



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

**FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE  
Thirty-second Session**

**Virtual, 16-20 May 2022**

**UPDATES ON FAO AND WHO WORK OF REGIONAL INTEREST**

**(Prepared by FAO and WHO)**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 FAO and WHO support a range of capacity development activities and networks to facilitate information exchange and knowledge sharing on food safety and quality issues. Working directly with the Members in the region, capacity development activities are implemented to support the continual improvement of official food control systems and use of international Codex food standards, for the dual purpose of consumer health protection and trade of safe, quality food.

1.2 The main normative activities relevant to the CCEURO region and membership are outlined in this paper.

**2. Global food safety strategies**

2.1 On request from the World Health Assembly in 2020, WHO in cooperation with FAO and OIE has developed the draft WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety<sup>1</sup> for consideration by the seventy-fifth World Health Assembly on 22-28 May 2022. The strategy aims to serve as a blueprint and guidance for the Member States in their efforts to strengthen their national food safety systems and promote regional and global cooperation. The strategy has been developed through a consultative process with input from a technical advisory group on food safety, two high-level international food safety conferences, and Member States consultations.

2.2 The strategy consists of five interlinked and mutually reinforcing strategic priorities to accelerate global efforts in food safety. Implementation of the strategy would rely on the commitment and efforts of Member States, WHO, and the whole international community. WHO will, together with other international partners, support Member States by providing global leadership and fostering policy dialogues among stakeholders; synthesizing evidence and generating normative guidance in food safety; enhancing technical cooperation and building stronger capacities for countries; and strengthening partnerships and fostering global collaboration.

2.3 The FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) at its twenty-seventh Session in 2020<sup>2</sup> requested that FAO develop a new Food Safety Strategy to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, showing the connection between food safety and food security as well as the role food safety plays in achieving more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. The importance to collaborate with WHO was underscored to ensure that the food safety strategies of FAO and WHO were aligned and mutually supportive following the One Health approach and taking into consideration the public health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the resilience of national food control systems.

2.4 Following the COAG request, and taking into account the global strategic context characterized by dynamic changes in global megatrends and in agrifood systems, "The FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031" document was developed with the vision to provide "Safe food for all people at all times" and the mission to "support Members in continuing to improve food safety at all levels by providing scientific advice and strengthening their food safety capacities for efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems". The FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety focus on four strategic outcomes (SOs), - SO1: Intergovernmental and intersectoral coordination of food safety governance is

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/draft-who-global-strategy-for-food-safety-2022-2030>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/coag/coag-27/list-of-documents/en/>

reinforced at all levels; SO2: Sound scientific advice and evidence are provided as the foundation for food safety decision-making; SO3: National food control systems are further strengthened and are continuously improved; and SO4: Public and private stakeholder collaboration is promoted to ensure food safety management and controls throughout agrifood systems. The FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety 2022-2031 resulted from an iterative consultative process led by FAO with its Members and international partner organizations, including, notably, WHO. These Strategic Priorities encourage a more consistent integration of food safety into the development of sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems, food security and nutrition policies and agriculture development strategies, and act as an instrument that will spur investments and secure adequate human and financial resources for FAO to successfully implement its food safety programme.

2.5 During the development of the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety, 2022 - 2031 and the WHO Global Food Safety Strategy, FAO and WHO maintained a standing and rigorous information sharing and discussion mechanism. Both Organizations have committed to plan the development of a joint framework for implementation, following the endorsement of the respective strategic directions. Members are encouraged to take note of both Strategies, and to partner and invest in food safety at national and regional levels.

### 3. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

3.1 Food safety authorities play an important role in addressing antimicrobial resistance in the food chain. In 2021, WHO developed the draft publication on “Prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance in the food chain – Guidance to food safety authorities”. The publication gives an overview of the current context and recent developments of foodborne AMR in the WHO European Region, explores the role of food safety authorities in reducing AMR and provides updated and practical advice on the prevention and control of AMR in the animal-human-environment interface using the One Health approach.

3.2 At the country level, WHO is working with FAO and OIE with support from the AMR multipartner trust fund to strengthen integrated surveillance of Extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing *Escherichia coli* in humans, food and the environment in Tajikistan. Technical support was also provided to Turkmenistan to engage in the work of the Codex Taskforce on AMR.

