

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Comments of the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST)

**ITEM8: Application of the Statements of Principle concerning the role of science
in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other
factors are taken into account (SoP)**

ITEM 9: New Food Sources and Production Systems

Celebrating Codex @ 60

The International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), and its membership from more than 100 countries, is the only representative of Food Science and Technology, elected by its multi-disciplinary peers as a full member in the International Science Council (ISC).

IUFoST would like to offer its heartfelt congratulations to the Codex family for the 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and would like to stress the importance of Codex as a forum that brings together nations and levels the playing field among all consumers of the planet, through the development of measures that protect consumers' health and their economic well-being globally, that offers guidance to food producers of all sizes and capacities and enables fair practices in the trade of food and agri-food commodities.

IUFoST, as an observer in Codex, and through its national scientific bodies globally, and Fellows of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology (IAFoST) and its partners, stresses the importance for Codex standards to be based on science and evidence and reiterates the commitment of its food science and technology community to accompanying the efforts of global and regional standards development with mobilization and stimulation of the contribution from the science and technology community from academia with emphasis on enabling such contributions from developing countries.

Comments on Agenda Item 9: New Food Sources and Production Systems and Agenda Item 8: Statement of Principles and the Role of Science in Codex Decision Making:

Responding to the call for action stemming from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, and supporting commitments to transform food systems to be more robust and reliable to address the rapidly growing needs of an increasing world population, the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST) partnered with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to organize the Future of Food Summit: Resilient and Innovative Food Systems, hosted by the Food Science and Technology Association of Thailand (FoSTAT), in Bangkok on 13 November 2023.

IUFoST would like to table the short summary of the discussions that resulted from the Summit, as an annex to this conference room document, for the information of Codex members and Observers.

IUFoST would like to emphasize the role played by Codex as the international food standard setting body to be the enabler of solutions resulting in new food sources and/ or food production systems, being developed as a result of food science and technology investments.

The enabling role of Codex should materialize in Codex, its subsidiary and advisory bodies, playing a pro-active role to support the development and update of food safety assessment methodologies that contribute to the assessment of risks and benefits resulting from the proposed innovations.

Similarly, Codex is expected to offer the relevant mechanisms that would facilitate efforts of standardizing safety and quality requirements associated with new food sources and production systems, including directing members to existing forums of standards development through prioritizing work in existing Codex committees, as well as supporting collaboration between such committees where needed, to avoid any delays in the development of the sought after standards.

In view of the possible increased reliance on novel food sources and production systems, IUFoST suggests the possible development of **guidance for national food regulators** on how **Novel Food Regulatory Frameworks** can be established with a strong emphasis on requiring science-based decisions in assessing and deciding on market access for food products and production processes, resulting from innovations. In doing so, food regulators will contribute to fostering further innovation in food systems as a whole, for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IUFoST notes the current challenges faced by Codex committees and the CAC in addressing situations of standards development, based on a global context that may result in provisions that are different from national food regulatory measures, when these pre-exist, and are legitimately based on different considerations than those relevant to Codex.

As a science-based organization, IUFoST would like to reiterate the importance of robust independent science to the Science / Policy interface. In this regard, science should be the preeminent enabler of standard development.

It will be important to reiterate to members that, more than the standards themselves, Codex offers the **harmonization of the methodologies and approaches** used to lead to these standards, which in turn can be applied relying on different sources of data as well as considering different levels of protection adopted nationally, leading to a different outcome than the proposed standard at the global level. Following the same methods and approaches in developing food standards is a prerequisite to predictable and robust food control systems and Codex guidance remains the backbone of this goal.

It is noteworthy to observe the increased interest by members in either expressing reservations on Codex standards, when the proposed standard differs from their national regulation or in marking through a footnote added to the standard whether a country would apply this standard nationally.

