

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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ALINORM 09/32/40

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty-Second Session

Rome, Italy, 29 June – 4 July 2009

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

Tunis, Tunisia, 26 – 29 January 2009

Note: This report includes Codex Circular Letter CL 2009/4-NEA

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CL 2009/4-NEA
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To: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

From: Secretary,
Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Subject: **Distribution of the Report of the Fifth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East Region (ALINORM 09/32/40)**

Proposed Draft Regional Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods at Step 3 of the Elaboration Procedure (ALINORM 09/32/40, Annex II)

Governments and interested international organizations in observer status with Codex wishing to propose amendments or comments on the above document should do so in writing.

Comments should be forwarded to the Secretariat of the Tunisian National Codex Committee, 12, rue de l'usine, Charguia II - 2035 Tunis, (e-mail: codextunisie@topnet.tn) with a copy to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (e-mail: codex@fao.org), **not later than 1 December 2009.**

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Fifth Session of the Coordinating Committee for the Near East Region reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 32nd session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Committee:

- The Committee noted several good practices conducted and reported by members of the Region in the implementation of these activities such as weekly or monthly meetings of a steering committee in addition to the National Codex Committee where all stakeholders were invited to participate. (see paras 11 – 14 and 19 – 20).
- Unanimously agreed to recommend to the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Tunisia be reappointed as the Regional Coordinator for the Near East (see para.60).

Matters for consideration by other committees

Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Committee agreed that project documents for new work on regional standards for Pomegranate, Harissa (hot pepper paste) and Halwa Tehenia (halwa shamia) will be created by members and forwarded to the Executive Committee for critical review (paras 34, 41 and 44).

Codex Committee on General Principles

The Committee concluded that the terms of reference of all coordinating committees should remain unchanged (see para. 18).

Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products

The Committee agreed to bring the issue of packaging and transport of fresh fish to the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (see paras 35 - 37).

Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products

The Committee agreed that Doogh and other drinks known in the region fell under the scope of the revised draft Standard for Fermented Milks and any specific characteristics for such drinks could be addressed by the Committee on Milk and Milk Products during the revision of the above Standard. The Committee also agreed to urge the CCMMP to finish this revision as soon as possible (see paras 32 and 67).

Matters of interest to the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Coordinating Committee:

- Expressed its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice which provided a solid basis for the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see paras 21-27);
- Agreed to circulate the proposed draft code of practice for street-vended foods at step 3 for comments (see para 30 and Appendix II);
- Exchanged updated information on national food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting, use of Codex standards at national and regional level and nutritional issues in the region (see paras 45-48);
- Agreed to develop project documents for new work on regional standards for camel milk, date paste and date molasses (see paras 64 and 65) and discussion papers on difficulties faced in the region when implementing Codex standards (see paras 54 and 62) and on classification of foods based on risks (see para. 66); and
- Noted the usefulness of the INFOSAN system and agreed that information on this system as well as the implementation status of the international health regulations should be a standing item under the information provided by FAO and WHO (see para 73).
- Noted the willingness of several delegations to provide Arabic translations of Codex texts and decided that any translations provided should be checked within the region for terminology through the Coordinator and then submitted to the Codex Secretariat for uploading on the Codex website.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AOAC	Association of Official Analytical Chemists
ADI/MRL	Acceptable Daily Intake/Maximum Residue Limits
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCNEA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCFA	Codex Committee on Food Additives
CCFC	Codex Committee on Food Contaminants
CCFH	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCGP	Codex Committee on General Principles
CCLAC	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
CODEX STAN	Codex Standard
CRD	Conference Room Document
EDTA	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO/EMRO	World Health Organization/Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East held its Fifth Session in Tunis from 26 to 29 January 2009 at the kind invitation of the Republic of Tunisia. The Session, chaired by Mr Mohamed Chokri Rejeb, Director-General of the Centre Technique de l'Agro-Alimentaire, was attended by 45 participants representing 14 Member Countries of the Region, two Observer Countries from outside the Region, and two international organizations. Dr Sanjay Dave (India), Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, also attended the meeting. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariat and a representative of FAO, is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Delegates were welcomed by Mr Mohamed Chokri Rejeb, Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee. Mr Aomar Ait Amer Meziane, Coordinator of the FAO Subregional Office for North Africa and FAO Representative in Tunisia, also addressed to the Coordinating Committee.

