

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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REP11/NEA

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty fourth Session

Geneva, Switzerland, 4-9 July 2011

**REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF
THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST**

Hammamet, Tunisia

23 – 27 May 2011

NOTE: This report contains Codex Circular Letter CL 2011/14-NEA.

C O D E X A L I M E N T A R I U S C O M M I S S I O N



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**CL 2011/14-NEA
June 2011**

TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

SUBJECT: **Distribution of the Report of the Seventeenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (REP11/NEA)**

The report of the Sixth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East will be considered by the 34th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 4-9 July 2011).

MATTERS FOR ADOPTION BY THE 34th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION:

Draft and Proposed Draft Regional Standards at Steps 5/8 of the Procedure

1. Proposed Draft Regional Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods (para. 72 and Appendix II)
2. Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste) (para. 75 and Appendix III)
3. Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Halwa tehenia (para. 79 and Appendix IV)

Governments and interested international organizations wishing to comment on the above documents should do so in writing, **preferably by e-mail**, to the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (e-mail: codex@fao.org; Fax +39 06 570 54593), before **30 June 2011**.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 34th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Draft and Proposed Draft Standards and Related Texts for adoption at Steps 5/8 of the Procedure

The Coordinating Committee forwarded:

- Proposed Draft Regional Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods for adoption at Steps 5/8 (para. 72 and Appendix II);
- Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste) for adoption at Steps 5/8 (para. 75 and Appendix III); and
- Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Halwa tehenia for adoption at Steps 5/8 (para. 79 and Appendix IV)

Other matters for information

The Coordinating Committee:

- Agreed that the Members of the Region would consider the nomination of the Regional Coordinator at the Commission Session (para.126);
- Considered Activities 4.5 and 5.5 of the Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013 (para 35) and the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 (paras 36 - 55);
- Considered the following issues referred by the Commission: private standards (paras 13 -29); processed cheese (paras 30 - 34); development of guidelines for traceability/products tracing (paras 11 - 12); and options for physical working groups (paras 56 - 59);
- Expressed its views on the Codex Trust Fund Mid-Term Review (paras 95 - 107);
- Exchanged information on national food control systems, and consumer participation in food standard setting (paras 109 - 112), use of Codex standards at national and regional level (paras 113 - 120) and nutritional issues within the region (paras 121 - 123).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(Used in this Report)

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCNEA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCEXEC	Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCFL	Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCGP	Codex Committee on General Principles
CCMAS	Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling
CCMMP	Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
CCNEA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCNFSDU	Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
CTF	Codex Trust Fund
EMPRES Food Safety	Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIFSA	Global Initiative for Food-related Scientific Advice
GSFA	General Standard for Food Additives
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

1 The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East held its sixth Session in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 23 to 27 May 2011 at the kind invitation of the Republic of Tunisia. The Session was chaired by Ms Mélika Hermassi Belgacem (Director of the department of quality, food safety and environment in the Centre technique de l'agro-alimentaire and responsible of the Tunisian National Codex Committee). The Session was attended by 28 delegates representing 6 Member Countries, two observer countries from outside the Region and 3 international organizations. Ms Karen Hulebak, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission also attended the meeting. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariat and the representatives of FAO and WHO, is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2 The session was opened by Mr Mohamed Elmi, Regional Adviser Food & Chemical Safety (FCS), World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO). He emphasized the importance of the work of Codex to protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in the food trade for the region and the necessity of international/ regional collaboration on the field.

3 Ms Fatima Hachem, Food and Nutrition Officer, Regional Office for the Near East, FAO welcomed the Committee and said that the protection of safe food supply had always been at the centre of FAO programmes, as food security and food safety were closely linked. She highlighted the long-standing cooperation of FAO and WHO on food safety and recent developments such as EMPRES and INFOSAN.

4 Mr Meftah Amara, Chargé de mission in the Ministry of the Industry and Technology, Tunisia also welcomed the Committee and highlighted the importance of agriculture and the food industry for Tunisia and the efforts made to increase food safety in Tunisian products as well as the importance of standards development at national and international level.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

5 The Committee agreed to establish in-session Working Groups on the *Proposed draft regional standard for harissa* (Agenda Item 4) and the *Proposed draft regional standard for halwa tehenia* (Agenda Item 5) and to consider these items after the reports of the Working Groups were available.

6 The Committee agreed that Tunisia would introduce the new developments on food safety systems related to INFOSAN under *Other business and future work* (Agenda Item 17). The Delegation of Tunisia recalled that it had been decided during the 5th Session of the Committee that a permanent Agenda item would be included concerning INFOSAN.

7 With this modification, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda as the agenda for this session.

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2)²

8 The Committee noted matters arising since its last session from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the Executive Committee and other committees summarized in the working document. The Committee discussed in particular the following matters:

Discussion Paper on Timely and Simultaneous Distribution of Documents and Length and Content of Reports (26th CCGP)

9 The Committee stressed the importance of having Codex documents and standards available in Arabic language in a timely manner to enable members to fully participate in the standards development and to send comments in time. The interest in concise reports and having the audio-recordings available in different languages was also mentioned.

Regional Standard for harissa (hot pepper paste)

10 The Committee noted the recommendation of 32nd CAC that, in the development of this Standard, the CCNEA should seek close collaboration with the CCASIA, which is elaborating the Regional Standard for Chili Sauce. The Committee agreed however that harissa was a fundamentally different product from chili

¹ CX/NEA 11/6/1

² CX/NEA 10/6/2, CX/NEA 11/6/3 (Iran), CRD 1 (IDF), CRD 2 (Egypt), CRD 11 (Tunisia), CRD 13 (IFT).

sauce as it consisted of cooked fresh hot pepper paste without any other ingredients whereas chili sauce was made from dried or fermented peppers as well as vinegar or other additives and spices.

Development of Guidelines for Traceability/Product tracing

11 The Committee noted that the 32nd CAC had endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems to request the FAO/WHO coordinating committees to discuss whether there was a need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing beyond the existing *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool Within a Food Inspection and Certification System* (CAC/RCP 60-2006).

12 The Committee agreed that there was a need for further Codex guidelines on implementation of traceability as this was an important tool for inspections. The usefulness to trace ingredients in case of hygiene problems was mentioned. It was mentioned that in CRD 13, the International Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) provided information on core recommendations and recommended best practices for traceability.

Consideration on the Impact of Private Standards

13 The Committee considered the replies to the four questions in CL 2010/37-NEA on problems encountered with private standards. In addition to written comments received the Committee noted the following:

Have food producers/processors in your country experienced any problems in meeting private standards?

14 The Delegation of Jordan reported that there were serious problems due to the lack of expertise to implement private standards such as EUREPGAP or GLOBALGAP. There was a lack of transparency concerning the development of such standards and high costs due to the necessary third party certification especially for EU countries and the criteria were quite different to Codex standards. The Delegation of Iran had noted similar concerns in their written comments.

15 The Delegation of Egypt said that in accordance with a Presidential Decree only the Egyptian Organization for Standardization was allowed to set food standards, based on ISO or Codex standards or standards of other countries. Private standards could cause a problem.

16 The Delegation of Tunisia said that private standards posed a threat due to the high costs for certification. Only 60 of 1000 food industry enterprises had received ISO 22000, IFS or BRC certification and out of 50000 farms only 234 were currently GLOBALGAP certified.

What are the financial implications of meeting private standards, especially implications for SMEs?

17 The Delegation of Tunisia said that the costs of ISO 22000 certification was 40000dt (~20000Euros) for a single company without counting any costs for necessary changes in its operation. For GLOBALGAP certification the costs were 15000dt (~7500Euros) for 10 hectares. If Codex standards were adopted the cost could be reduced and one could have more beneficiaries.

18 The Delegation of Lebanon said that the high cost of certification had increased production costs but that subsidies to farmers to overcome these costs were not allowed in accordance with WTO.

19 The Delegation of Iran in their written comments noted that the high certification compliance costs may discourage SMEs to get access to international markets and they would be driven to shift to alternative market opportunities.

What measures have been taken to overcome/ease the problems in implementing private standards?

20 The Delegation of Jordan reported that the government had set up a body to assist companies with EUREPGAP or GLOBALGAP certification.

21 The Delegation of Tunisia said that, despite the implementation since 1996 of a National programme to assist producers and the industry, the number of beneficiaries was low because not enough enterprises applied for the assistance.

22 The Delegation of Saudi Arabia said that they had a system where the government, private companies and WHO cooperated in a national commission on standard setting.

23 The Delegation of Iran in their written comments suggested: Regular exchange of information amongst the related enterprises; encouraging related industries to apply international food safety standards in their production; Mutual recognition of standards by private standard setting bodies; Organization of workshops

and training by competent bodies on selected private standards (for products of commercial interest) to counter their negative impacts.

What should the CAC/FAO/WHO do in the context of private standards?

24 The Delegation of Jordan suggested that the Commission should carry out a study on private markets and the private sector should take part in the discussions so as to reduce costs.

25 The Delegation of Egypt proposed that the CAC and other organizations should adopt measures to revise these standards so that they are based on science and transparent and do not pose obstacles to trade. The private standard setting organisations should have observer status in the CAC.

26 The Delegation of Tunisia said that it was necessary to strengthen Codex standards and that the CAC should have a clear position on private standards and promote adoption of Codex standards.

