on principles of efficiency and equity, is crucial to ensure that all nations, regardless of size or economic capacity, can benefit from the standards and guidelines established by Codex. For developing countries such as Panama, where financial resources may be limited, it is particularly important that funds be used in a way that maximizes benefits to public health and trade.

Panama considers that, in the context of Codex budget management, it is essential to have detailed, clear and understandable financial reports, which include:

1. **Breakdown of income and expenditure:** It is crucial to know in detail the sources of funding (e.g. voluntary contributions, membership dues, external funding) and how these resources are distributed among the various areas of Codex work, such as standards development, training, technical cooperation activities and project development.
2. **Resource efficiency analysis:** Reports should include an assessment tool on the effectiveness and efficiency of resource allocation. This will enable member countries to identify areas for improvement and make recommendations to optimize the use of funds to benefit Codex objectives.

3. Future financial projections: Having access to short, medium and long-term financial projections is essential for planning activities and ensuring that Codex can meet future financial challenges without compromising its ability to act.
4. Performance of funded activities: It is essential for the members countries to know the impact of funded activities, especially those that directly affect developing countries, such as training programmes, technical assistance and pilot projects. This will allow countries to assess whether resources are being used effectively to achieve the intended objectives.

Panama also considers it important for Codex to prepare itself to face possible economic challenges in the future, which could arise from factors such as inflation, reduction of member contributions or changes in the global economic situation. To this end, Panama proposes:

1. Creation of reserve funds for unforeseen emergency situations: Establish contingency funds to deal with unexpected situations, such as economic or health crises, that could affect the financing of Codex activities.
2. Improving operational efficiency: Continue to look for ways to improve operational efficiency, using innovative technologies and more agile processes to reduce administrative costs and allow resources to be allocated more to key activities.

Periodic evaluation of programmes and their effectiveness: Promote the continuous evaluation of funded programmes and projects, to ensure that resources are allocated to activities that really generate a tangible impact on global food security and on capacity development at the level of member countries.

### Agenda item 10

Panama recognizes the importance of Codex Alimentarius standards and guidelines for improving food safety and the quality of food products globally. The implementation report of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (2022-2023) provides a critical overview of the progress made, as well as the persistent challenges in the adoption and application of these standards. In this context, it is essential that countries, especially low- and middle-income countries, analyze the effectiveness of these guidelines and their applicability within their national contexts. This document presents Panama's position on the report's findings and recommendations for advancing the implementation and use of Codex standards.

#### Analysis of Achievements

##### 1. Recognition of Codex Texts

Panama welcomes the fact that more than 80% of member countries have recognized Codex texts as useful for their national priorities in food safety and quality. This high level of acceptance demonstrates the relevance of Codex standards in global food planning and underlines the importance of these standards as a basis for strengthening food control and surveillance systems around the world. We applaud the efforts made by Codex to promote the harmonization of food standards and facilitate international trade while ensuring consumer safety.

##### 2. Use of Scientific Advice

The integration of scientific advice into the Codex standards development process is essential as it strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the regulations. However, in Panama we believe that the implementation of this process must be more efficient, with the need to clarify the timelines for the delivery of scientific advice, especially in committees that still lack established delivery schedules.

##### 3. Access and Participation

The transition to virtual platforms has been an aspect of enormous impact, as it has allowed for greater global participation in Codex meetings. Panama values the increase in registration rates, especially from low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), which encourages the inclusion of diverse voices in the standards-setting process. However, we recognize that inequalities persist in the active participation of high-income countries (HIC), which could lead to an imbalance in the representation of interests in Codex discussions. Panama urges Codex to continue promoting equitable participation and ensuring that the most vulnerable countries are not excluded from important decisions.

#### Challenges identified

##### 1. Barriers to Local Implementation

The report highlights various barriers to the implementation of Codex standards at the national level, such as lack of resources, insufficient technical capacity and long lead times for the adoption of standards. Panama shares these concerns, as developing countries often face difficulties in adapting Codex standards to their national contexts due to limitations in infrastructure, trained personnel and

financial resources. The adoption of international standards must be accompanied by a plan for technical and financial support so that countries can effectively comply with international obligations.