3. The Session was opened by Mr Abdelaziz Rassaa, Secretary of State to the Minister of Industry, Energy and Small and Medium Enterprises. Mr Rassaa highlighted recent and ongoing activities in Tunisia to improve its food control system, emphasized the importance of the work of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East in protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade in the Region and wished the delegates a successful meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)¹

4. The Committee agreed to consider the following two items under Item 14, if time allowed:

- Contamination of foods by melamine (proposed by Egypt); and
- Information on the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) (proposed by Tunisia).

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

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

6. The Committee noted matters arising from the 30th and 31st Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 61st Session of the Executive Committee and the 24th Session of the Committee on General Principles, as summarized in the working document. The Committee discussed in particular the following matters:

Conversion of regional standards into worldwide standards

7. In response to requests for clarification by some delegations regarding the conversion of regional standards into world-wide standards, it was clarified that:

- A proposal for the conversion of a regional standard into a world wide standard could be made after its adoption as a regional standard at step 8;
- Such proposal had to be substantiated by a project document for critical review by the Executive Committee and, after, approval by the Commission, could usually enter the accelerated uniform elaboration procedure at step 3.

8. One delegation indicated that developing countries were disadvantaged in the global Codex committees because they could not participate easily in all meetings of these committees and that the Region might have less impact on the decisions to be taken with regard to the conversion of its regional standards into world-wide standards.

¹ CX/NEA 09/5/1; CRD 9 (proposal of Egypt); CRD 10 (proposal of Tunisia).

² CX/NEA 09/5/2.

Guidelines on the application of the criteria for the establishment of work priorities applicable to commodities³

9. The Committee noted that the 60th Session of the Executive Committee had adopted this text as an important guide for discussing new work proposals in the critical review and stressed the importance of keeping these guidelines in mind when drafting project documents for submission to the Executive Committee.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013

10. The Committee noted that matters related to the implementation of the strategic plan would be discussed under Items 2.1 and 7.

Participation of developing countries

11. The Committee recalled that the Commission, at its 31st Session, had recommended that the Coordinating Committees consider the issue of participation of developing countries and report their views to the 32nd Session of the Commission⁴. The Committee noted that a document with data on the participation of developing countries in Codex sessions and proposals to improve the situation was under preparation by the Codex Secretariat, and would be presented to the 25th Session of the Committee on General Principles. The Secretariat was currently extracting information on country participation from lists of participants attached to Codex meeting reports, for the purpose of preparing the above document, in accordance with the request made at the last session of the Commission.

12. The Observer from Brazil stated that even though the number of developing country members of Codex was higher than that of developed countries, their participation had been lower and that this imbalance was compromising the function of Codex as one of the international standard setting bodies responsible under the WTO-SPS agreement. The Observer felt that it was important that countries stated their concern on this matter so that measures could be taken to turn Codex into an organization with better means and structure.

13. As a means to enhance the participation of developing countries, some delegations pointed out the importance of the support given by the Codex Trust Fund and its possible extension, as well as holding more Codex committees in developing countries through co-hosting arrangements. In this regard, the Committee noted that the arrangement of co-hosting principally depended on the agreement between the host and co-hosting countries and that countries of the Region were encouraged to invite global committees to the Region.

14. The Committee noted that a review of the impact of co-hosting of Codex sessions in developing countries on the participation was currently undertaken by the Secretariat together with a review of replies to a questionnaire on experiences of countries with this practice.

Nutrition related matters of regional interest

15. This matter will be considered under Item 9 on the basis of information provided in response to the Part D of CL 2008/20-NEA.

Terms of reference of coordinating committees

16. The Committee recalled that at its 4th session it had not been possible to adopt a position on this matter. The Committee noted the information given by the Secretariat on the outcome of discussions in other coordinating committees (CCNASWP, CCASIA, CCLAC and CCEURO).

17. Several delegations were of the opinion that the adoption of regional positions on strategic subjects by the Coordinating Committees was already covered by the current terms of reference and that the terms of reference of coordinating committees should be consistent across regions.

18. The Committee supported these views and concluded that the terms of reference of all coordinating committees should remain unchanged.

³ ALINORM 08/31/3, Appendix II.

⁴ ALINORM 07/31/REP, paras 152-162.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013 (Item 2.1)⁵

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

Activity 5.5: Enhancing participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels.