27 The Delegation of Jordan said that CAC should address the problem in close cooperation with the OIE, the IPPC and the SPS and TBT committees.

28 The Delegation of Iran in their written comments supported this and suggested to further engage with global private standards setting bodies and encourage their participation in Codex work; that Codex committees give appropriate consideration to the development of “end user relevant” standards; to ensure that Codex Standards remain the single point of reference for food safety; and that Members should identify gaps in Codex standards and make suggestions for new work.

29 The Representative of FAO summed up the results of the document prepared by FAO and WHO on private standards for CAC33 (CX/CAC 10/33/13), which clarified the issues producers and industry faced with regards to private standards. The Representative said that even though today much progress had been made in the implementation of Codex standards, implementation of private standards caused significant costs and these standards were not transparently developed and should be results based and not overly prescriptive. The private bodies setting these standards should become stakeholders in the work carried out by Codex.

Proposed draft Standard on Processed cheese

30 The Committee recalled that the 33rd CAC had deferred the decision on whether or not to discontinue work on a standard for processed cheese to its 34th session and had requested the views of Coordinating Committees on this matter.

31 The delegations of Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan and Saudi Arabia noted that an international Standard should be elaborated because: a significant amount of this product was produced, traded and consumed in the Region and internationally; national standards in each country were varied, which might cause trade impediment; and the composition of the product especially source of fat should be defined to prevent nutritional problems, especially as the product was widely consumed by children.

32 One delegation proposed to elaborate a Regional Standard if the international Standard would not be elaborated.

33 The Delegation of Egypt and the observer of IDF were of the view that the Standard was not needed because food safety issues such as food additives and food hygiene of the product were already covered by horizontal Codex standards. The delegation of IDF also noted that the source of fat and composition had to be labelled in conformity with the Codex labelling standards. They also recalled that the CCMMP had not made progress on this standard in 10 years, despite many attempts in working groups and plenary discussions to reach a consensus on issues such as definitions, composition and additives.

34 In response to these comments, the delegation of Tunisia said that, if only horizontal standards were considered and no product specific standards, this could ensure a safe product but it could be that it would not conform to the expectations of the desired cheese, including its specific composition (of milk origin).

Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013

Activity 4.5 - Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level

Activity 5.5 Enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels

35 The Committee noted the comment from the delegation of Egypt that they had mechanisms for cooperation in place but were revising them to meet current needs and that they continued to make sure that NGOs were involved and all Codex documents were distributed to them.

Development of the new Strategic Plan for 2013-2018

36 The Chairperson of the Commission introduced the item and recalled that, following the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Commission had prepared a questionnaire that was distributed in CL 2010/37-NEA to give each coordinating committee the opportunity to participate in the early stages of the development of the new strategic plan. The Chairperson mentioned in particular the need to ensure that the plan looked into the future, taking into account new challenges to food safety such as climate change, which had been recognised by the OIE as an important issue, or nanotechnology on which FAO and WHO had already worked.

37 The Committee discussed the questions contained in CL 2010/37-NEA and noted the written comments from Iran.

(a) *Are the current five goals still relevant? What changes would you propose (if any)?*

38 The Committee agreed that the five goals were still relevant.

39 Building the capacity of countries in the region to provide scientific data for the international risk assessment bodies such as JECFA, JMPR and JEMRA was mentioned as very important, as was the need to strengthen national Codex committees and communication between members.

40 The following additional suggestions for were made for supporting the five goals with new activities:

- To involve private standard setting organizations in the work of Codex;
- To hold a regional meeting focusing on the possible impacts of climate change on food safety;
- To identify appropriate mechanisms to increase exchange of experience, knowledge and expertise on food safety in the Region.

41 The Chairperson of the Commission acknowledged that it was important that all regions of the world could participate in developing the data for global risk assessments. She stressed the need for FAO and WHO to work in partnership with countries on capacity building in a way that would ensure lasting development. She mentioned further that the decision of JECFA to review the “food basket”, which had been created more than 40 years ago on the basis of a western diet and did not reflect the current situation in the world, would be one of the most important public policy changes in the near future. She also mentioned the opportunity for countries to participate in WHO’s programme to estimate the burden of food borne diseases (FERG). As this programme would assist countries in complex data gathering, participation in FERG and the continuation of the programme by WHO should be encouraged.

42 The Representative of WHO informed the Committee that in FERG, four international committees (chemical contaminants, parasites, bacteria, viruses) would start to work country by country and probably by 2012 some facts and figures would be available. Modules were under development to estimate the cost of food borne diseases. All information and methodology would be provided to countries in a package.

43 One member mentioned that difficulties in coordination were also caused by the large number of contact points that each country needed for different international organizations e.g. for OIE, different contact points with different specialties were needed in the same country. As each of the contact points derived its legitimacy from the organization they served, there was not enough efficient information sharing and contact between them. The recent nuclear crisis in Japan and its impact on food safety was cited as an example where there had been confusion and conflicting messages.

(b) *The 2003-2007 Framework did not include measurable indicators, as does the current Strategic Plan. Should the next Strategic Plan include measurable indicators? Is the current “table” format useful or would you suggest changes? For example, is it useful to track “ongoing” activities?*

44 It was suggested to include an extra column in the table to monitor difficulties encountered in the implementation of goals of the strategic plan and that measurable indicators should be incorporated.

(d) *Do current Codex structures and procedures adequately meet present needs of members (i.e., various “step procedure” options, critical review by CCEXEC, etc.)? What changes might be considered?*

45 Several delegations stressed the need to have all documents and standards available in Arabic language and to benefit from Arabic interpretation at each Codex session. The difficulties to participate in Codex meetings that were held in different regions of the world were also mentioned.

46 The Committee noted that for language coverage the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its

subsidiary bodies followed the rules in the Procedural Manual. The Committee noted further that for all Codex committees and task forces, except for the Executive Committee and the Coordinating committees, the relevant host governments funded the meeting organization as well as interpretation and translation services.

- A number of suggestions were made to improve the situation:
- Documents could be translated in a collaborative manner within the region;
- Other regional organisms (e.g. Arab League, GCC) could be asked for assistance;
- The contributions of members that are returned from international organizations could be used;
- The use of machine-assisted translation, which had shown to increase the speed for the availability of documents by 30%, could be studied;
- Videoconferencing and other modern means could be used to increase the possibility to participate in Codex meetings.

47 The Delegation of Iran in their written comments suggested that Codex should accelerate its standard-setting process and CCEXEC should seek to introduce better screening of new work proposals.

(e) The Commission operates in an environment of change and technological advancement. Should issues such as the food safety consequences of climate change, and new production technologies such as nanotechnology, etc., be reflected in the new Strategic Plan? If so, how?

48 Following a question from the Chairperson of the Commission, the Committee discussed the need for Codex committees to evaluate the impact of climate change on food safety within their areas of responsibility e.g. climate change could affect moisture conditions which in turn could lead to formation of moulds and aflatoxins.

49 The Representative of WHO mentioned that the Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO had passed a resolution on climate change and health at its 55th Session. In that resolution member states were urged to address the health impact of climate change in a timely manner in order to protect health, which was a joint responsibility of all sectors. Food safety was included due to possible water scarcity issues that would affect food safety. He mentioned all member states had a climate change and health focal point. Some countries (e.g. Jordan) were currently using grey waters for agriculture to reduce water scarcity.

50 The Representative of FAO said that there was a need for better coordination in the region. A number of cases studies had been done by FAO and UNEP was also preparing studies. The Second Forum on climate change, agriculture and food security in the Near East Region would be held from 27 to 29 June, 2011 to discuss case studies prepared by countries from the Region and policies for prevention and mitigation.

51 The Committee acknowledged that climate change was an important issue for the region and its effects on food safety should be monitored. The Committee also noted that nanotechnology and biotechnology were mentioned as important issues.

52 One delegation mentioned the need to evaluate the impact of ingredients and food additives on health and food safety especially in relation to chronic and emerging diseases.

53 It was mentioned that, while many maximum limits had been established by Codex based on risk assessment, the work was not complete e.g. concerning mineral contaminants in sugar.

54 It was suggested that FAO and WHO should hold a workshop on recent developments on climate change and new technologies.

55 One delegation suggested including a long-term goal in the plan to obtain specific funding for Codex so that it would be less depending on the in-kind contributions from host countries to ensure neutrality. The Committee noted however that the Executive Committee and the Commission had discussed issues related to new ways of funding extensively but had not decided any change for the time being. It was mentioned that in any case funds had to come from members, either directly or indirectly. The Committee noted that a mechanism to ensure neutrality already existed through the satisfaction survey form that was distributed after each session where members had the opportunity to bring any issues with the conduct of the session to the bureau of the Commission and the Secretariat.

New Options for Physical Working Groups

56 The Chairperson of the Commission recalled that the proposal for new options for physical working groups had originally been developed in a retreat of Codex chairpersons to address the challenges faced by all members and especially developing countries to participate in physical working group meetings that were

used increasingly by Codex committees.

57 Presently the rules of conduct for physical working groups were the same as for full Committee meetings. It had been suggested that there could be more flexible rules that would ensure full participation of all regions by allowing regional representation in working groups with 2-3 participants from each region. The issues to be solved were related to a transparent mechanism in which the regions would choose their representatives and new rules allowing trust fund support for these representatives.

58 One delegation noted that the proposals were practical but that a transparent and fair mechanism for the selection of the representatives was necessary. They suggested holding regional workshops to prepare joint papers that would be conveyed to the physical working group meetings.

59 Another delegation supported the proposal.

Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

60 In reply to the request from the CCMAS, the Committee clarified that the methods of analysis for fat content in humus with tehena should be ISO 5508:1995 and ISO 5509:2000 and for clarification of origin of fat a TLC method³ should be used.

61 The Committee agreed to request the CCMAS to clarify why it had recommended to delete the reference to the General Guidelines on Sampling and to consider development of specific sampling plans for Humus with Tehena, Tehena and Foul Medames.

PROPOSED DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STREET VENDED FOODS (Agenda Item 3)⁴

62 The Committee recalled that the 5th Session of the Committee had agreed to circulate the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods for comments at Step 3 and consideration at this Session.

63 The Committee agreed to consider the text section by section and in addition to some minor editorial or translation amendments, agreed to the following changes.

Section 2 – Scope, Usage and Definitions

64 The Committee agreed to replace “mobile vendor” with “street food vendor” in Section 2.3.7 and that the definition should read “individuals selling street foods” and to adapt the definition of “street foods” to a relevant FAO definition⁵.

Section 3 – General Requirements

65 With regard to licensing, one delegation was of the opinion that licensing meant giving the permission from the competent authority to sell food and taking responsibility as having checked that all requirements were fulfilled whereas another delegation said that licensing meant only a declaration of activity by the seller by which he/she declared of having taken cognizance of the requirements and committing themselves to apply them. After some discussion, the Committee agreed to change the title of Section 3.2 as “Licensing/ registration of vendors” to include these two concepts.

66 The Committee agreed to replace “including rodents, flies, insects or vermin infestation” with “(e.g. rodents or insects)” in Section 3.5.1 and to amend Section 6.8 accordingly. It was also agreed that “contamination” in Section 3.5.4 should be replaced with “direct or indirect contamination” as contamination of pest control materials from utensils should be taken into account.

Section 4 – Vendors

67 It was agreed to add “and symptoms” after “diseases” in Section 4.1.1 as more appropriate. The Committee further agreed to delete “against food and water borne disease such as typhoid, hepatitis A or any other food and water borne disease” in Section 4.1.3, noting that the vaccination requirements should be left to the relevant competent authority.

Section 6 – Appliances

68 One delegation proposed to amend Section 6.13, noting that disposable hand service articles were not compatible with the need to promote sustainable practices. The Committee, however, agreed not to

³ Internal method of the laboratory of the Centre technique de l'agro-alimentaire (CTAA) based on: Pharmacopeia Eur. Version 2004, Section 2.3.2

⁴ CL 2010/27-NEA, CX/NEA 11/6/4 (Comments of Lebanon), CRD 4 (Comments of Lebanon)

⁵ This definition of street foods was agreed upon FAO Regional Workshop on Street Foods in Asia, held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia in 1986 (Winarno, 1986)

amend the section, as it was difficult for street vendors to clean napkins, towels and hand wipes appropriately and failure of cleaning them could cause hygiene problems.

Section 7 – Food Preparation

69 With regard to Section 7.2.1, the Committee agreed to split the provisions for soaking and washing under running water for clarity. In Section 7.2.6 the Committee also agreed to delete reference to ways of purifying water as it was considered sufficient to require water to be potable.

70 The Committee considered the temperatures that foods should be kept at, specified in Section 7.3.11. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the temperature should be 63°C or above for food served hot, which was scientifically justified for food safety. It was also agreed that the temperatures should be 4°C or below for food served cold and -18°C or below for food served frozen, in line with the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Precooked and Cooked Foods in Mass Catering* (CAC/RCP 39-1993).

71 The Committee agreed to amend Section 7.4 to read “All unsold cooked food and prepared beverages that cannot be properly preserved should be safely disposed at the end of the day if they cannot be stored in a sanitary manner.” for clarification.

Status of the proposed draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods

72 The Committee agreed to advance the proposed draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods (Regional Code for the Near East Region) to Steps 5/8 with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7, for adoption by the 34th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Appendix II).

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HARISSA (HOT PEPPER PASTE) (Agenda Item 4)⁶

73 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed to recommend to the Commission to start a new work on harissa, which had been agreed by the 32nd CAC (N08-2009).

74 The Delegation of Tunisia as chair of the in-session working group, informed the Committee that the working group had considered the proposed draft standard carefully and found consensus on all outstanding issues (CRD 14). The Committee discussed the proposed draft standard on the basis of CRD 15, in which the Secretariat had aligned the outcome of the working group with the Format for Codex Commodity Standards.

Status of the Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Harissa

75 The Committee agreed to advance the proposed draft regional Standard for Harissa to Steps 5/8 with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7, for adoption by the 34th Session of the Commission (Appendix III).

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HALWA TEHENIA (HALWA SHAMIA) (Agenda Item 5)⁷

76 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed to recommend to the Commission to start a new work on halwa tehenia, which had been agreed by the 32nd CAC (N09-2009).

77 The Delegation of Saudi Arabia as chair of the in-session working group, informed the Committee that the working group had considered the proposed draft standard carefully and found consensus on all outstanding issues (CRD 17)..

78 It was agreed that the name of the product should read “halwa with tehenia” and in the definition the alternative names halwa tehenia, halwa shamia and halwa should be mentioned and the same in the labelling provisions.

Status of the Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Halwa tehenia (Halwa shamia)

79 The Committee agreed to advance the proposed draft regional Standard for Halwa with tehenia to Steps 5/8 with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7, for adoption by the 34th Session of the Commission (Appendix IV).

⁶ CX/NEA 11/6/5, CX/NEA 11/6/5-Add.1 (Syria), CRD 5 (Kuwait), CRD 6 (Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan), CRD 8 (Sudan), CRD 10 (Tunisia), CRD 14 (Report of in-session working group), CRD 15

⁷ CX/NEA 11/6/6, CX/NEA 11/6/6-Add.1 (Sudan, Syria), CRD 5 (Kuwait), CRD 7 (Egypt, Lebanon), CRD 8 (Sudan), CRD 10 (Tunisia), CRD 17 (Report of in-session working group)

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOUGH (Agenda Item 6)⁸

80 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed that dough could fall under the scope of the revised draft Standard for Fermented Milks and the Committee on Milk and Milk Products could address specific characteristics for dough during the revision of the above Standard (ALINORM 09/32/40, para. 32). The 9th CCMMP agreed not to include specific reference to dough in the draft amendment. The CCMMP was of the view that regional standards for this type of products could be developed (ALINORM 10/33/11, paras 35-38).

81 The Committee noted that the project document submitted by Iran did not contain sufficient information to submit it for critical review to the CCEXEC⁹ and that further elaboration of the project document at the present Session was difficult due to absence of the Delegation of Iran.

82 The Committee therefore agreed to recommend that Iran elaborate a project document based on CRD12, supplementing it with the required information taking into account information from other countries in the region and submit it directly to the CCEXEC for critical review.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR REGIONAL STANDARDS FOR CAMEL MILK (Agenda Item 7)¹⁰

83 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed to consider starting new work on this product, which was of growing importance within the region (ALINORM 9/32/40, para. 64) based on a project document by the United Arab Emirates.

84 One observer stated that while they were not opposed to regional standards for specific products made from camel milk, a Codex standard for camel milk was not necessary because: there were no Codex standards for milk as such from any species as there were many horizontal Codex texts that addressed and regulated the trade in milk regardless of the relevant milking animal; many existing milk product standards covered milk products produced from milk of all milking animals, except for some specific milk products where the raw material provisions specified milk from named animals.

85 The observer also mentioned there were two distinct species of camel within the genus *Camelus* – i.e. *Camelus dromedarius* (the dromedary) and *Camelus bactrianus* (the Bactrian camel) and that while the dromedary was by far the more numerous and also the more commercially important species as regards their milk a standard for camel milk should not be confined just to that single species or at least make it clear in the title that the standard applies to dromedary milk only.

86 The observer also said that in order to have a meaningful standard for camel milk, relevant methods of identification of camel milk were necessary.

87 Some delegations pointed out that raw camel milk and products made from camel milk were traded in the Region.

88 The Committee agreed that it was necessary to specify what kind of products should be covered by a standard, however, the Committee did not discuss the matter further due to absence of the Delegation of the United Arab Emirates.

89 The Committee agreed to recommend that the United Arab Emirates elaborate a new project document taking into consideration the discussion above and consulting with other countries of the region as appropriate for discussion at the next session of the Committee.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR REGIONAL STANDARDS FOR DATE PASTE AND DATE MOLASSES (Agenda Item 8)¹¹

90 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed to consider starting a new work on this product, which was of growing importance within the region (ALINORM 9/32/40, para. 65) based on a project document prepared by Saudi Arabia.

91 The Delegation of Saudi Arabia introduced the project document and said that more data on trade in the Region was needed to finalise it. The Delegation of Tunisia indicated that the production of date paste in the country was 10,000 to 15,000 tons a year and that 800 to 1,000 tons were exported.

92 The Committee agreed to recommend to countries in the Region to provide data related to these products to Tunisia and Saudi Arabia who would develop a revised project document and submit it directly to the CCEXEC for critical review.

