

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Eighty-second Session

20-24 and 30 June 2022

Codex side event focusing on Food Safety on the margins of ISO General Assembly,

19th – 23rd September 2022, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

(Prepared by CCAFRICA Coordinator)

1. Introduction

Codex and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) activities are complementary. Codex, as a governmental organization, prepares documents to assist governments in their statutory and regulatory work to protect their citizens from health hazards caused by food consumption. ISO prepares standards in particular on test methods to assist stakeholders along the whole food chain to fulfil both the statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as the requirements of consumers of these products.

The global standards of Codex Alimentarius, like the ones from ISO, provide valuable information to governments, industry and consumers worldwide. They serve as a reference, as a point of common understanding and mutual recognition, that enables mutual understanding and provides a foundation for the safe, global trade of foods. The standards are critical enabler of long-term human development and a prerequisite for the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ISO is an observer in Codex and participates in specific standards development activities of interest especially in the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis in Foods and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. Codex as well maintains Category A Liaison in generally the Technical Committee ISO/TC 34 on Food Products and specifically in the Sub committees on Microbiology and Management systems for Food Safety. It is important to explore and initiate deeper collaboration between ISO especially the Coordination unit for Africa and Arab region with the Regional Codex Coordinating Committees such as that for Africa.

At present, 39 out of the 49 CCAFRICA Members hold different levels of membership within the ISO System and 12 have a single national institution serving as both the Codex Contact Point and Member in ISO.

2. Proposal

The ISO General Assembly to be held 19th – 23rd September in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, presents an excellent platform to share information with a wide range of stakeholders and deepen the technical collaboration between Codex and ISO in the broad area of Food Safety, which was identified by ISO Members States from Developing Countries as one of the areas that requires urgent attention, innovative solutions and focus. For example, there is ongoing Codex work, which may be of interest to ISO within the Codex Committee for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems such as remote auditing, food fraud, traceability.

It should be noted that one of the core values of Codex is collaboration and this current proposal contributes to realization of some of objectives identified in Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan (2020-2025) that seeks to increase the impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards.

Uganda as the current FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa proposes to hold a side event on the margins of the ISO GA in September 2022 to share ongoing developments in the region within the Food Safety space especially the ongoing work in the region on Draft Guidelines for developing Harmonized Food Safety Legislation for the CCAFRICA Region which will enable Member Countries to strengthen their food legislation and food control systems as well as develop harmonized policies, standards and legal frameworks which ultimately support Intra Africa trade as envisioned in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA, 2019) Agreement.

Additionally, in 2021, the African Union approved the Africa Food Safety Strategy which promises to address non-tariff barriers, particularly those related to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures or standards that have the potential of slowing down the attainment of the Malabo Declaration aspirations and ultimately the African Union Agenda 2063 and related flagship programmes impacted by food safety.

The event will be organized in a panel format with interaction of the audience and will bring on board technical representatives from Codex Secretariat on specific Committees of interest, the CCAFRICA Coordinator (Uganda) and the Electronic Working Group Chairperson (Kenya) for the ongoing work within CCAFRICA.

3. Format and Participation

The session will be held for 60 minutes in English only and will be accessible to a broad audience through physical attendance and the event's virtual platform. The panellists may explore participating physically in the event. However, it should also be possible to participate virtually.

4. Recommendations

CCEXEC82 is invited to:

- a) Take note of the information provided;
- b) Recognize the importance of deepening technical collaboration with ISO on areas of mutual interest; and
- c) Provide support to stage the planned side event on the margins of ISO GA 2022.