19. The Committee recalled that the 31st Session of the Commission had requested coordinating committees to review the current status of interdisciplinary coordination and communication at national and regional level and report to the 32nd Session of the Commission on possible actions to be taken to promote it⁶. In discussing this request, the Committee noted information provided by members and observers in response to Part C (i) of CL 2008/20-NEA.

20. The Committee noted several good practices conducted and reported by members of the Region in the implementation of these activities such as weekly or monthly meetings of a steering committee in addition to the National Codex Committee where all stakeholders were invited to participate.

FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Item 3)⁷

21. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee about the major activities of FAO and WHO complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as described in document CX/NEA 09/5/4 Part I which included information on capacity building activities undertaken in the Region.

22. The Representative also drew the attention of the delegates to Part II of the document describing a number of FAO and WHO activities complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission such as information on outcomes of recent FAO/WHO expert meetings including those of JECFA, JEMRA and JMPR on scientific advice requested by Codex Committees and member countries. Part II also included information on follow-up to the FAO/WHO consultative process on provision of scientific advice to Codex and member countries and on status of requests for FAO/WHO scientific advice. The Representative pointed out that the output of these meetings were available to the public.

23. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their significant work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice which provided a solid basis for the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

24. To the requests from some delegations for technical assistance projects in areas such as reducing aflatoxins in food as well as in areas such as genetically modified foods and organic farming, the Representative clarified that all requests for technical assistance should be done in accordance with established procedures.

25. Some delegations drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that a number of publications indicated in the document were not available in Arabic language and that this created problems in their implementation, therefore highlighted the need for their timely translation.

26. To the proposal from some delegations that workshops on food safety and food control should be organized in conjunction with the sessions of this Committee, the Chairperson clarified that it had been intended to organize such a workshop before this session, however this had not been possible due to unavailability of experts.

27. The Vice-Chairperson of the Commission expressed the view that member countries may wish to share information on how the FAO programmes were utilised by them with a view to strengthen the effectiveness of CCNEA in the Codex process, taking into account the different situation of countries.

⁵ CX/NEA 09/5/3 (Replies from Egypt and Sudan); CRD 1 (Reply from Tunisia); CRD 2 (Reply from Jordan); CRD 3 (Reply from Lebanon).

⁶ ALINORM 07/31/REP, para. 141.

⁷ CX/NEA 09/5/4-Part I Information on Capacity Building Activities in the Region and CX/NEA 09/5/4-Part II Activities of FAO and WHO Complementary to the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

ACTIVITIES OF THE STDF IN THE REGION (Item 3.1)

28. The Committee noted that the document on activities of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), a joint venture of FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO and the World Bank to provide capacity building and assistance to countries in the application of SPS measures (CX/NEA 09/5/5) had not been prepared for this session, however was of the view that this programme was a very important for the Region, therefore wished that such information be submitted for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

PROPOSED DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STREET VENDED FOODS (Item 4)⁸

29. The Committee noted that the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods had been made available in Arabic only shortly before the meeting and that it had been neither translated nor circulated for comments at Step 3.

Status of the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods

30. The Committee agreed to attach the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods to this Report and circulate it for comments at Step 3 and consideration by the Sixth session of the Committee (see Appendix II).

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOUGH (Item 5)⁹

31. The Committee noted that the product addressed by the proposal for a regional standard for dough, submitted by Iran, was based on fermented milk and traditionally marketed under different names in various countries and used in large quantities across the Region as well as in a number of countries in other regions. It also noted that the Committee on Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP) was revising the Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX STAN 243-2003) to cover a wide range of products based on fermented milks.

32. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that dough fell under the scope of the revised draft Standard for Fermented Milks and those specific characteristics for dough, if any, could be addressed by the Committee on Milk and Milk Products during the revision of the above Standard. The Committee also agreed to urge the CCMMP to finish this revision as soon as possible and encouraged Iran and other interested countries of the Region to submit their comments and observations directly to the CCMMP.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR POMEGRANATE (Item 6)¹⁰

33. The Committee noted that the proposal to develop a standard for pomegranate had been submitted to the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) as a Conference Room Document only which was why the CCFFV was not able to consider it in detail. The Committee also noted that pomegranate was a commodity which was traded in different regions of the world and that the development of a world-wide standard for this commodity might be more appropriate.

