

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

(Comments of EU, Kenya, and United Republic of Tanzania)

European Union

*Mixed Competence
Member States Vote*

The EU and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for the information on matters arising from Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies. The EUMS would like to submit a number of remarks and considerations with regard to the matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

Procedural consideration related to new work proposals, prioritization mechanisms and regional standards

The EUMS note that several levels of procedures are currently in place when it comes to submitting a new work proposal in Codex:

- The general procedure described in section 2 of the Procedural Manual (several subparts are applicable);
- Specific procedures only applicable to certain standards, such as MLs, MRLs or methods of analysis;
- Prioritization mechanisms and work management processes that have been or are still being developed by certain committees;
- Other specific cases, such as the development of new regional standards or the elaboration of new texts in cooperation with other international standardization bodies.

The EUMS also welcome the recent discussions in the Executive Committee and the different initiatives taken to tackle challenges linked to new work proposals. The EUMS believe that these initiatives (i.e. the request for guidance, the discussion paper on regional standards and the stocktake on prioritization mechanisms) are all addressing different aspects of the same issue and should be conducted in a consistent and coordinated manner. The EUMS recall that these procedural matters fall under the mandate of CCGP and should be discussed more in-depth in this Committee.

In this context, the EUMS would support the preparation by the Codex Secretariat of a comprehensive document taking stock of existing procedures to further consider the procedures and criteria in place and reflect on whether there are any gaps or inconsistencies in the current system.

The EUMS propose that this comprehensive document on all identified issues linked to new work proposals would be prepared for discussion at the next meeting of CCGP (i.e. CCGP34). This would provide a basis for exchange amongst the whole membership taking into account Members' experience with the preparation of new work proposals, the prioritisation mechanisms and the critical review process.

The EUMS expect that this discussion should enable CCGP34 to take a decision on the development of a comprehensive and clear guidance on new work proposals and work prioritization by committees. Such guidance

would be a useful contribution towards Goal 1 (Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner) and Goal 5 (Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals) of the CAC Strategic Plan 2020-2025. It would contain all criteria and requirements for the preparation of new work, the Committee mechanisms for prioritization (already existing or under discussion) and the criteria considered in the Critical Review of new work.

Electronic working groups

The EUMS note the importance of well-functioning EWGs for the work of Codex and the major evolution of the methods of work due to the pandemic. The EUMS would like to get information on when the handbook will be available and to what extent EUMS comments on the use of virtual meetings at EWG level would be taken into account.

In that respect, the EUMS would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the current Guidelines on EWG and PWG in the Procedural Manual (Section 2) are largely outdated and not in line with current working practices. The EUMS suggest that when the EWG handbook is released, CCGP be tasked to undertake a full review of these guidelines to identify areas of improvements and make sure they are aligned with the guidance of the handbook.

Kenya

Kenya has taken note of matters arising including the limitations of the survey conducted to monitor the use and impact of Codex texts. Responses from Members in the African region indicated that the use of Codex texts was being 'mostly', or 'completely' impeded by challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts (41%), and lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders (39%), lack of resources (39%), duration of Codex text development (28%) (Figure 26 in the report- EXEC84/INF1). In contrast to global responses, Members in the African region identified the irrelevance of Codex texts for national context/reality (35%) to be 'mostly' or 'completely' a barrier to Codex texts use.

The low response rate from the CCAFRICA Region affected the results of the survey particularly on issues of importance to the region including lack of resources, challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts, and lack of local implementation capacity, which were ranked below 5%. Low and Middle-income countries where these issues are significant form the larger group of CCAFRICA.

The methodology (the online data collection tool, and its design) used in the survey may have contributed to the low response by the Member Countries giving results that may not be representative of the status in the CCAFRICA Region. Further, the text-specific response trends were not equally representative of the global Codex membership base. Further, the level of awareness of the survey could have influenced the number of responses from the region.

Kenya also takes note of matters arising from other subsidiary bodies including those from the Codex Committee on Food Additives and from FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO).

United Republic of Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the different agenda items to be discussed by the 33rd of the Codex Committee on General Principles. The following are the comments from the URT for consideration.

URT noted the matters for information and action.