

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
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**Agenda Item 4**

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## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**Twenty-fifth Session**

**Kampala, Uganda**

**27 - 31 January 2025**

### **FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY IN THE CCAFRICA REGION**

*(Prepared by FAO and WHO)*

#### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

1. Members in the region need to continue to address food safety issues in a timely and effective manner. Since the last coordinating committee for Africa in September 2022, FAO and WHO, continued to provide capacity building support to members in order to improve their food control systems which ultimately contributes to enhancing intra-Africa trade in safe and quality food products and agricultural commodities.

#### **SUPPORT TO TRADE: AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AND TRADE FACILITATION PROGRAMME**

2. FAO continues to provide support to the AU member states in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement to enhance intra-Africa trade using a variety of complementary approaches, from a trade, food safety and value chain perspective, using an agrifood system lens to analyse issues and deliver assistance.
  - FAO organized a workshop in Johannesburg from 26 to 28 June 2024 aimed at enhancing trade facilitation and addressing agricultural challenges in Africa with 27 participants from Cameroon, Mauritius, Namibia, Tanzania, and Tunisia. The first session of the workshop was a high-level event focused on AfCFTA-related trade and agricultural challenges. The participants addressed crucial issues surrounding trade integration, agricultural trade, and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The second session on the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI), aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing and information exchange among African countries. The sessions focused on identifying and addressing barriers to trade, particularly those related to food safety requirements to support efforts in harmonizing standards and ensuring smoother trade across borders.
  - Additionally, FAO is implementing a regional Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) to assist African Union member states in developing inclusive agricultural value chains. This project is designed to facilitate the effective implementation of AfCFTA and strengthen regional integration, trade, and agricultural systems across the continent.
  - Capacity building support is provided since end of year 2022, to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in western Africa (Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal and will start in 2025 in the Eastern Africa (Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) to support them comply with regional and international food standards. The capacity development activities included support to identify priority food commodities and associated food hazards, and series of trainings of Food Business Operators on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) in order to improve the compliance with international standards.

- With a financial support from the Standard Trade and Development Facility (STDF), FAO is providing support in trade facilitation in Mali and Senegal focusing on two important value chains, namely smoked fish and shellfish to strengthen capacity to comply with international standards. A prototype of fish smoking oven was developed in Mali and distributed to women associations of fish processors and GMPs/GHPs trainings were provided to improve the quality of the smoked fish and to reduce the levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and pesticide residues.
- FAO concluded its project in support of the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme funded by the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund. Spanning over food safety and phytosanitary issues, the project had two major relevant outputs:
  - Strengthening the risk and evidence basis for establishing regulation of key food products: Four pilot countries (Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were equipped with the scientific tools, concertation framework, and important background information and data on the status of the implementation of regulatory and non-regulatory food safety controls. The countries conducted a regional consultation, in 2023 to discuss harmonization through an agreed framework for regulatory measures pertaining to food safety within the COMESA space. Advice regarding non-regulatory approaches was also considered.
  - Analysis of the import control capacities, participatory elaboration of an action plan, regional and national training courses leading to the development of risk categorization frameworks to guide border controls in six pilot countries (Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Madagascar, Sudan and Tunisia). In addition, a draft technical document for regional consideration on the exchange of information on national food control systems to facilitate trade, based on Codex Alimentarius guidance, was prepared to support further discussion among COMESA members.
- As part of the global programme of support by the European Union to the SPS Policy of the African Union, and with funding from the EU, FAO also implemented a series of assessments of phytosanitary systems as well as the national food control systems, using the tools respectively anchored in the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Codex Alimentarius Commission, namely the PhytoSanitary Evaluation and the FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool in a total of twelve countries ( Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). In addition to provide detailed country assessments and strategic plans for strengthening food control and phytosanitary systems, the goal is to provide the African Union with an analysis of most recurrent capacity development needs, to be addressed as a priority at continental level. As part of the same EU programme of support to the African Union for SPS matters, and in close collaboration with FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) is implementing a similar approach of assessments using their relevant assessment instrument (Programme-Vision-Strategy, PVS) to complement the array of recent assessments available in the three SPS domains.

## GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY STRATEGIES

### WHO

3. In August 2024, the seventy-fourth session of the Regional Committee for Africa adopted a regional framework to guide Member States in the WHO African region in implementing the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030. The regional framework is aimed to accelerate actions towards strengthening national food safety systems in the African Region. It adopts a holistic and integrated approach that covers the entire food chain, using evidence and risk-based interventions to improve food safety in the African Region<sup>1</sup>.
4. A WHO Alliance for Food Safety was created at an inception meeting held in collaboration with the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in May 2024. The WHO Alliance will support the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030, a key component of which is surveillance of foodborne disease. The inception meeting that convened WHO Collaborating Centers and partners developed terms of reference and a workplan of the alliance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2024-07/AFR-RC74-10%20Framework%20for%20implementing%20the%20WHO%20global%20strategy%20for%20food%20safety%202022-2030%20in%20the%20African%20Region.pdf>

## FAO

5. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Regional Conference for Africa (ARC33) was held from 18 to 20 April 2024 in a hybrid mode in Morocco under the theme of Resilient agrifood systems and inclusive rural transformation. The conference put a spotlight on the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.
6. Safe food for everyone (BN3) has been confirmed as a key component of the regional priority 2 (Efficient and equitable food and nutrition systems) with two main areas of emphasis: (i) Make nutritious foods safe, available and accessible Trade and (ii) market opportunities for inclusive growth. The conference further highlighted the importance of Harnessing science and innovation for increased agricultural productivity and competitiveness in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

## NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

### Food Control system Assessments in Africa

7. There are continued efforts to assist Member countries in utilizing the FAO/WHO Assessment tool to assess national food control systems, as a strong basis to encourage harmonization of regulatory frameworks, policies and practices with Codex Alimentarius guidance and drive consistent progress. WHO supported assessments in Cameroon and Cape Verde. With the support from the European Union, FAO concluded the assessment of national food control systems in ten African Union countries (Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Uganda, and Zimbabwe). Country profiles have been developed for Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal with the financial support from African Development Bank (AfDB); this is the first big step to assess the food control system and FAO keeps working to mobilize financial resources to complete the entire assessment of food control system within the three west African countries. In addition, FAO in collaboration with UNIDO, is starting the assessment of the food control system in Liberia.

### Codex Trust Fund

8. Through the mentoring scheme established by the FAO and WHO to support countries to prepare robust applications to the Codex Trust Fund (CTF), as of date, 30 countries<sup>2</sup> have become beneficiaries in the African Region. Three additional countries Namibia, Somalia and Togo received technical approval by the CTF Steering Committee for the Round 8 call of applications in 2023. Eight countries<sup>3</sup> have since successfully completed their projects with significant achievements in enhancing capacities and management of their national codex programmes.
9. As part of the mentoring efforts, the WHO in collaboration with CCAFRICA and with the participation of the FAO Regional Office for Africa held a regional training workshop in November 2023 on enhancing participation in the work of Codex and preparation of robust applications for submission to the CTF2 for 14 countries. A practical hands-on session was undertaken during the workshop through the pairing of eligible countries and those that had successfully applied for mentoring support.
10. The ongoing support by the FAO and WHO in the implementation of Codex Trust Fund 2 projects in countries have resulted in forging of twinning partnerships between countries thereby increasing understanding of participation in Codex sessions and sharing experiences in the management of Codex activities at country level. Procedural manuals have since been elaborated which has improved the functioning of national Codex structures. National experts have been trained on various topics including structure and functioning of Codex Alimentarius, data generation, risk analysis, Electronic Working (EWG), and Online Commenting System (OCS), procedures for developing and defending national positions in Codex work. This has created a pool of experts at country level on codex issues whilst advocacy efforts have been undertaken to garner engagement of high-level authorities to codex activities at country level. To increase uptake of Codex standards in countries, national food standards based on Codex standards have been developed, regulators trained on the harmonization of national standards with Codex standards and key actors trained on selected codex standards.
11. Under the leadership of Codex Trust Fund Secretariat, FAO and WHO have supported the participation of delegates from CTF beneficiary countries to a training on Good Codex Practices in Seoul, Republic of Korea in December 2023 and December 2024. The objective of this training was to learn from the experience of the Republic of Korea in setting up their Codex system and apply learnings to the further strengthening of Codex in their respective countries.

<sup>2</sup> Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

<sup>3</sup> Benin, Ghana, Madagascar, Senegal, Guinea, Rwanda, the Gambia, Nigeria

## INFOSAN

12. In 2023 and 2024, activities to strengthen food safety emergency response capacities and participation in the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) were carried out in several countries jointly by the WHO and FAO regional offices in collaboration with the INFOSAN Secretariat. In 2023, introductory workshops were delivered to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congo aiming to raise awareness about how INFOSAN operates during food safety emergencies and the modalities for effective participation in the network.
13. National multi-sectoral workshops were also supported in Burkina Faso, Liberia, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, and Niger in 2024. During the workshops, national authorities with a stake in food safety emergency response had the opportunity to learn more about the Network, understand their roles and responsibilities as INFOSAN members during food safety emergencies, and deepen their understanding on the link between INFOSAN and the International Health Regulations in the context of food safety emergency response. National authorities were also oriented on the elaboration of food safety emergency response plans. National roadmaps for strengthening food safety emergency response have since been elaborated in the countries.

## Antimicrobial resistance

14. The WHO continues to support countries to strengthen integrated surveillance of extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing *Escherichia coli* in humans, food and the environment in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe. A regional webinar was held in 2023 to further promote the implementation of the integrated ESBL producing *E. coli* surveillance, share regional achievements and experiences.
15. In August 2023, at the Seventy-third session of the Regional Committee for Africa, a Regional Strategy for expediting the implementation and monitoring of national action plans for antimicrobial resistance, 2022-2030 in the WHO African Region was endorsed. The Regional antimicrobial resistance (AMR) strategy aims to guide Member States' efforts to curb AMR and prescribes key interventions to enhance National Action Plan implementation in line with the One Health approach<sup>4</sup>.

## Surveillance of foodborne disease

16. WHO has developed a regional roadmap to progressively strengthen foodborne disease surveillance and response capacities across the region. A regional webinar series was held in September 2024 in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources and the Africa CDC to orient countries on the key package of actions to establish surveillance of foodborne disease and response systems. There are ongoing efforts to initiate foodborne disease surveillance pilots.

## Risk Analysis

17. Since CCAFRICA23, FAO and WHO continued to support capacity development on risk analysis in the region. As part of the implementation of the CTF projects, trainings on risk analysis (risk assessment, risk management and risk communication) have been delivered by FAO in Mali, and risk assessment training in The Gambia. Additionally, regional training on scientific basis of Codex with focus on data generation and provision for standards-setting was undertaken in September 2023 under the CTF Group Project for 5 countries (Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda). FAO has also conducted trainings on risk ranking and risk prioritization Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal with AfDB support. Burkina Faso, Benin, Malawi and Mauritius were supported by the WHO on a training on risk assessment and data generation in support of standard's setting.

## Food safety management system

18. FAO is making use of the Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Toolbox for food safety<sup>5</sup> to develop capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) food business operators (FBOs) in Ghana. The initiative focuses on helping these businesses to develop and implement Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), key components of ensuring food safety across the food production chain. The beneficiaries included members of the national butcher's association, association of milk and yogurt processors, and bush meat traders in Ghana. In collaboration with the Veterinary School of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) to develop a generic HACCP program at the Kumasi. Competent authorities in Ghana and Liberia have been trained on ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection as well as monitoring GMPs and GHPs in the slaughter facilities. This comprehensive training is aimed at improving food safety standards, ensuring that food products from slaughter facilities meet

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-08/AFR-RC73-6%20Regional%20strategy%20for%20expediting%20the%20implementation%20and%20monitoring%20of%20NAPs%20on%20AMR.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/good-hygiene-practices-haccp-toolbox/en>

international food safety requirements, and ultimately contributing to safer food systems in the region. Additionally, FAO has received funding from the Government of Ireland, represented by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, for food safety work and is working with the Togolese Republic on guidance targeted to SMEs on compliance with GHP and HACCP according to the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene.