34. Some delegations drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that an ISO standard for pomegranate existed and that duplication of work should be avoided. After some discussion, the Committee concluded that there was a need for a regional Codex standard for this commodity but that when developing it, the existing ISO standard should be taken into consideration. The Committee agreed that Iran with the assistance of Jordan, Kuwait and Tunisia would revise the project document in conformity with the format provided in the Procedural Manual and taking into account the Guidelines for the Application of *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* Applicable to Commodities, and submit it before 1 April 2009 to the 62nd Session of the Executive Committee for critical review for adoption as new work. Members are invited to submit all information and data relevant to the pomegranate sector with a view to enriching the project document for critical review.

⁸ CRD 6 (Prepared by Egypt).

⁹ CX/NEA 09/5/8 (Prepared by Iran).

¹⁰ CX/NEA 09/5/9 and Add.1 (Prepared by Iran), CRD 8 (Comments from Syria) CRD 11 (Comments from Tunisia).

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PACKAGING AND TRANSPORT OF FRESH FISH (Item 7)¹¹

35. The Committee noted that in order to develop a regional code of practice for the packaging and transport of fresh fish a sound justification was necessary on what elements were needed in addition to the existing *Code Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 52-2003) and why such additional elements were specific to the Near East Region.

36. The Delegation of Iran clarified that the guidance needed could be developed in the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) and be included in the existing code.

37. The Committee agreed that Iran would propose to the CCFFP to address this matter at its next session to be held in Morocco from 28 September to 2 October 2009 and encouraged countries of the Region to actively support this initiative and to participate in the next session of the CCFFP.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HARISSA (Item 8)¹²

38. The Committee noted that harissa prepared from hot pepper was an important product for the Region, but distinct from chilli sauces produced in Southeast Asia or Latin America. The Committee therefore strongly supported the proposal for new work on this product.

39. Some delegations indicated that the term “harissa” could be interpreted differently in countries of the Region and proposed various modifications to the title of this new work proposal.

40. The Committee, taking into account that it was a paste produced from hot pepper, agreed to add “hot pepper paste” in brackets after “harissa”. While noting that the Regional Standard would cover only commercially processed products that are packaged and/or preserved and not home-made products, the Coordinating Committee agreed to remove a reference to “preserved” in the title of the new work proposal, because this point could be clarified in the definition of the standard.

41. The Committee requested Tunisia to prepare a revised project document in conformity with the format provided in the Procedural Manual and taking into account the Guidelines for the Application of *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* Applicable to Commodities, and submit it before 1 April 2009 to the 62nd Session of the Executive Committee for critical review for adoption as new work. The Committee encouraged interested Members to provide comments and information to assist Tunisia in the revision of the project document.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HALWA WITH TEHENA (Item 9)¹³

42. The Committee noted that the proposal to develop a regional standard for halawa with tehena did not contain a project document as required for the critical review and stressed that before embarking on the consideration of a proposed draft standard, a project document containing technical data such as the volume of trade, between countries inside as well as outside the Region and other justifications should be prepared.

43. As the product was important for the Region, the Committee supported the proposal to develop a regional standard for halwa tehena and agreed to clarify the title as follows: “Halwa tehena (halwa shamia)”.

44. The Committee encouraged countries of the Region to submit the necessary data in particular on the trade volume to Saudi Arabia who would prepare the project document in conformity with the format provided in the Procedural Manual and taking into account the Guidelines for the Application of *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* Applicable to Commodities, and submit it by 1 April 2009 to the 62nd Session of the Executive Committee for critical review for adoption as new work.

¹¹ CX/NEA 09/5/10 (Prepared by Iran).

¹² CX/NEA 09/5/10; CRD 4 (comments of Lebanon); CRD 7 (comments of Kuwait); CRD 12 (comments of Libya).

¹³ CX/NEA 09/5/12 (Prepared by Saudi Arabia), CRD 14 (comments from Tunisia).

NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARD SETTING (CL 2008/20-NEA, PART A) (ITEM 10)¹⁴

45. The Committee discussed the status of the national food control systems, National Codex Contact Points and other national structures for Codex matters as well as the participation of consumers in standard setting in the Region.

46. The Committee noted the information contained in written submissions in response to Part A of CL 2008/20-NEA or presented during the session.

47. With regard to national food control systems, the Committee noted that single agencies to ensure coordination and oversight on the activities of relevant government bodies and/or laws integrating various aspects of foods currently addressed by separate laws had been in place or were being considered in several countries. The Committee further noted that in some countries consumers were represented in National Codex Committees and/or bodies in charge of national food standard setting along with other relevant stakeholders.