⁸ CX/NEA 11/6/7, CX/NEA 11/6/7-Add.1 (Syria), CRD 5 (Kuwait), CRD 12 (Codex Secretariat)

⁹ ALINORM 10/33/3, Appendix II

¹⁰ CX/NEA 11/6/8, CRD 1 (IDF)

¹¹ CX/NEA 11/6/9, CRD 8 (Sudan), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

PROPOSALS FOR THE CODING, CLASSIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF FOODS (Agenda Item 9)¹²

93 The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed that the United Arab Emirates prepare a discussion paper on the improvement of their food control system for consideration at this session.

94 The Committee agreed to postpone the matter to the next session due to the absence of the Delegation of United Arab Emirates.

FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION INCLUDING FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX (AGENDA ITEM 10)¹³

95 The Committee noted the information provided by FAO and WHO on capacity building activities and scientific advice and thanked the organizations for the assistance provided.

96 Some delegations mentioned the need for increased support because of recent changes in their countries.

97 The representative of WHO stressed that work on food safety was a joint effort of all relevant actors in countries and good internal communication was essential to succeed in projects.

98 The Committee recalled that the 33rd session of the Commission and the 64th CCEXEC had extensively discussed the mid-term review of the Codex Trust Fund (CTF)¹⁴. Subsequently FAO/WHO had submitted five interlinked questions to the coordinating committees to collect information and feedback on critical issues in each region for use as a basis for determining the strategic and operational direction of the CTF for the next six years. It was recalled that the three main objectives of the CTF were as follows: Objective 1 – Widen participation in Codex; Objective 2 – Strengthening overall participation in Codex; and Objective 3 – Enhance scientific/technical participation in Codex.

99 The Committee considered the questions as follows:

Question 1: Should there be a shift in emphasis from Objective 1 to Objectives 2 and 3?

100 The Committee noted that the three objectives were still relevant. Some delegations were of the view that a gradual shift from objective 1 to objectives 2 and 3 could be useful but it should be taken into account that the situations in countries were varied.

Question 2: If yes, what is the "niche" for the Codex Trust Fund?

101 The Committee noted different suggestions: strengthening contact points and capacity to participate in international negotiations; focus on risk analysis for which there was no sound framework in the region; and training of experts and support revision of national standards.

102 The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that the criteria for funding from the CTF were based on World Bank classifications and there was a difference between the support from the CTF and the support given by FAO and WHO for which there had to be a direct request from the government. FAO would support activities of any ministry if in line FAOs country and the objectives of the country.

103 The Representative of WHO informed the Committee that the assistance from WHO for countries was established as a 2-year program which was reviewed on a yearly basis and could cover activities of different ministries. The possibility for bilateral support, where one country directly supports project in another country, was also mentioned.

Question 3: Should there be a mechanism to continue support for physical participation for those who need it most (including graduates who cannot sustain participation)?

104 The Committee agreed that a mechanism to continue support for physical participation was needed.

Question 4: Should there be re-consideration of the criteria for allocation of support?

105 The Committee was of the view that the criteria should be reviewed and new criteria should be added in case countries needed additional support after graduation.

106 One delegation mentioned that those new criteria should take into account the scientific basis already

¹² CX/NEA 11/6/10

¹³ CX NEA 11/6/11, CX/NEA 11/6/12 (Iran), CRD 2 (Egypt), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

¹⁴ CX/CAC 10/33/14 Add.1

in place in countries who could contribute but lacked the means to physically participate in Codex meetings.

Question 5: Should the lifespan of the Codex Trust Fund be extended?

107 Some delegations were of the view that the lifespan of the CTF should be extended.

ACTIVITIES OF THE STDF PROGRAMME IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 11)¹⁵

108 The Committee did not consider the matter, as the working document was not available.

NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARD SETTING (Agenda Item 12)¹⁶

109 The Committee recalled that its last session had concluded that the information provided by countries was useful and had encouraged countries to submit updated information in order to make it available on the regional website for the benefit of all countries in the Region. The 32nd CAC confirmed that it was in the remit of coordinating committees to adapt the text of the Circular Letter requesting information on national food control systems and consumer participation in food standards setting in accordance with their specific needs (ALINORM 09/32/REP para. 198). In addition to the replies submitted in writing to the questionnaire in CL 2010/38-NEA, Part A the Committee noted the following interventions.

110 The Delegation of Lebanon informed the Committee that the national food control system in Lebanon was changing and the delegation would submit further information at the next session.

111 The Committee noted the need expressed by countries for further training to enhance participation in the Codex process on the level of negotiation and on risk analysis. The need for early warning systems was also stressed.

112 The Representatives of FAO and WHO clarified that INFOSAN was composed of a general component designed for sharing information among all stakeholders, and of INFOSAN Emergency, which was a tool to inform on emergency situations related to health and food safety issues and that focal point existed in each country for these systems as well as for issues related to the International Health Regulations.

USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 13)¹⁷

113 The Committee recalled that the 57th CCEXEC had agreed to add a new agenda item to FAO/WHO coordinating committees regarding the use of Codex texts at the national and regional levels. In addition to the replies submitted in writing to the questionnaire in CL 2010/38-NEA, Part B the Committee noted the following interventions.

114 The Delegations of Tunisia and Egypt were of the view that it was necessary to further harmonize food safety regulations in all countries with Codex Standards. The Delegations pointed out the difficult situation of having to conform with Codex standards and at the same time to the standards of importing countries and private standards, which might not correspond to Codex standards.

115 The Delegation of Saudi Arabia said that GCC countries had adopted many Codex Standards as their own legislation, but that the same degree of harmonization had not been possible for ISO standards due to problems with intellectual property rights on the standards.

Discussion paper on the acceptance of Codex standards in the region

116 The Delegation of Lebanon highlighted the importance of research on acceptance of Codex standards in the region. They highlighted the importance of Codex standards in the framework of the WTO SPS and TBT agreements and mentioned that Codex standards were used as a reference for legislation but the level of alignment varied from country to country.

117 The transformation of Codex standards into national regulations posed a problem as there was no guidance from Codex on this and members had proceeded differently, which made it impossible to compare national and Codex standards. The identification of gaps between national standards and Codex standards was further made difficult, as not all texts were available in Arabic.

¹⁵ CX/NEA 11/6/13 (not issued)

¹⁶ CL 2010/38-NEA Part A, CX/NEA 11/6/14 Part A (Iran, Sudan, UAE), CRD 3 (Egypt, Kuwait), CRD 9 (Sudan), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

¹⁷ CL 2010/38-NEA Part B, CX/NEA 11/6/14 Part B (Iran, Sudan, UAE), CX/NEA 11/6/15 (not issued), CRD 3 (Egypt, Kuwait), CRD 9 (Sudan), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

118 The Delegation of Tunisia said that they considered certain private standards as technical barriers to trade.

119 As Codex did not in general determine specific microbiological criteria, members had to conduct microbiological risk assessments, including field studies and sampling, to determine such criteria for use in justifications in line with the WTO SPS agreement. Countries of the region faced huge challenges in doing this due to the absence of specialized national risk assessment bodies in most countries of the region and the absence of a sufficient number of experts.

120 Most countries of the region adopted Codex MRLs as national sanitary regulations, however the majority of these countries did not participate in the relevant Codex committees and did not prepare the required studies reflecting the consumption patterns that differ between countries.

NUTRITIONAL ISSUES WITHIN THE REGION (Agenda Item 14)¹⁸

121 In addition to the replies submitted in writing to the questionnaire in CL 2010/38-NEA, Part C the Committee noted the following interventions.

122 The Committee noted that diabetes, poor nutrition, heart disease and obesity were identified as important health problems related to malnutrition in the Near East Region and that countries were working to alleviate the problem by: strengthening the rules on labelling to provide all necessary information to the consumer to sensitize them to make the right choices; to request the agri-food industry to reduce sugar, fat and salt content. As this was a crosscutting issue the importance of adequate communications between different ministries, institutes, the industry, producers and international organizations was stressed.

123 The Representative of FAO informed the Committee of a number of FAO and WHO tools and projects related to the issue in the region, information on which was available on the relevant FAO and WHO websites.

PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND IN FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SCIENTIFIC ADVICE (Agenda Item 15)¹⁹

124 In addition to the replies submitted in writing to the questionnaire in CL 2010/38-NEA, Part D the Committee noted the following intervention.

125 The Delegation of Tunisia underlined the importance of quality of scientific data that could be published as well as the role of international organizations in building capacities to achieve this goal.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 16)²⁰

126 The Committee noted that according to the Rule IV para. 2, nomination of Coordinators shall be made exclusively on the proposal of a majority of the Members in the Region. The Committee noted further that less than half of the Members of the Region were present at the session. The Committee noted the willingness of Lebanon to serve as the next Coordinator for CCNEA and agreed that the Members of the Region would consider the matter at the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 17)

New developments related to INFOSAN

127 The Delegation of Tunisia informed the Committee that the first Global Meeting of INFOSAN was held in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates from 14 to 16 December 2010. During the meeting a regional workshop was held which dealt with the efficiency of the participation of the Near East region in this network and underscored the importance to set up national early warning systems and the UAE proposed to host a training workshop to build capacity in the region.