3.3 FAO is conducting field surveys in fourteen countries in Europe and Central Asia<sup>3</sup> to understand Antimicrobial Use (AMU) in the livestock sector. Trainings on the Assessment Tool for Laboratories and AMR Surveillance Systems (ATLASS) were delivered, enabling countries to assess and define targets to improve national AMR surveillance systems in the food and agriculture sectors. Laboratory trainings were provided in Armenia and Tajikistan to provide theoretical knowledge and opportunity for hands-on exercises on AMR detection in compliance with international standards.

3.4 The World Antimicrobial Awareness Week was celebrated from 18 to 24 November 2021. FAO and WHO provided guidance and advocacy materials to the Member States for their initiation of and involvement in awareness raising activities at country level.

3.5 FAO has developed and translated a series of technical and awareness raising materials on AMU in dairy, poultry and swine production, in English and multiple other languages from Europe and Central Asia.<sup>4</sup> The use of antibiotics in livestock was translated into 17 languages.<sup>5</sup> Additional to the electronic versions, all materials have been printed and delivered at relevant events as part of several field projects.

### 4. One Health

4.1 In April 2021, the Regional One Health Coordination Mechanism (OHCM) for Europe and Central Asia was established by FAO, OIE and WHO. UNEP joined in May 2021. The mechanism provides strategic leadership and serves as a starting point for identifying common priorities, coordinating efforts, planning joint activities, and monitoring progress to address health threats originating in the human-animal-environment interface in Europe and Central Asia. This is done in close cooperation with key partners including other UN and international organizations, civil society, and academia.

4.2 The first dialogue on the Regional One Health Partner Platform was initiated by FAO, OIE, UNEP, and WHO during the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, 18–24 November 2021. The purpose was to exchange information about the challenges and most urgent One Health issues in the region and to gain insight into how these can be addressed in a coordinated synergistic way.

<sup>3</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo<sup>6</sup>, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine

<sup>4</sup> Visual booklets on how to use antibiotics effectively and responsibly in [dairy production](#), [poultry production](#), and [pig production](#); Leaflets for [dairy](#) and [poultry](#) vets and farmers; posters (dairy in [English](#), [Armenian](#), [Kazakh](#), [Russian](#) and [Tajik](#); and poultry in [English](#), [Armenian](#), [Kazakh](#), [Russian](#) and [Tajik](#)).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CB1585EN>

4.3 In March 2022, a joint webinar with the Issue-Based Coalition on Health (IBC-Health) was conducted to enhance UN Country Teams' and UN Resident Coordinators' awareness and familiarity of the One Health approach to address health threats originating in the animal, human and environment interface.

4.4 Working closely with FAO and OIE, WHO has supported Kazakhstan and Armenia in strengthening multisectoral coordination to address zoonotic diseases using the One Health approach. Technical support using the One Health approach was also provided to Kosovo<sup>6</sup> to develop an operational framework to support preparedness and response to zoonotic disease outbreaks.

4.5 Leaflets on six foodborne parasitic infections produced by the FAO, OIE and WHO Tripartite were translated into Russian and disseminated.<sup>7</sup>

## 5. COVID-19 and food safety

5.1 FAO and WHO conducted a survey to seek feedback from the Member States on the impacts of COVID-19 on organizations, resources, activities, and communication (both internal and among stakeholders) focusing on challenges and resolutions regarding food safety control and management. It aimed to capture insights on the consequences of pandemic disruptions to food chains, especially regarding food safety hazards, foodborne illnesses, food fraud, changes in food business models, consumption patterns, and food safety control and management.

## 6. Building capacities in Codex

6.1 Since CCEURO31, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia and Turkmenistan have become beneficiaries of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund. Several activities were carried out since implementation of the projects started in January 2021.

6.2 Azerbaijan partnered with Turkey in a twinning arrangement to benefit from their experience over the years. A series of tailored online trainings and information sessions were provided to the National Codex Committee (NCC) members on understanding the work of Codex and participating in Codex sessions, and using Codex at national level with practical examples and experience sharing. Through a mission to Turkey, Azerbaijan delegates received direct guidance and consolidated their knowledge on the working mechanisms of an established NCC. Operating procedures for the Azerbaijan NCC and the role of Codex Contact Point (CCP) were drafted.

6.3 In Kazakhstan, a webinar and a practical training session was conducted to enhance the awareness and familiarity with Codex Alimentarius working arrangements and to train relevant stakeholders on practical aspects of the work of Codex respectively. In addition, several meetings were held on the establishment of a Codex Unit within the Ministry of Health and sensitisation of policy makers on the importance of Codex Alimentarius.

