



Development of Codex Food Standards Fundamental to International Trade and Food Safety

Kenya has been selected to champion the FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa, comprising 49 countries. This provides the opportunity to champion Codex standards that will enhance participation in international trade and improve food safety.

Kenya's Journey to Codex Alimentarius Commission

Kenya has been one of the governmental Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) bodies since 1969, and was FAO/WHO Coordinator for Africa from 1983 to 1985. We launched our National Codex Executive Committee in 2007.

As a country, we have been participating actively in developing Codex Food Standards in the 23 Codex technical Committees nationally and internationally as a member in the Commission.

In a world that is marked by complex and evolving trends, standards become powerful tools to lead positive change by detailing specifications that can open up global markets. They create enabling business environments, spur economic growth and drive our country's industrialisation agenda.

Not only are standards good for trade, but they also make it easy for people around the world to work together.

The recently launched Kenya's Industrial Transformation Programme (KITP) is a demonstration of the government's commitment to transform Kenya into a newly industrialising middle-income country providing a high-quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030. KITP also aims to accelerate the development of critical industries that will drive Kenya's development agenda. It puts Kenya on a path to become a hub for manufacturing in Eastern Africa. Standards are key to the achievement of this goal.

Africa is in a development trajectory. The continent's economy is growing at an average of five per cent per year, and the middle income group is expanding. Africa's agricultural potential is largely untapped, with approximately 60 per cent of the world's non-cultivated arable land found in the sub-Saharan.

A few countries have well-established farming, food manufacturing and retail sectors that cater for both the domestic and international markets. These sectors have grown substantially within a relatively short time due to the strong support they have received through appropriate policies and the implementation of appropriate food safety standards. The result has been successful access to regional and international markets.

Therefore, the adoption of set standards is significant for Africa's industrialisation agenda. They provide the assurance that the end user of a product/service desires.

Standards and quality infrastructure ensure that importers, exporters, shipping lines, clearing and forwarding agents and government agents are cognizant of the values that must be adhered to.

The world relies on various standards and technical regulations for trade related activities. For Kenyan products to be competitive in the regional and global markets, the country must adhere to these standards.

The success story of Kenya's food export industry illustrates how adopting international standards can serve as a catalyst for trade and an opportunity to redefine the industry's comparative advantage.

Standards and Trade Facilitation

The ability to comply with product standards is an important factor in determining access to markets, and more broadly, the



Adan Mohamed
Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Investment and Trade

capacity of countries to export and involve smallholder farmers in commercial supply chains. This is true for both mandatory regulations set by governments to meet their objectives regarding health, safety, and the environment, and for market-driven standards set within the private sector.

Kenya's National Codex Committee will be used to address the problems of food safety in our industries and subsequently food trade between Kenya and her partners.

Kenya's food industry is highly advanced and continues to make significant contribution to the regional and international trade. Controlling food safety by adopting Codex Food Hygiene standards as a national standard is possible. It can significantly improve health and reduce the occurrence of food and water-borne diseases.

By taking the lead in Codex Standards settings meetings, the Kenya Food Industry will secure their position in the world market and stimulate action on regulatory issues. If they fail to participate, they may find themselves responding to innovations introduced by competitors and having to comply with the imposed standards specifications, to retain market share.

Significance of the Codex Food Standards in relation to the WTO TBT Agreement

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement acknowledges the importance of harmonising standards internationally so as to minimise or eliminate the risk of becoming barriers to trade. The WTO TBT Agreement seeks to ensure that technical regulations and standards, including packaging, marking and labelling requirements, and analytical procedures for assessing conformity with technical regulations and standards, do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (WTO-SPS) recognises Standards and guidelines established by CAC as reference in international food trade.

As Kenya takes on the mantle of coordinating food standards in Africa, we undertake as a government to support this activity.