128 The Representative of WHO informed the Committee that a team of FAO/WHO would meet with the government of Abu Dhabi in June to discuss the modalities for this workshop..

New standard for Halal

129 The Delegation of Saudi Arabia proposed new work on development of Codex guidance on halal products, which should address all issues related to the international trade of halal food products.

¹⁸ CL 2010/38-NEA Part C, CX/NEA 11/6/14 Part C (Iran, Sudan, UAE), CRD 3 (Egypt, Kuwait), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

¹⁹ CL 2010/38-NEA Part D, CX/NEA 11/6/14 Part D (Iran, Sudan, UAE), CRD 3 (Egypt, Kuwait), CRD 9 (Sudan), CRD 11 (Tunisia)

²⁰ CX/NEA 11/6/16

130 The Representative of WHO informed the Committee that the report of a two-year research project on Halal was available in Arabic and that French, Spanish and English versions would be estimated shortly . The project had developed a protocol and a standard and guidance on who can certify and how it is done. The Representative also noted that Codex already had *General Guidelines for Use of the Term Halal* (CAC/GL 24-1997).

131 The Delegation of Egypt was of the view that, as the Codex Guidelines only covered labelling, a regional or international standard dealing with other issues was necessary because of the importance of Halal food trade in the region.

132 One observer noted that any standard developed on halal food should be international rather than regional as consumers of halal food lived in all regions of the world.

133 The Committee agreed to request Egypt to submit a discussion paper on the issue for the next session.

Member elected on a geographical basis

134 The Committee noted the offer of the delegation of Tunisia to serve as member elected in the Executive Committee. The Committee noted also that the nomination period for members elected on a geographical basis would be open during the 34th session of the Commission.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 18)

135 The Committee was informed that its 7th session would be held in approximately two years time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 34th Session of the Commission.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY:	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (REP11/NEA)
Proposed Draft Regional Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods (Near East)	5/8	Governments, 34 th CAC	para. 72, Appendix II
Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste)	5/8	Governments, 34 th CAC	para. 75, Appendix III
Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Halwa tehenia	5/8	Governments, 34 th CAC	para. 79, Appendix IV
New Work on a Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Doogh	1/2/3	34 th CAC, Iran, Governments, 7 th CCNEA	para. 82
New Work on Proposed Draft Regional Standards for Date Paste and Date Molasses	1/2/3	34 th CAC, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, Governments, 7 th CCNEA	para. 92
New Work on a Proposed Draft Regional Standard for Camel Milk	-	UAE 7 th CCNEA	para. 89

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**PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STREET-VENDED FOODS
(NEAR EAST REGION)
(At Steps 5/8)**

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INTRODUCTION

Street-vended ready-to-eat foods constitute an important link of the food supply chain as they have spread at a rather fast rate in many countries due to socioeconomic changes. In fact, people opt for such foods for their special taste and affordability. These foods are also necessary to certain societies, namely in developing countries as they offer ready-to-eat meals that even the poorest can afford. Despite this important aspect, these foods represent on the other hand a possible health threat.

Due to the potential chemical and bacterial contamination out on the streets, the present guidelines recommend raising the awareness of the people working in the ready-to-eat foods sector and improving the environmental conditions in which those foods are vended. They also recommend providing the necessary services to help the vendors guarantee the safety of such foods.

In addition to tackling the role of authorities and entities regulating street food vending, the present examines the standards of this important sector of the food system, and sheds the light on the principles of hygiene that should be respected in every step of the process.

SECTION 1 – OBJECTIVES

The present directives tackle the conditions that should be taken into consideration when setting street food standards. They include legal provisions, accurate implementation and practice.

They also aim at helping the relevant authorities in improving the level of these foods' preparation and vending processes in way that guarantees safe, healthy and nutritional foods to the consumers, in accessible locations.

SECTION 2 – SCOPE, USAGE AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Scope

The present guidelines define the general hygienic requirements and recommended practices concerning the preparation and vending of street foods.

2.2 Usage

Each Section of the present document indicates the goals to be achieved and the justifications of such goals, as far as food hygiene is concerned.

2.3 Definitions

For the purposes of the present guidelines, the terms used herein shall have the following definitions:

2.3.1 Appliances

The whole or any part of any utensil, machinery, instrument, apparatus or article used or intended for use, in or for making, preparing, keeping, selling or supplying of food.

2.3.2 Clean water

Water from any natural source where there is no reason to believe the water is contaminated.

2.3.3 Crockery

All tools used for food serving and consumption (whether non-disposable or disposable), and they include cups (glasses), plates, trays, mugs, spoons, forks, ladles... etc.

2.3.4 Disposable articles

Any appliance, container, implement, utensil or wrapper that is intended for use only once in the preparation, storage, display, consumption or sale of food.

2.3.5 Impermeable

Preventing the passage/absorption of water and/or fluids.

2.3.6 Microorganisms

Any microscopic living organism that can cause disease or food spoilage.

2.3.7 Street food vendor

Individual selling street foods in street food stalls or centres.

2.3.8 Perishables

Food that is of such a type or is in such a condition that it may spoil.

2.3.9 Potable/Drinking water

Treated water, which shall comply with WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality.

2.3.10 Readily Perishable Food

Perishable food that consists wholly or partly of milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish or shellfish, or ingredients that are capable of supporting the progressive growth of microorganisms that can cause food spoilage, food poisoning and other food borne illnesses.

2.3.11 Ready-to-eat foods

Any food (including beverages) which is normally consumed in its raw state or any food handled, processed, mixed, cooked, or otherwise prepared into a form in which it is normally consumed without further processing.

2.3.12 Relevant authority

Any ministry having competent responsibility and any local or officially recognized authority.

2.3.13 Sealed containers

Food grade containers such as:

- (a) hermetically sealed containers;
- (b) sealed jars, with anchor and crown type closures;
- (c) milk bottles sealed with aluminium caps;
- (d) glass jars and bottles with screw caps; and
- (e) cans and similar containers with seals.

2.3.14 Street Food Centre

Any public place or establishment designated by the relevant authority for the preparation, display and sale of street foods by multiple vendors.

2.3.15 Street Foods

Wide range of ready-to-eat foods and beverages sold and sometimes prepared in public places, notably streets.

2.3.16 Street Food Stall

A place where street food is prepared, displayed, served or sold to the public. It includes carts, tables, benches, baskets, chairs, vehicles with or without wheels and any other structure approved by the relevant authority where on it or in it, any street foods are displayed for sale.

2.3.17 Waste Water

Waste water resulting from the activity of street food vendors.

2.3.18 Water containers

Any form of food grade container which is used solely for the purpose of storing and serving water and has not been used previously for any other purposes which could cause contamination of the water stored in it.

SECTION 3 – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Rules and regulations

3.1.1 Appropriate rules and regulations should be drafted in order to be easily endorsed with the possibility of controlling the street foods industry as an integral part of the food preparation process. Such legislations can be either elaborated separately or for incorporation into existing food regulations.

3.1.2 The general hygienic requirements and practices to be followed by the vendors should be translated by the relevant authorities into Codes of practice which are recognized as cost effective tools for the control of street foods, by fully taking into account local conditions including specific risk factors that are relevant to each operation.

3.2 Licensing/ Registration of vendors

No vendor shall conduct his/her business of preparation, packing, storage, display and sale of any street foods unless he/she is licensed/ registered under the relevant food regulations.

3.3 Conditions for licensing

3.3.1 No relevant authority shall issue or renew the license of any vendor who does not commit himself to comply with all the requirements of the Code of Practice established by the officially recognized authorities within a determined period of time.

3.3.2 It is essential that basic training in food hygiene is carried out by the relevant authorities prior to issuing or renewing the license/ registration of street food vendors.

3.4 Display of notices

3.4.1 Every licensed vendor shall at all times display visibly his/her vendor's License/ Registration and any other notices that are required by the relevant authorities to be displayed.

3.5 Pest and animal control

3.5.1 Every vendor shall at all times take appropriate measures to keep his/her stall free from animals and pests (e.g. rodents or insects) to prevent contamination of the food.

3.5.2 Every vendor shall, on becoming aware of the presence of any such pest or harbourage, immediately take all practicable measures to get rid of the pest or harbourage and to prevent re-infestation.

3.5.3 Any food found to have become contaminated by pests shall be appropriately disposed of in a hygienic manner.

3.5.4 The direct or indirect contamination of food with pest control materials such as poisons must be prevented.

3.6 Street food advisory service

3.6.1 To facilitate the enforcement of the Code of practice they have developed, the relevant authority should provide advisors:

- (a) to work with vendors offering them on-site advice and guidance to improve their operations in accordance with the requirements of the Code;
- (b) to participate in the design and/or delivery of the formal training of vendors which is to be provided by the authorities in view of issuance and renewal of licenses;
- (c) to work in close collaboration with the enforcement personnel, including the officers in charge of registration and renewal of licenses, so that the code of practice is well understood and correctly applied;
- (d) when applicable, to train the enforcement personnel and regularly organize joint inspections to monitor progress in the application of the code of practice; and
- (e) to inform consumers as per section 3.7 of these Guidelines.

3.6.2 Advisors should be good communicators, familiar with the requirements of the Guidelines, and have good understanding of both problems of the vendors and the protection of consumers.