6.4 In North Macedonia, project activities have enabled the CCP and relevant officials to increase their participation in Codex and clarify the Codex sessions and standard setting activities on which to focus and actively contribute. Increased participation in electronic working groups (EWGs) is a tangible outcome, and clearer working procedures for the CCP have been documented. Mentoring, discussions and support from Norway and Sweden CCPs has been instrumental in building these capacities. In addition, a business case scenario was developed to support Codex work, and key Codex texts were translated into Macedonian.

6.5 In Turkmenistan, two webinars were held for national experts and NCC members on the structure of Codex, working mechanisms and benefits of participating in Codex related work.

6.6 FAO HQ is finalizing a new set of e-learning materials on Codex Alimentarius. The first two lessons will be made available in the second quarter of 2022, with the full set to be completed by the end of 2022.

## 7. Food safety in small and medium enterprises

7.1 FAO is finalising a regional guideline that outlines key policy recommendations for governments to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to improve food safety, specifically, on assisting SMEs to comply with the national legal requirements and facilitate increased access to markets. Advice on appropriate and flexible rules by food safety authorities and inspectorates for SMEs on good hygiene and HACCP is included.

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<sup>6</sup> All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>7</sup>[Clonorchiasis and Opisthorchiasis](#), [Fascioliasis \(Liver fluke\)](#), [Cystic and alveolar echinococcosis](#), [Trichinellosis \(Trichinosis\)](#), Foodborne parasitic infections, [Paragonimiasis: Foodborne parasitic infections](#), [Taeniasis and Cysticercosis](#)

## 8. World Food Safety Day

8.1 Working closely with FAO and WHO Headquarters and the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO annually disseminate information and support countries in the region to implement World Food Safety Day (WFS) Events. Cross-ministerial participation in the events bringing the health, agriculture, veterinary and other key sectors together. In 2021, FAO and WHO organized a joint webinar on “Food safety in the context of Sustainable Food Systems: Moving Forward for a Healthy Tomorrow in Europe and Central Asia”. The webinar gathered over 280 participants from almost 60 countries and provided an opportunity to discuss food safety in the context of sustainable food systems and actions needed to address food safety issues in the human-animal-environment interface.

8.2 The theme for WFS 2022 is “Safer food, better health”<sup>8</sup>. FAO and WHO have produced a guide to WFS 2022<sup>9</sup>, available in English, French, Spanish and Russian to assist Members in planning their events in 2022. To celebrate WFS, 2022, at the regional level, FAO and WHO are promoting WFS through information dissemination, including social media, and participating in some country events.

## 9. Sustainable food systems transformation

9.1 The Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (IBC-SFS)<sup>10</sup> supported UN Resident Coordinators, UN country teams and Governments, during the preparation to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). During 2021, the main activities included the development and dissemination of advocacy and policy guidance promoting best practices for SFS and healthy diets (e.g. a Technical Note<sup>11</sup> on SFS and a document on Specific Food System Challenges and Priorities in the Europe and Central Asia region<sup>12</sup>). A Regional Dialogue on “Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia”<sup>13</sup>, was held in May 2021. In addition, a regional community of practice on sustainability of food systems<sup>14</sup> was also launched to provide key stakeholders with an inclusive and open digital space to share and exchange information, ideas, knowledge on key regional policy areas related to the food systems.

9.2 As a follow-up to UNFSS, the IBC-SFS focuses on supporting the implementation of national food system pathways through capacity development and information sharing, as well as maintaining the discussion on priority food system issues (e.g. a side event at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (UNECE)<sup>15</sup> was organized and a series of Food Systems Talks<sup>16</sup> was launched).

9.3 In addition to the work of IBC-SFS, FAO collaborated with the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow, on a series of independent dialogues focused on “Food policy, rural development and gender equality in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: current trends and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic”.<sup>17</sup> FAO worked also with the Economic Cooperation Organization - Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS)<sup>18</sup> to organize a sub-regional independent dialogue “Sustainable Food Systems – Its Concept and Practices in the Countries of Economic Cooperation Organization”<sup>19</sup>; a webinar series<sup>20</sup> on sustainable food systems; a regional workshop<sup>21</sup> on sustainable food systems on World Food Day 2021 and a sub-regional conference<sup>22</sup> on food loss and food waste.

