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CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

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Proposed draft revision of the *Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food* (CXG 79-2012)

(Comments of India, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania (URT))

India

India appreciates the work done by chair of the EWG in collaboration with the co-chairs for the revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012).

➤ **India would like to submit following technical comments on the proposed document:**

1. In Section 6, Definitions, India supports option 1 for the frozen produce as it specifies a temperature limit (-18°C), which aligns with Codex and industry.

Rationale: Freezing fresh produce to -18°C or colder halts microbial activity and slows enzymatic reactions. Further, specifying a uniform temperature standard (-18°C) provides a clear benchmark for producers, distributors, and retailers. This ensures consistency in handling practices and product quality across international and domestic markets. Many international food safety standards (Codex Alimentarius, EU regulations, USDA guidelines) recognize -18°C as the critical threshold for frozen foods.

2. In Section 11, paragraph 60, India proposes to revise the last sentence as “Absorbent material such as paper towels and tissues may be used to limit the spread of contaminated fluids but should then be properly disposed of, e.g. in closed plastic bags or in **closed, leak-proof waste containers**, so as not to be a vehicle for further contaminating foods, surfaces or personnel.”

Rationale: To reduce contamination risk by specifying proper waste containment.

3. In Section 11, paragraph 63, India submits that specific wavelength of UV radiation should be given (e.g., 254 nm UV-C) for reproducibility and safety compliance, as mentioned in other CODEX documents.

Rationale: To ensure reproducibility and compliance with standard UV disinfection practices.

➤ **India proposes following editorial corrections to the draft revised guidelines:**

1. In paragraph 8, second sentence should be revised as “Hepatitis can be severe in risk groups comprising individuals with underlying health conditions, which include acute hepatitis in persons with pre-existing liver disease or chronic infections leading to cirrhosis and liver ~~damaged~~**damaged** in immunocompromised individuals.”
2. In paragraph 10, the second sentence should be revised as “This is due to their environmental**al** persistence and resistance to many treatments commonly.... ”

Kenya

Kenya acknowledges the work done by the EWG chaired by Canada and co-chaired by the Netherlands.

Kenya supports adoption of the proposed draft revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012) through the step process, with the inclusion of the following comments

Section 6- Definitions- Frozen produce

Comment: Kenya proposes Option 1

Rationale: It covers the entire food chain from transport to storage, distribution, and to sale of commodities.

The proposed temperature of -18° is consistent with other standards and specifically the standard on fruits and vegetables CXC 53-2003.

Annex II: Control of Norovirus and Hepatitis A virus (HAV) in fresh and frozen produce

Section 6- Definitions- paragraph 12

Comment: Kenya propose deletion

Rationale: The definitions are already covered within the guideline.

Section on Participation and Methodology – Paragraph 8 – bullet 6

General comment: Kenya notes that the term “clean water” still appears in several sections of the document, despite the Chair's and the EWG's decision that the agreed terminology is “water fit for purpose,” consistent with CXG 100-2023 and the revised General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969).

Kenya proposes that all remaining instances of “clean water” be replaced with “water fit for purpose” for consistency, scientific accuracy, and alignment with recent Codex texts, thereby helping avoid ambiguity for regulators and food business operators.

Malaysia

Malaysia appreciates the work of the Electronic Working Group chaired by Canada and co-chaired by the Netherlands on the Proposed Draft Revision of the Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Viruses in Food (CXG 79-2012).

Malaysia prefers option 1 for the definition of Frozen Produce because it is more comprehensive and encompasses the entire supply chain, from transportation up to the time of final sale.

Morocco

Position nationale :

- Tout au long du document, le Maroc propose de spécifier les catégories d'eau (eau potable, eau propre et eau adaptée à l'usage prévu). L'eau potable et l'eau propre ne nécessitent pas d'évaluation des risques, contrairement à la 3^{ème} catégorie qui nécessite une évaluation des risques en fonction de l'usage prévu, à cet effet la citation de l'eau adaptée à l'usage prévu seulement peut prêter confusion.
- **Définition « fruits et légumes surgelés » :** Le Maroc soutient l'option 1 de cette définition « Fruits et légumes frais ayant fait l'objet d'une surgélation suffisante pour réduire la température de l'ensemble du produit à un niveau assez bas pour en préserver les qualités inhérentes, et maintenus à une température de -18 °C maximum pendant le transport, le stockage et la distribution, jusqu'à la vente finale comprise, sous réserve de tolérances de température autorisées » vu que cette définition est plus précise et indique la température de surgélation qui est de -18°C.
- **Paragraphe 74 :** Le Maroc propose de supprimer la phrase entre parenthèse (par exemple 48h) et d'ajouter une note de bas de page comme suit « la durée d'arrêt du travail est fixée par le médecin du travail conformément aux réglementations nationales des pays ». Pour donner plus de flexibilité aux autorités compétentes.
- **Paragraphe 82 :** Le Maroc propose de reformuler la phrase suivant « Il est prouvé que les détergents ménagers conventionnels présentent un bon effet virucide à 40 °C » comme suit « Les vêtements...devrait être lavés avec des détergents adéquats à une température ≥40°C ».

Nigeria

Nigeria proposes the revision of section be reviewed with aspect of HACCP and make a statement to cross referencing CXC-1-1969 will lead to unnecessary duplication.

Rationale

Repetition of the section of HACCP in this annex will lead unnecessary duplication and add no point to the document.