48. The Committee concluded that the information provided was very useful and would be posted on the recently developed CCNEA website and encouraged countries that had not submitted the information in writing to do so, in order to post it on the website for the benefit of all countries in the Region.

USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (CL 2008/20-NEA, PART B) (Item 11)¹⁵

49. The Committee recalled that this item had been added by the Executive Committee as an additional standing item in coordinating committees, following the abolition of the acceptance procedure, in order to collect information on how Codex standards and related texts were used at national and regional level.

50. The Committee had an exchange of views on the use of Codex standards at national and regional levels. The Committee noted the information contained in written submissions in response to Part B of CL 2008/20-NEA or presented during the session. In particular, it was noted that Codex standards were used by the Members of the Region as a basis when they developed national legislation and in some cases adopted by reference where relevant national legislation did not exist. It was further noted that other international standards such as those of the ISO and legislations of other countries were also referred to depending on the subject concerned.

51. One delegation pointed out that some countries were placing regulations more stringent than Codex standards, which was creating barriers to trade.

52. The Committee concluded that the information provided was very useful and would be posted on the recently developed CCNEA website and encouraged countries that had not submitted the information in writing to do so, in order to post it on the website for the benefit of all countries in the Region.

Discussion paper on the acceptance of Codex standards in the region

53. The Delegation of Lebanon introduced the discussion paper (CRD 5), emphasizing that Codex had not developed guidance on how Codex standards should be adopted as national standards, and that the elaboration of such guidance would facilitate tracking of versions and origin of standards and trade among Members of the Region through the harmonization of national standards

54. The Committee noted that it was not possible to examine this discussion paper in detail at the current session because it was made available only at the meeting and thus agreed to consider how to address this proposal under Item 14 (Other business and Future Work).

¹⁴ CX/NEA 09/5/12; CRD 1 (information from Tunisia); CRD 2 (information from Jordan); CRD 3 (information from Lebanon); CRD 13 (information from Libya)

¹⁵ CX/NEA 09/5/14; CRD 1 (information from Tunisia); CRD 2 (information from Jordan); CRD 3 (information from Lebanon); CRD 5 (discussion paper prepared by Lebanon); CRD 13 (information from Libya)

NUTRITIONAL ISSUES WITHIN THE REGION (Item 12)¹⁶

55. The Committee recalled that this matter had been placed on the Provisional Agenda based on the recommendation of the 61st Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

56. Several delegations shared information about the nutritional status in their countries among different population groups, including nutrient deficiencies or increasing obesity in urban and rural areas. It was noted that various actions or programs had been taken, such as breastfeeding, or food fortification and awareness raising campaigns in order to address these problems.

57. One delegation pointed out that dietary habits were varied among countries in different parts of the world and that there was a need for the development of criteria for the recommended daily allowance specific for the Near East Region.

58. To the question on how Codex could help in implementing the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, it was clarified that as a consequence of the consideration of the Global Strategy at the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Committee on Food Labelling had agreed at its last session to develop several discussion papers examining: the List of Nutrients that are always Declared on a Voluntary or Mandatory Basis; Issues Related to Mandatory Nutrition Labelling; Criteria/Principles for Legibility and Readability of Nutrition Labels; and Labelling Provisions Dealing with the Food Ingredients Identified in the Global Strategy. The Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses had started the revision of Nutrient Reference Values for Labelling Purposes in the Codex *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling*.

59. After an exchange of information the Committee requested countries who had not already done so to submit the information on nutrition status and national programmes and policies in this field in writing to the Coordinator to include it on the CCNEA website.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Item13)¹⁷

60. The Committee acknowledged the excellent work of the Government of Tunisia during its first term as Coordinator for the Near East and noted that Tunisia, who will have served for one term of two years in July 2009, was eligible for a second term. The Committee also noted the willingness of Tunisia to continue serving as Coordinator and unanimously recommended to the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Tunisia be reappointed Coordinator for the Near East.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (ITEM 14)¹⁸**Electronic Working Groups**

61. The Committee recalled its decisions with regard the proposals for new work (see Items 6, 7 and 9) and agreed to establish the following electronic working groups open to all Members of the Region, which would prepare proposed draft regional standards for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its Sixth Session, subject to the approval of new work by the 32nd Session of the Commission:

- Electronic Working Group on the Regional Standard for Pomegranate, led by Iran and working in English only¹⁹;
- Electronic Working Group on the Regional Standard for Harissa (Hot Pepper Paste), led by Tunisia and working in Arabic only²⁰; and
- Electronic Working Group on the Regional Standard for Halwa Tehenia (Halwa Shamia), led by Saudi Arabia and working in Arabic only²¹.

