



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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**Agenda item 3**

**CX/GP 25/34/3**

**March 2025**

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEx COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### Thirty-fourth Session

Lille, France, 2-6 June 2025

### INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCGP

Prepared by FAO and WHO

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 This document presents information on activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) that could be of interest or relevant to the work of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP).

#### *Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO*

#### 2. Codex Trust Fund

2.1 The Codex Trust Fund (CTF) is a joint FAO/WHO programme providing support to developing and transition economy countries to build strong and sustainable capacity to engage in Codex work. Since 2016, the CTF2 issues annual calls for individual and group applications from low- and middle- income countries eligible for support.

2.2 In 2024, CTF2 launched its project output repository which provides access to resource material and products developed with CTF2 support. Documents included in the repository have been officially shared by beneficiary countries of the CTF2 to serve as examples and inspiration to countries aiming to develop similar products to strengthen the components of their national Codex systems. The repository can be accessed through the CTF website (<https://www.who.int/initiatives/codex-trust-fund/repository-of-project-outputs>) and is updated regularly.

#### 3. Codex e-learning courses

3.1 Initially published in English,<sup>1</sup> the series of four Codex e-learning courses is now also available in French<sup>2</sup> and Spanish.<sup>3</sup> These courses are designed to improve the understanding of Codex Alimentarius and develop sustainable national capacities to engage in and benefit from Codex work. The courses have proven to be in high demand, with approximately 9000 users registered and over 2000 digital certificates issued upon successful completion of the tests at the end of each course. Development of a new course focused on risk assessment within the framework of Codex is currently underway.

#### 4. Advocacy and funding needs

4.1 Each year on 7 June, FAO and WHO work together to facilitate the observance of the World Food Safety Day all around the world. This year's theme is "Food safety: science in action" to highlight the critical role of science as the foundation for food safety.<sup>4</sup>

4.2 FAO and WHO manage expert committees including the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR), the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA), and the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Nutrition

<sup>1</sup> <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=800>

<sup>2</sup> <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?lang=fr&id=865>

<sup>3</sup> <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?lang=es&id=863>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/wfsd-homepage/en/> and <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-food-safety-day/2025>

(JEMNU) that bring together leading independent scientists to provide objective scientific advice and recommendations to Codex committees.

4.3 FAO and WHO continue to jointly prioritize the requests for scientific advice taking into consideration the criteria proposed by Codex as well as the requests for advice from Member countries and the availability of resources.

4.4 FAO and WHO also lead food safety capacity development programmes aiming at increasing impact through policy uptake of Codex Alimentarius standards and guidance into national food control systems, as well as improving participation in Codex work (through CTF2).

4.5 As demands for scientific advice by various Codex committees and for capacity development activities by Members continue to outstrip the means FAO and WHO currently have at their disposal, both Organizations encourage Members to consider the possible provision of extra-budgetary resources and would welcome discussions regarding this subject.

### **Matters arising from FAO**

## **5. FAO Governing Bodies**

5.1 In 2025, FAO will host the 44th session of the FAO Conference (to be held from 28 June to 4 July 2025). The FAO Council will meet for its 177th session in April 2025 to prepare for the upcoming Conference, and will review the recommendations of the 140th session of Programme Committee and of the 203rd session of the Finance Committee on the Reviewed Strategic Framework,<sup>5</sup> and *The Director-General's Medium Term Plan 2026–29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026–27*.<sup>6</sup> These Committees met in March 2025.

5.2 The Programme Committee report (140th session) re-emphasized the essential role of the normative work of FAO including standard-setting and its necessary resources allocation. The report of its Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee (203rd session) also welcomed the increased allocations to support the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; and recommended management prepare a detailed overview and assessment of Codex Alimentarius funding in consultation with the WHO, including risks and opportunities, for consideration at the next session of the Joint Meeting.

5.3 In line with the *FAO Strategic priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31*, endorsed by Members in December 2022, food safety is at the core of the Programme Priority Area (PPA) “Better nutrition 3: Safe food for everyone” (BN3). The “key outcome statement” for PPA BN3 is an “integrated, multisectoral food-safety policies and legislation across national agrifood systems adopted and implemented by governments, and capacities and awareness of value chain operators and consumers enhanced”.<sup>5</sup> The key thematic components focus on:

- strengthening the development and adoption of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's food safety and quality standards to protect the health of consumers, ensure fair practices in the food trade and address emerging food safety challenges by adapting and developing standards accordingly;
- strengthening the food-safety governance to create robust regulatory frameworks and effective national food-control systems to protect consumers and reduce food loss and waste; and proactively identify and address emerging risks in food-safety governance;
- bridging the gap between science and practice by translating scientific findings into practical guidance and training to ensure food-safety measures are based on the latest research; and forecast future scientific advancements to integrate them into food-safety practices; and
- enhancing the food-safety capacity of value chain operators by providing training and guidance to ensure food safety throughout the entire food system, from producers to retailers; and prepare value-chain operators for future food safety challenges through continuous education and innovation.

5.4 Other PPA such as “Better nutrition 5: Transparent markets and trade”, and “Better production 3: One Health”, also contribute to the work of FAO in the area of food safety, including the critical work on antimicrobial resistance, and support the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

## **6. Agrifood systems transformation agenda**

6.1 Delivering the necessary sustained impact at scale to transform our agrifood systems towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires a strategic and systems-oriented approach. This was already set out by the *FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31* and remains true even more so today.