Kenya joins the rest of Africa and the International Community in celebrating the handing over of the FAO/WHO Africa Region Codex Coordinating Committee chairmanship from Cameroon to Kenya. I hail the assistance that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Codex Secretariat have invested in this endeavour.

The Agriculture Sector is the backbone of Kenya's economy and the source of livelihood for a majority of the rural population. The sector contributes about 26 per cent of the country's GDP, and employs 75 percent of the population. Agricultural produce exports account for nearly two thirds of total domestic export. Supporting this sector therefore leads to securing most livelihoods in Kenya.

The goal of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is to achieve an Innovative and Commercially Oriented and Competitive Agriculture supported by food safety and increased agricultural market access, among other strategic objectives.

My ministry has made steps towards enhancing market access through strengthening food safety infrastructures. This is exemplified by the development of market infrastructures through Small Holder Horticulture Programme, promotion of aquaculture production and construction of modern fish mini-processing/storage facilities.

The Ministry has facilitated new export markets for meat and milk through the development of abattoirs and milk cooling plants that are in line with international food safety protocols.

The handing over of the Coordinator of the FAO/WHO Codex Committee for Africa (CCAfrica) to Kenya comes at a time when the Government is focused on improving consumer health and fair trade practices in food.

The production and consumption of food is central to any society, and has economic, social and environmental consequences. Protection of human, animal and plant health in today's global food market is a challenge that must be addressed through internationally recognised health and food safety systems. Such systems should ensure that consumers are informed and protected from the risk of food-borne illnesses. These systems should ensure that foods and feeds produced, handled, stored, processed and distributed are safe, wholesome and fit for consumption.

Kenya's agricultural, livestock and fisheries exports have a potential to



Mr Willy Bett
Cabinet Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

double their value by adopting and implementing Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) standards. The overall benefit is improved livelihoods.

The WTO vide the Agreement of Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (WTO-SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO-TBT) reference the international standards set by the WTO for Animal Health, International Plant Protection Convention and Codex. This underscores the pre-eminence of the Codex system in food standards development in the global commerce.

The Government of Kenya will continue to work closely with the global fraternity through active participation in the Codex process to ensure that the expectation of Kenya and Africa are realised.

The Government will play its role to support the strategic objectives of CAC by developing and implementing policies, such as Veterinary Policy, Agricultural Policy and Fisheries Policy. The appropriate technical standards will be legislated and the Codes of Practice and guidelines put in place.

To ensure inclusivity, the industry ought to exploit the opportunity availed by CCAfrica to improve the standards of their food safety systems along the food chain – from production to processing and distribution. This is an obligation that should be observed. A miss-step can be fatal.

Consumers are encouraged to ensure they source food from credible and trusted outlets. I commend the efforts of the CAC, FAO, WHO, CCAfrica in their drive to make food safe for all.



Mr Julius Korir
Principal Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Investment and Trade

Kenya Ready to Champion Food Standards in Africa

Today, we celebrate the official handing over of FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa from Cameroon to Kenya. At the same time, Kenya will participate in the awareness event scheduled for tomorrow, February 25, 2016, on the contribution of the Codex Alimentarius in food quality, safety and fair food trade.

The State Department of Industry is elated at

the selection of Kenya as the coordinating country for the FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. Kenya is now poised to identify and define needs of all African Codex member countries concerning food safety standards and control.

Standardisation has contributed

immensely to building robust economies at national, regional and global levels. The functions performed by standards institutions such as KEBS and Codex in specifying hygienic food production practices and instituting guidelines for safe levels of contaminants in foods, have been instrumental in safeguarding consumer health and the environment,

and in facilitating trade.

These efforts tie squarely with the Ministry's main agenda of driving Kenya towards becoming a primary food hub of Africa. The programme is guided by Kenya's Vision 2030, the country's economic development



We are Ready to Champion Food Standards in Africa

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blueprint that aims to transform it into a newly industrialising "middle-income country providing a high-quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030". Leveraging Kenya's agro-based activities is one of the identified ways of achieving this goal.

Kenya's rich equatorial climate and abundant arable land gives us considerable agricultural potential. The country possesses 57 million hectares of arable land. There is significant potential to improve farming, particularly for high value crops for agro-processing. This is underscored by the efforts championed by KEBS of providing food standards to make Kenya a force to reckon with globally.

Kenya's experience as seen in the horticulture and fish sub-sectors shows that well-coordinated food safety management systems that involve all stakeholders in the supply chain is necessary for the management of risks.

Development of standards must involve all stakeholders, including regulatory and research agencies, producers, consumers, universities, professionals and other interested parties. The stakeholders provide expertise and information necessary to build consensus on national standards development.

In developing standards, priority for reference is given to relevant Codex and other international standards to provide the baseline information on which national standards may be adopted or adapted. Other reference materials include regional and other national standards, laws and regulations.

The main purpose of making such references is to harmonise national standards with other standards and technical regulations in order to protect the consumer and promote fair trade. However, the concept of making reference to standards in regulations is still new, and regulations are yet to make reference to national standards. Therefore, there is a need for sensitisation to create awareness on the importance of technical regulations and harmonised implementation of food safety standards and regulations.

KEBS has adopted over 200 Codex Food Standards and several codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and facilitate trade. Most of these guide on hygiene practices, good food handling and manufacturing practices. Kenya has even developed standards for street foods and codes of practice for catering establishments that incorporate food kiosks.

It is time all relevant stakeholders got involved, including county authorities at the grassroots, to enable all Kenyans to access safe foods from catering establishments, cottage industries and so on. We need to be sure that common foods such as "sukuma wiki" (collard greens) are safe for consumption.

Government regulators and agencies are keen to play their role in enforcing codes of practice to ensure food is produced in a safe manner. Through use of approved inputs, Kenya's produce will become more competitive in the international market.

KEBS to Steer Kenya's Role as Africa's Codex Food Coordinating Secretariat



Charles Ongwae
Managing Director, Kenya Bureau of Standards

I take great pleasure in joining Kenyans during this ceremonial handing over of this very important FAO/WHO African Regional Codex Coordination for food standard programme from the Republic of Cameroon to Kenya.

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is the Codex Contact Point, and consequently links Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) Secretariat in Rome with Kenya in regard to any CAC activities, such as drafting Codex food standards and related text development.

KEBS is currently spearheading five Codex Food standards for

Africa's interest as approved at the CAC meeting in July 2015. We are also working on some new justification for Codex food standards.

Kenya has been effectively participating in international Codex food and feed Committees meetings, using the occasions to table the country's position on the various commodities. Among the committees Kenya participates in include those on Fish and Fisheries Products, Methods of Analysis and Sampling, Pesticide in Food, Veterinary Residues in Foods, Food Hygiene, Export, Import and Certification Service, Food Additives, Food Contaminants, Processed Fruits and Vegetables, and others.

The participation in these Codex meetings by stakeholders is important in ensuring that local Standards or adopted Codex Standards keep abreast with changing technologies, new scientific discoveries and emerging innovations.

As the new Codex coordinator for Africa, Kenya will be responsible for defining concerns regarding food standards and food control of all Codex member countries in the continent.

As regional coordinator, Kenya will embrace open dialogue and excellent inter-regional collaboration to ensure

Africa's interests are well articulated globally.

Through KEBS, Kenya adopts 90 per cent of Codex standards. These are implemented as national standards to ensure safety of food for consumers. Food products are tested for microbiological parameters, chemical contaminants, heavy metals, storage specifications and expiry dates.

KEBS Milestones

Since Kenya became a member of Codex, KEBS has adopted over 200 Codex Food Standards and several codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and to facilitate trade.

Codex Food standards are also used when harmonising standards within Regional Economic Communities, such as EAC, COMESA, SADC etc.