¹⁶ CX/NEA 09/5/16.

¹⁷ CX/NEA 09/5/17.

¹⁸ CX/NEA 09/5/18.

¹⁹ Jordan, Kuwait and Tunisia expressed willingness to participate in this Electronic Working Group.

²⁰ Libya and Kuwait expressed willingness to participate in this Electronic Working Group.

²¹ Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates expressed willingness to participate in this Electronic Working Group.

62. As the Committee had not considered the discussion paper submitted by Lebanon on the acceptance of Codex standards in the region (CRD 5) due to its late submission, it agreed to establish an electronic working group led by Lebanon, working in Arabic only and open to all Members of the Region²², to elaborate a discussion paper for consideration at its Sixth Session, focusing on the difficulties faced by the Members of the Region in implementing Codex standards.

Future Work

63. The Committee agreed that the following items be included in the provisional agenda of its next session for consideration as possible future work and stressed that the standard format for the project document (as in the Procedural Manual) should be followed for all requests for new work.

Project document for a regional standard for camel milk (to be prepared by the United Arab Emirates)

64. There was a wide agreement in the Committee to consider starting a new work on this product which was of growing importance within the region.

Project documents for regional standards for date paste and date molasses (to be prepared by Saudi Arabia)

65. The Committee noted that when preparing the project document for regional standards for date paste and date molasses, it should be examined if the products could be covered by existing Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables. It should also be examined if it could be worthwhile to consider creating group standards for pastes and molasses made from different fruits.

Discussion paper on the classification of foods based on risks (to be prepared by United Arab Emirates)

66. The Committee noted that the objective of the classification of foods based on risks proposed by the United Arab Emirates was to improve the effectiveness of food control system, by applying different levels of risk management measures to foods according to the possible risks involved, and that the discussion paper should provide more details of the proposed work as well as its relationship with existing food classifications systems in the Codex Alimentarius.

Work of importance to the Committee to be presented to other Codex Committees

67. The Committee noted the proposal of the Delegation of Libya for new work on the yoghurt drink. However, it agreed not to consider the proposal further in this Committee, because the product was a type of fermented milk covered by the Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX/STAN 243-2003). The Committee noted that the Standard currently contained provisions for the use of names for traditional products such as Stragisto, Labneh, Ymer and Ylette and that the Delegation of Libya could propose to the CCMMP to add “Yoghurt drink” to this Standard if necessary.

Document preparation for the next session

68. The Committee emphasized the importance of timely preparation of documents for all items for the next meeting in order to allow countries to provide technical comments.

Action Plan for CCNEA²³

69. The Coordinator presented the action plan for CCNEA for 2008/2009 which had been prepared in coordination with other countries in an informal meeting during the 30th Session of the Commission. The plan contained the following main items:

- Promotion of coordination between the countries of the region
- Preparation of the draft standards of the coordinating committee for the Near East
- Creation of Codex National Committees
- Creation of a Web site of the coordinating committee for the Near East (www.ccnea.org)
- The participation in the codex committee’s activities
- Definition of the priorities of work
- The constitution of a network of the experts of the Near East region
- Reinforcement of the capacities in the region of the Near East

²² Jordan, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia expressed willingness to participate in this Electronic Working Group.

²³ CX/NEA 09/5/18.

Translation of GSFA online and other Codex texts into Arabic

70. The Committee noted the information given by the Secretariat as that an Arabic version of the GSFA online could be developed as had been done for Chinese where the translation had been provided by the Government of China.

71. Several delegations stated that it was very important to have good quality translations of Codex texts into Arabic to facilitate their application. The Committee noted the willingness of several delegations to provide Arabic translations of Codex texts (such as CXS 192 and the INS prepared by Libya) and decided that any translations provided should be checked within the region for terminology through the Coordinator and then submitted to the Codex Secretariat for uploading on the Codex website.