## 2. Inequality in Access to Resources

The discrepancy in countries' capacity to use and implement Codex standards is a major challenge. Countries with fewer resources, such as Panama, face significant obstacles in implementing regulations, which could limit the benefits of Codex guidelines in these contexts. Codex needs to implement strategies that ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and technical support, especially in areas such as training and assistance in implementing standards.

## 3. Time and Resource Management During Meetings

Although satisfaction with the management of Codex meetings has been high, the report suggests that some adjustments are necessary, especially in relation to the length of sessions to deal with complex issues. Panama supports the idea of reviewing the structure of meetings, in order to optimize time and resources during the meetings. This would facilitate a deeper and more constructive discussion on issues that require greater attention and analysis.

## Recommendations for Future Implementations

### 1. Strengthening Training and Resources

Panama believes that one of the key areas to improve the implementation of Codex standards in developing countries is the strengthening of technical training. To this end, more accessible and sustainable training programs must be created that include scholarships and mentoring programs for national officials. These initiatives will allow countries, especially those with limited resources, to better adapt Codex standards to their local realities and improve their national food safety systems.

### 2. Development of an Impact Monitoring Mechanism

The creation of a monitoring mechanism to assess the real impact of Codex standards on improving food safety and the quality of food products is essential to ensure the effectiveness of implementation. Panama suggests that this mechanism collect more detailed and relevant data on how standards affect national food systems, which would allow for necessary adjustments and adaptations to be made in real time.

### 3. Dissemination of Knowledge and Best Practices

It is essential to encourage the exchange of experiences between countries with similar contexts, as this can accelerate learning and improve the application of standards. Panama proposes the creation of regional platforms for the exchange of knowledge and best practices, where countries can share innovative solutions to common problems. These platforms would help promote the implementation of Codex standards in a more effective and contextualized manner.

### 4. Review of the Budget Structure

Panama considers it crucial to review the budget structure for Codex activities, ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to the implementation of standards in developing countries. The allocation of resources must be equitable, so that the most vulnerable countries can receive the necessary support to comply with international standards, without this implying an unsustainable financial burden.

## Agenda item 11

Panama supports the importance of maintaining the vision, mission and core values of Codex, which have been key pillars in the success of its activities. These principles guide the work of the Commission towards improving food safety and public health and must continue to be the frame of reference for all future efforts. The coherence and continuity of these values are essential to maintaining global confidence in the standards developed by Codex.

Regarding the new Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2031, Panama believes that there should be a broader and more detailed consultation process among members to ensure that the new strategic objectives reflect the current challenges and needs of all countries, especially those in development. In the case of Panama, we face specific challenges related to technical capacity, limited resources and infrastructure that must be considered when designing objectives that are achievable and effective at the local level.

The new Strategic Plan needs to not only identify the objectives and expected results, but also clearly detail the activities necessary to achieve them, the implementation timeframes, and the indicators of success. Without a precise definition of these activities and indicators, it will be difficult for countries to assess the viability and effectiveness of the plan.

It is essential to reduce barriers to the implementation of standards by providing the technical support and resources necessary to enable all countries, regardless of their level of development, to comply with international food safety standards.

#### **Agenda item 13**

Panama recognizes the relevance of the discussions on the possible implementation of live webcasting of the sessions of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC), as discussed in previous meetings. Transparency is an important value to improve the understanding and monitoring of the Committee's activities, but the specificities of its composition and its function within the structure of Codex must be taken into account. CCEXEC has a restrictive character, with a membership that includes members of the Codex Commission and some Regional Coordinators, which implies that its nature is not completely open to the public.

Panama considers it important to consider the opportunity to view these meetings.

#### **Agenda item 14**

Panama congratulates the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe on the re-election of Germany as Coordinator for the region, recognizing its commitment and outstanding work in recent years. It also congratulates Uruguay for having been nominated as the new Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, trusting that its experience and dedication will continue to promote the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius and strengthen regional cooperation on food security issues.

#### **Agenda item 15**

Panama congratulates the Member States responsible for appointing the chairs of the Codex subsidiary bodies, especially those countries that continue to play an active role in the presidency of the committees, such as China, the United States, France and Norway. This appointment not only reflects the continued commitment of these countries to strengthening global food security, but also their willingness to advance international cooperation within the Codex Alimentarius. Panama also highlights the importance of continuing to evaluate and adjust the situation of the subsidiary bodies, as their work programs are fulfilled, to ensure that Codex remains relevant and efficient in its mission.