

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Opening

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Thirty-second Session
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Opening Remarks
Mr Guilherme da Costa Junior
Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening everyone,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to be here with you all and participate in the 32nd Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), which takes place exceptionally online. The past year has been unusually emotional, and I am more than happy to see you all well and healthy today.

I would like to extend my sincere condolences and support to all those who have had to live through challenging days during this pandemic.

I would like to welcome all Codex members, observers, authorities and delegates from different world regions.

It is a tremendous honour for the Vice-Chairs and me, my friends Mariam Eid from Lebanon, Purwiyatno Hariyadi from Indonesia and Steve Wearne from the UK to be with you all here.

I would also like to express my great pleasure to be with my colleague Jean-Luc Angot, chair of this important committee.

I would like to commend the Codex and CCGP Secretariats for their efforts in making this session possible and the parent organisations, namely FAO and WHO.

One of the significant challenges we face is // the need to feed 9 billion people in 2050. So the element of food security immediately comes to mind, and therefore the aspect of the quantity of food ". However, the issue of food security is much broader than the amount of food. To guarantee food security, it is essential to combine the quantity of food with at least two other elements: food safety on the one hand and trade on the other. We cannot guarantee food security if a sufficient amount of food is not healthy. Likewise, we cannot have food security if we cannot exchange enough food, without danger, between production and consumption areas.

The Codex Alimentarius is therefore essential to achieve this combination of these three elements. Without preserving food safety and stimulating trade, we cannot achieve food security.

Figures on severe problems due to the lack of food safety control continue to cause thousands of food-borne illnesses, deaths, and rising unemployment every year, not to mention an economic crisis in different countries.

It is never too much to remind our great responsibility towards the global society when it comes to food safety. It is essential and paramount to do our best, now in this new normal environment, to develop and disseminate Codex standards to ensure the safety and quality of food for all, everywhere, following the Sustainable Development Goals which are linked to the Codex mandate.

In this context, scientific standards ensure transparency in terms of market access, inclusion and economic development. The foundations of Codex are based on concrete scientific evidence. From the beginning, the Codex Alimentarius has been a scientific activity. Experts and specialists from a wide range of disciplines have contributed to all aspects of Codex Alimentarius to ensure that its standards are based on the most rigorous scientific reviews.

Despite its negotiating characteristics, Codex's work should focus on cooperation, strengthening all members' participation, especially those who find it more difficult to participate, consensus building, and particularly on the interests of the world related to food safety and fairness of international food trade.

And to reach consensus, it is necessary to keep in mind, among other aspects, the following question: "How can my country as a Codex member cooperate so that the other member state, my trading partner, can also guarantee the protection of the health of its consumers and also to have room to generate profits, currency and jobs for its people?"

This is an issue which, in my opinion, remains alive in our work process. This is an essential way by which we must try to continue working in this Committee and also implementing the Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025, with the real and concrete will to build a better Codex for the world.

During this session of the CCGP, we have some important issues before us which we will have the opportunity to discuss, for example, procedural guidance for committees working by correspondence.

Finally, Mr Chairman, on behalf of my fellow Vice-Chairs of Codex Alimentarius, I would like to reiterate my honour to be here and wish you all an excellent session of the CCGP.

Thank you all for your attention.