

MINUTES OF AFROFOODS MEETING HELD ON 22ND JULY, 2014 DURING THE ANEC VI CONFERENCE, GIMPA, GHANA

Opening: The meeting commenced at about 5:30pm at the Yan Saatwa hall with about 52 delegates from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Malawi as well as the FAO Facilitators.

The FAO INFOODS Coordinator, Ruth Charrondiere, welcomed the participants and noted with delight the interest of many in food composition data generation. She used the opportunity to announce the new Coordinator for AFROFOODS: Professor Henrietta Ene-Obong, while soliciting support and cooperation from other countries' Coordinators. The new Coordinator was asked to Chair the meeting.

Opening Remarks of AFROFOODS COORDINATOR: Professor Ene-Obong once again welcomed all participants and solicited the support of every one in ensuring that Africa can produce its own food composition database. She stressed that the importance of generating food composition databases cannot be overemphasized, judging from the enormous bio-resources available to Africa and the need to combat the double burden of malnutrition which the region is facing. She stated that the meeting was a brainstorming exercise to chart a way forward for the achievement of the set objectives of AFROFOODS.

The following ideas were put forth by the participants:

- Strengthening the existing food composition tables by engaging in analysis of foods, particularly the staples, in order to fill in the missing data.
- Need for orientation and training on sampling methods and acceptable analytical methods, i.e. developing capacity and uniformity of methodology.
- Compilation of existing data at national levels to ascertain usefulness and existing gaps.
- Need for identification of quality research laboratories and trained technologists. The provision of laboratory equipment well suited to the tropics was emphasized to ensure their usefulness as well as the production of accurate and reproducible data.
- Need for reference materials to authenticate results.

Regional Activities

Regional coordinators were absent at the meeting, thus it was impossible to evaluate the progress of work from each region. However, Nigeria reported progress of work in terms of division of the country into zones: compilation is on at different zonal levels into the archival database. For Ghana, the President of the African Nutrition Society (ANS) was asked to

follow up or take up the issue of enabling an update of the existing outdated Ghanaian FCT, as reported during the meeting by delegates.

The INFOODS Coordinator lauded the ideas and aspirations put forward but cautioned on the expensive options, due to the challenges of raising funds. She suggested the need to identify those things that can be done with little money and start doing them, while we plan for those that will need a lot of funds. Based on this suggestion, the issue of producing a list of African foods that are completely absent from FCTs/databases was raised. Volunteers were solicited for and Mr. Ibukun J. Afolami volunteered to do something. Participants were asked to send such lists to Mr. Afolami or to the AFROFOODS Coordinator for necessary action.

Closing: Ruth thanked all for coming and hoped that soon AFROFOODS would have something to show for its efforts, judging from all the interest manifested and the number of people present at the meeting.

Dr. Yetunde Alozie