19. With funding from the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) of Switzerland, FAO supports the delivery of guidance for SMEs to strengthen food safety in the meat and dairy products value chains in particular in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar. This guidance and training approaches will be built on the FAO GHP and HACCP Toolbox for food safety, based on the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene and the results will be made available globally.

#### Risk-based official controls

20. FAO has been using the multicriteria decision analysis (MCDA) approach to help competent authorities rank and prioritize food and hazards combinations to support risk-based official controls. Risk ranking and risk prioritization trainings have been implemented in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal in 2023 and 2024. In Ghana, quality control activities based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles have been implemented at the slaughter facilities followed by training of competent authorities and food business operators (FBO) on Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs).

#### Improvement of traditional food markets

21. The WHO continues to support the implementation of the healthy food market initiative to achieve incremental but sustainable improvements in traditional food markets using the One Health approach. Market improvement projects have since been introduced in Senegal in Dakar and Cameroon in two pilot markets in Douala. In Ghana, FAO has completed a mapping and profiling of bush meat actors and has provided support to women traders to enhance Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) in the market.

### **ADVOCACY THROUGH WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY**

22. WHO and FAO regional offices for Africa have jointly facilitated over the years the observance of the World Food Safety Day in collaboration with the WFP, CCAFRICA and the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources to draw attention and inspire action to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks. In June 2024, the joint event that brought stakeholders from the food sector across the continent, offered an opportunity to raise awareness and share knowledge and best practices on enhancing preparedness and effective response to food safety emergencies. FAO and WHO, through their regional offices, collaborate regularly to commemorate the world food safety day in a regional manner every year: at this occasion strong message to ensure food safety are providing in high-levels panels to encourage countries to better engage for food safety.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

23. CCAFRICA25 is requested to:

- (i) Note the need for continuous support from FAO and WHO to build capacity on food safety and quality in the region;
- (ii) Recognize the effort deployed by FAO and WHO in the region through joint efforts on AMR, Codex Alimentarius activities through the CTF, risk analysis and strengthening national food control systems;
- (iii) Welcome a range of initiatives and activities that address issues such as strengthening national food control systems, improving participation in the activities of International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs), and increasing scientific capacity in data generation to support food safety risk assessment;
- (iv) Appreciate the role of FAO and WHO in resource mobilization and work planning to address the emerging issues identified in previous CCAFRICA sessions such as aflatoxins, antimicrobial resistance, pesticide residues and contaminants in food;
- (v) Note the work of FAO and WHO that has been undertaken in the context of the implementation of the AfCFTA, which has led to increased efforts in promoting trade facilitation through harmonization of food control requirements in the region;
- (vi) Note the approaches and mechanism being undertaken to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030 within the member states;
- (vii) Support the regional joint collaborative advocacy and awareness events undertaken through the celebration of World Food Safety Day; and

- (viii) Note and take keen interest in the topics identified in the foresight programme of FAO, of global relevance, such as circular economy, environmental inhibitors and new foods and food production systems and that these will need to be monitored across the CCAFRICA region, as they relate to key challenges relevant for the region, like for example climate change, or the need to feed a growing population while at the same time ensuring sustainability and food safety in our Agrifood systems.
24. CCAFRICA25 is also encouraged, considering the above recommendations, to share information and updates on the following:
- (i) improvements needed for the exchange of information between countries on different aspects of food safety that guide regional work and approaches to aid the identification of new and emerging issues in the region;
  - (ii) new issues affecting food safety and quality in the region that have emerged since CCAFRICA24; and
  - (iii) suggest any relevant work in the region that should be pursued by the Member Countries, CCAFRICA, FAO and WHO.