9.4 FAO launched “Food Systems Assessments” to develop food systems profiles and to provide a

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/slogan-theme/en/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/how-to-participate/en/>

<sup>10</sup> A regional UN mechanism which capitalizes on the expertise of several UN agencies to provide Member Countries with a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach on sustainable food systems (Co-Chairs: FAO, WHO, UNICEF; additional members: WFP, UNECE, WMO, UNDP, IFAD). For more information: <https://unece.org/issue-based-coalition-sustainable-food-systems>

<sup>11</sup> <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Technical%20Note%20on%20Sustainable%20Food%20Systems%202021FINAL.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Specific%20Food%20System%20Challenges%20and%20Priorities%20in%20the%20ECA%20region.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fao.org/europe/events/detail-events/en/c/1397986/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://foodsystems.community/communities/food-systems-in-europe-and-central-asia/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/sustainable-food-systems-build-back-better-europe-and-central-asia-carrying-forward-un-food>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wu3leYCpmY>

<sup>17</sup> Information about the forum is available at <https://inagres.hse.ru/en/faogenderwebinars/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://ecorcfs.org/en>

<sup>19</sup> <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/13283/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.fao.org/turkey/news/detail-news/en/c/1403528/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://ecorcfs.org/en/news-about-eco-rcfs/regional-dialogues-workshop-on-sustainable-food-systems/11ea27ea-20a8-4e8b-8e68-b94f7b8faad0/df205a85-89a7-4cea-b7f5-0e9566cf126b>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ecorcfs.org/en/news-about-eco-rcfs/sub-regional-conference-on-food-loss-and-waste-reduction/11ea27ea-20a8-4e8b-8e68-b94f7b8faad0/6daa84c8-da5c-4f41-b71e-409ada4932c8>



snapshot of the key drivers, status and outcomes of the national food systems, using methodologies and assessment tools in the Member States of the Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

9.5 Throughout the region, UNFSS Member State dialogues have facilitated important discussions across various ministries, sectors and disciplines. Countries are continuing to implement national pathways, and FAO is providing tailored support to a number of countries in the region. This enables further discussions and actions at country level to ensure food safety and quality, nutrition, and One Health considerations are part of food systems transformation. At the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of CCEURO, Agenda item 2 provides an opportunity for a regional exchange on building more sustainable food systems.

## 10. New or upcoming publications

10.1 “Thinking about the future of food safety – A foresight report”<sup>23</sup> was released in March 2022 coinciding with the World Food Safety Day campaign launch. It provides an overview of the major global drivers and trends by describing their implications for food safety in particular and for agrifood systems by extrapolation.

10.2 “International and national regulatory strategies to counter food fraud”<sup>24</sup> was published in 2022 and introduces the available international regulatory guidance and the potential legal strategies at the national and regional level. It identifies and analyses some of the regulatory approaches to food fraud that countries have chosen and pays attention to the role of the private sector in food fraud regulation.

10.3 “Safe and healthy food in traditional food markets in the WHO European Region”<sup>25</sup> was released in March 2021. This technical report contains guidance on the promotion of safe and healthy food in traditional markets within the WHO European Region, targeting all stakeholders from policy-makers to market workers. The document outlines the main guiding principles of a safe and healthy traditional food market and proposes a stepwise approach to the implementation of safe and healthy traditional food market initiatives.

10.4. “Food safety considerations to achieve best health outcomes under limited food availability situations”<sup>26</sup> has been published in 2022. This publication draws attention to food safety aspects, to be considered when providing food humanitarian aid in times of food insecurity, brought on by conflicts, natural disasters and climate crises. Under such food assistance conditions, food safety controls should be carefully evaluated regarding their impact on available food, which may be limited, in conjunction with minimizing the risk of exposure to foodborne contaminants among the receiving population. These populations may be particularly vulnerable due to pre-existing conditions such as malnutrition, or other co-morbidities.

10.5. “FAO/WHO JEMRA Risk Assessment of Food Allergens - Part 1”<sup>27</sup> report has been released in March 2022. The labelling of food allergens in pre-packaged foods plays a key role in protecting food allergic individuals. The list of major foods and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity was included into the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Packaged Foods (GSLPF) in 1999. Since then, there have been many scientific developments in the understanding of food allergens and their management. This report responds to the request from Codex for scientific advice and focuses on deliberations and conclusions of the first meeting of the Ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens which reviewed and validated the Codex priority allergen list through risk assessment.