Issue of Melamine

72. Following the question on how the Codex Alimentarius Commission dealt with the melamine issue it was clarified that an expert consultation had been held in Ottawa in 2008 to provide a risk assessment²⁴. The results of this meeting would be forwarded to the Committee on Contaminants in Foods to take decisions on risk management. One delegation stated that the problem of melamine contamination was that it was fraud and not naturally occurring contamination that was dealt with in Codex.

INFOSAN/International Health Regulations

73. The Committee noted the usefulness that the INFOSAN system had demonstrated in the melamine food safety incident. The Committee agreed that information on the INFOSAN system (developed and maintained by WHO) should be included as a standing item under the matters from FAO/WHO so that countries could benefit in the best possible way from this system. The Committee also agreed that regular reports on the state of the implementation of the international health regulations were useful.

Planned workshop for CTF participants

74. The Committee noted that the Codex Trust Fund Secretariat planned to organize a Codex training course for countries of the Region eligible for support from the Trust Fund in 2009.

Capacity Building for Organic Farming

75. To the proposal of one delegation to do more work on organic farming, the Committee noted that Codex Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (CAC/GL 32-1999) existed and that the responsibility of capacity building in this area was mainly with FAO.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Item 15)

76. The Committee was informed that its 6th Session would be held in approximately two years time and that the exact date and venue would be communicated to Members at a later stage, subject of consultation between the Coordinator to be appointed by the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject matter	Step	When	Action by	Paragraph in 09/32/40
Proposed draft regional code of practice for street-vended foods	3	1 December 2009	Governments	30
Project document for a regional standard for Pomegranate	-	1 April 2009	Iran, CCEXEC62, CAC32	34
If approved: Proposed draft standard	1/2/3	30 August 2010	EWG (Iran)	
Project document for a regional standard for harissa (hot pepper paste)	-	1 April 2009	Tunisia, CCEXEC62, CAC32	41
If approved: Proposed draft standard	1/2/3	1 August 2010	EWG (Tunisia)	
Project document for a regional standard for Halwa Tehenia (halwa shamia)	-	1 April 2009	Saudi Arabia, CCEXEC62, CAC32	44
If approved: Proposed draft standard	1/2/3	1 August 2010	EWG (Saudi Arabia)	
Discussion paper on the difficulties faced in the Region when implementing Codex standards.	-	1 August 2010	EWG (Lebanon)	62
Project document for a regional standard for camel milk	-	1 August 2010	United Arab Emirates	64
Project documents for regional standards for date paste and date molasses (to be prepared by Saudi Arabia)	-	1 August 2010	Saudi Arabia	65
Discussion paper on the classification of foods based on risks (to be prepared by United Arab Emirates)	-	1 August 2010	United Arab Emirates	66

APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II

DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STREET-VENDED FOODS**Guidelines for the Design of Control Measures for Street-vented Foods in the Near East****At Step 3****TABLE OF CONTENTS****Introduction****Section 1 – Objectives****Section 2 – Scope, usage and definitions****Section 3 – General requirements**

Rules and regulations

Licensing of vendors

Conditions for licensing

Display of notices

Pest and animal control

Street food advisory service

Consumer education

Section 4 – Vendors

Health condition of the vendors

Personal hygiene and behaviour

Training of vendors

Vendors associations

Section 5 – Design and structure

Location

Structures

Sanitation

Section 6 - Appliances**Section 7 – Food preparation**

Requirements for ingredients

Cooking and handling

Serving food

Unsold food

Transportation of street foods

Food storage

Section 8 – Street food centres (point of sales)

General requirements

Location, design and construction

Liquid and solid waste

Customer hygienic facilities

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 Mobile vendor (hawker, peddler)

Any person with/without a vehicle going from place to place for the purpose of preparing, serving, displaying, distributing or delivering any street food.

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

Ready-to-eat foods prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in streets and other similar public places

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 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 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 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 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, including rodents, flies, insects or vermin infestation 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 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:

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 against food and water borne disease such as typhoid, hepatitis A or any other food and water borne diseases 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 pests or vermin.

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 Soak and thoroughly wash fresh vegetables and fruit whether for cooking or consuming raw, with sufficient running potable water, to remove adhering surface contamination.

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 of potable water quality, or of clean quality and boiled, or disinfected in any other way such as the use of an appropriate chemical agent.

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 2.19.

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..... 60°C or above;

(b) for food served cold.....7°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 disposed of in a sanitary manner at the end of the day.

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.