3.6.3 The advisers should be as far as possible conversant with the Codex International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969), including the Codex Guidelines for the Application of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System (HACCP), in order to assist vendors to optimize the use of scarce resources.

3.6.4 Street Food Advisory Services should be established with the necessary capacities to carry-out their mission effectively.

3.7 Consumer education

3.7.1 The relevant authority should inform consumers through posters, the media and publicity campaigns about hazards associated with street foods and the steps the authority requires street food vendors to take to minimize those hazards.

3.7.2 Consumers should also be informed of their responsibility in ensuring that they do not contaminate, dirty or litter street food vending sites.

3.7.3 Street Food Advisory Services should have the leading role in the elaboration of information material and in the monitoring of consumers' education.

SECTION 4 – VENDORS

4.1 Health condition of the vendors

4.1.1 No vendor, assistant or food handler shall be allowed to perform his/her job if suffering from any of the following diseases and symptoms: jaundice, diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sore throat with fever, discharge from ear, eye and nose, visibly infected skin lesions (boils, cuts, etc.) In such cases, he/she shall cease from handling food in any capacity and seek medical treatment.

4.1.2 Any vendor, helper or food handler who has been identified as or is known to be or has previously been a carrier of food borne disease organisms, shall not be involved in any food handling activity until certified by a Medical Officer of Health or any other medical practitioner as a non-carrier.

4.1.3 Any vendor, helper or food handler shall be required to be immunized as required by the relevant authority.

4.2 Personal hygiene and behaviour

Every vendor, helper or food handler, during the conduct of his business, shall observe the following:

4.2.1 Wear an identification tag if issued and required by the relevant authority.

4.2.2 Dress in clean and proper attire.

4.2.3 Wash hands thoroughly with soap and clean water before and after handling food, after visiting the toilet, after handling unsanitary articles, touching animals, touching raw food, after handling toxic and dangerous materials as and when necessary.

4.2.4 Finger nails should be kept short and clean at all times, and avoid wearing jewellery or ornaments during food preparation.

4.2.5 Hair should be kept clean and tidy and should be covered during operation.

4.2.6 Non-infected cuts shall be completely protected by a waterproof dressing which is firmly secured and routinely changed.

4.2.7 Shall not smoke or chew chewing-gum while preparing or serving food.

4.2.8 Refrain from any unhygienic practices such as spitting and cleaning nose, ears or any other body orifice.

4.2.9 Shall not sneeze or cough onto the food.

4.2.10 No vendor is allowed to use the stall as a sleeping or dwelling place, or for any other personal activity.

4.3 Training of vendors

4.3.1 Every vendor, helper or food handler shall undergo a basic food hygiene training prior to licensing and further training as required by the relevant authority. Training is to be conducted by the relevant authority or other institutions recognized or approved by the relevant authorities. Vendors should also be made aware of their responsibility to consumers and be informed of available credit facilities and other sources of finance to assist and improve their businesses.

4.4 Vendors associations

The formation of street food vendor associations or cooperatives should be encouraged to provide a liaison point with the relevant authorities in view of facilitating the implementation of control measures.

SECTION 5 – DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

5.1 Location

5.1.1 The location of street food stall(s) should be suitable for the purpose of avoiding contamination of the food prepared and served or sold at or from the stall. Stalls shall be located in areas designated by the relevant authorities.

5.1.2 The area where the stall is located and immediate surroundings should be easily cleaned and capable of withstanding repeated washing and scrubbing.

5.1.3 The space in and around the vendors' stall shall be free of unnecessary stored goods or articles and discarded articles in order to permit easy access for cleaning.

5.1.4 The stall should have a convenient access to an inlet of a drainage system or any suitable means of disposing waste water in a sanitary manner.

5.2 Structures

5.2.1 Vendors' stalls shall be of a type approved by the relevant authority and shall be constructed from impervious materials that can be easily cleaned such as stainless steel, aluminium, glazed tiles or any other materials as approved by the relevant authority. It shall be properly constructed as to be readily cleaned and maintained in a good state of repair at all times.

5.2.2 Food preparation areas and working surfaces should be made of a smooth and impermeable food grade material.

5.2.3 All cooking ranges, washing equipment, working tables, shelves and cupboards on or in which food is placed should be at least 45 cm above the ground.

5.2.4 There should be adequate provision of artificial light of sufficient intensity to ensure a reasonable standard of illumination for every part of the stall.

5.3 Sanitation

5.3.1 Water supply

Vendors should ensure sufficient supply of potable water at all times. Where necessary, such as in the case of mobile vendors or where potable water supply is not yet available, potable water should be stored in clean water containers.

5.3.2 Waste water disposal

Vendors' stalls should have an efficient waste water disposal system which should be maintained in a good state of repair. The system should be large enough to carry peak loads and be provided with traps to ensure only liquid waste is discharged into the drain/sewer.

5.3.3 Solid waste disposal

Solid waste material should be handled in such a manner as to avoid contamination of food and/or potable water. Waste should be removed from the working area of the stall as often as necessary and at least daily. All solid waste should be properly disposed into suitable containers which are secured with tight fitting lids or placed in rubbish bins or central rubbish bins.

Immediately after disposal of the waste, receptacles used for storage and any equipment which has come into contact with the waste should be cleaned using one of the methods described in paragraph (5.6). The waste storage area should also be cleaned daily.

Waste receptacles, equipment which has come into contact with the waste and waste storage areas should be disinfected when required by the relevant authority. Only appropriate and suitable sanitizing agents should be used. In areas without garbage collection service, solid waste is to be disposed of in a sanitary manner, as recommended or approved by the relevant authority.

5.3.4 Cleaning

All working surfaces, table tops, floors and surrounding areas should be thoroughly cleaned at least daily, using one of the methods described in paragraph (5.6)

5.3.5 Toilets

Every vendor, helper or food handler should have access to facilities which are approved by the relevant authorities and kept at all times in a clean and operational condition.

SECTION 6– APPLIANCES

6.1 The appliances should be kept clean. The equipment, including containers for storing drinking water, should be made of materials which do not transmit toxic substances, odour or taste, are not absorbent (unless its use is intended for that purpose and will not result in food contamination), are resistant to corrosion and capable of withstanding repeated cleaning and disinfection.

6.2 Every cutting surface used in the preparation of food should be free from cracks and crevices, with only reasonable wear and tear, and should be cleaned using one of the methods described in Section 6.5 at least on the following occasions:

(a) before and after daily operations; and

(b) especially after having put unclean material or food on it if the surface is subsequently to be used to cut street foods or foods to be consumed raw.

6.3 Cooked and uncooked food should be handled with separate utensils.

6.4 Every vendor should ensure that all defective, damaged, cracked, rusted, chipped and unsuitable appliances and crockery are removed from use and discarded.

6.5 All utensils should be regularly cleaned by thoroughly washing them in warm water containing adequate amount of soap or other suitable detergents and then either immersing them for one-half (1.2) minute in boiling clean water and draining them or, for two (2) minutes in potable water at a temperature of not less than 77°C and draining them.

In the case where non-disposable crockery is used and water at 77°C or boiling temperatures is unavailable, potable water, wash soap or detergent and running water rinse is allowed. However, this method is not preferred.

6.6 Disposable crockery shall be used only once and properly disposed of. In the case where non-disposable crockery is used, the crockery is to be cleaned after each use using the method described for utensils in paragraph 5.6.

6.7 All appliances are to be maintained in good state of repair.

6.8 All washed and clean utensils and crockery should be handled, stored or transported separately from unclean and used utensils and crockery and other sources of contamination. They shall be stored in a clean and protected area which is not accessible to animals or pests.

6.9 Only containers made of food grade material, not previously used for non-food use, shall be used.

6.10 Wash basins and sinks for cleaning utensils and washing hands should always be clean and maintained in a good state of repair.

6.11 Towels used for wiping crockery should be clean, handled in a sanitary manner and only be used for that purpose.

6.12 Containers used for table side condiments should be kept clean and maintained in good condition and protected from pests.

6.13 All hand service articles such as napkins, towels and hand wipes should be of the disposable type.

6.14 Hand washing facilities such as hand wash basins, disposable towels and soap should be provided at all times.

SECTION 7 – FOOD PREPARATION

7.1 Requirements for ingredients

Every vendor should ensure the following

7.1.1 Supply of ingredients, including ice, must be from known and reliable sources.

7.1.2 The food handling method employed should be such as to minimize the loss of nutrients.

7.1.3 Freshness and wholesomeness of ingredients to maintain quality and safety of food.

7.1.4 Transportation of ingredients should be made in a manner so as to prevent exposure to the environment, spoilage and contamination.

7.1.5 Only permitted food additives should be used and the amount added should follow the specifications provided.

7.2 Cooking and handling

7.2.1 Thoroughly wash fresh vegetables and fruit whether for cooking or consuming raw, with sufficient running potable water, to remove adhering surface contamination. For any soaking, potable water should be used.

7.2.2 Where appropriate, wash raw food before using in food preparation to reduce the risk of contamination. Never wash perishable raw food with other foods that will be consumed raw or in a semi-cooked state.

7.2.3 There should be an area for handling, storing, cleaning and preparing raw food ingredients, separate and apart from the cooked, street food display, handling and serving areas.