With Kenya being the coordinating country, our goal will be to ensure we harmonise our standards as a region in line with the international food standards (Codex Alimentarius Standards) recognised by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Multilateral standards serve as reference for developing regional and national standards. The development of national regulations and standards

(just like the making of regional standards) shall in the first instance be guided by relevant multilateral standards set by bodies such as Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The same applies for regional standards guiding the development of national standards and regulations. Such references are meant to harmonise regional and national standards with a view to facilitating trade.

KEBS, which is the link between Kenya and the CAC, works with various agencies, such as Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), Department of Public Health (DPH), Weights and Measures Department (WMD), Government Chemist, Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), Kenya Dairy Board (KDB), and Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA), among others

KEBS, the National Codex Secretariat and the host to the National Codex Contact Point in Kenya promise to improve the facilitation of fair practice trade and co-ordination of the codex food standards development and related texts.

Congratulations Kenya on Appointment as FAO/WHO CCAfrica Coordinator



Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Lic. in Law, MSc, Cert. Human Nutr.
Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is the intergovernmental food standards-setting body. It was established in 1963 by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) with the mandate to develop harmonised food safety and quality standards aimed at protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

Currently, CAC has **188 Members**, made up of 187 Member Countries spread around the world and one Member Organisation (the European Union). South Sudan is the most recent Member Country to have joined the CAC in October 2015. Today, the **Codex African Region has 49 Member Countries**.

There are also **234** intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that enjoy observer status in Codex.

Implementing Codex standards helps to protect consumers' health and promotes access to regional and international food markets. Indeed, compliance with Codex and international food safety and quality standards is a prerequisite to international food trade.

The FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa (**CCAfrica**) was established in **1974**. Over the years, CCAfrica has been chaired by Ghana, Senegal, Kenya,

Egypt, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Morocco and Cameroon. Let me take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all the former CCAfrica Coordinators for their outstanding contributions to Codex work in Africa.

Kenya has once again been entrusted by the CAC to coordinate the Codex-related food safety and quality issues in this very big, heterogeneous and diverse region. I congratulate Kenya on this achievement, and I look forward to working closely with the country in this very important regional coordination task.

Kenya Already at Work as Africa Codex Coordinator a Second Time



Dr Moses Gichia
FAO/WHO Africa Region Codex Coordinator

Kenya has been a member of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) since 1969, and joined the Africa Region Codex Coordinating Committee (CCAfrica) at its inception in 1974. The country served as its Coordinator from 1983 to 1985.

The current selection of Kenya

as coordinator for CCAfrica is thus its second opportunity at the prestigious responsibility. It was initiated at the 21st Session of the CCAfrica meeting held in January 2015 in Yaounde, Cameroon, and confirmed by the 38th Session of CAC held in July 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. This effectively elevated Kenya to the rank of Africa's representative in the Codex Executive Committee.

Kenya's leadership of CCAfrica comes at a time of increased competitive trade in food as a commodity, and existence of unfair global trade practices. As Coordinator for Africa, Kenya will be expected to undertake the following key duties:

- Define the concerns of the region regarding food standards and food control.
- Promote mutual exchange of information on proposed

regulatory initiatives and problems arising from food control, and stimulate the strengthening of food control infrastructure;

- Recommend to CAC, the development of worldwide standards for products of interest to the region, including products considered by the Committee to have an international market potential in the future.
- Promote the development of regional standards for food products moving within the region in intra-regional trade in line with Codex standards.
- Draw the attention of the Commission to any aspects of work of particular significance to Africa.

Kenya has already commenced its work as the Coordinator by:

- Championing development of three Regional Standards, namely on Shea butter, fermented cooked cassava and Gnetum. A regional standard on Dried Meats is also being developed.
- Cooperating with WHO to develop guidelines on Safer Foods for All towards reducing food-borne diseases.
- Getting involved in FAO's drive to strengthen Codex Structures in Swaziland, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.
- Encouraging African scientists to participate in FAO/WHO Scientific bodies.