<sup>5</sup> See: *FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31* <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb7099en>

<sup>6</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nq860en>

6.2 Adopting a systems approach for agrifood systems transformation has, as its main objective, to achieve multiple outcomes simultaneously. The increasing awareness of the importance of adopting a systems approach creates opportunities to discuss trade-offs and co-benefits between components of the agrifood system. Examples include finding the appropriate balance between strengthening food safety and food security within the national context and in consideration of planetary boundaries. Another example of balancing trade-offs is often seen in food insecure environments, such as many low-income settings, where restrictive food safety requirements can limit the number of agricultural products deemed safe enough to become food, thereby adding additional constraints on the amount of available food and, thus, threatening food security further. Adopting a systems approach is a means through which to make sense of trade-offs and identify appropriate entry points to address the issue at hand and achieve co-benefits.

6.3 FAO's case studies (*Food safety considerations to achieve best health outcomes under limited food availability situations*<sup>7</sup> and *Food safety in the context of limited food availability*)<sup>8</sup> highlight the need for risk management recommendations that balance food safety and food security, recognizing the multiple contributing factors directly related to food insecurity conditions.

6.4 Countries continue to engage actively with the agrifood systems transformation agenda and are, within their own contexts, taking steps to adopt a systems approach. Practically, these efforts are often seen in the multistakeholder and multisector mechanisms that are set up at country level. Inclusion of the food safety perspective in such mechanisms and the overall recognition of the interrelatedness of agrifood systems outcomes with food safety are essential and require active engagement from all different agrifood systems and food safety stakeholders.

6.5 As part of the agrifood systems transformation agenda, countries will come together during the second stocktaking moment of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS+4), which is announced to take place between 27 and 29 July 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. UNFSS+4 will focus on reflecting on progress, strengthening accountability and unlocking investments for food systems transformation.

### **Matters arising from WHO**

## **7. WHO Governing Body - Fourteenth General Programme of Work**

7.1 The Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW14)<sup>9</sup> was adopted by the World Health Assembly at its 77th meeting in May 2024. It sets a global health agenda and will guide WHO's work in support of Member States and partners between 2025 and 2028. The strategy builds on the strengths of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW13), and the recommendations from the evaluation of GPW13.

7.2 Building on the evaluation of GPW13, the 2023 global monitoring report on Universal Health Coverage<sup>10</sup> and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, GPW14: (i) sets a global health agenda for WHO's Secretariat and 194 Member States, together with the Organization's partners; (ii) includes an overarching theory of change articulating how WHO enables the joint actions needed to achieve the GPW14 strategic objectives and outcomes; (iii) establishes priority focus areas, which are reflected in the 6 strategic objectives and 15 joint outcomes; (iv) provides an enhanced results framework with recalibrated measurement indices, updated outcome indicators and "corporate" outcomes that reflect the specific contributions of WHO; and (v) emphasizes stronger data foundations and digital systems at WHO and in countries.

## **8. Update on the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety**

8.1 The *WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030*<sup>11</sup> was adopted by the WHO World Health Assembly 75 in May 2022 and the final document was launched in October 2022. It was developed to guide and support Member States in their efforts to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate actions towards the reduction of the burden of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety systems and promoting global cooperation.

8.2 For the first time there are indicators proposed to measure the impact and the implementation of the activities to strengthen food control systems. The impact indicator is calculated by the Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) and refers to the global estimated number of cases from the five foodborne pathogens: *Campylobacter* spp., Enteropathogenic *E. coli* - EPEC, Enterotoxigenic *E. coli* - ETEC, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* - STEC, and non-typhoidal *Salmonella* Enterica. This indicator was collected from FERG and refers to data from 2010 that was published in 2015. FERG 2021-2024 is updating

<sup>7</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb8715en>

<sup>8</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd0761en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.who.int/about/general-programme-of-work/fourteenth>

<sup>10</sup> <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/40348>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240057685>

this data.<sup>12</sup> It takes into consideration the five most frequent bacterial causes of diarrheal foodborne diseases. The progress indicators are extracted from the International Health Regulation (IHR, 2005) assessment and aim to measure the implementation of the strategy. The indicator on multisectoral collaboration mechanism for food safety events is extracted from the State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR)<sup>13</sup> while the progress indicator on the capacity for surveillance of foodborne diseases is extracted from the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) report.<sup>14</sup>

8.3 To support the implementation of the *WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030*, WHO launched the WHO Alliance for Food Safety in 2024. The Alliance is a network of WHO Collaborating Centers (WHO-CC) and other partners to collaborate, share knowledge, and coordinate efforts on matters related to foodborne disease surveillance and food contamination monitoring. The Alliance's mission is to guide and support Member States in prioritizing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating actions to reduce the burden of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety and promoting global cooperation in accordance with the *WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030*, the IHR (2005), and by considering the One Health approach.

8.4 WHO, in partnership with the International Finance Corporation from World Bank, developed a food safety roadmap development tool to support Member States in the identification and prioritization of main gaps in the food control systems. The tool was validated in Uzbekistan, Egypt, Qatar and Brazil in 2024. This "food safety roadmap development tool" supports countries to prepare for the use of the "FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool". The latter analyses in greater depth and details the performance of the food control system and delivers an actionable strategy to invest in food safety, in incremental and measurable ways.

8.5 WHO is launching the publication *Smart investments: Uncovering the public health and economic value of foodborne disease surveillance*. This study was designed to help governments and donors to make informed decisions about the best investments for food safety by calculating the average return on investment of interventions for surveillance of foodborne disease.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.foodbornediseaseburden.org/ferg/estimates>

<sup>13</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/e-spar>

<sup>14</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/sph/jee>