10.6. “Looking at edible insects from a food safety perspective. Challenges and opportunities for the sector”<sup>28</sup>, published in 2021, provides an overview of the potential food safety issues associated with the farming, production and consumption of insects. It explores both benefits and challenges and discuss regulatory frameworks governing edible insects in various regions. The document highlights challenges related to research gaps and scaling up production, that the insect sector will need to overcome if it is to have a more global reach.

## 11 Direct country support to build capacities in food safety and quality and national food control systems

11.1 FAO and WHO remain committed to providing direct support to countries in the region to build their capacities in national food control systems and enhance food safety and quality. Since the last CCEURO, FAO and WHO have or continue to work directly with many countries in the region. Annex 1 provides an overview of the recently completed, ongoing and pipeline projects and activities to build capacities.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb8667en/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9035en/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/publications/2021/safe-and-healthy-food-in-traditional-food-markets-in-the-who-european-region,-march-2021>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb8715en/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9070en/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4094en/>

**12. Recommendation**

12.1 Members are encouraged to:

- i. Share information on any ongoing initiatives relevant to FAO's and WHO's work in the region;
- ii. Advise FAO and WHO on any new topics where support may be needed and would benefit from technical exchange or coordination in the region;
- iii. Inform on any continuing support needed to continue to enhance food safety and quality capacity and skills development in the region; and
- iv. Highlight any other key bilateral or regional capacity development programmes implemented or planned for the European region.

**Annex 1: Recently completed, ongoing and pipeline projects and activities to build food safety and quality capacities in the European region**

<b>FAO</b>		
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Beneficiary country</b>
Support to dairy value chain for a more competitive and inclusive sector	January 2022 – December 2023	Albania
Strengthening food safety and animal health capacities in risk assessment and management	May 2019 – December 2021	Armenia
Codex Trust Fund 2A – Establishing sustainable and well-organized National Codex System	January 2021 – December 2023	Azerbaijan
Strengthening the official food safety control system and facilitating market access of food products	April 2019 – December 2021	Belarus
Strengthening the administrative system to manage and support sustainable GIs	June 2021 – April 2022	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Support to the Food Safety and SPS Sector in Georgia under ENPARD IV	December 2021 – November 2025	Georgia
“Fostering economic empowerment of women farmers by supporting homemade dairy production through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach” in cooperation with Swiss Agency for development and cooperation, and UN WOMEN	October 2020 – September 2024	Georgia
Assessment and improvement of institutional capacities on food control, food safety management systems and international standards	January 2021 – June 2022	Kyrgyzstan
Enhancing capacity for food safety management in the Kyrgyz fruit and vegetable industry, funded by STDF	January 2020 – December 2022	Kyrgyzstan
Codex Trust Fund 2A – Sustainable engagement in Codex work activities	January 2018 – December 2021	North Macedonia
Enabling market access for Tajik agricultural products through improved food safety system, funded by STDF	October 2018 – February 2022	Tajikistan
Improving national food safety systems and regional cooperation, in cooperation with Turkish partnership programme	January 2021 – December 2023	Azerbaijan Kyrgyzstan Republic of Moldova Tajikistan Turkey
Reducing the advance of Antimicrobial Resistance -AMR- in food and agriculture in cooperation with Russian Federation	March 2017 – November 2023	Armenia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan
<b>WHO</b>		
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Country beneficiary</b>
Strengthening multisectoral coordination to address zoonotic diseases in Kazakhstan and Armenia	October 2021 – May 2022	Armenia Kazakhstan
Strengthen foodborne and zoonotic disease outbreak preparedness and response	April – September 2022	Albania Croatia

		Kosovo <sup>29</sup>
Enhancing rapid exchange of information during food safety emergencies in the Western Balkans	April-October 2022	Albania Bosnia & Herzegovina Kosovo Montenegro North Macedonia Serbia
Strengthening the application of the risk analysis principles to food safety emergency response	November 2021 – May 2022	Albania Bosnia & Herzegovina Kosovo Montenegro North Macedonia Serbia
Strengthening the operationalization of the One Health approach to address foodborne and zoonotic diseases	April 2021 – December 2022	Montenegro Ukraine
Strengthening capacity to actively engage in Codex Alimentarius	January 2021 – December 2023	Kazakhstan Turkmenistan
Strengthening capacity to address food safety issues associated with pesticide and veterinary drug residues in food (in cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Commission)	April 2020-December 2020	Armenia Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Russian Federation Turkmenistan

<sup>29</sup> All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).