7.2.4 Thawing: Frozen products, especially frozen vegetables, can be cooked without thawing. However, large pieces of meat or large poultry carcasses often need to be thawed before cooking. When thawing is carried out as an operation separated from cooking this should be performed only in:

(a) a refrigerator or purpose-built thawing cabinet maintained at a temperature of 4°C; or

(b) running potable water maintained at a temperature not above 21°C for a period not exceeding 4 hours; or

- (c) a commercial microwave oven only when the food will be immediately transferred to conventional cooking units as part of a continuous cooking process or when the entire, uninterrupted cooking process takes place in the microwave oven.

NOTE: Hazards associated with thawing include cross-contamination from drip and growth of micro-organisms on the outside before the inside has thawed. Thawed meat and poultry products should be checked frequently to make sure the thawing process is complete before further processing or the processing time should be increased to take into account the temperature of the meat.

7.2.5 The time and temperature of cooking should be sufficient to ensure the destruction of non-spore forming pathogenic micro-organisms.

7.2.6 Water used for the purpose of drinking, preparation of hot or cold drinks and beverages should be potable.

7.2.7 Ice should be made from potable water. Ice should be handled and stored so as to protect it from contamination. Containers used to transport or store ice should meet the requirements for water containers prescribed by Section 2.3.18.

7.2.8 Food should not be re-heated more than once and only the portion of the food to be served should be re-heated. A temperature of at least 75°C should be reached in the centre of the food within one hour of removing the food from refrigeration. Lower temperatures may be used for reheating providing the time/temperature combinations used are equivalent in terms of destruction of microorganisms to heating to a temperature of 75°C.

7.2.9 Utensils used for tasting food should be washed immediately after each use.

7.3 Serving food

Every vendor should observe the following:

7.3.1 All vendors purchasing street foods for the purpose of serving or selling must assure that such food is from licensed and reliable sources.

7.3.2 Cooked street foods should not be handled with bare hands. Clean tongs, forks, spoons or disposable gloves should be used when handling, serving or selling food.

7.3.3 All crockery used should be clean and dry and not handled by touching the food contact surfaces.

7.3.4 Plates filled with food should not be stacked one on top of the other during display, storing or serving.

7.3.5 Food grade packing materials should be used.

7.3.6 Printed material should preferably never be used to serve food. Only food grade aluminium foil, waxed paper, food grade plastic and any other suitable material should be used for packing and serving food.

7.3.7 Never blow into plastic bags, wrappers or packages used for food.

7.3.8 All beverages offered for sale should be dispensed only in their individual original sealed containers or from taps fitted to bulk containers and made of food grade plastic or other suitable material. Bulk containers should be covered with tight fitting lids.

7.3.9 Cut fruit or other foods ordinarily consumed in the state in which they are sold may be set out in an enclosed display case, cabinet or similar type of protective device and should be displayed in a manner which will not affect the wholesomeness and cleanliness of such foods.

7.3.10 Food handlers should avoid handling money. If this is unavoidable, the food handler should wash his hands after handling money and before handling food again.

7.3.11 Ready-to-eat foods intended for continuous serving should be protected from environmental contamination and kept at the following holding temperatures:

(a) for food served hot..... 63°C or above;

(b) for food served cold.....4°C or below;

(c) for food served frozen..-18°C or below.

7.3.12 A food warmer should be used to maintain continuous holding temperatures (Section 7.3.11 (i)), and should not be used for re-heating purposes (Section 7.2.8).

7.4 Unsold Food

All unsold cooked food and prepared beverages that cannot be properly preserved should be safely disposed of at the end of the day if they cannot be stored in a sanitary manner.

7.5 Transportation of street foods

7.5.1 Street foods which require transportation to the point of sale/stall should be placed in a well protected, covered and clean container to avoid contamination

7.5.2 Any vehicle used in transporting food should be clean and in good condition, appropriately equipped to accommodate any special requirements of the food being transported and provide protection from environmental contamination.

7.5.3 Milk should be transported to the point of sale in an insulated container maintained at a maximum temperature of 4°C.

7.5.4 Street foods should not be transported together with raw food and ingredients, animals, toxic substances and any other materials which may contaminate the food.

7.6 Food storage

7.6.1 The food should at all times be kept clean and free from contamination, and be adequately protected from pests, environmental contaminants and stored at proper temperatures where appropriate.

7.6.2 Readily perishable food should be placed or stacked so that it is not likely to be contaminated by contact with raw food, pet food, toxic materials or any other materials which may cause contamination. The bulk of readily perishable foods should be stored in clean containers placed in a clean ice box or refrigerator in which the food should not exceed a temperature 10°C. Quantities displayed for continuous serving should be handled according to the requirements listed in Section 7.3.11.

7.6.3 All dry ingredients should be stored and maintained in their original labelled commercial container or subsequent containers and should be properly labelled as to the content and designed to prevent moisture absorption.

7.6.4 All non-perishable food should be stored in a clean, protected and closed container/cupboard to prevent cross contamination by pests.

7.6.5 Once cleaned, following the requirements of Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, the bulk of perishable raw food including wet milled legumes, cereals or pulses should be stored in clean separate containers preferably placed in a clean ice box, a refrigerator or a freezer to prevent spoilage.

7.6.6 Refrigerators and freezers should not be overloaded and their temperatures should be maintained at a maximum of 4°C and -18°C or below, respectively.

7.6.7 All enclosed spaces, cupboards, shelves and racks used for the storage of food should be constructed so as to be easily cleaned and to protect the food from pests.

7.6.8 All food stored in bulk should be stored in an orderly fashion and should be placed so as to facilitate ventilation, inspection and the detection of pests.

7.6.9 All food should be stored and handled separately from toxic, poisonous, deleterious and injurious substances.

7.6.10 The principle "First in, first out" should be applied to stock rotation.

7.6.11 Date marking on all food containers shall be checked before the food is used. Expired food shall not be sold or used for the preparation of food.

SECTION 8 – STREET FOOD CENTRES

8.1 General requirements

All vendors located in a street food centre should comply with all provisions stated in the officially recognized regulations applicable to street food vendors.

8.2 Location, design and construction

8.2.1 The location of any street food centre is to be approved beforehand by the relevant authority, having taken into consideration the provisions stated in Section 5.1 - Location, of these Guidelines.

8.2.2 The design of the street food centre shall:

- (a) be reviewed and approved beforehand by the relevant authority;

- (b) provide sufficient and adequate space and orderly placement of vendor stalls, carts, display cases, food preparation, handling, storing, serving and selling areas;
- (c) allow for the orderly flow of materials and goods, in and out of the centres, which will prevent possible routes of food contamination;
- (d) Allow for the proper placement of client facilities, such as toilets, hand washing and eating facilities and be located or arranged in a manner that prevents routes of food contamination;
- (e) provide suitable, sufficient and properly placed areas for solid waste storage and crockery and appliance cleaning, washing and sanitizing;
- (f) be adequately ventilated to remove hazardous obnoxious gases and odours, cooking fuel fumes and other offensive airborne materials and provide a continuous and sufficient supply of fresh air to support the activities within the centre;
- (g) be provided with sufficient and adequate electrical power supply to support the vendors in the centre to operate appliances, equipment and other implements used in the preparation, handling, storage, serving and selling of food; and
- (h) have available an ample supply of potable water, under adequate pressure and of suitable temperature, with adequate facilities for its storage, where necessary, and distribution, and with adequate protection against contamination.

NOTE: Samples should be taken regularly, but the frequency should depend upon the origin and the usage of the water, e.g. more frequent from private supplies than from public supplies. Chlorine or other suitable disinfectants may be used. If chlorination has been employed checks should be made daily by chemical tests for available chlorine. The point of sampling should preferably be at the point of usage, but occasionally it would be useful to sample at the point of entry of the water to the establishment.

8.2.3 Street food centres shall be properly constructed in a manner using materials approved by the relevant authority, taking into consideration the provisions stated in the paragraph on "Structure, of these Guidelines. In addition to these provisions, street food centres should:

- (a) have smooth cement, glazed tile or tarmac paved floors, equipped with properly placed floor drains for the purpose of removing surface water and to facilitate cleaning and sanitizing;
- (b) have, where applicable, smooth non-permeable surface walls or partitions, such as glazed tile, to facilitate cleaning and sanitizing;
- (c) have, if applicable, a smooth non-absorbent ceiling to facilitate cleaning;
- (d) provide sufficient artificial lighting, properly placed to facilitate food preparation, handling, storage, serving and selling for each vendor located at the centre;
- (e) provide for smoke hoods and flues above cooking ranges to enable the removal of fuel and cooking gases, smoke and fumes from the centre into the open air.
- (f) provide centralized or individualized appliance, crockery, utensil and other implement washing facilities, equipped with hot and cold running potable water, wash basins or sinks with appropriate drains to an approved sewer or drain system, detergent and sanitizing agents to satisfy the proper sanitary and complete cleaning needs of the vendors in the centre; and
- (g) comply with any other requirement of the relevant authority related to the structure of street food centres.

8.3 Liquid and solid waste

8.3.1 Pertaining to liquid waste disposal, street food centres are to:

- (a) be equipped with an efficient centralized or individual (for each vendor in the centre) liquid waste disposal system(s) approved by the relevant authority and of suitable size and design to exceed the level of demand for liquid waste disposal at peak levels of activity by the vendors in the centre;
- (b) maintain the liquid sewage disposal system in good working condition;
- (c) ensure that the liquid waste disposal system exits to a relevant authority approved sewage drain system capable of efficiently carrying away the liquid waste from the centre; and
- (d) comply with any other relevant authority requirements related to liquid waste disposal.