Addressing possible future directions related to the application of the Statement of Principles (SoP) and the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-Making, as discussed under agenda item 8, IUFoST suggests that the practical guidance on the application of the SoP offers a clarification to the SoP, to convey to members that:

- The adoption of a codex standard does not take away countries' prerogative(s) to deviate from the Codex standard, based on their own scientific assessment, or on the level of protection that they have adopted to their consumers (including protection of consumers' social and cultural preferences) at the domestic level and which may not be relevant globally and hence would be different from the factors considered by Codex to manage the same risk or issue (which ought to be of global applicability)
- Continued recording of reservations on Codex standards, based on the sole difference between the proposed standard and national provisions, may convey a non-justified doubt in the robustness of the methodologies or approaches followed by Codex to arrive at such standards. While recording a reservation remains a country prerogative, more guidance may be needed to restrict such reservations to

instances where a delegation is questioning the methodology followed, without opposing the progression of the standard.

It is important that the Codex decision-making process keep evolving to cope with the need to address an increasing number of products and processes that will be seeking access to markets regionally and globally and that will be challenging the regulators' capacity to cover individually.

Short of having such trusted international guidance, new food production sources and solutions will not be effective in addressing the identified challenges of food safety and security.

IUFoST Future of Food Summit
In Partnership with the
Food Systems Division of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Resilient and Innovative Food Systems

13 November 2023

Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC), Bangkok, Thailand

The Declaration Resulting from the Bangkok IUFoST Future of Food Summit

Responding to the call for action stemming from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, and supporting commitments to transform food systems to be more robust and reliable, to address the rapidly growing needs of an increasing world population, the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST) partnered with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to organize the Future of Food Summit: Resilient and Innovative Food Systems, hosted by the Food Science and Technology Association of Thailand (FoSTAT), in Bangkok on 13 November 2023.

Food scientists and researchers, opinion leaders, industry representatives and regulators present at the meeting, reaffirmed:

- **The pivotal role played by food science and technology** to provide solutions to challenges testing the resilience of food systems, namely the vulnerability and scarcity of natural resources, climate change, regional and global conflicts, and continued food losses,
- **The importance to offer food processing solutions** as a means of prevention of food losses and remediation of the possible introduction of food safety hazards that can be further managed through post-harvest interventions. This needs to be coupled with awareness raising and education efforts aiming to clarify the role of food processing and to rebut the claims propagated about the negative impacts of processing interventions, as may be relevant,
- **The importance to continue to invest in innovation** supporting the development and availability of novel food and feed sources and ingredients, such as alternative protein being developed from plant origin and /or through the application of technologies of likes of precision fermentation,
- **The importance to consider optimization of use of resources in food and feed production** such as land and water resources as well as to consider the reliance on recycling technologies where relevant, supported by the corresponding safeguards ensuring the safety of food production applications and technologies used,
- **The need to benefit from the experience gained from indigenous knowledge and/or the re-development of traditional food**, as well through traditional knowledge to develop solutions to prevent and/or mitigate food loss and to identify new food sources and/or processes.

Participants in the Summit identified a 3 Pillared Path Forward to support the development of resilient and innovative food systems (Figure 1) :

- I- **Continued Investment in Food Science and Technologies:** that enable the development of novel food sources and enhance current practices of food and agri-food production. These investments should include the development of research aiming to better understanding consumers' interests and concerns to support readiness to address such concerns or mitigate consequences of consumers acceptance of available food sources. Particular attention should be

developed to the introduction of digital solutions, including the reliance on Artificial Intelligence that can facilitate and optimize food production conditions, food safety and traceability.

- II- **Availability of Funding and Investments:** dedicated not only to research and development but to the overall food and agri-food production sector, in particular to support knowledge and technology translation and scalability of innovative solutions of food production. Investments should cover skill and competency development, indispensable to sustain efforts of research, and food production
- III- **Development of Effective Partnerships:** harnessing the capacities of the public sector i.e., government interventions, academia and the private sector, to support availability of sustainable food production operations resulting from research and innovation or to offer enablers and solutions to translate research, scale-up new production processes or facilitate market access where relevant.

These three pillars of interventions need to be enabled by a series of interventions that include:

- **Regulatory facilitation and early engagement of food regulators** in the development of novel food production systems
- **Contributions of the Academic Sector** to accompany the foreseen developments with adaptation of curriculum of food science and technology and effective support to applied research efforts,
- **Leadership from individuals and organizations** support food security and integrity, to ensure these areas are at the forefront of the policy agendas regionally and globally,
- **Support to consumer education and awareness raising** in relation with food production systems, to prevent and minimize food waste and support acceptance of new products and ingredients based on knowledge and facts