Section 6 Definition Paragraph 19:

Nigeria support Option 1 as the preferred definition of frozen produce

Rationale

It allows for uniformity in definitions and easy understanding of the terminologies

Republic of Korea

The definition of frozen produce

- Option 1 provides a clear and measurable criterion of -18°C , which facilitates regulatory implementation and verification and ensures strong alignment with existing standards. It also offers practical benefits for maintaining temperature control systems during importation and for post-market management.

Russian Federation

Proposed draft revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012) (Step 4)

The Russian Federation supports the development of the proposed document, strengthening requirements for water quality and personnel hygiene, and detailed development of control measures for high-risk products. We also propose, where possible, aligning terminology and approaches with the WOA documents on zoonotic viral infections.

In Section 6 "Definitions", as a definition for the term "Frozen produce", we consider option 2 to be preferable.

We consider it appropriate to supplement paragraph 5 of Section 1 "Introduction" with information on the spread of the A(H5) virus in the dairy cattle population since 2023, cases of its transmission to persons who have been in contact with infected dairy cattle, as well as the detection of this virus in raw unpasteurized milk, due to the potential risk to human health of the A(H5) virus and the possible consequences of diseases caused by them.

Subparagraph 48 of Section 10.1 "Awareness and responsibilities" shall be amended to read as follows: "It is the responsibility of the FBO personnel to inform the supervisor/ manager or employer when ill with diarrhoea or vomiting, or when having symptoms indicative of hepatitis or gastrointestinal illnesses *in employees, as well as in their family members*."

Subparagraph 58 of Section 11.1.1 shall be supplemented and amended to read as follows: "FBOs, catering and retail establishments should have control measures in place for responding to events involving the presence of vomitus or faeces onto surfaces. These should set out specific actions to take to minimize the potential for spread of viral contamination and exposure of employees, consumers, food, and surfaces to vomit, faeces and blood".

Singapore

Singapore thanks Canada and the Netherlands for their excellent leadership in chairing the EWG and for incorporating feedback from two comprehensive consultation rounds. We appreciate the thorough consideration of the JEMRA MRA 49 report and the systematic approach to updating these important guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

Regarding the revised Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012), including the new annex on Control of Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) in pork and wild game meat (Annex III) as presented in Appendix I:

Singapore supports the proposed draft revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012). The comprehensive revisions provide updated, science-based guidance that aligns with current international standards. We particularly appreciate the full

alignment with the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969) and the incorporation of findings from JEMRA MRA 49, which ensures the guidelines reflect the latest scientific findings of foodborne viruses which are of greatest public health concern and provide practical guidance for food business operators and competent authorities.

Singapore also supports the inclusion of the new Annex III on Control of Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) in Pork and Wild Game Meat. Given that HEV in pork and wild game meat was identified as having a high global public health burden in MRA 49, this dedicated annex provides essential targeted recommendations for this virus-commodity pair and emphasizes relevant good hygienic practices.

Regarding the frozen produce definition:

Singapore supports Option 1 for the definition of frozen produce as it provides specific temperature requirements (-18°C or colder) that align with established international standards for frozen foods and Singapore's existing regulatory framework. The specific temperature threshold provides clearer guidance for food business operators and facilitates consistent implementation and enforcement compared to the more general language in Option 2.

Uganda

Uganda appreciates the work done by the electronic working group (EWG) chaired by Canada and co-chaired by the Netherlands on the Proposed draft revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012); and provides the comments below:

In general, Uganda considers the proposed draft revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012), including the new annex on Control of Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) in pork and wild game meat (Annex III) as comprehensive and takes into consideration latest scientific work on the subject matter as provided by JEMRA.

However, on Section 6, Para 19, Regarding the definition of “Ready-to-Eat Food” in Appendix I: Uganda notes that the definition is not consistent with existing definitions in other Codex texts. In particular, it is unclear whether the definition should be specific to viruses or eliminate their infectivity or be applied more generally, as is currently done in the Regional Guidelines for the Design of Control Measures for Street-Vended Foods (Africa) (CXG 22R-1997) and the Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for Street-Vended Foods in Asia (CXC 76R-2017).

Uganda proposes harmonizing the definition across relevant Codex documents and recommends to ensure its application across different Codex texts and hence ensure consistency. **New proposed definition to read as** “Any food (raw or processed) for which it is normally, or reasonably foreseeable that it will be, eaten without further treatment.” Uganda further proposes that the definition of ready-to-eat foods should be included in revised General principles of food hygiene (CXC 1-1969) to ensure consistent application and referencing by Codex texts.

Section 6 Definition Para 19, and Annex II, Section 6 para 12: Uganda supports Option 1 as the preferred definition of frozen produce

Rationale: It provides for temperature guidance, which specifies a minimum temperature of -18°C, a commonly used standard that works well in practice for frozen food products

United Republic of Tanzania (URT)

Tanzania Position: Tanzania thanks the coordination of the EWG for the preparation of the working document and support advancement of the document in the step process.

Rationale: All the recommendations made to ensure protection of human health and trade facilitation after comprehensive discussion and evaluation.

Proposed draft revision of the guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food (CXG 79-2012)

Tanzania Position: Tanzania agree with Option 1 for the definition of frozen produce

Rationale: It is more clear and covers the entire concept of frozen produce including temperature requirement and aligned with other codex standards such as Quick-Frozen Vegetables (CXS 320-2015) and the Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (CXC 8-1976).

Annex III - Control of hepatitis E virus (HEV) in pork and wild game meat

Paragraph 14: Tanzania propose paragraph 14 to be moved to section 13

Rationale: The clause 8.2 is about hygienic production in primary production and not processes and the paragraph 14 highlighted processing issues.

Paragraph 34

Tanzania position: Tanzania support inclusion of labelling criteria

Rationale: To ensure consumers are well informed about the risk of the food products