8.3.2 Regarding solid waste disposal, street food centres are to have an efficient system for disposal of solid waste complying with all solid waste disposal requirements of the relevant authority, to include:

- (a) the allocation of an appropriate and separate amount of space for solid waste storage, located at a convenient but suitably distant location from food preparation, storage, handling, serving or selling areas to prevent contamination;
- (b) sufficient number of suitably designed and constructed waterproof solid waste containers with tight fitting lids to adequately contain the volume of accumulated solid waste produced by vendor activity in one day. Containers should be lined with suitable disposable liners or inner containers for securing waste and which are easy to handle at time of disposal;
- (c) the daily, and more often if necessary, disposal of solid waste from the street food centre to:
 - (i) rubbish bins approved, designed and intended for the centralized collection of solid waste by garbage service agencies;
 - (ii) approved sanitary land fill; or
 - (iii) other disposal methods authorized and approved by the relevant authority.
- (d) routine inspection of solid waste disposal areas for the presence or harbourage of pests, taking any and all practical measures to eliminate and further prevent any infestation; and
- (e) compliance with any other requirement of the relevant authority related to solid waste disposal.

8.4 Customer hygiene facilities

Street food centres should have sufficient toilet facilities for each gender to accommodate the vendors, their employees and the clientele, conveniently located but separate and apart from food preparation, handling, storage, serving and selling areas, in order to prevent contamination of the food. The toilet facilities should be approved and subject to all requirements for such facilities by the relevant authority. Among other requirements the facilities should:

- (a) have smooth walls of glazed tile to a height of at least two (2) meters;
- (b) should be clean, free of bad odours and provided with a flushing system;
- (c) be well lit, ventilated, and routinely cleaned and sanitized and maintained in good working condition;
- (d) include hand washing and drying facilities and properly supplied with soap and other needed supplies;
- (e) contain posters instructing vendors and employees to wash hands thoroughly after each use of the toilet facilities before returning to work; and
- (f) have doors which are equipped with self-closing devices.

APPENDIX III

**PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HARISSA (Red hot pepper paste)
(At Steps 5/8)**

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to harissa (red hot pepper paste) as defined in Section 2, manufactured and intended for direct human consumption.

It does not apply to other traditionally-prepared types of harissa.

2. DESCRIPTION

“Harissa” designates the preserved pulp of fresh red hot pepper, of the *Capsicum annum* variety, concentrated and with the composition provided for in Section 3 and preserved using thermal treatment only.

3. INGREDIENTS AND QUALITY FACTORS**3.1 ingredients**

- Fresh red hot peppers of the *Capsicum annum* variety
- Fresh garlic
- Coriander
- Caraway
- Salt

3.2 Quality factors**3.2.1 Ingredients**

The peppers used in the preparation of processed Harissa shall be sufficiently ripe, wholesome, with a deep red colour, free of spoilage, rot and impurities and free of insects.

3.2.2 Final product**3.2.2.1 Sensory factors**

- Natural homogenous red color with a minimum of color on a “hunter” scale of the value of a/b not less than 1/4 and free of black particles.
- The taste shall be typical to the product, spicy (hot), free from bitterness or burned taste or any other foreign taste.
- The smell shall be typical of the product and free of foreign smells.

3.2.2.2 Consistency/texture

The final product shall be free of crusts and seeds using a 2 mm sieve.

3.2.2.3 Acidity

Total acidity, expressed as citric acid, shall not exceed 3.6% of total dry residues.

3.2.2.4 Dry extract

Dry extract shall be not less than 14% of total soluble solids (excluding salt)

3.2.2.5 Added salt

The percentage of added salt shall not exceed 1.5% of dry weight basis.

3.2.2.6 Acid insoluble ash

The percentage of acid insoluble ash shall not exceed 0.15% of the total weight of dry extract.

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additives may be used in harissa.

5 CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the Maximum Levels of the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6 FOOD HYGIENE

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Code of Hygienic Practice: *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), and other relevant Codex texts such as *Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice* (.).

The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7 WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

7.1 Fill of Container

Minimum Fill

(a) The container should be well filled with the product, which should occupy not less than 90% (minus any necessary head space according to good manufacturing practices) of the water capacity of the container. The water capacity of the container is the volume of distilled water at 20°C, which the sealed container will hold when completely filled.

(b) Flexible containers should be filled as full as commercially practicable.

8 Labelling

The product covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the latest edition of the *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

The name of the products shall be "harissa".

9 PACKAGING AND STORAGE

Harissa must be packed in suitable and clean containers, tightly closed, and all materials in contact with the product must be authorized for use in food packaging.

10 METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

10.1 Methods of sampling

Samples should be taken in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5. (See also *Codex General Guidelines on Sampling* CAC/GL 50-2004)

10.2 Acidity

In accordance with Standard ISO 750-1998

10.3 Dry extract - soluble solids

In accordance with Standard ISO 2173-2003

10.4 Acid insoluble ash

In accordance with Standard ISO 763-2003

10.5 Colour

In accordance with the "hunter" method.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HALWA TEHENIA**(At Steps 5/8)****1. SCOPE**

The present standard applies to halwa tehenia as defined in section 2.

2. DEFINITIONS**2.1 Halwa Tehenia**

‘Halwa tehenia’ designates a heat-processed food product made of tahina, natural sugars and other ingredients with the composition provided for in Section 3. Its texture is consistent or crumbly (Fibrous Halwa).

2.2 Tahina

A food product made by grinding peeled and roasted sesame seeds.

2.3 Natural Sugars

Unprocessed carbohydrates such as sucrose, glucose, fructose, or a mixture of them.

2.4 Soapwort Extract

A substance extracted from the bark, leaves or roots of soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*). It is either called soapwort or saponin.

3. INGREDIENTS AND QUALITY FACTORS**3.1 Primary ingredients**

3.1.1 Tahina

3.1.2 Natural sugars

3.1.3 Soapwort extract or authorized substitutes

3.2 Optional Ingredients

The following optional ingredients can be used:

3.2.1 Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, dried fruits and/or cocoa powder.

3.3 Quality Factors

3.3.1 All raw materials used in the production process should meet their respective standards.

3.3.2 The product shall be free of any rancid taste or smell or any other foreign taste.

3.3.3 The product shall be free of insects and of their body parts and secretions.

3.3.4 The product shall retain its natural characteristics, particularly the non-separation of its oil never separating, and it should be free of white or dark spots.

3.3.5 The product shall be of a consistent texture that can be easily cut into.

3.3.6 The acidity percentage, expressed as citric acid shall not exceed 0.2% of the product's weight.

3.3.7 The percentage of acid insoluble ash shall not exceed 2% of dry weight. The percentage of acid insoluble ash shall not exceed 0.2% of weight.

3.3.8 The percentage of fat (sesame oil) shall not be inferior to 25% of the weight.

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

4.1 Only acidity regulators and emulsifiers used in accordance with Table 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CODEX STAN 192-1995) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

4.2 Flavourings

Flavourings are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard when used in accordance with good manufacturing practices and in compliance with the Codex Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings (CAC/GL 66-2008).

5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the Maximum Levels of the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6. HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Code of Hygienic Practice: *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), and other relevant Codex texts such as *Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice* (.).

The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7. PACKAGING, TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

When packaging, transporting and storing the product, the following considerations must be taken into account:

7.1 Packaging

Halwa Tehenia should be packaged in suitable containers that are tightly closed to protect the product from humidity and contamination, and that impede the product from sticking on the packaging material.

7.2 Transportation

The means of transportation must provide protection to the product from the various climatic effects that might alter its characteristics or spoil it.

7.3 Storage

The product shall be stored inside well-ventilated warehouses, away from all sources of heat and sun and any other material that might lead to its contamination.

8. LABELLING

Labelling should comply with the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985).

The name of the product for labelling purposes shall be: "Halwa Tehenia", "Halwa Shamia" or "Halva"

Optional ingredients, if used, shall be mentioned next to the name of the product.

The label shall not be applied directly on the product.

9. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

9.1 Samples should be taken in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5. ((See also *Codex General Guidelines on Sampling* CAC/GL 50-2004).

9.2 Methods of Analysis and Testing

9.2.1 Moisture

Moisture should be estimated according to one of the official analysis methods of the AOAC, Association of Official Analytical Chemists, AOAC 925.45, 16th Edition, 1995.

9.2.2 Fatty Substances

Fatty substances shall be estimated according to one of the official analysis methods of the AOAC, Association of Official Analytical Chemists, AOAC 963.15, 16th Edition, 1995.

9.2.3 Ash

Ash shall be estimated according to one of the official analysis methods of the AOAC, Association of Official Analytical Chemists, AOAC 900.02, 16th Edition, 1995.

9.2.4 Sugars (Estimated as sucrose)

The sugar content can be estimated according to one of the official analysis methods of the AOAC Association of Official Analytical Chemists, AOAC 930.15, 36th Edition, 1995.

9.2.5 Acidity

Acidity can be estimated according to one of the official analysis methods of the AOAC, Association of Official Analytical Chemists, AOAC 900.02, 16th Edition, 1995.