

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Opening

CRDXX

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

17th Session

Nadi, Fiji

3 – 7 February 2025

OPENING REMARKS

OPENING COMMENTS AT CCNASWP17 FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, ALLAN AZEGELE

Distinguished guests, representatives of FAO and WHO, Mister Chairperson, Codex secretariat colleagues, delegates and friends – good morning to you all.

It is an honour and privilege to address you during the opening of the 17th session of the FAO/WHO Co-ordinating Committee for North America, Southwest Pacific, which is the second in this round of co-ordinating committee meetings this year. My apologies that a clash in schedules and commitments prevents me from joining you in person this week.

Warm regards to you all from Vice-Chairpersons Khalid Al Zhrani who is with you in person and from Vice Chairs Betul Vezgecer and Jing Tiang. We are keen to demonstrate our continuing commitment to work in the service of the Codex membership, ensuring we are close to members, to committees and committee chairs, so that we understand your issues and the debates and can help guide the Codex family through them.

As Chairperson, my vision is to ensure Codex remains the foundation of the global food system, protecting consumer health, facilitating fair trade practices, and addressing emerging challenges with science-based solutions. As we gather here today, we are reminded of the essential role that food safety, quality, and trade play in shaping the future of food systems. The Codex Alimentarius provides the international benchmark for food safety and quality standards. It is a framework that helps to protect consumer health and ensures fair practices in the food trade, thus fostering economic growth and food security across the globe.

As we begin our work today, we are reminded that our mission is not just about food safety or trade; it is about ensuring the health and well-being of people throughout North America and the Southwest Pacific. This task is more vital than ever as we face new challenges in the food system—from climate change and emerging diseases to evolving consumer demands and technological innovations. Together, we have the responsibility to create standards that are not only scientifically sound but also forward-thinking, adaptable to future needs, and inclusive of the diverse cultures and practices that define our region.

As we turn to the agenda this week, I want to acknowledge that our strategic plan 2020-2025 continues to inform our responses to the new opportunities and challenges that are posed by our ever-changing operating environment. Our first strategic goal is to address the current, emerging and critical issues that are identified by our members. This is a key function of each of the six FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees, whose agendas provide the time and space to discuss issues for food safety and quality that are most relevant for each region, sharing perspectives and catalysing action.

I am also pleased to note that there will be discussions on the strategic plan 2026-2031 which was adopted during the 47th session of the Commission in November 2024. The Commission noted that the Codex Secretariat would present a monitoring framework at CCEXEC88 for review, and that comments on the revised version of the monitoring framework would then be sought from Members and Observers through a CL with the aim of submitting a final version to CAC48 for approval. I will look forward to the active engagement of the region in providing comments as we seek to finalize the monitoring and evaluation framework.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), whose support continues to be instrumental in advancing the work of Codex globally. Their ongoing partnership is essential as we work together to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our host the Government of Fiji and the secretariat for successfully hosting this Committee.

With your permission Mister Chairperson I request Vice-Chairpersons Khalid Al Zhrani to make his remarks.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson,