STANDARD SETTING PROCESS OF
THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
COMMISSION
(CAC)

A Handbook for Guidance of Participation of African Countries
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FOREWORD

This handbook was initiated under the Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard setting Organizations (PANSPSO) Project of AU-IBAR with the main aim of providing an easy to read guidance to African Member Countries and Observers of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and to help them to better understand the Codex Alimentarius Commission and thereby enhancing their participation in the activities and standard setting procedures of the Commission.

Much of the information contained in this Handbook is available in more details on the Codex Alimentarius Commission website http://www.codexalimentarius.org and in several other publication of the Commission including the Codex Procedural Manual and the booklet known as Understanding Codex. Similarly, the FAO/WHO Training Package “Enhancing participation in Codex activities” was extensively used in preparation of this handbook.

The main emphasis of this handbook is to introduce African Union Member Countries and Intergovernmental Organizations in Africa to the history, organization and activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission including its achievements, the process of setting, adoption and implementation of international standards for protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

African Union Member Countries are given guidance on how to best participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission first by establishing a national structure for coordinating activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the national level and applying for membership. Secondly African Union Member Countries are guided on how to prepare and participate in the sessions of the Codex Subsidiary Bodies and of the Commission.

Similarly, Intergovernmental Organizations in Africa including Regional Economic Communities are given guidance on how to best participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by applying for Observer Membership and actual participation in the meetings of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies.

The important role to be played by African Union Commission through the African Union Inter-
African Bureau for Animal Resources to assist Member Countries and the FAO/WHO Joint Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) to fulfill their roles as Delegates and to achieve the establishment of a common position for Africa in the standards setting process of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is also described in details.

It is trusted that this Handbook will assist African Union Member Countries, Intergovernmental Organizations in Africa and the FAO/WHO Joint Coordinating Committee to become better informed and help them to participate fully and with better understanding in the many activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank Dr Claude J.S. Mosha, consultant for AU-IBAR and author of this handbook, for his work.

Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy

Director of AU-IBAR
ABBREVIATIONS

AU  African Union
CAC/Codex  Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCEXEC  Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCAFRICA  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa
CCASIA  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCPC  Codex Committee on Cocoa Products and Chocolate
CCPL  Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes
CCEURO  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe
CCFA  Codex Committee on Food Additives
CCF  Codex Committee on Contaminants
CCFFP  Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products
CCFFV  Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
CCFH  Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCFICS  Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems
CCFL  Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCFO  Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
CCGP  Codex Committee on General Principles
CCCLAC  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
CCMAS  Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling
CCMH  Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene
CCMMP  Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
CCNASWP  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the Southwest Pacific
CCNEA  FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCNFSDU  Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
CCNMW  Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters
CCPFV  Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables
CCPR  Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
CCRVDF  Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods
CCS  Codex Committee on Sugars
CCVP  Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins
CL  Circular letter
CRD  Conference room document
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
JECFA  Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives
<table>
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<td>OIE</td>
<td>World Organisation for Animal Health</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures</td>
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<td>TBT</td>
<td>Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade</td>
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I. DESCRIPTION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

1.1 History of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Food safety and quality control can be traced back to the early civilizations and gradually evolving into the contemporary international food standards. A number of examples can be mentioned. Assyrian tablets described the method to be used in determining the correct weights and measures for food grains. Egyptian scrolls prescribed the labelling to be applied to certain foods. In the year 300 before the Christian era, the Indian statesman Kautilya referred to food quality control measures in his writings. There is other evidence of food control systems to protect consumers from fraud or bad produce in ancient Greece and Rome, and in England in the Middle Ages.

Modern civilization saw increased interest in international food trade. The growth of international trade at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was hindered by the proliferation of national food standards with divergent and contradictory criteria. To address this situation, there was an international call for FAO and WHO to start pursuing joint activities in 1950, when joint expert meetings on nutrition, food additives and related areas were started. One of the factors driving this initiative was the proliferation of chemical additives which was deemed as an essential aspect to be evaluated to ensure the safety of food.

In 1961, at the initiative of the Regional Conference for Europe and with the support of WHO, the FAO Conference approved the establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program. Subsequently, the World Health Assembly ratified the Joint Food Standards Program and created the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In 1963 the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission were approved, marking the starting point for the organization’s work.

The term “Codex Alimentarius” is a Latin term and means “food code”. Its use in modern international food standardization is also historical and can be traced back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which between 1897 and 1911, developed, a collection of standards and product descriptions for a wide variety of foods. This was known as the “Codex Alimentarius Austriacus”. Although lacking legal force, it was used as a reference by the courts to determine standards of identity for specific foods. Thus, in modern understanding, the “Codex Alimentarius” is a collection of written codes of international food standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and for use by all nations.
1.2. What is the Codex Alimentarius Commission?
The Codex Alimentarius Commission, frequently referred to simply as “Codex”, is a Joint FAO/WHO Commission which was formed by resolutions passed by the Eleventh Session of the FAO Conference in 1961 and the Sixteenth World Health Assembly in 1963 to implement a Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme which includes development of harmonised international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. The Commission also promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is established as an intergovernmental body with membership open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards. Regional economic integration organizations that are members of either FAO or WHO can also become members and special rules apply. Similarly, observers from other UN Organizations, IGOs and NGOs may participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission following special rules. By June 2013, the Codex Alimentarius Commission had: 186 Codex Members including 185 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (EU); and 220 Codex Observers including 50 International Governmental Organizations (IGOs), 154 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and 16 United Nations Organizations.

1.3 Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
The original Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission were adopted in 1961 by the 11th Session of the FAO Conference and in May 1963 by the 16th Session of the World Health Assembly. These Statutes which were again Revised in 1966 and 2006, provide the legal basis for the Commission’s work, and formally reflect the concepts behind and reasons for its establishment. They consist of ten Articles, which are summarized below. The full text can be found in the Codex Procedural Manual.

Article 1 – Mandate
a. Protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.
b. Coordinating all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.
c. Determining priorities and initiating and guiding the preparation of draft standards.
Standard Setting Process of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

d. Finalizing standards and publishing them in a Codex Alimentarius either as regional or worldwide standards.
e. Amending published standards, after appropriate survey in the light of developments.

Article 2 – Membership
Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO that are interested in international food standards. Membership shall comprise such of these nations as have notified the Director-General of FAO or of WHO of their desire to be considered as Members. It should also be noted that membership is limited to countries only – the exception being regional economic integration organizations (e.g. the European Community).

Article 3 – Observers (FAO or WHO Member Nations)
Any Member Nation or Associate Member of FAO or WHO which is not a Member of the Commission but has a special interest in the work of the Commission may, upon a request communicated to the Director-General of FAO or WHO, attend sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies and ad hoc meetings as observers.

Members of either FAO or of WHO that do not wish to become full Members of the Commission are permitted to attend Codex sessions as observers. As observers, they may address the Commission but cannot vote. Observers identified in Articles 3 and 4 should not be confused with international organizations that have been granted observer status under the Rules of Procedure.

Article 4 – Observers (other UN Member Nations)
Nations that, while not Member Nations or Associate Members of FAO or WHO, are Members of the United Nations, may be invited on their request to attend meetings of the Commission as observers, in accordance with the provisions of FAO and WHO relating to the granting of observer status to nations.

Article 5 – Reports and recommendations
The Commission shall report and make recommendations to the FAO Conference and the World Health Assembly of WHO through their respective Directors-General. Copies of reports, including any conclusions and recommendations, are circulated to interested Member Nations and international organizations.
Article 6 – Executive Committee
The Commission shall establish an Executive Committee whose composition should ensure an adequate representation of the various geographical areas of the world to which the Members of the Commission belong. Between sessions, the Executive Committee shall act as the executive organ of the Commission.

Article 7 – Other subsidiary bodies
The Commission may establish such other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the accomplishment of its task, subject to the availability of the necessary funds. This article provides the Commission with the authority to create the various committees and task forces necessary to elaborate standards.

Article 8 – Rules of Procedure
The Commission may adopt and amend its own Rules of Procedure that shall come into force upon approval by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO, subject to such confirmation as may be prescribed by the procedures of these Organizations.

Article 9 – Expenses (Commission and subsidiary bodies)
The operating expenses of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies, other than those for which a Member has accepted the Chair, shall be borne by the budget of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, which shall be administered by FAO on behalf of the two Organizations in accordance with the financial regulations of FAO. The Directors-General of FAO and WHO shall jointly determine the respective portion of the costs of the Programme to be borne by each Organization and prepare the corresponding annual expenditure estimates for inclusion in the regular budgets of the two Organizations for approval by the appropriate governing bodies.

Article 10 – Expenses (preparatory work)
All expenses (including those relating to meetings, documents and interpretation) involved in preparatory work on draft standards undertaken by Members of the Commission, either independently or upon recommendation of the Commission, shall be defrayed by the government concerned. Within the approved budgetary estimates the Commission may recommend, however, that a specified part of the costs of the preparatory work undertaken by the government on behalf of the Commission be recognized as operating expenses of the Commission.
1.4 Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Codex Alimentarius Commission being an intergovernmental body, has well defined Rules of Procedure which provide for:

i. conditions of membership of the Commission;

ii. conditions for member organizations

iii. appointment of Commission officers, including the chairperson, three vice chairpersons,

iv. appointment of regional coordinators and a secretary, and prescribe their responsibilities;

v. establishment of an Executive Committee which meets between Commission sessions and acts on behalf of the Commission as its executive organ;

vi. frequency and operation of Commission sessions;

vii. nature of agendas for Commission sessions;

viii. voting procedures;

ix. observers;

x. preparation of Commission records and reports;

xi. establishment of subsidiary bodies;

xii. procedures to be adopted in the elaboration of standards;

xiii. allocation of a budget and estimates of expenditure;

xiv. languages used by the Commission;

xv. amendments and suspension implementation of rules; and

xvi. entry into Force of Commission’s rules of procedures after approval by Directors- General of FAO and WHO, subject to such confirmation as may be prescribed by the procedures of the two Organizations.

1.5 Structure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Codex Alimentarius Commission has 10 clearly defined structures which include:

i. Commission;

ii. Executive Committee;

iii. Codex Secretariat;

iv. Codex Contact Points;

v. National Codex Committees;

vi. Subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;

vii. Bodies providing scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission;

viii. Members;

ix. Observers; and

x. The General public
1.5.1 Commission

The Commission is the decision-making body of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The First Session of the Commission was held in Rome, Italy from 25 June - 3 July 1963 and it was attended by representatives from 31 countries. These countries were Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America and Yugoslavia. Subsequent Commission sessions have alternated between Rome, Italy where FAO headquarters is located, and Geneva, Switzerland where WHO headquarters is located.

Membership of the Commission increased from 31 attending member countries in 1963 to 185 member countries and 1 Member Organization (EU) in 2013. Only one country from Africa, that is South Africa was represented in the First Session. However, the Commission now has 53 member countries from the African continent which became members at the years shown in Table 1.

Codex Alimentarius Commission celebrated its 50th Anniversary in July 2013 during its 36th Session held in Rome, Italy from 1 to 5 July 2013. The FAO and WHO Directors-General and national governments united in their praise for its benefits which include having established more than 200 food standards and more than 100 guidelines and codes of practice for food production and processing. Maximum permissible levels have been established for thousands of food additives, contaminants, pesticides and veterinary drug residues.

The Codex Commission currently meets annually, but from the 26th session, it is empowered to decide the frequency of its meetings at each of its sessions, bearing in mind the workload on its agenda. During the Commission’s annual meetings, it adopts decisions with respect to standards, guidelines and recommendations, as well as decisions on the management policy of the Commission and of the subsidiary bodies and on its relationship to other international organizations; it also make amendments to its operating mechanisms, and it elects its authorities.
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*They belong to the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNEA)

Source: Codex Procedural Manual, 21st Edition

1.5.2 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Commission (CCEXEC) is a Committee of 17 members formed by the Commission. The members include a chairperson and three vice-chairpersons elected from among the delegates of the Members of the Commission for a period commencing at the end of the session in which they were elected until the end of the following regular session. These officers can be re-elected for a maximum of one additional term.

Since it was formed, there have been Chairpersons elected from Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania (United Republic of), Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Africa chaired the Commission for the first time when Dr. Claude John Shara Mosha of Tanzania was elected at the end of the 28th Session in 2005 until the end of the 30th session of Commission in 2008.
Vice-chairpersons have been elected from Australia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Senegal, the Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Other members of CCEXEC include one member country elected from each of the following seven geographic locations: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and the Southwest Pacific. Each Member may be accompanied by not more than two advisers from the region. However, these advisers do not address the sessions of the Executive Committee. Members elected from the regions hold office from the end of the session at which they were elected until the end of the second two regular sessions of the Commission, and may be elected for an additional term of two sessions. Members are ineligible for re-election after having served two consecutive terms.

The regional coordinators for the six regions (for coordination purposes, the regions of North America and the Southwest Pacific are combined) are also Members of the Executive Committee. Coordinators may hold office from the end of the session of the Commission at which they are appointed until not later than the end of the third succeeding regular session. After serving two consecutive terms, the coordinators are not eligible to hold office for the next succeeding term. The role of the regional coordinators is to coordinate the views of the region in the preparation of draft standards, guidelines and other recommendations for submission to the Commission. They also assist the Executive Committee and the Commission as required, by advising them of the views of the region on matters under discussion or of interest.

CCEXEC is chaired by the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and meets between Commission sessions acting as the executive organ of the Commission, making recommendations about the general direction of the Commission’s work including management of the standards development process. In particular, the functions of CCEXEC include:

i. conducting a critical review of Codex work;
ii. paying particular attention to requests for new work;
iii. presenting proposals to the Commission on the general direction of its activities;
iv. studying special problems relating to standards development, and also problems that may arise in the various Codex regions relating to standards
development; and
v. handling the strategic planning of the Codex Commission.

The Executive Committee is also involved in the program budget and examines other questions submitted to it by FAO or WHO.

The Executive Committee has no decision-making power on actions of the Codex Commission, as its function is basically to assist the Commission in its work and to make suggestions and recommendations to enhance the working efficiency of the Commission and of the Directors General of FAO and WHO.

1.5.3 Codex Secretariat
The Codex Secretariat is located at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is elected through an open, worldwide search by the Directors General of FAO and WHO. The Secretary has a small team of professional and technical staff to assist him/her in his/her work collectively responsible for the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The Secretary report to the Director-General of FAO through the Director, Food and Nutrition Division in Rome and to the Director-General of WHO through the Director, Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases in Geneva.

The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee, and also supervises the work of the Codex committees hosted by governments for the purpose of preparing and distributing documents to the Codex contact points in each country, and to the observers.

The Secretariat collaborates in such matters as the calendar and place of meetings, distribution of invitations to members to attend meetings, finalizing the program and documentation for meetings, making arrangements to keep the minutes of meetings, sending all Codex Members the documents that are to be dealt with, and organizing all the details of the meetings held in Rome or Geneva, by either the Executive Committee or the Codex Commission.

The Codex Secretariat is the great “communicator” of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by providing guidance to countries seeking information, makes the Commission’s decisions on standards available to all interested parties, distributes circular letters and negotiating documents, and prepares texts to guide the work of the organization.
**1.5.4 Codex Contact Points**

The Commission recommends the establishment of a Codex Contact Point (CCP) in every Codex member country in order to facilitate an efficient and effective communication and a good working relationship between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the government. The CCP serves as the official link between the Codex Alimentarius and the respective member country. In essence, the CCP serves as the official national communication agent (for and on behalf of the member country) to the Commission. This implies that all communications from the member country to the Commission and vice versa shall go through the CCP.

Just as the Codex Secretariat in Rome operates to facilitate the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, so does the CCP operate like the National Codex Secretariat. The CCP is a government ministry, department or organization coordinating the Codex activities within the country, and receives all Codex final texts (standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other advisory texts) and working documents of Codex sessions and ensure that they are circulated to those concerned within their own country.

The CCP shall be headed by a competent and knowledgeable person in matters relating to the Codex Alimentarius Commission’s objectives and functions. Additional staff can be hired as per the needs and capacities of each country. The person who leads the CCP shall also serve as the secretary to the National Codex Committee.

CCP does also send comments on Codex documents or proposals to the Codex Alimentarius Commission or its subsidiary bodies and/or the Codex Secretariat. Some of the coordination activities to be done by the CCP at the country level include working in close cooperation with the national Codex committee, where such a committee has been established and liaising with the food industry, consumers, traders and all other concerned to ensure that the government is provided with an appropriate balance of policy and technical advice upon which to base decisions relating to issues raised in the context of the Codex work.

CCP is the channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex Members. It also receives the invitation to Codex sessions and informs the relevant chairpersons and the Codex Secretariat of the names of participants from their own countries.
The CCP is expected to maintain a library of Codex final texts and promotes Codex activities throughout their own country.

All the 53 African Continent Codex Member Countries have designated CCPs and informed the Codex Secretariat.

The Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa has developed guidelines for establishment and organization of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Coordinating Committees in Africa under the title “REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES (AFRICA) CAC/GL 43R-2003”

1.5.5 **National Codex Committees**

Codex Alimentarius Commission by recognizing the fact that there are many stakeholders within any Codex member country whose interests and concerns need to be taken on board while taking decisions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings, encourages Codex member countries to establish National Codex Committees (NCCs). The primary objective of the NCC is to act as a consultative group to the government on matters related to Codex by providing a forum for discussions and for the formulation of the national position(s) and responses to Codex proposals or policy.

The NCC also enables stakeholders with no international affiliation or exposure to represent their interests, or those groups unable to attend the international meetings to have an opportunity to discuss the meetings’ agenda items with their national delegation.

Representatives from all relevant national bodies, including consumers organisations, business associations and other relevant stakeholders in the country should be invited to attend the National Codex Committee in order to expose their views for consideration and inclusion in the national negotiating position.

1.5.6 **Subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission**

To implement the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, the Commission is empowered to establish subsidiary bodies which include:

i. Codex Committees;

ii. Regional Coordinating Committees;

iii. Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces;

iv. Physical Working Groups; and
Codex Committees prepare draft standards for submission to the Commission. Membership of Codex Committees is open to Members of the Commission who have notified the Director-General of FAO or WHO of their desire to be considered as members thereof or to selected members designated by the Commission.

Any other Member of the Commission or any Member or Associate Member of FAO or WHO which has not become a Member of the Commission may participate as an observer at any Codex Committee if it has notified the Director-General of FAO or WHO of its wish to do so. Such countries may participate fully in the discussions of the Committee and shall be provided with the same opportunities as other Members to express their point of view (including the submission of memoranda), but without the right to vote or to move motions either of substance or of procedure. International organizations which have formal relations with either FAO or WHO are also invited to attend in an observer capacity in sessions of those Codex Committees, which are of interest to them.

The Committees are hosted by member countries, which are chiefly responsible for the cost of the committees’ maintenance and administration and for providing chairpersons. The designation of host countries for the committees is a standing item on the agenda for the Commission.

Codex Committees can be differentiated into general subject committees and commodity committees. The General Subject Committees work on questions of general scope, applicable to all foods or food groups, and are therefore often called “horizontal committees”. General Subject Committees develop all-embracing concepts and principles applying to foods in general, specific foods or groups of foods; endorse or review relevant provisions in Codex commodity standards; and, based on the advice of expert scientific bodies, develop major recommendations pertaining to consumers’ health and safety.

General subject (Horizontal) committees include:

i. Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants;
ii. Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems;
iii. Codex Committee on Food Hygiene;
iv. Codex Committee on Food Labelling;
v. Codex Committee on General Principles;
vi. Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling;
vii. Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues;
viii. Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food; and
ix. Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses

The Commodity Committees develop standards for specific foods or classes of food and are sometimes referred to as “vertical committees”. Commodity Committees convene as necessary and go into recess or are abolished when the Commission decides their work has been completed. New Committees may be established on an ad hoc basis to cover specific needs for the development of new standards. There are currently (2013) four Commodity Committees that meet regularly and include:
i. Codex Committee on Fats and Oils hosted by Malaysia;
ii. Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products hosted by Norway;
iii. Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables hosted by Mexico; and
iv. Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables hosted by USA

The following six commodity committees have been adjourned sine die (not active) and include:
i. Cocoa Products and Chocolate hosted by Switzerland
ii. Cereals, Pulses and Legumes hosted by United States of America
iii. Meat Hygiene hosted by New Zealand
iv. Milk and Milk Products hosted by New Zealand
v. Natural Mineral Waters hosted by Switzerland
vi. Vegetable Proteins hosted by Canada

1.5.6.2 FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees

FAO/WHO coordinating committees are established by the Commission to provide forum through which regions or groups of countries coordinate food standards activities in the region, including the development of regional standards. Membership of Regional Coordinating Committees is open only to Members of the Commission belonging to the region or group of countries concerned. However, any other Member of the Commission or any Member or Associate Member of FAO or WHO which has not become a Member of the Commission may participate as an observer at any session of an FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee if it has notified the Director-General of FAO or WHO of its wish to do so.
Such countries may participate fully in the discussions of the Committee and shall be provided with the same opportunities as other Members of the region to express their point of view (including the submission of memoranda), but without the right to vote or to move motions either of substance or of procedure. International organizations which have formal relations with either FAO or WHO are also invited to attend in an observer capacity in sessions of those Codex Committees which are of interest to them.

Coordinating Committees play important role in ensuring that the work of the Commission is responsive to regional interests and to the concerns of developing countries. They normally meet at two-year intervals, with a good representation from the countries of their respective regions. Meeting reports are submitted to and discussed by the Commission.

These Committees have no standing host countries but are hosted by one of the member countries in each region that has indicated to the Committee the willingness to take on the responsibility. The country that hosts the Committee provides a chairperson of the Coordinating Committee who also becomes the Regional Coordinator for the region concerned.

There are six FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, one each for the following Codex regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, and North America and the Southwest Pacific.

Membership of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and/or WHO, which are members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, within the geographic location of the Codex regions.

The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa was established by the Commission during its 9th session of the Commission under Rule IX.1 (b) (2) (ALINORM 72/35, para 106). In that session of the Commission, Africa was represented by twelve countries namely Algeria, Burundi, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Zaire and Zambia.

The First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, from 24 to 27 June 1974. The Session was attended by participants from 13 countries namely Algeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and Upper Volta (Now Burkina Faso).
Participation in sessions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa has been increasing over the years from 13 countries in 1974 to 35 Member countries participating in the 20th session of the Committee held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in 2013 (REP13/AFRICA para 1). Several member countries have also hosted the Committee including Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana (x 2), Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

1.5.6.3 Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces

By virtue of Article 7 of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and Rule XI.1(b) of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission establishes Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces with specific mandates and for a limited period of time, normally not exceeding four years. As in the case of the horizontal and vertical committees, Codex task forces are hosted by a member country. Task forces are dissolved by the Commission once their work has been completed.

The Rules of Procedure of the Commission apply, mutatis mutandis, to Codex Committees, Coordinating Committees and ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces. The Guidelines applying to the conduct of Codex Committee sessions also apply to those of Codex Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces.

Task Forces are created to address emerging and new safety issues as well as issues relating to specific products that are not included in the mandate of any committee. In other cases, they can be created because the topic need to be dealt with by several committees, something that requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Task Forces fulfil the same function as a Codex committee, the only difference being that their mandate is established for a fixed period of time, and once they have completed their work they are dissolved. Examples of Task Forces formed and dissolved by the Commission include:

i. Animal Feeding hosted by Denmark (2000-2004) and Switzerland (since 2011);


iii. Fruit and Vegetable Juices hosted by Brazil;

iv. The Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods hosted by Thailand and

v. Antimicrobial Resistance hosted by Republic of Korea.
1.5.6.4 Physical Working Groups

Physical working groups are established by Codex Committees, Regional Coordinating Committees and by Codex Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces where there is consensus in the respective Committee or Task Force to do so. When establishing a physical working group, a Committee or Task Force ensures, as far as possible, that the membership is representative of the membership of the Commission. Participation in physical working groups by Commission members or observers is by notification to the chairperson of the Committee and to the host country secretariat of the Committee.

The terms of reference of physical working groups are established by the Committee during its plenary session, limited to the immediate task at hand and normally are not subsequently modified. The terms of reference state clearly the objective(s) to be achieved by the establishment of the physical working group and the language(s) to be used. Interpretation and translation services are provided in all languages of the Committee, unless decided otherwise by the Committee. The terms of reference also state the time frame by which the work is expected to be completed.

Sessions of physical working groups may be held at any time, in-between two sessions or in conjunction with the sessions of the Committees, which established them. When convened in-between two sessions of a Committee, the session of the physical working group is scheduled as to allow the physical working group to report to the Committee well in advance of the next meeting so that countries and other interested parties, that were not members of the physical working group, can comment on the proposals that the physical working group might put to the Committee. When convened during a session of a Committee, a physical working group is scheduled so as to allow participation of all delegations present at the session.

The proposals/recommendations of a physical working group are presented to the Committee for consideration and are not binding on the Committee as no decision, nor vote, either on point of substance or of procedure, take place in physical working groups on behalf of the Committee.

Physical working groups are dissolved after the specified work has been completed or when the time limit allocated for the work has expired or at any other point in time, if the Codex Committees which established them, so decide.
1.5.6.5 Electronic Working Groups

The introduction of electronic working groups was prompted by the search for worldwide consensus and for greater acceptability of Codex standards by the involvement of all the members of Codex and the active participation of developing countries. Increased use of written communications, especially through remote participation via email, internet and other modern technologies in the work done between sessions of Codex Subsidiary bodies is expected to enhance the participation of developing countries in work of Codex Committees. For this reason, Codex subsidiary bodies are expected to give first priority to considering the establishment of electronic working groups when deciding to undertake work between sessions.

When establishing an electronic working group, a Committee or Task Force ensures, as far as possible, that the membership is representative of the membership of the Commission. Participation in an electronic working group by Commission members or observers is by notification to the chairperson of the Committee and to the host country secretariat of the Committee. Similarly, observers notify the chairperson of the Committee and the host country secretariat of the Committee, of their wish to participate in an electronic working group. Observers may participate in all the activities of an electronic working group, unless otherwise specified by Committee members.

An electronic working group business is transacted exclusively by electronic means by the Secretariat of the host country. The Host therefore, provides the secretariat of the electronic working group with all services needed for its functioning, including suitable Information Technology (IT) equipment, and any other requirements agreed upon by the Committee.

The terms of reference of an electronic working group are established by the Committee during its plenary session, limited to the immediate task at hand and normally are not subsequently modified. The terms of reference state clearly the objective(s) to be achieved by the establishment of the electronic working group and the language(s) to be used. Interpretation and translation services are provided in all languages of the Committee, unless decided otherwise by the Committee. The terms of reference also state the time frame by which the work is expected to be completed.

A notice indicating when the electronic working group starts to operate and a programme of work is prepared, translated and distributed by the Host to all Members and Observers who have expressed the willingness to contribute.
Circulation of drafts and calls for comments include a request for the names, positions and e-mail addresses of all the persons willing to contribute to the business of the electronic working group. Comments from participants are submitted exclusively by electronic means. These submissions are circulated to all concerned by the Host. Every participant is made aware of the materials contributed by all others.

An update on the progress of its work shall be presented by the Host at each session of the Codex Committee which has established it, indicating the number of countries having sent contributions by mail. A compilation of these contributions is made available.

As soon as possible after the end of the business of an electronic working group, the secretariat of the Host sends a copy of the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document and of the list of participants to the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the Committee. The conclusions of an electronic working group and the list of participants are distributed to Codex Contact Points and observers by the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the electronic working group’s recommendations.

The conclusions of electronic working groups are presented to the Committee for consideration and are not binding on the Committee as no decision, nor vote, either on point of substance or of procedure, take place in electronic working groups on behalf of the Committee.

An electronic working group is dissolved after the specified work has been completed or when the time limit allocated for the work has expired or at any other point in time, if the Codex Committee which has established it, so decides.

1.5.7 Bodies providing scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is science based and follows the principles of risk analysis. The Commission is the risk manager as such the Codex committees, when developing standards rely on independent scientific advice provided by bodies not officially part of the Codex Alimentarius Commission structure. These bodies are constituted jointly by FAO and WHO and provide expert scientific advice on many aspects of food quality, safety and nutrition relevant to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission following a request from the Commission itself or from any of its subsidiary
It is due to its scientific basis that Codex texts are considered by WTO as the international reference for food safety standards.

The Joint FAO/WHO Bodies providing scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission include the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA); the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR); the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA); and Other Expert Groups Meetings organized by FAO and WHO for the purpose of providing scientific advice to the Commission.

1.5.7.1 Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)
The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) is an international expert scientific committee administered jointly by FAO and WHO. JECFA serves as an independent scientific committee which performs risk assessments and provides advice to FAO, WHO and the member countries of both organizations. The requests for scientific advice are for the main part channelled through the Codex Alimentarius Commission in their work to develop international food standards and guidelines under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

1.5.7.2 Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
The Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues provide independent scientific expert advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Committee on Pesticide Residues. FAO and WHO maintain separate websites highlighting the work of the JMPR from the points of view of the two parent Organizations.

1.5.7.3 Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment provide independent scientific expert advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its specialist Committees.

1.5.7.4 Other FAO/WHO scientific advice
FAO/WHO Expert Consultations provide independent scientific expert advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its specialist Committees and Task Forces on matters not falling directly under the other three FAO/WHO bodies above.
1.5.8 Members
As explained earlier on, membership of the Commission is open to all member nations and associate members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards. Article 2 of its Statutes that states: Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards. Membership shall comprise such of these nations as have notified the Director-General of FAO or of WHO of their desire to be considered as Members. Regional economic integration organizations that are members of either FAO or WHO can also become members and special rules apply.

Therefore, a country that wishes to become a Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission communicates this desire by means of a letter addressed to the Director-General of either FAO or WHO. The letter is signed by a suitably senior official, for example a minister or head of agency, and include the name and contact information of the designated Codex Contact Point (including an e-mail address and national Codex Web site where applicable). A copy of the letter is copied to the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Box 1 provides a sample of the application form obtained from the Codex Secretariat to be completed and appended to the official letter of request for membership.

Currently (2013) the Codex Alimentarius Commission has 186 Codex members including 185 member countries and 1 member organization (EU). Fifty three of the 54 members of African Union are members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Out of the 53 members, four countries belong to the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East while the rest belong to the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa as can be seen in Appendix I. Appendix I include the dates the different countries became independent and the dates they accessed to the Commission (see also Table 1).

1.5.9 Observers
1.5.9.1 Observer nations
According to Codex Rule IX, any member nation and any associate member of FAO or WHO which is not a member of the Commission but has a special interest in the work of the Commission, may, upon request communicated to the Director-General of FAO or WHO, attend sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies as an observer. It may submit memoranda and participate without vote in the discussion.
African Union - Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

A Handbook for Guidance of Participation of African Countries

Nations which, while not member nations or associate members of FAO or WHO but are members of the United Nations, may, upon their request and subject to the provisions relating to the granting of observer status to nations adopted by the Conference of FAO and the World Health Assembly, be invited to attend in an observer capacity sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies. The status of nations invited to such sessions is governed by the relevant provisions adopted by the Conference of FAO. To request an invitation interested Nations write to the Codex Secretariat at least one month before the session.

1.5.9.2 Observer organizations

Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) may attend sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies as observers upon requesting for invitation from the Directors-General of FAO or WHO. However, the participation of intergovernmental

Box 1: Application Form for Codex Alimentarius Commission Membership

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

The Government of ________________________________ has the honour to inform the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Director-General of the World Health Organization that, in accordance with Article 2 of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, it wishes to be considered as a Member.

1. A list of the subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is given overleaf. All invitations to sessions of these subsidiary bodies are sent to Member Governments of FAO and WHO. Documentation relating to these sessions is sent to all designated Codex Contact Points.

2. Please advise if a National Codex Committee has/has not been established and give the address:

3. Please give the name, address, telephone and fax numbers as well as the E-mail address (the use of an institutional rather than personal account is encouraged) of the Contact Point in your country for Codex Alimentarius matters to whom all technical documentation and correspondence should be sent:

4. Please advise how many copies and in which language Codex documents should be sent to the Contact Point for Codex Alimentarius matters (maximum: a total of five copies). English French Spanish

Notification of membership made by:
Name: _________________________________________
Official title: ____________________________________
Address: _______________________________________

Nations which, while not member nations or associate members of FAO or WHO but are members of the United Nations, may, upon their request and subject to the provisions relating to the granting of observer status to nations adopted by the Conference of FAO and the World Health Assembly, be invited to attend in an observer capacity sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies. The status of nations invited to such sessions is governed by the relevant provisions adopted by the Conference of FAO. To request an invitation interested Nations write to the Codex Secretariat at least one month before the session.

1.5.9.2 Observer organizations

Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) may attend sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies as observers upon requesting for invitation from the Directors-General of FAO or WHO. However, the participation of intergovernmental
organizations in the work of the Commission and the relations between the Commission and such organizations is governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitutions of FAO or WHO, as well as by the applicable regulations of FAO or WHO on relations with intergovernmental organizations which include:

i. UN organizations filling in application form and Observer status is granted. Currently (2013), there are 16 United Nations Organizations with Observer Status with the Commission;

ii. IGOs or INGOs that have official relations with either FAO or WHO should filling in application form and observer status is granted. The application is examined by the Codex Secretariat and the legal offices of FAO and WHO. In the process further questions may be asked of the applicant before Observer Status is granted. Currently (2013), there are 50 IGOs and 154 INGOs. Among the 50 IGOs, 12 IGOs are operating in Africa including:

a. African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP);
b. African Groundnut Council (AGC);
c. African Organization for Standardization (ARSO);
d. African Union (AU);
e. Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
f. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
g. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
h. Organisation africaine et malgache du café (OAMCAF);
i. Southern African Development Community (SADC);
j. Union douanière et économique de l’Afrique centrale (UDEAC);
k. Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) ; and
l. Africa Rice Center (WARDA)

iii. INGOs that have no official relations with either FAO or WHO should filling in the application form and submit related information as requested in the form. The respective organization will study the text on NGO participation before applying to check if it fulfils the criteria.

The application will also be examined by the Codex Secretariat and the legal offices of FAO and WHO as well as the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee then makes a recommendation on the application to the Directors General of FAO and WHO.

1.5.10 General public
All meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and of any of its subsidiary bodies are public to the limits of available space. Members of the public wishing
to attend a Codex session are to write to the Codex Secretariat at least one month before the session.
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

2.1. What is the Codex Alimentarius?
It is important at this stage to differentiate between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Alimentarius. While the Codex Alimentarius Commission as seen previously, is the body mandated to develop international standards, guidelines and related texts, the Codex Alimentarius is the collection of the work of the Commission in a form of internationally adopted food standards and other provisions of an advisory nature presented in a uniform manner to assist in protecting consumers’ health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. The publication of the Codex Alimentarius is intended to guide countries in the elaboration and revision of their food standards in order to promote the harmonization of these standards, and in so doing to facilitate international trade.

2.2 Scope of the Codex Alimentarius
The Codex Alimentarius includes standards for all the principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, for distribution to the consumers includes general provisions in respect of:
   i. contaminants;
   ii. food additives;
   iii. food hygiene;
   iv. inspection and certification;
   v. labelling and presentation;
   vi. methods of analysis and sampling;
   vii. pesticide residues; and
   viii. veterinary drug residues.

It also includes provisions of an advisory nature in the form of:
   i. codes of practice;
   ii. guidelines; and
   iii. other recommended measures

2.3 Where can the Codex Alimentarius be accessed?
All the Codex standards, guidelines, codes of practice and recommendations adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission can be downloaded for free from the Codex Web site (http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standard_list.asp). Listings of maximum residue limits for chemical substances used in agricultural production (commonly referred to as “pesticides”), and residue limits for veterinary drugs in foods, are also available on the Codex Web site.

The Codex Contact Points of Member Countries receive all Codex texts. Printed copies can also be ordered from the Sales and Marketing Group, Publishing Management Service, FAO Information Division, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, e-mail: Publications-Sales@fao.org, fax: (+39) 06 57053360.

2.4 Significance of the Codex Alimentarius in relation to the WTO SPS and TBT Agreements

2.4.1 Significance of the Codex Alimentarius in relation to the WTO SPS

Acceptance of Codex Alimentarius had always been voluntary for Codex Member Countries, with their adoption increasingly being interpreted as the regulatory minimum with which governments must comply to ensure that foodstuffs reaching the consumer are wholesome and safe, thereby facilitating international trade. The conclusion of the WTO SPS Agreement gave the Codex Alimentarius international legal recognition since the Agreement identified standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission as the international benchmark for food safety. Members of the WTO basing their food safety standards on the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission are deemed to meet the requirements of the SPS Agreement. However, WTO Members may implement standards that are more stringent than those of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, provided there is scientific justification that the more stringent measure is required to achieve their appropriate level of protection. In doing so, WTO Members must have scientific justification for such variations, as well as being able to demonstrate that the action taken was based on an assessment of risk.

The SPS Agreement covers all relevant laws, decrees, regulations; testing, inspection, certification and approval procedures; and packaging and labelling requirements directly related to food safety. Examples of SPS measures include: (i) inspection of products for microbiological contaminants; (ii) mandating a specific fumigation treatment for products; and (iii) setting maximum allowable levels of pesticide residues in food. However, for the purposes of the SPS Agreement, WTO does not differentiate between standards, guidelines and recommendations elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. They all have the same status under WTO. For food safety, the SPS Agreement specifically refers to standards developed by Codex in the following areas:

i. codes and guidelines of hygienic practices;
ii. contaminants;
iii. food additives;
iv. methods of analysis and sampling; and
v. veterinary drug and pesticide residues

It is important to note that not all Members of Codex Alimentarius Commission are Members of WTO. Although Codex standards are referred to by WTO, Codex does not establish food standards for WTO. It establishes food standards for the use of its (Codex) Member countries.

2.4.2 Significance of the Codex Alimentarius in relation to the WTO TBT Agreement

The WTO TBT Agreement, like the SPS Agreement, acknowledge the importance of harmonizing standards internationally so as to minimize 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.

Unlike the SPS Agreement, Codex is not specifically referenced in the TBT Agreement. However, it does reference more broadly “standards developed by appropriate international bodies” For food, these would be standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. For example, food labelling requirements, quality and packaging regulations are generally not considered to be sanitary or phytosanitary measures and hence are normally subject to the TBT Agreement.
3. THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

3.1 The step process
As stated in Article 1 of the Commission’s Statutes, one of the principal purposes of the Commission is the preparation of food standards and their publication in the Codex Alimentarius. The Commission’s procedure called “Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts” is well defined, open and transparent procedure.

A proposal for a standard to be developed may be submitted by a national government or a subsidiary committee of the Commission. This is usually followed by a discussion paper that outlines what the proposed standard is expected to achieve, and then a project proposal that indicates the time frame for the work and its relative priority.

In Africa there are many food products produced that are likely to be traded intra-regionally or internationally and for which regional or international standards can be developed. Africa Codex Members are encouraged to work through the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa to identify products from the region suitable for a Codex international or regional standard and submit proposals as explained above.

A step process is then followed and include:

Step 1.
The Commission, on the basis of a recommendation from the Executive Committee or a subsidiary body, decides to undertake new work or to revise an existing standard. In the case of proposals from the regional committees, the Commission will base its decision on the proposal of the majority of Members of the region. “Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities” exist to assist the Commission or Executive Committee in their decision-making and in selecting the subsidiary body to be responsible for steering the standard through its development. If necessary, a new subsidiary body – usually a specialized task force – may be created.

Step 2.
The preparation of a proposed draft standard is arranged by the Commission Secretariat. In the case of Maximum Limits for Residues of Pesticides or Veterinary Drugs, the Secretariat distributes the recommendations made by the Joint Meetings of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the WHO Core Assessment Group on
Pesticide Residues (JMPR), or the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA). In the cases of milk and milk products, the Secretariat distributes the recommendations of the International Dairy Federation (IDF).

**Step 3.**

The proposed draft standard is sent to Members of the Commission and interested international organizations for comment on all aspects including possible implications of the proposed draft standard for their economic interests.

Africa Codex Members are encouraged to provide comments on the possible economic implications that the approval of such a draft standard can have including the potential impact on international trade that would derive from the proposed measures, recognizing that unless the technical and economic feasibility of applying it in African countries is considered, some products from African countries may fall short of the standard and will find themselves facing a price penalty or simply banned in certain markets.

**Step 4.**

The comments received are sent by the Secretariat to the subsidiary body or other body concerned that has been allocated responsibility for the development of the proposed draft standard, and this subsidiary body may present the text to the Commission as a draft standard. The draft may also be referred to the Codex Committees responsible for labelling, hygiene, additives, contaminants or methods of analysis for endorsement of any special advice in these areas.

**Step 5.**

The proposed draft standard is submitted through the Secretariat to the Executive Committee for critical review and to the Commission with a view to its adoption as a draft standard. In taking any decision at this step, the Commission gives due consideration to the outcome of the critical review and to any comments that may be submitted by any of its Members regarding the implications which the proposed draft standard or any provisions thereof may have for their economic interests. In the case of Regional Standards, all Members of the Commission may present their comments, take part in the debate and propose amendments, but only the majority of the Members of the region or group of countries concerned attending the session can decide to amend or adopt the draft. In taking any decisions at this step, the Members of the region or group...
of countries concerned will give due consideration to any comments that may be submitted by any of the Members of the Commission regarding the implications which the proposed draft standard or any provisions thereof may have for their economic interests.

Sometimes the text is considered to be ready for final adoption at this stage – often called Step 5/8.

Again, Africa Codex Members are encouraged to provide comments on the potential impact on international trade that would derive from the proposed measures ensuring that account is taken of the technical and economic feasibility of applying it in African countries. This is another opportunity for any comment from Africa which was not adequately addressed at Step 3 can be raised again in written comments and/or presented orally in the Commission session.

Step 6.
The draft standard is again sent out to all Members of the Commission and interested international organizations for further comment. At this step it is again encouraged for African countries to comment on the economic implications that the draft standard could have if it were adopted without amendments.

Step 7.
The comments received from member states and international organizations are sent by the Secretariat to the corresponding subsidiary body, which will consider such comments and amend the draft standard accordingly.

Step 8.
The draft standard is submitted through the Secretariat to the Executive Committee for critical review and to the Commission, with a view to its adoption as a new Codex standard. The Secretariat will also send the comments on the draft standard presented by Member States and international organizations for amendments at step 8.

It is important to note that very few amendments are done at this step of the procedure. However, there is always a window to address concerns of member countries which were not well addressed in the earlier stages. Occasionally, a draft standard that was put for final approval at step 8 is sent back to step 5 and can remain there for several years until all the concerns of Member countries are taken into account. An example of this is the negotiation on the “Guidelines for Determining the Equivalence of Sanitary
Many developing countries including African countries have been criticized for waiting until the Commission session at step 8 to voice their opposition to approval of a draft standard. But, in fact this may well be the only meeting a developing country attends, and it may not have been following the work of the committee as closely as it should. In these situations, when the country decides to oppose the document at such an advanced stage, it will need to have very well-founded arguments to put forward. Africa Codex Member countries are encouraged to follow the work of the committees that interest them even if they do not participate in the meetings, for in this way they will have the chance to submit written comments in earlier steps of the procedure. Similarly, if an African Codex member country keeps track of the issue over the years it will be able to raise it at some point in the regional committee meeting and line up support from other countries, and this may help it win a reversal in the Commission.

The elaboration procedure of Codex standards, therefore, gives to all Member Countries two opportunities to express their views on the proposed texts, before they are sent to the Commission for adoption. The first opportunity is at the proposed draft standard stage (comments at Step 3). The second opportunity is at the draft standard stage (comments at Step 6). The third and ultimate opportunity is given when the draft standard (at Step 8) is considered for adoption at the Commission session. Africa Codex Members are encouraged to provide comments even at this stage as when the Commission meets, any written proposal received from member countries and interested international organizations to amend the draft standard at Step 8 is considered. Before the Commission meets, each Member country receives a copy of the text that will be proposed for adoption at the Commission’s session. A date is given in the accompanying letter to notify the members of the deadline for sending written proposals on the texts.

It should be noted here that, most standards take a number of years to develop and once adopted by the Commission, a Codex standard is added to the Codex Alimentarius.

3.2 Format for Codex Commodity Standards and their content
The Codex Procedural Manual detail a format for presentation of Codex commodity standards. The format is intended for use as a guide by the subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in presenting their standards, with the object of achieving, as far as possible, a uniform presentation
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of commodity standards. The Format also indicates the statements which should be included in standards as appropriate under the relevant headings of the standard. The sections of the Format require to be completed in a standard only insofar as such provisions are appropriate to an international standard for the food in question. The format includes the following categories of information:

i. Name of the Standard;
ii. Scope;
iii. Description;
iv. Essential Composition and Quality Factors;
v. Food Additives;
vi. Contaminants;
vii. Hygiene;
viii. Weights and Measures;
ix. Labelling; and
x. Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

Provisions of Codex General Standards, Codes or Guidelines are only incorporated into Codex Commodity Standards by reference unless there is a need for doing otherwise.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to commodity standards, the Codex Alimentarius includes general standards which have across-the-board applications to all food and are not product-specific. There are also documents titled Principles and Guidelines (for example, Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems, Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Food); Codes and Recommendations (for example, Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene, and other relevant Codex texts such as Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food).

There are general standards or recommendations for:

i. Food Labelling;
ii. Food Additives;
iii. Contaminants in Foods;
iv. Methods of Analysis and Sampling;
v. Food Hygiene;
vi. Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses;
vii. Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems;
viii. Residues of Veterinary Drugs In Food; and
ix. Pesticide Residues in Food.
4. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF AFRICA IN CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

4.1 Why should Africa participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission?

There are several reasons and advantages for Africa and particularly for the African Member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to participate effectively in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as reviewed below.

The economies of most of the African countries depend largely on agriculture. On the other hand, many of the countries on the continent are net food importers. It is therefore, important for African countries to participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission because use of the standards, guidelines and related texts adopted by the Commission assist policy-makers in building sound national food control systems to ensure safety and quality of food produced, exported or imported into the continent.

Growth in world food trade has created opportunities for a wider variety of foods from Africa to reach consumers worldwide as such opening opportunities for countries in Africa to expand their economies. The increase in food trade has heightened the need for international food standards to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

The increase in food trade among nations has increased the probability of spreading diseases from one country to another as such increasing risks to human health. The Codex Alimentarius is the right source of standards that can be readily applied to minimize such risks.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an international risk management body and, by using standards and related texts adopted by the Commission, African countries can make substantial savings in time and money incurred in risk assessment and risk management processes.

African countries that are signatories to the WTO Agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) like other members of the WTO, are expected to participate to the extent possible in the standard-setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
Standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission are explicitly referenced in the SPS Agreement as the international benchmark for food safety. On the other hand, the TBT Agreement makes reference to international standard-setting bodies and for food safety, that body is the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These WTO agreements provide member countries that adopt Codex standards as their national standards with a defence in situations where they are challenged by trading partners as national measures based on standards adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission are deemed to be in compliance with the SPS Agreement.

The sessions of the Commission and those of its Subsidiary Bodies provide opportunities for African Food Safety and Quality Experts and Regulators to meet among themselves and with their counterparts from other parts of world to exchange information and share views on food safety and quality issues. In this way, African member countries can be kept appraised of international developments in food safety and quality including new or pending technological developments, new products entering the marketplace and up to-date measures in the management of food safety and quality issues.

4.2 Entry avenues for Africa into the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission?

Africa has six avenues for entering or participating in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission including:

i. AU as an Intergovernmental Organization Observer (see also 1.5.9.2);
ii. AU as a Member Organization;
iii. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as Intergovernmental Organizations Observers (see also 1.5.9.2);
iv. Economic Communities (RECs) as Member Organizations;
v. Intergovernmental Organizations - Other than AU and RECs as Observers (see also 1.5.9.2); and
vi. as Member countries (see 1.5.8)

4.2.1 AU as an Intergovernmental Organization Observer (see also 1.5.9.2)

Already, AU has observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission since (check the year). As an observer IGO, AU can participate physically in all sessions of the Commission and of its Subsidiary Bodies and can also put forward points of view at every stage except in the final decision, which is the exclusive prerogative of member governments.
Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Commission and the relations between the Commission and such organizations is governed by provisions detailed in the Constitutions of FAO or WHO, as well as by the applicable regulations of FAO or WHO on relations with intergovernmental organizations and such relations are handled by the Director-General of FAO or WHO, as appropriate.

4.2.2 AU as a Member Organization (see also 1.5.8)
Rule I of the Codex Alimentarius Commission provides for Membership of regional economic integration organizations members of either FAO or WHO that notify the Director-General of FAO or WHO of their desire to be considered Members of the Commission. It follows that for AU to acquire Member Organization status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, efforts have to be made to acquire regional economic integration organization membership of either FAO or WHO.

As a Member Organization, AU will be able to participate in matters within its competence in any meetings of the Commission or its subsidiary bodies in which any of its Member States is entitled to participate. In any Codex session, a Member Organization will have to define areas of competence so that the Member organization can exercise membership rights on an alternative basis with its Member States that are Members of the Commission in the areas of their respective competence.

If AU becomes a Member Organization of Codex Alimentarius Commission, it will be able to exercise on matters within its competence, in any meetings of the Commission or any subsidiary body of the Commission in which it is entitled to participate, a number of votes equal to the number of its Member States which are entitled to vote in such meetings and present at the time the vote is taken. The rule is that whenever a Member Organization exercises its right to vote, its Member States shall not exercise theirs, and conversely.

One important point to note is that a Member Organization is not eligible for election or designation, nor to hold office in the Commission or in any subsidiary body. Similarly, a Member Organization does not participate in voting for any elective places in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

4.2.3 Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as Intergovernmental Organizations Observers (see also 1.5.9.2)
The African continent has several Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
some of which have acquired Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission including the:

i. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
ii. Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
iii. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
iv. Southern African Development Community (SADC);
v. Union douanière et économique de l’Afrique centrale (UDEAC); and
vi. Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)

As Observers, the RECs within the AU can participate physically in all sessions of the Commission and of its Subsidiary Bodies and can also put forward points of view at every stage except in the final decision, which is the exclusive prerogative of member governments. Like the other IGOs participation of the RECs in the work of the Commission and the relations between the Commission and such organizations is governed by provisions detailed in the Constitutions of FAO or WHO, as well as by the applicable regulations of FAO or WHO on relations with intergovernmental organizations and such relations are handled by the Director-General of FAO or WHO, as appropriate.

4.2.4 Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as Member Organizations (see also 1.5.8)

RECs within AU are building blocks for AU wide economic integration. Likewise, RECs, especially those with Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, can start working for Member Organization Membership with the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

As provided for under Rules I and II of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the RECs have to work towards acquiring Membership of regional economic integration organizations of either FAO or WHO before notifying the Director-General of FAO or WHO of their desire to be considered Members of the Commission.

As Member Organizations, the RECs will be able to participate in matters within their competence in any meetings of the Commission or its subsidiary bodies in which any of its Member States is entitled to participate. In any Codex session, the RECs will have to define areas of competence so that they can exercise membership rights on an alternative basis with their Member States that are Members of the Commission in the areas of their respective competence.
If the RECs become Member Organizations of Codex Alimentarius Commission, they will be able to exercise on matters within their competence, in any meetings of the Commission or any subsidiary body of the Commission in which they are entitled to participate, a number of votes equal to the number of their Member States which are entitled to vote in such meetings and present at the time the vote is taken. The rule is that whenever a Member Organization exercises its right to vote, its Member States shall not exercise theirs, and conversely.

One important point to note is that as Member Organizations, the RECs will not be eligible for election or designation, nor to hold office in the Commission or any subsidiary body. Similarly, as Member Organizations the RECs will not participate in voting for any elective places in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

4.2.5 Intergovernmental Organizations Observers - Other than AU and the RECs (see also 1.5.9.2)

The African continent has several Intergovernmental Organizations other than AU and the RECs having Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These include the:

i. African Groundnut Council (AGC);

ii. African Organization for Standardization (ARSO);

iii. Conseil Phytosanitaire Interafricain (CPIA);

iv. Organisation Africaine et Malgache du Café (OAMCAF); and

v. Africa Rice Center (WARDA)

4.2.6 As Member Countries (see 1.5.8)

According to Rule I of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and/or WHO. Currently, AU has 54 Member States out of which 53 are members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Out of the 53 members, four countries belong to the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East while the rest belong to the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa as can be seen in Appendix I.

4.3 Commitment of Africa to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

4.3.1 Sensitization/creation of awareness

It is important to consider and make a decision at the policy level the extent of
commitment to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that would provide the greatest benefits for the region, organization, REC or country. Efforts might be required to create awareness and interest on Codex at the various levels and using different approaches.

4.3.1.1 Sensitization at the AU Level

a. Introduction of food safety on the agenda of AU high level policy meetings

At the AU level, introduction on the agenda of the meeting of Heads of States and Governments, that is the summit, of an item on food safety with reference to Codex Alimentarius Commission will ensure high policy level recognition and follow up of Africa’s participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Such agenda item is better presented by the country chairing or hosting the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) and the country chairing or hosting the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNEA) (for Algeria Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia) (see 1.4.6.2). Since such high level decision and policy meeting of AU is preceded by preparatory meetings attended by Government Ministers and Senior -Technical Officials, discussions on Codex Alimentarius Commission at that level will resulting in extensive sensitization and implementation at the relevant AU Member Governments’ levels.

b. Organization of continental workshops on food safety including activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The African Union Commission (AUC) can be organizing continental workshops on food safety with particular reference to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. For example, AUC through AU-IBAR, convened the First Continental Workshop in Kigali, Rwanda on 29th and 30th October 2012 to discuss the mechanisms and procedures for putting in place a system for ensuring the safety and quality of food produced and traded on the African continent. The Workshop also considered the importance of establishing a system for alerting all AU Member States of any ensuing food safety concerns.

Food safety workshops can be organized in the margins of other scheduled AU meetings attended by say AU ministers policy and technical officers from relevant ministries including agriculture, health and trade.

4.3.1.2 Sensitization through Regional FAO and WHO Forums

There are also two other avenues through which Africa can sensitize high level policy makers on issues related to the Codex Alimentarius Commission. First is through the FAO Africa Regional Annual Meeting which is usually attended by
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Government Ministers and Senior Officials from the ministries of Agriculture and Food of the AU Member States. Secondly is through the Africa Regional Annual WHO meeting, again attended by Government Ministers and Senior Officials from the ministries of Health of the AU Member States. In these two regional forums, the Ministers from the country chairing or hosting the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa and from the country chairing or hosting the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia) (see 1.5.6.2) could report on the progress made on Africa’s participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

4.3.1.3 Sensitization through African IGOs Level

The African continent has several Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) other than AU which could also provide a platform for sensitization of AU Member States high and senior government officials on the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Such IGOs include the RECs.

a. Sensitization at the RECs’ level

Some of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the African continent already have Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These provide a ready platform for carrying out awareness and sensitization programmes related to the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This is on the understanding that as Codex Observers, the RECs participate in sessions of the Commission and of its Subsidiary Bodies and that reports from such meetings are submitted and discussed in relevant forums within the RECs. The RECs with Codex Observer Status (see 4.2.3 ) include the:

i. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
ii. Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
iii. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
iv. Southern African Development Community (SADC);
v. Union douanière et économique de l’Afrique centrale (UDEAC); and
vi. Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)

The East African Community (EAC) is in the process of acquiring Codex Observer Status. EAC has however, established under the East African Community Standards Committee (EASC), a Committee known as Codex Forum. The reports from this Forum will be submitted to and discussed by the EASC, the report of which filters through technical officials meetings to those of the Ministerial Sectoral Council and finally to the meetings of Heads of States. The EAC Codex Forum therefore, provides a window for carrying out
sensitization and guiding implementation of Codex Alimentarius Commission work within the EAC region. The success of the Forum will open an approach which the other RECs in Africa can follow, especially that it provides an opportunity to have Codex issues on the agenda of meetings of high policy and technical government officials in the given REC.

In the absence of a mechanism similar to the EAC Codex Forum, the Codex Contact Point in the Member State holding the chairmanship of the REC is encouraged to work with the respective government delegation to meetings of a given REC to introduce an agenda item addressing Codex issues in the respective REC and at AUC levels.

It is also encouraged to designate an official at the RECs’ Secretariat who will be responsible for the daily management and coordination of the Codex issues and activities at the REC including working with the Codex and Contact Point Officials at the AUC, other RECs and in the RECs’ Member States. Such officials should be a professional officer, preferably with a background in food safety/food standard setting. The individual must be given sufficient authority to coordinate the Codex issues and have sufficient time to devote to it.

b. Sensitization at the level of IGOs other than AU and RECs

The African continent does also have several Intergovernmental Organizations other than AU and the RECs having Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and which could provide platforms for sensitizing high level policy and technical officials from the AU Member States on Codex issues. Some of these IGOs include the:

i. African Groundnut Council (AGC);
ii. African Organization for Standardization (ARSO);
iii. Conseil Phytosanitaire Interafricain (CPIA);
iv. Organisation Africaine et Malgache du Café (OAMCAF); and
v. Africa Rice Center (WARDA )

Most of these IGOs do hold meetings which are attended by high level policy and technical government officials from AU Member States. Since these IGOs have Codex observer Status, it is expected they will be represented in sessions of the Commission and of its Subsidiary Bodies. It is further expected that relevant issues discussed in Codex sessions attended will be put on the agenda of appropriate meetings of the IGOs leading to sensitization and cause for implementation of Codex activities through the decisions reached in the IGOs’ meetings.
It is also encouraged to designate an official at the organization’s Secretariat who will be responsible for the daily management and coordination of the Codex issues at the organization’s level including working with the Codex Officials at AUC, Africa FAO and WHO Regional Offices, the Coordinators of the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for Africa and Near East and in the RECs. For IGOs with country offices, they are also encouraged to designate country representatives who will work with the Codex Contact Points in the respective Member States.

4.3.1.4 Sensitization at the AU Member State level

Most of the AU Member States are member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see 1.4.8). However, establishing a case to become a Codex member country, or initiating a domestic Codex programme requires policy commitment and resources. This is possible through prior sensitization of the national high policy and senior decision-making officials. Sensitization can be done through short briefings or through national workshops and seminars. Short briefings are suitable for high level policy makers like presidents, prime ministers, ministers and chief executive officers of both public and private organizations. The briefing can cover topics like:

i. what is Codex;
ii. why a country should be involved in Codex;
iii. value of the FAO/WHO coordinating committees; and
iv. resources required.

More important for policy makers is to demonstrate to them the possible economic and or financial losses to a country for not participating in the work of the Commission. This is done for example by showing the national food-borne incidences or available data on food import rejections and analysis of imported/exported food products.

Several national workshops can be organized for the senior and technical public and private officials with more detailed coverage of the above topics and including more examples of benefits for joining or disadvantages for not joining the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

It is important to note that the briefings and workshops need to be organized as frequently as resources can allow as both public and private policy and senior officials are often changed and new ones come in depending on the government or organization policies.
4.3.2 Implementation of activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

4.3.2.1 Implementation at the Africa Union Commission level

The Africa Union Commission (AUC) is in a position to take a leading role in the organization of Africa’s participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission through:

i. her position as an Observer member of the Commission;

ii. working closely with the countries chairing or hosting the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNEA) (for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia) to coordinate and make follow up of activities related to the Codex Alimentarius Commission at Member States, regional and international levels;

iii. working closely with the RECs;

iv. working closely with the other IGOs in Africa which have Observer status with Codex; and

v. by working closely with the African NGOs which have Observer status with Codex.

Issues related to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the AU level are currently being handled by the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). AU-IBAR has already recruited a Food Safety Officer. Initiatives have also been taken by the AU Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture through AU-IBAR to explore the establishment of an Africa Food Safety Authority and Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.

AU-IBAR has been organizing under the Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard setting Organizations (PANSPSO) Project annual meetings of the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for Africa (CCAFRICA) CCPs and AU-IBAR-CCAFRICA expert consultations on issues on the agenda of sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies. Such central coordination of Codex Alimentarius Commission activities at the AU level ensures institutional continuity especially that CCAFRICA does not have a permanent host country but change from one country to another in a period of four years.

As mentioned earlier some AU member countries namely Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia do not belong to CCAFRICA but to the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees Near East (CCNEA). AUC through AU-IBAR is including these countries in meetings and consultations related to activities of
the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Africa.

a) What resources are needed?

Staff allocation
In order for AUC through AU-IBAR to be able to meet her obligation as an Observer Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission some basic resources will be required. In terms of human resource allocation, there could a Technical Officer assigned or responsible for activities related to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Technical Officer will require the support of an administrative officer/personal assistant or clerk who should be able to devote at least 25 percent of his/her time in support of the AUC Codex activities. The allocation of other human resources to the Codex programme will be contingent on the level of involvement and coordination required. However, in determining ongoing commitment as an Observer Member of Codex, a preliminary assessment of the projected level of involvement and associated budgetary implications should be made early at the decision-making process. This is of great importance if there is the political will for AU to apply for Regional Membership of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see 4.2.2).

Infrastructure
Besides becoming an Observer Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, AU through AU-IBAR takes on responsibility for establishing an interface between the AUC and the Rome-based Secretariat, and between AUC and the Codex Contact Points in the AU Member States and in the other IGOs (including RECs) in and outside Africa, as well as linkages with other Codex Member Countries outside the region. For effective discharge of these roles, infrastructure issues will need to be addressed including:

i. Computer facilities
The primary method of contact between the Codex Secretariat in Rome and the members of the Codex Alimentarius is via electronic mail. In addition, all the standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted by the Codex Alimentarius are posted on the Codex Web site. Therefore, it is essential that the Technical Officer and other officers involved in the management of the Codex activities at the AU-IBAR are equipped with computers capable of accessing e-mail and the Internet, and with up-to-date software capabilities.

It is recommended that a distinct e-mail address for the Codex office be
established so that communications regarding Codex do not get lost in the general e-mail account of AU-IBAR. Such e-mail address can be established along the following lines: codex.AU-IBAR@AU-IBAR. It is discouraged to use individuals e-mail addresses like cjsmoshar@AU-IBAR. This is important to ensure that there is no interruption in the flow of information should there be a change in the individual designated as being responsible for the Codex activities in the organization.

ii. Office
The Codex office may be located in an existing office, or provided with a separate facility.

Whatever arrangement is implemented, it is important that Codex activities are carried out in a designated area/facility from which the work is conducted.

iii. Essential equipment
Telephone and facsimile access for the Codex office are essential to the overall efficiency of the activities. A photocopy machine and filing cabinet will facilitate the handling and organization of Codex documentation and related correspondence.

b. Formulation of AU position/comments
As an Observer member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, AU is entitled to submit written comments on issues on the agenda of the sessions of the Commission and its Subsidiary bodies. Advantage can be taken of the AU intergovernmental links with the AU Member States to formulate a position which will not only be AU position as an Observer but also a position to be supported by all the members of CCAFRICA. The fact that Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia do belong to CCNEA does also present an opportunity for AU position to be supported by both CCAFRICA and CCNEA member countries.

AUC is also in a position to work with the several IGOs (including the RECs) – see 4.2.3 and 4.2.5 - with Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission to formulate a strong Africa position on any issue on the agenda of sessions of the Commission or its Subsidiary Bodies.

Consultations
The current process of holding physical meetings of African experts (four
experts) to prepare scientific arguments on proposed Codex standards which are submitted to CCAFRICA CCP through the CCAFRICA Coordinator for reference during the national consultations before the submission of their comments or positions to the Codex Secretariat should be continued. The advice from the African experts should also be shared with the CCP of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia which belong to CCNEA. Again the same advice should be shared with other IGOs in Africa.

The AU experts meetings should be held as soon the request for comments is received from the Codex Secretariat and well in advance of the national and IGOs consultations for formulation of positions/comments on the respective issues on the agenda of the sessions of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies. This will allow consideration of the AU position in those national and IGOs consultations.

The CCAFRICA Coordinator is encouraged to post the experts’ advice on the CCAFRICA website and to coordinate the views from the CCAFRICA CCPs on the experts’ advice with the view of coming up with a common CCAFRICA position. Efforts should also be made by the CCAFRICA Coordinator to reach the CCNEA Coordinator on the same issues. If in the opinion of the CCAFRICA Coordinator that the experts’ advice is not readily accepted by many of the CCAFRICA member countries, efforts should be made through AU or other means to hold physical meeting of the CCAFRICA CCPs to come up with a common position/comment. In such physical meeting all the IGOs in Africa, especially those with Codex Observer status should also be invited. The common position/comment reached at in such meeting should be shared extensively in Africa.

The common Africa position/comments should also be shared with the other Codex Regions and Member Countries with the view of getting worldwide support.

Note should made here with reference to the possibility of AU acquiring Member Region status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission – see 4.2.2. that there will be a need to form Technical Committees open to experts from all AU Member States to discuss and formulate AU common position/comments on Codex issues.

c. Submission of AU position/comments

AUC through AU-IBAR should submit the AU common position/comments to
the Codex Secretariat making sure to observe the deadlines for submission of such comments.

d. **Physical attendance in Codex sessions**

After submitting AU position/comments to the Codex Secretariat, the next activity is to participate in the respective sessions of the Commission, Codex Committees and Taskforces. This means sending an AU delegation to such sessions. In most cases AU delegation will consist of one or two persons only, owing to a lack of resources. When only one person represents AU at a Codex session, the selection of the right person requires consideration of important facts, that is Codex is an intergovernmental organization and is a food standard-setting organization so whoever represents AU should have experience in communicating with government officials and have some food safety/food standard-setting experience including trade negotiation skills.

**Registration, travel itineraries, accommodation and visas**

AUC through AU-IBAR should inform the person(s) identified to represent AU in a session of the Commission, or of its Subsidiary Bodies well in advance to enable him/her to start preparing internal documentation for requesting travel authorization and for obtaining visas if there are visa requirements by the country hosting the meeting.

The nominated delegate(s) should fill in the registration forms from the Codex Secretariat and submit them to the Codex Secretariat and may be a copy to the host country secretariat if so advised. It is important to note that the registration exercise has a deadline to enable the Codex Secretariat and the secretariat of the committee host country enough time for making adequate arrangements for the meeting.

Travel reservations should be made well in advance. Invitations to Codex sessions are sent to all Codex members including Observer members by the Codex Secretariat at least two months and sometimes several months before the date of the meeting. Travel reservations for the selected AU delegate(s) should be made early enough to avoid last minute travel arrangements. AUC has travel agents who can make appropriate travel reservations but it is recommended to book the most direct route to the venue of the session. Again, AU has security officers who can do security briefing, however, it is highly recommended to seek for daytime arrival and departure times to and from the venue of the meeting.
**Important documents that should be carried to a Codex session**

AU delegate(s) to a Codex session, should carry the following documents with them:

i. Invitation, Provisional Agenda and other Working documents;

ii. Report(s) of the last Session(s) of the Codex committee or task force to be attended;

iii. Back-to-Office Report (personal report) of the delegate who attended the last session;

iv. The Codex Procedural Manual;

v. A Briefing containing AU position(s) on relevant agenda items and related comments;

vi. Invitations to informal meetings if any;

vii. All other relevant documents such as the report of the last Commission session.

Similarly, it is useful to remember to have the following information at hand:

i. Information on the place of accommodation;

ii. Information on the place of the meeting (remember that if there is to be a physical working group before the meeting begins, it will not necessarily be held in the same place as the plenary: pay attention to all the information in the invitation);

iii. A city map; and

iv. How to get to the meeting—you can get information from the committee’s Secretariat or via the Internet on means of transportation from the airport to the hotel and from the hotel to the meeting site.

**Arriving in the city/town where the Codex meeting is being held**

As recommended earlier, efforts should be made to take the most direct route to the venue of the session and to seek for daytime arrival times. It is highly recommended to cooperate fully with security and immigration staff at the airports regardless of whether one is entering or leaving a country.

Study the name and address of the hotel or other accommodation to be used for the period of the Codex session, get a map of the area and know the street(s). Know your surroundings and the people approaching you. Note that as a foreigner, you are easily identified by many people with questionable intentions. These range from the taxi drivers who will exploit you by taking you several kilometres before getting you to your hotel so that the you pay for several kilometres as per the taxi meter reading to people who would con or rob you directly. It is advised to take hotel transport, if provided. Otherwise
take public transport including commuter trains and buses. If you are to take a taxi, make sure you take one from a reputable company. It is also recommended for the persons in the same delegation to get into the same taxi or at least two persons in a taxi to the hotel. Upon checking in at the hotel, always request for a room on the second or third floor. Understand the hotel surroundings and move in and out in a group where feasible.

**Finding the meeting venue and registration**

The address of the Codex session is usually clearly detailed by the Codex Secretariat and the Secretariat of the host country. However, it is always recommended to take some time on the arrival day (usually a day or two before the date of the meeting) to identify the hotel and room or conference hall where the meeting will be held including identification of the most convenient transport to that venue. In most of the Codex meetings, registration starts early, usually on the day before the date of the meeting. In this case one can already register and also collect any documentation which would have been put out for pick up by delegates. If the meeting room would have been set for the meeting, one can already identify the nameplate (flag) and the seat(s) reserved for the organization’s delegate(s).

If the meeting venue cannot be found one day before the date of the meeting, it is recommended for all the AU delegate(s) to arrive well before the starting time of the meeting to get ample time for registration and for collecting any CRDs, INFs and any other documentation that would have been put out by the Secretariat or other delegations. It is also important to register early to get time to identify the organization’s designated seat(s). Again is important to note here that Codex does not establish the number of delegates by organizations. However, there may not be room for all the delegates of an organization to sit at the organization’s designated place. In these cases, delegates will take turns, depending on their areas of expertise. In the case of large delegations, it is essential to inform the Codex Secretariat in advance.

**Informal meetings**

It is normal practice for different Codex members and interest groups to hold informal meetings in advance of a Codex session to address agenda items. The aim of such informal meetings is to seek support on a given position or reaching consensus on some of agenda items. Invitations to informal meetings are usually sent out in advance of the session to all CCPs and Observers. AUC working through AU-IBAR could work with the CCAFrica Coordinator to hold informal meetings to address agenda items with the view of seeking to
reach at a common Africa position on some of agenda items. Such approach is important, especially if a common position could not be reached during the Continental consultations. In such informal AUC meetings, delegations of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia could be invited as AU Member States. Similarly, all the other IGOs from Africa attending the respective Codex session should be invited to such informal meetings. Participation of Africa IGOs in the informal meetings will ensure support of issues on the agenda by both CCAFRICA Member countries and by the IGOs in their capacity as Observer Members of Codex.

Besides efforts to reach Africa common position, the AU-IBAR coordinating through CCAFRICA can also organize for an informal meeting with the other FAO/WHO Joint Coordinating Committees if is known that they share similar positions. To do so, the CCAFRICA Coordinator will have to contact the others by e-mail. It is best to hold such meetings on the opening day of the formal session, because in this way there will usually be space available in the meeting venue for talks between interest groups. If the issue is really important, the embassy of the CCAFRICA Coordinating country is an ideal place to meet, if it has enough room. In this case, arrangements have to be made in advance and send out the invitations. It is important to note that most delegations arrival a night before the meeting, as such meetings should be planned in such way that as many of the target delegations as possible may participate.

**Attending in the meetings**

It is important to note that all Codex meetings follow the same uniform format and are conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for Codex Committees and Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces as set out in the Codex Procedural Manual.

1. **Opening of the session**

Codex sessions are normally opened by a senior representative of the host government. After the opening, the Chairperson proceeds to the adoption of the agenda. It is at this stage of the proceedings that members of the Commission or its Subsidiary Body, may propose additional items for consideration, which, if agreed upon will be discussed under Other Business as time permits. Once comments on the provisional agenda have been considered, the Chairperson will request that the committee or task force adopt the provisional agenda or amended agenda as the agenda for the session.
ii. Role of the Chairperson
The Chairperson ensures that all questions are fully discussed, including written comments of Members and Observers not present at the session. At appropriate intervals during the discussion of each agenda item, the Chairperson will summarise the discussion by stating what appears to be the generally accepted view. The Chairperson also ensures that conclusions of the discussion are clearly understood by all participants.

iii. How are decisions reached?
Decisions at committee or task force level are normally reached by consensus. Voting at this level is extremely rare and efforts are made to come to a solution that is acceptable to all. At the Commission level, voting may take place including for the adoption of amendments to the Rules of Procedure. Voting at this level is only done by members of the Commission and Observers are not eligible for voting.

iv. When are you allowed to speak?
Observers are permitted to intervene on issues under consideration. Normally the head of delegation has the right to speak. However, another member of the delegation may speak (e.g. on technical matters) but with the permission of head of delegation. Comments are always directed at the Chairperson. Note that Protocol states that Members speak before Observers and delegations speak only when acknowledged by the Chairperson.

It is important to ensure that, before requesting to speak, the AUC position is sufficiently worked out in advance and have the document translated into other languages, if there is an interest in lining up more countries in its support. We need to note here that mere submission of an AUC position paper is not enough for the comments to be taken seriously and the head of delegation will need to ask for the floor and present the position orally during a Codex meeting. It is not recommended to read out the entire text of documents already submitted in writing, for the floor time is limited to two minutes. It is better, then, to focus on highlighting the salient points of the document and to indicate that further details on the position can be found in the published document (citing the Codex identification number assigned to the document).

It is also important to note that not all interventions will flow from the documents the delegate has brought along. At times, the delegate will have to respond to other reactions, offering counterarguments that may not have been considered back at the Continental.
v. **How to indicate desire to speak?**
As head of delegation you need to indicate your desire to speak/intervene by holding up the AUC nameplate (sometimes referred to as flag) and placing it in an upright position until acknowledged by the Chairperson. In some cases, an electronic system is used to indicate request to make an intervention.

vi. **How many times AUC can intervene?**
There are no uniform rules within Codex regarding the number of interventions an Observer can make. The general practice is to intervene only once on a particular issue, although a second intervention may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairperson, normally to clarify a point or reply to a question raised by another delegation. It is important to keep interventions short and concise (not more than 1 – 2 minutes) and to speak slowly to allow for effective and accurate simultaneous interpretation.

vii. **Report of the meeting**
A draft report of the session’s proceedings is prepared by the Codex Secretariat for consideration on the final day of the session. It is customary, depending on the workload, that the second to last day of the meeting is set aside for the drafting of this report (i.e. no plenary session is held). The draft report is made available early on the last day of the session to allow delegates to familiarise themselves with its contents.

As the report is the official record of the Codex meeting it is essential that delegations carefully read it to ensure that it accurately reflects the meeting’s views, recommendations and conclusions. To the benefit of the conciseness of the final report, views and opinions summarised may not be associated with the names of specific delegations and observers. During the review of the draft report, the Chairperson calls up each paragraph or section. This allows delegations who wish to amend the text to intervene at the appropriate moment. When doing so, it is important to make concrete proposals for changes (e.g. additions or deletions). At this stage, it is not possible to re-open discussions; nor is it possible to record in the report what was not stated during the discussion. Once adopted the report becomes the official record of the Commission, committee or task force session and is called a REPORT (previously ALINORM). As mentioned earlier, reports are identified by the code REPxx/yy where xx is the year of the Commission which will discuss the report and yy the Committee acronym e.g. REP 13/FH for the report of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene reporting to the Commission in 2013.
The Secretariat distributes the final report, in all the working languages of the Commission or respective committees or task forces, to all Codex Contact Points including the one for AUC. The report is also posted on the Codex website.

viii. Reporting and debriefing
The head of the AUC delegation should submit a report of participation to AUC. The report should be submitted as soon as possible but within a period of 30 working days from the last date of participation in the meeting. Such report should enclose any additional agenda items/notes tabled in the meeting – conference room documents/position papers circulated by other Members and Observers and a copy of the draft report as adopted in the meeting.

It is suggested that the report should be submitted in the following format, and should bear the signature of the leader and other members of the AUC delegation with their names and designations:

a. Subject of the meeting;
b. Place of the meeting;
c. Dates of the meeting;
d. Names and designations of the leader and other members of the delegations;
e. List of additional documents as tabled in the meeting, along with a copy of each document;
f. A copy of the draft report as adopted in the meeting;
g. A summary of salient recommendations/decisions arrived at in the meeting which have economic and trade implications on the country.
h. Main deliberations on each of the items of the agenda concerning the African Union, covering the following points:
   - Topic of the agenda;
   - Document No.;
   - Paragraph No.;
   - The AUC’s position, as reached during the Continental Consultations;
   - Views of the AUC’s delegation as expressed in the meeting;
   - Whether the views expressed are in conformity with the national AUC policy – if not; the extent of divergence and the reasons thereof;
   - Names of countries, Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, Observers supporting AUC (CCAFRICA);
   - Whether any informal meeting/get-together with other Members, Observer was arranged and if so, the outcome thereof;
   - An extract of the recommendation as arrived at in the meeting;
   - Future course of follow-up action on the part of African Union, if any;


- Whether any issue requires attention by other Codex Committees;
- Inform about any contacts made with FAO/WHO, and any offers AUC may have received to participate in other meetings to pursue joint projects;
- Did all members of the delegation abide by the directive of the leader and official decorum? If not, the specific instance of non-compliance; and
- Additional remarks/suggestions, if any.

The AUC report should be shared with the CCAFRICA Coordinator, CCPs of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia (as they belong to CCNEA) and the Intergovernmental Organizations including the Regional Economic Communities for Africa. The AUC and CCAFRICA reports could also be submitted and discussed in regular regional meetings of the FAO and WHO.

The participation of AUC in the respective Codex session and the report thereof should be reported through the normal AUC reporting structures. Working in Coordination with the CCAFRICA Coordinator, the AUC report and that of the Coordinator should be presented to the AU Summit through the AU statutory reporting structure for technical and policy directives.

ix. Follow-up action

The follow-up action of recommendations of any Codex meeting, based on the report of participation of the AUC delegation, forms the base for interaction in the future meetings. It is, therefore, extremely important that the AUC through AU-IBAR undertakes the following steps:

a. Within one month from the date of receipt of the report of AUC participation inform the respective AU Technical Experts the outcome of the report and the need for subsequent follow-up action. AU-IBAR in coordination with the CCAFRICA Coordinator highlight the outcome of AUC and CCAFRICA participation and subsequent follow-up action needed to be prepared for the next meeting of the concerned Committee/other Codex Committees/Commission.

b. AU-IBAR in coordination with CCAFRICA Coordinator and by involving the respective AU Technical Experts draw up a schedule of activities for the short, medium and long terms, relating to respective committee issues. It is important to note that that, depending on the outcome of the meeting’s handling of the issues, some will remain on the agenda without moving on to the Codex Commission, while others will require scientific input from the Codex expert groups, which will give AU Member States an opportunity to present data (in these cases consultations with AU research
centres and universities are essential to know whether there are Africa studies with data on the topics in question). Still other documents will be passed to the Commission for approval, in which case a future meeting should be proposed to assess the final texts and define the AUC position to be taken to the Commission.

The work of analyzing the new topics proposed by the respective committee should begin on the basis of respective AU Technical Experts presentations so that arguments can be prepared to support the AUC position for the Commission meeting that will have to decide whether or not to undertake new work.

4.3.2.2 Implementation at the Intergovernmental Organizations (including Regional Economic Communities) level

Intergovernmental Organizations in Africa including the Regional Economic Communities (see 4.2.4 and 4.2.5) are highly encouraged to work with AUC and CCAFRICA Coordinator in all matters related to Codex activities at the Continental and AU Member States levels.

4.3.2.3 Implementation at the AU Member State level

As mentioned earlier, most of the AU Member States have made decisions to participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as they are member countries of Commission (see 1.5.8). However, for a country to arrive at a decision to join the Commission, it is encouraged to go through or re-assess the following stages:

i. determination of the appropriateness for the country to join the Commission:
ii. carrying out advocacy at national level;
iii. identifying the Codex Contact Point;
iv. requesting for membership; and
v. establishment of National Codex Committee.

Stage 1 – Determination of the appropriateness for the country to join the Codex Alimentarius Commission

It is necessary to determine if it is appropriate for a country to become involved in the work of Codex. In this respect, several considerations are taken into account, namely:

a. is the country a Member of FAO and/or WHO?;
b. would the adoption or use of Codex standards in national legislation
facilitate protection of the country’s consumers?;
c. is it important for the country to introduce a national food control system, improve the existing system, or improve its national capacity to deal with food safety incidence?;
d. does the country export agricultural crops, animal products or species of fish in their raw or processed state, and do any of these commodities and products contribute significantly to the country’s economy?;
e. are there specific food imports upon which the country relies to ensure an adequate and nutritious food supply?; and
f. is the country a Member of WTO?

For the current African Member Countries of Codex, it is hoped that these questions were answered in affirmative, and therefore, appropriate for those countries to become Members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. For a country which is not yet a member of the Commission, an affirmative answer to any of these questions would be an appropriate indication for the country to become a Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Stage 2 – Carrying out advocacy at national level

Again, for the current African Member Countries of Codex, once it was determined that membership in the Codex Alimentarius Commission was appropriate, the next step was to identify which government departments/ministries had a legislated responsibility for food standards, and to engage them in the preliminary decision-making process and in any briefing sessions. That entailed an examination of existing food legislation applicable anywhere along the food chain, from farm to consumer, taking care to identify any government departments/ministries with responsibility for administering and/or enforcing legislation pertaining to food safety and quality. It was also necessary to liaise with the various ministries in order to explain what Codex is about, and why it was important for the country to become involved. The need for communication among the relevant government departments/ministries cannot be overemphasized. Transparent decision-making processes and good communication at the early stage will avoid many misunderstandings and duplication of activities in the future. Even at that early stages of Codex involvement, it was important to include or to involve other stakeholders – industry, academia and consumer groups. Although they are not involved in the ultimate decision, they do have an important role to play.
Stage 3 – Identification of the Codex Contact Point

Again, for the current African Member Country of Codex, once there was an agreement that the country were to become involved in Codex activities, the next step was to identify a Codex Contact Point and the ministry/department that had to take the responsibility for coordination of Codex activities in the country. Section 1.4.4 above provides in greater detail the functions of a Codex Contact Point, but it is important to understand that a country’s participation in Codex is a collaborative effort.

In order for such participation to be effective, there must be open and constant communication among not only the government ministries, but also industry and consumer groups. At this point, it is important to understand that the Codex Contact Point is primarily a coordinator and focal point for Codex activities within the country, and is the link between the country and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (and its Secretariat).

A common question is “Where should the Codex Contact Point be?”
To answer this question, several considerations have to be taken into account. First is to understand that the Codex Alimentarius Commission is an intergovernmental organization and therefore, the designated Codex Contact Point should be a ministry, government department or parastatal. However, having understood the role and functions of the Codex Contact Point, the decision on where best to locate the Codex Contact Point rests with the respective member country. It is a recommended practice that the government takes up the responsibility of being the Codex Contact Point because:

i. Codex as an intergovernmental body it is the Member Governments that take decisions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission, with the expectation that they should interpret and implement them accordingly at the national level. Hence, it is more appropriate that the government should coordinate Codex activities. Looking at the functions and requirements, in most cases it is the government that is better placed to be effective as the Codex Contact Point. Example of locations of Codex Contact Points in AU Member States is given in Appendix II

ii. There is a need for perceived neutrality in terms of meeting the basic Codex objectives of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade, and the government is generally considered to be in a position to provide this. Irrespective of the location of the Codex Contact Point, it is desirable that the following criteria are met:
   a. neutrality as far as possible with regard to all stakeholders involved in
Codex work;
b. capability to perform the functions of the Codex Contact Point;
c. accessibility to all parties interested and/or those involved in the activities of Codex.

Equally important is to ensure that the placement or location of the Codex Contact Point in a given ministry, government department or parastatal is provided for under one of the country’s laws in order to have legal status. Being a legal entity in a country enables the Codex Contact Point to be included in the national development strategies and therefore supported by the government through regular national budgetary allocation. For example, the Tanzania Parliamentary Standards Act No 9 of 2009 under which the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) is re-established, assigns TBS the role of coordinating Codex activities in Tanzania.

Secondly, it is important that the individual designated to head of the Codex Contact Point communicates with all interested stakeholders and has sufficient support and resources to do the work. A key role will be to interact with entities in relevant ministries such as health, agriculture, fisheries and trade.

The head of the Codex Contact Point must be given the responsibility and authority to coordinate national Codex activities. It is critical that the designated individual has sufficient time and resources (human and financial) to devote to this function. In some countries, a senior official is the designated head of the Codex Contact Point, but the actual coordination and related work is carried out by a professional officer(s). This is acceptable provided the necessary resources (including time) are devoted to the country’s Codex activities to achieve the desired results.

What resources are needed?
The other common question is what resources are need for the Codex Contact Point. Mention has been made above of the Head of the Codex Contact Point. In terms of human resource allocation, there could be an administrative officer/personal assistant or clerk assigned to assist the head of the Codex Contact Point, who should be able to devote at least 25 percent of his/her time in support of the national Codex activities. The allocation of other human resources to the Codex programme will be contingent on the level of involvement and coordination required. However, in determining ongoing commitment as a Codex member country, a preliminary assessment of the projected level of involvement and associated budgetary implications should be
In becoming a Codex member country, a nation takes on responsibility for establishing an interface between the Codex Contact Point and the Rome-based Secretariat, and between the Codex Contact Point and the national stakeholders, as well as linkages with other Codex member countries within the region. Certain infrastructure issues will need to be addressed including:

i. **Computer facilities**
   The primary method of contact between the Codex Secretariat in Rome and the Codex Contact Points is via electronic mail. In addition, all the standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted by the Codex Alimentarius are posted on the Codex Web site. Therefore, it is essential that the Codex Contact Point and officers involved in the management of the Codex activities in the country are equipped with a computer capable of accessing e-mail and the Internet, and with up-to-date software capabilities.

   It is recommended that a distinct e-mail address for the Codex Contact Point be established so that communications regarding the Codex do not get lost in the general e-mail account of the Codex Contact Point or agency. Such e-mail address can be established along the following lines: codex.countryname@.... For example, codex.tanzania@tbs.org, codexswd@gov.sz. Avoid individuals e-mail addresses like cjsmoshar@yahoo.com. This is important to ensure that there is no interruption in the flow of information should there be a change in the individual designated as being responsible for the Codex Contact Point.

ii. **Office**
   The Codex office may be located in an existing office, or provided with a separate facility. Whatever arrangement is implemented, it is important that Codex activities are carried out in a designated area/facility from which the work is conducted.

iii. **Essential equipment**
   Telephone and facsimile access for the Codex office are essential to the overall efficiency of the activities. A photocopy machine and filing cabinet will facilitate the handling and organization of Codex documentation and
related correspondence.

iv. Library/reading facility
While most Codex documentation is available electronically, not all interested stakeholders will have access to computers. Therefore, there is still a need to have the capacity to manage printed copies of some Codex documents. The need to ensure transparency and communication of Codex work has led in some countries to the establishment of a reading facility. This ensures ready access for interested parties (industry, consumers) to Codex texts. Specific computer(s) may be set up for use by interested parties to access Codex material electronically.

Stage 4 – Request membership

As explained in detail in 1.5.8, the Codex Alimentarius Commission maintains an open invitation to become a Member by virtue of Article 2 of its Statutes that states: Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards. Membership shall comprise such of these nations as have notified the Director-General of FAO or of WHO of their desire to be considered as Members. A country that wishes to become a Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, should communicate by means of a letter addressed to the Director-General of either FAO or WHO. The letter should be signed by a suitably senior official, e.g. a minister or head of agency, and include the name and contact information of the designated Codex Contact Point (including an e-mail address and national Codex Web site where applicable). A copy of the letter should also be referred to the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Stage 5 - Establishment of National Codex Committee (NCC).

Codex activities involve many stakeholders in the Member Country whose interests and concerns need to be taken on board while taking decisions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission activities including submission of national comments or meetings. To ensure involvement of such stakeholders and inclusion of all interests and concerns, it is essential that a National Codex Committee (NCC) be established. The Codex Alimentarius Commission in some of its publications encourages Codex Member countries to establish National Codex Committees (see also 1.5.5) due to their vital functions. The National Codex Committee will therefore provide a forum for discussions
and for the formulation of the national position(s) and responses to Codex proposals or policy.

The National Codex Committee also enables stakeholders with no international affiliation or exposure to represent their interests, or those groups unable to attend the international meetings to have an opportunity to discuss the meetings' agenda items with their national delegation.

Therefore the primary objective of the National Codex Committee is to act as a consultative group to the government on matters related to Codex. Representatives from all relevant national bodies, including consumers organisations, business associations etc., should be invited to attend the National Codex Committee in order to expose their views for consideration and inclusion in the national negotiating position.

The functions of the National Codex Committee vary from country to country owing to a number of reasons. However the primary functions include:

i. formulate the country's response to the proposals of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;

ii. nominate delegates to represent the country at various Codex meetings;

iii. advise the government on the best possible decisions regarding Codex standards and their implementation;

iv. appoint technical sub-committees whenever necessary for the country's effective participation in Codex. These subcommittees normally focus on specific technical issues or types of standards (e.g. fish and fishery products), and their work may be coordinated by either the national Codex coordinating structure or the Codex Contact Point;

v. propose and implement an annual programme of work;

vi. present an annual report of its activities;

vii. articulate with the national authorities the strengthening of Codex activities in the country;

viii. undertake such other duties as may be advised by the government; and

ix. undertake other duties according to the government’s advice.

An important issue to consider regarding the National Codex Committee is the composition of such committee so as to make it as representative as possible. Also, the nomination process of those to serve in the committee needs careful consideration. Ideally, all government departments and organizations concerned with food safety, food production and trade in food should be included in the National Codex Committee. Furthermore, owing to the functions of the NCC,
some scientific organisations such as public universities, research institutions and any other notable experts in the relevant field with keen interest in Codex matters, could be co-opted to the NCC.

However the NCC should not be too large in order not to make it unmanageable. The NCC shall elect a chairperson among its members. The chairperson can represent any organization or ministry. The position of the chairperson may be rotational, on a two-year term for instance. The responsibilities of the chairperson shall be defined by the NCC and may include conducting meetings of the NCC among others.

The person who serves as the Head of the Codex Contact Point shall also serve as the Secretary of the National Codex Committee. As a secretary to the NCC, his/her responsibilities shall be defined by the NCC and may include:

i. taking minutes at the NCC meetings;
ii. keeping all records relating to the activities of the NCC;
iii. drafting the agenda items and sending invitations to meetings in conjunction with the chairperson;
iv. keeping an updated file of NCC members;
v. disseminating information on food-related events among NCC members;
vi. drafting the annual schedule for the NCC; and
vii. undertaking such other duties as may be prescribed by the NCC and/or the government.

The NCC shall agree itself on the basic operational procedures including the quorum, the schedule and the procedure of the meetings. However it is recommended that the quorum for any meeting should include a representative from all the key stakeholders such as the industry and the consumers. The documents should also be circulated as widely as possible and with ample time in advance in order to enable those who are not able to attend any particular NCC meeting, to submit their contributions which should be considered at the NCC meeting.

All sub-committees appointed by the NCC shall report to the NCC. Decisions at the NCC shall be reached by consensus and implemented by and as agreed at respective NCC meeting. Communication between the government and the NCC is conducted through the Codex Contact Point.

As there are several interested parties who would want to be involved in and represent their constituents at the NCC, the procedure for nomination/
inclusion into the NCC must be known, open and transparent. Whereas different countries could use different methods to select those to sit at the NCC, depending on the resources and structures available, it is recommended that the Codex Contact Point identifies and lists all key stakeholders and invites them to the inaugural meeting of the NCC. The participants at this meeting would then identify and invite other members to the NCC through the secretary.

An example of a National Codex Committee could include representatives from the following institutions:

- Relevant Ministries/Government institutions such as:
  - Ministry of Health;
  - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Livestock;
  - Ministry of Trade and Industry;
  - Ministry of Consumer Protection;
  - National Bureau of Standards;
  - Food and Drugs Authority(Board); and
  - Government Chemist.
- Consumers’ Organisations;
- Food Industry - Manufacturers [representatives from various sectors]
- Traders in Food items e.g. importers and exporters;
- Universities;
- Leading Research Institutions; and
- Notable experts.

It is advisable to co-opt into the NCC, representatives from the Office of the FAO and WHO Representatives in the country as they are always helpful and have up-to-date information on the working of FAO and WHO including procedures for applying for FAO and WHO technical support to Member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

As mentioned for the Codex Contact Point, the NCC is recommended to be established under a national legal framework so as to make its operations and functioning to be guided by an enabling national law.

**Stage 6 - Conduct Codex workshop**

Once the Codex Contact Point has been able to organize the inaugural meeting of the NCC, it is suggested that a Codex workshop be conducted to facilitate the understanding of Codex as an international food standard-
setting organization, and of how the national Codex programme interacts with international standard-setting activities.

In that workshop, the NCC should be able to identify Codex committees, task forces and other subsidiary bodies of priority to the country. Most African countries like other countries in the other Codex regions cannot afford the resources to participate in the work of all the currently active Codex committees, task forces, the Codex Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission itself. Therefore, it is important for the African countries to prioritize and focus their resources to ensure that they are involved in discussing and developing standards of greatest national significance.

It is advised to form Subcommittees of the NCC in-line with the identify Codex committees, task forces and other subsidiary bodies of priority to the country. Or at least identify a national technical/scientific person for each of the identify Codex committees, task forces and other subsidiary bodies of priority to the country to be working with the Codex Contact Person to prepare working documents/recommendations for the NCC meeting.

The workshop should also make efforts to come up with the schedule of the NCC meetings based on the schedule of sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. It is advisable to plan the NCC meetings one month before the session of a Codex subsidiary body, in order to review and approve the national position at that meeting. Example of Codex organization in a Codex Member Country is given in Box 2 below.

The national workshop should also come up with firm recommendations for sustainable funding to enable the Codex Contact Point and the National Codex Committee to operate efficiently and effectively. A secure source of funding for Codex work at the national level would enable prompt response/reactions on Codex proposals, timely and adequate preparation for Codex meetings, representation and effective participation at Codex meetings among other things. Possible sources of funds to support Codex activities include:

- Budgetary allocation from regular Central Government budget;
- AU and RECs;
- UN Organisations especially WHO and FAO;
- Foundations & Trust Funds;
- Industry Levy; and
- International Organisations.
**Box 2: Codex coordination in the United Republic of Tanzania**

The United Republic of Tanzania has established a Codex Contact Point and a National Codex Coordinating Committee, both of which are essential for the country’s effective participation in the international food standard-setting process. The Codex Contact Point is located in the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) and the Head of the Agriculture and Food Section of the TBS is the officer responsible for the national Codex Contact Point.

The establishment of the National Codex Committee has ensured that all ministries, non-governmental organizations, consumers and industry have ample opportunities to present their views on various Codex matters, including aspects related to food safety control.

The National Codex Committee has representation from public and private institutions including academia, research and consumer organizations.

The core functions of Tanzania’s National Codex Committee include:

- advising the government on the implications of various food standardization and food control issues that may have arisen and that are related to the work undertaken by the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- proposing to the government the adoption of Codex standards, and suggesting which organizations should take action;
- serving as a national forum to assist the government in ensuring a supply of safe food to consumers, while at the same time maximizing the opportunities for industry development, and for the expansion of both domestic and international trade;
- appointing the technical (sub)committees to assist in the study or consideration of technical matters;
- studying Codex documents, collecting and revising all relevant information related to science, technology, economics, health and control systems, so as to be able to give supporting reasons in the preparation and acceptance of Codex standards;
- cooperating with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and nominating delegates to Codex sessions; and
- cooperating with other national and foreign organizations whose scope covers food standards.

The source of funding for running and/or for activities of the Codex Contact Point and the National Codex Committee must however be known to all members of the NCC. Similarly, any contributions must not be submitted to any conditions so as to enable the two bodies operate effectively without fear or favour.

Another important activity to be done during the national workshop is to review the national laws with the view of find the right law under which provisions for the establishment of the CCP and the NCC can be introduced and to enable the coordination of Codex activities to have legal status.

**Stage 7 – Understanding Codex Documentation**
A country which has successfully applied for Codex Membership, organized the Codex function at the national level by establishing Codex Contact Point, forming a National Codex Committee and its Subcommittees will need to now understand well the different documents from Codex especially how Codex documents are organized and referenced. This understanding will make it easier to keep Codex documents in order, and avoid confusion and loss of time when searching for a specific document, in view of the large volume of documents produced by the Codex system. It is equally important to understand the differences between REPS (ALINORMS), Commission working papers, committee working papers, circular letters and conference room documents including the Codex document numbering system.

Codex documentation is divided into six main categories namely:

i. the Codex Procedural Manual;
ii. REPS (ALINORMS);
iii. committee working papers (CXs);
iv. conference room documents (CRDs);
v. circular letters (CLs); and
vi. adopted texts.

All categories of documents follow a specific numbering system that may include a reference to the year of origin and the relevant committee or task force.

a. The Codex Procedural Manual

The Codex Procedural Manual contains the Statutes of the Commission, the Rules of Procedure and information on how the Commission carries out its work. It also includes a listing of the Commission’s subsidiary bodies and their terms of reference, and identifies the Members of the Commission together with the addresses of Codex Contact Points.

The Codex Committee on General Principles is responsible for updating the Manual, and such amendments are considered regularly by the Commission. Amendments to the Manual do not follow the Codex step procedure.

The Manual outlines the agreed set of rules to ensure uniform running of Codex activities, and is intended to help member countries to participate effectively in the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

The Manual is the document which every delegate to a Codex session, staff in
the CCP office, members of the NCC and all the other persons with interest in Codex activities must read. The Latest version and previous versions of the Manual are readily available on the Codex website.

b. Working documents for Codex sessions

**ALINORMS Until 32nd session and CX/CAC from 33rd Session**

Reports of the Commission, committees and task forces, recording the outcomes of meetings, and working documents prepared for Commission sessions were called ALINORMS before the 33rd session of the Commission held in July 2010. These documents are identified with the term “ALINORM” followed by the calendar year in which the meeting is held, followed by the session number. This is then followed by the consecutive number of the document in line with the Commission agenda item. For example, a document on the agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (held in July 2009) would be identified as ALINORM 09/32/xx (xx being a consecutive number, starting at 1 like ALINORM 09/32/1 Provisional Agenda)

From the 33rd session of the Commission, the Reports of the Commission, committees and task forces, recording the outcomes of meetings, and working documents prepared for Commission sessions were changed from being identified as ALINORMS to CX/CAC followed by the calendar year in which the meeting is held and followed by the session number.

This is then followed by the consecutive number of the document in line with the Commission agenda item. For example, a document on the agenda of the Thirty-third Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (held in July 2010) would be identified as CX/CAC/10/33/xx (xx being a consecutive number, starting at 1 like CX/CAC/10/33/1 Provisional Agenda)

Reports of committees and task forces are Commission documents and, as such, were also referenced as ALINORMS before the 33rd session of the Commission in July 2010. Those also follow a standard numbering system, but with a slight variation on the above system. In the case of reports, the number following the word “ALINORM” indicates the year in which the Commission meeting is being held at which the committee report will be presented. For example, ALINORM 09/22 was the report of a Codex committee which was presented to the Thirty-second Session of the Commission held in July 2009. In addition, instead of a letter combination indicating the committee, each committee/task force had a number. For example, the Codex Committee on
Food Labelling (CCFL) was designated “22”. Therefore, a CCFL report from a session held in May 2009 was identified as ALINORM 09/22 (i.e. report to be tabled at the Thirty-second Session in July 2009). If there were more than one meeting of a particular committee between Commission sessions, the second session is identified with the letter “A” after the number.

However, this system changed from 2010 and all reports of Codex Committee meetings held from August 2010 after the 33rd session of the Commission to date are identified by the abbreviation “REP” followed by the Calendar year of the Commission session and then followed by the abbreviation of the name of the Codex Committee. For example, the report of the Forty-Third session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives held in Xiamen, China 14 – 18 March 2011 and presented to the 34th session of the Commission carried the identification number of REP/11/FA. Box 3 below gives some examples of the identification of documents for Commission reports while Box 4 gives some examples of the identification of documents of a Committee session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>32nd session</th>
<th>34th session</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agenda of the Commission</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports of Codex Committees and Task Forces</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codex Committee on Food Additives</td>
<td>ALINORM 09/32/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

32nd session of the Commission in July 2009
CAC/32 INF/4- Communication from OIE (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/32 INF/5 - Communication from WTO (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/32 INF/6 - Communication from IAEA (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/32 INF/7 - Communication from OIML (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/32 INF/8 - Communication from ISO (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/32 INF/9 - Codex Document Distribution
CAC/32 INF/10 - Proposed Schedule of Codex Meetings 2009-2011
CAC/32 INF/11 - Codex Advocacy Material
CAC/32 INF/12 - International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health
CAC/32 INF/13 - Side Events organised during the the 32nd Session of the Commission
CAC/32 INF/14 - International seminar on setting food safety standards, effects on International trade, particularly for developing countries, The Hague, The Netherlands, 9-12 June 2008
CAC/32 INF/15 - Explanatory note on the use of the Electronic Voting System

34th session of the Commission in July 2011
CAC/34 INF/1- Communication from OECD (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/2 - Communication from OIE (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/3 - Communication from WTO (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/4 - Communication from WTO/STDF (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/5 - Communication from OIV (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/6 - Communication from ISO (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/7 - Communication from IAEA (report of activities relevant to Codex work)
CAC/34 INF/8-Rev Side Events organised during the 34rd Session of the Commission
CAC/34 INF/9 - International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health

Box 4: An example of referencing documents of a Codex Committee working papers

Agenda Item 1       CX/FH 13/45/1
August 2013

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE
Forty-fifth Session
Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 11 – 15 November 2013
To be held at the JW Marriott Hotel, Ha Noi, Viet Nam
from Monday 11 November at 9:30 through Friday 15 November 2013

PROVISIONAL AGENDA
Opening of the Session
1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Matters Referred by the Codex Alimentarius Commission
and/or Other Codex Committees and Task Force to the
Food Hygiene Committee
3. Matters arising from the Work of FAO, WHO and other International
Intergovernmental Organizations:
(a) Progress Report on the Joint FAO/WHO
Expert Meetings on Microbiological
Risk Assessment (JEMRA) and Related Matters
Standard Setting Process of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

(b) Information from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)  
CX/FH 13/45/4

4. Proposed Draft Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: Trichinella spp. and Cysticercus bovis at Step 4  
CX/FH 13/45/5
- comments at Step 3  
CX/FH 13/45/5-Add.1

5. Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs at Step 4  
CX/FH 13/45/6
- comments at Step 3  
CX/FH 13/45/6-Add.1

6. Proposed Code of Practice for Low-Moisture Foods at Step 4  
CX/FH 13/45/7
- comments at Step 3  
CX/FH 13/45/7-Add.1

7. Discussion paper on occurrence and control of parasites  
CX/FH 13/45/8

CX/FH 13/45/9

9. Other Business and Future Work:  
CL 2013/11-FH

(a) Forward Workplan and criteria for evaluating and prioritizing new work  
CX/FH 13/45/10
(b) New Work  
CX/FH 13/45/11

10. Date and Place of the Next Session

11. Adoption of the Report

NOTES ON THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Agenda Item 4: The working document, CX/FH 13/45/5 and comments to this document compiled in CX/FH 13/45/5-Add.1 will form the basis for discussion in the physical Working Group on the Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: Trichinella spp. and Cysticercus bovis. The report of this working group will be made available as a CRD at the Session and will be considered under this item.

Agenda Item 9: The working documents, CX/FH 13/45/10 and CX/FH 13/45/11 will be discussed at the physical Working Group for establishment of CCFH Work Priorities. The report of this working group will be made available as a CRD at the Session and will be considered by the Committee under this item.

Circular letters

Circular letters (CLs) provide the vehicle for communication from the Codex Secretariat in Rome to Codex member countries and interested international non-governmental organizations. When reports from committees (REPs) are circulated, they always include a CL that invites Members and observers to provide comments on specific elements of the report – usually comments on draft text contained in the appendixes to the report.

When a committee establishes an ad hoc working group, and the working group wishes to circulate its recommendations, this is normally done through a CL. Circular letters are numbered consecutively, also indicating the calendar year and committee to which they pertain.
Box 5: An example of a Circular Letter

CX 4/20.2 CL 2013/11 - FH
May 2013

TO: Codex Contact Points, Interested International Organizations
FROM: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK AND/OR REVISION OF EXISTING STANDARDS

DEADLINE: 1 September 2013

COMMENTS: To:
1. Dr Vu Ngoc Quynh, Director
   Vietnam Codex Office, Vietnam Food Administration
   135 Nui Truc St, Hanoi, Vietnam
   Tel: (84-4) 38464489 ext 3070, Fax: (84-4) 38463739
   E-mail: vungocquynh@vfa.gov.vn

2. Ms Barbara McNiff
   Senior International Issues Analyst, Food Safety and Inspection Service, US Department of Agriculture,
   Room 4861, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington DC, 20250 USA,
   Tel: 202 690 4719, Fax: 202 720 3157
   Email: Barbara.McNiff@fsis.usda.gov

Copy to: The Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission
FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
E-mail: codex@fao.org

Background

1. When considering the Report of the Working Group for Establishment of CCFH Work Priorities, the 44th Session of the Committee agreed to re-establish the Working Group for Establishment of CCFH Work Priorities under the chairmanship of Viet Nam with assistance of the United States of America. The Working Group will consider proposals for new work to be submitted in reply to this Circular Letter. The Working Group will meet the day before the 45th Session of the Committee (10 November 2013).

2. It was agreed that the proposed draft revision of the “Process by which CCFH will undertake its work”, which includes the proposed criteria for evaluating and prioritizing new work will be used by the chair of the working group on priorities on an experimental basis.

3. In addition to proposals for new work, the Committee also agreed to request comments on the provisional criteria and their weighting values, and on the “forward workplan” (see Annex I to this Circular Letter). (REP 13/FH, paras 128-131).

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

4. Members and Observers are requested to provide comments on the provisional criteria and their weighting values and on the “forward workplan” (Annex I) and to (i) evaluate each workplan item; and the weighting values given to each workplan item; and (ii) provide weighting values for each criterion for the newly added workplan items, i.e. parasites and cereals. 5. Member Governments are invited to propose new work for consideration by the above Working Group and the possible revision and/or revocation of existing codes of practice. In making submissions.
5. Member Governments should keep in mind the discussion papers that are being developed for consideration by the Committee and the CCFH provisional “forward workplan” of the Committee. Proposals should be made in accordance with the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities (see Codex Procedural Manual) and in accordance with the process described in Appendix VI of REP12/FH, to the addresses indicated above by 1 September 2013.

Information on the development and discussions on the “process by which CCFH will undertake its work”, the criteria for evaluating and prioritizing new work and the “forward workplan” can be found in CRD 2 presented at CCFH44, ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/ccfh/ccfh44/CRDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Weighting Value</th>
<th>Criteria Weighting Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public health risk – such as a foodborne risk to public health</td>
<td>Potential: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of trade on public health</td>
<td>Actual: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency of information – new data/technologies that influence need to review existing codes</td>
<td>Regional impact: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplication of, or inconsistency with, existing codes</td>
<td>Global impact: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years since implementation, last review and/or last consideration by the Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, CL 2013/11 - FH identifies the eleventh circular letter for the calendar year 2013. This particular CL pertains to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. Box 5 shows an example of a circular letter.

Confere_nce room documents
Conference room documents (CRDs) are documents that are circulated at a Codex session and are not circulated more broadly to all Codex Members and observers. They are used to convey last-minute comments received from a country or organization, dealing with an item on the agenda of a Codex meeting and too late for translation. CRDs are also used when the Secretariat needs to circulate agenda documents close to the date of the meeting. Other CRDs may be generated when a committee establishes a working/drafting group that meets during the committee session. The report of the working/drafting group back to the committee is identified as a CRD.

They are distributed only at the meeting, in hard copies and countries not present at a meeting do not receive copies, as these are neither appended to committee reports nor formally circulated after a committee meeting. We need to note that a CRD will not be sent out by e-mail either before or after the meeting, unless a member expressly requests in plenary session that the Committee Report record the fact that it will be distributed for consideration in future work, or unless the committee’s secretariat decides to distribute it for the sake of transparency. However, the Codex Secretariat do currently compile all the documentation for different Codex sessions including the CRDs and put
on the FAO website. For example, the CRDs produced during the 36th CAC session in July 2013 can be found at the link FTP directory /codex/meetings/ CAC/CAC36 at ftp.fao.org.

CRDs are also distributed only in their original language, which makes it difficult to ensure that they are read by all Codex Members, including the chair and the secretariat, thus diminishing the likelihood that other countries will support the positions expressed therein. Therefore, if the issue is very important, the country should present its comments at least in two of the Codex languages: English and French or Spanish. The identification code for these documents is CRD, followed by serial numbering beginning with 1, in the order they are received by the Codex Secretariat. The comment must be sent to the committee secretariat and to the Codex Secretariat in Rome. However, it is advisable for the delegate who will be attending the meeting, or the head of delegation, to also carry the document in an electronic format, as the copy e-mailed may not have arrived at its destination, or it may be lost in the Secretariat. In this case, on the first day of the meeting, as soon as he or she has completed the registration formalities, the delegate should review all the documents that have been put out for pick up by the participants to first verify that the position papers submitted by his/her country have been published and secondly pick out the documents that were not available before he/she left home, including the CRDs. If papers submitted by his/her country had not been published, the delegation will have to approach the Secretariat, give it the electronic file, and ask that the papers are published as a conference room document.

The CRDs are widely used by countries that do not have the opportunity to systematically follow the work of Codex during the year and those that do not meet the deadlines indicated in the circular letters for submitting country comments.

Instead, they do submit their country comments only when they are sure they will be attending the meeting or as they reach the meeting venue. It is important to also note here that countries which rely on CRDs to present their position on a specific issue may find it more difficult to gain support, as there is limited time for members of the delegations of other countries to review the CRD and determine if they can support the position. In addition, where there are technical issues involved, the other delegations may not have the expertise on their respective delegation, necessitating either a call back to their capitals or the deferment of a decision.
LIM Documents
These were used in Commission sessions as conference room documents. They are limited-edition documents, hence their name. They had the same function as the CRDs.

Information documents
These are documents distributed during Commission sessions by the Secretariat presenting various information to delegates including reports on the relations between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other International Organizations like OIE, WTO, IAEA, OIML and ISO. Similarly they are circulated by the Secretariat with important information from the Secretariat or from FAO and WHO and other information of administrative nature including logistics for the session. An example of the information documents is given in Box 4 of the information documents distributed by the Codex Secretariat during the 32nd and 34th sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These documents are identified by starting with the abbreviation CAC followed by the number of the Commission session and then the abbreviation INFO followed by a consecutive number starting with 1 issued by the secretariat. For example CAC/36 INF/1 - Communication from OECD (report of activities relevant to Codex work), CAC stands for Codex Alimentarius Commission, 36 – stands for the 36th session of the Commission while INFO – is the abbreviation of information, and 1 – stands for the first information document issued by the secretariat during the 36th session of the Commission.

Adopted texts
As indicated previously, Codex texts take the form of standards, recommended codes of practice and guidelines. Once a committee has elaborated one of these types of texts, it is forwarded to the Commission for adoption. Upon adoption, the text is incorporated into the Codex Alimentarius.

Standards are identified as STAN, recommended codes of practice as RCP and guidelines as GL. For example, a standard would be identified as CODEX STAN or CX STAN, followed by a letter (for selected standards) and number, then the year the standard was adopted and, if applicable, the year it was revised. For example, the Codex international individual standard for cottage cheese, including creamed cottage cheese is identified as CODEX STAN C–16 (1968). The Codex standard for named vegetable oils is identified as CX STAN 210–1999.
Recommended codes of practice and guidelines follow a similar identification system. For example, the Code of hygienic practice for aseptically processed and packaged low-acid foods is identified as CAC/RCP 40–1993. The Codex general guideline on claims is identified as CAC/GL 1–1979 (Rev. 1–1991).

**Stage 8 - Participating in the Codex Work**

A country which has successfully applied for Codex Membership, organized the Codex function at the national level by establishing Codex Contact Point, forming a National Codex Committee and its Subcommittees will be in a position to start active participation in the Codex process. It is important to understand that participation in Codex means more than travelling to a meeting. It requires time to review the issues under discussion, preparing national positions and, if appropriate, submitting written comments to the Codex Secretariat in Rome.

Usually, the first step towards participation in Codex is developing national positions on Codex issues and, when appropriate, submitting written comments. Then there is physical attendance in Codex sessions by a national delegation, presenting report and adoption of text adopted by the Commission.

**a. Developing a national position**

In order to be effective Members of Codex, African countries should establish processes for developing national positions on matters before the Commission, Codex committees and task forces. These need not be complex, but should follow an administrative process that reflects good management procedures. As mentioned earlier, it is recommended to establish Subcommittees in-line with the Codex Committees and task forces identified by the NCC as being of national priority and chaired by technical chairpersons. It is also recommended for the Chairpersons of the Subcommittees to also be designated heads of coordinating national positions and head of national delegations to meetings of the respective Codex committees and task forces.

Regardless of the exact mechanism a country has established, there are five common basic steps in the development of a national position which include:

i. circulating working documents;
ii. soliciting input from stakeholders;
iii. review of positions proposed by CCAFRICA as supported by AUC through AU-IBAR;
iv. review of positions proposed by respective RECs;
Standard Setting Process of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

v. drafting a position;
vi. obtaining national endorsement of the position; and
vii. where appropriate, submitting the position as written comments.

Circulate working documents
As explained in 1.5.4 above, all communications from the Commission to the member country and vice versa go through the CCP meaning that the CCP receives the Codex working documents from the Codex Secretariat in Rome.

The CCP receives working documents from CCAFRICA Coordinator, AUC through AU-IBAR, from respective RECs and from other CCPs in and outside Africa.

Codex working documents sent to CCP include reports of the Commission, committees and task forces recording the outcomes of meetings, working documents prepared for Commission, committees and taskforces sessions, circular letters, adopted texts and any other text identified by the Codex Secretariat for circulation to Codex Member Countries.

Working documents from CCAFRICA Coordinator, AUC through AU-IBAR and from respective RECs include positions and comments as proposed by AUC technical experts as coordinated by CCAFRICA Coordinator through AU-IBAR support.

A first step in engaging stakeholders and making them aware of the issues discussed at Codex meetings is to circulate the latest versions of the reports of the Codex committees relevant to the country. It would be helpful to draw their attention to specific paragraphs in the report that address agenda items of particular interest to the stakeholders. In addition, circulation of reports not only serves to familiarize recipients with the relevant issues, but also to sensitize them to the format and language of Codex documents.

The CCP should also determine whether written comments are being requested and, if so, what time frame needs to be established in order for the country to adhere to the deadline for submission of comments. In other words, the deadline that the CCP will establish for completion of the national position will not be the same as the deadline contained in the working papers. It is recommended that the date established by the CCP should three to four weeks prior to the deadline in the working papers, to allow sufficient time for any formatting, spell checking and government endorsement.
The CCP circulates working documents for review and comment by respective national stakeholders and refers comments received to the respective Subcommittee of the NCC or respective technical person responsible for drafting national position (see Solicit input).

Solicit input
Significant effort by the CCP is necessary to ensure that appropriate stakeholders are consulted in the development of national positions for sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary committees.

This means that the CCP should establish communication with other ministries, industry, consumers, academia and public health professionals. It should be understood that not all stakeholders will be interested in all the issues under consideration in Codex. Therefore, to facilitate consultation and avoid overwhelming stakeholders with unwanted documentation CCP should endeavour to identify which groups are interested in what issues. For example, a country may decide to actively participate in the work of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) and the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO). The types of issues considered by these two committees, however, are quite different. Those industry associations associated with the production, processing, exportation or importation of fresh fruits and vegetables might be very interested in receiving the Codex documents relevant to the CCFFV. However, it is unlikely they would be interested in documents relevant to the CCFO. Therefore, they should not be sent those documents unless they have asked for them. On the other hand, for the FAO/WHO coordinating committee, both the fresh fruit and vegetable industries and the fats and oils industry might be interested in all the documentation. It is the responsibility of the CCP to determine the relevant stakeholders for each Codex issue and the mechanism for consultation.

Drafting National positions
National positions are prepared for two main purposes:

i. to enable the country delegation to present the position of their country during the relevant Codex meeting; and

ii. to form the basis of written comments that will be provided to the Codex Secretariat and/or host country secretariat in response to a request for written comments through a circular letter.

Preparing a national position is a collaborative effort. The first step is to prepare a “first cut”, or initial draft. This is prepared by the relevant Subcommittee
of the NCC or by an individual with technical expertise on the issue under consideration. The Chairperson of the Subcommittee or the technical expertise making the initial draft will usually serves as the head of delegation to the Codex session for which the position is being prepared.

In preparing the national position, input received as a result of the above consultation process is taken into consideration. AU through AU-IBAR and in coordination with CCAFRICA holds physical meetings of African experts (see 4.3.2.1(b)(Consultations)) to prepare scientific arguments on proposed Codex standards which are submitted to CCAFRICA CCP through the CCAFRICA Coordinator for reference during the national consultations before the submission of country comments or positions to the Codex Secretariat. The AU comments present form of harmonized AU comments/positions. However, it must be understood that the final decision as to the content of a national position rests with the NCC on behalf of the government, so it would be up to the NCC to determine how much and to what extent the input received will be reflected in a national position.

When developing a country position on Codex issues, the considerations to be taken into account are as varied as the issues that might be considered by the committee. However, the following are some general criteria that should be borne in mind:

i. Drafting a position is not done in isolation — it should be done in consultation with all interested parties.

ii. Consideration of an issue is usually not a one-time matter: often the issue may be on the agenda for several sessions. There is a history to the evolution of each issue within the context of any Codex committee or task force. Attempts should be made to understand this history, so that developing a position would be done within context. The committee will generally not revisit comments or interventions on issues that it has already discussed, and on which it has taken a decision.

iii. When preparing comments, make sure they are scientifically sound, or supported by risk assessment data (including an economic impact statement).

iv. Positions promoted internationally should be consistent with a country’s national policies. Therefore, the country’s domestic policies (including any pertinent legislation) should be considered when developing a position. However, using domestic requirements as a rationale for promoting a particular position at the international level is not appropriate. For example, it is not appropriate to state that “My country supports X
because that is what is in our national legislation”, as national legislation tends to reflect national concerns. National positions that are promoted at the international level should be based on considerations with a global application, e.g. science.

Official endorsement of the national position
The draft approved by the NCC may then be shared again with other interested parties (e.g. other members of the country’s delegation if applicable, ministries of health and or agriculture, Ambassadors to FAO and or WHO), who provide their final input. The final version should receive a final review by the NCC, so that it can be endorsed as an official country position.

Due attention should be given to ensuring national agreement and support, as once submitted it is not common practice to withdraw a national position, and countries should avoid changing the national position unless it is absolutely necessary (e.g. new information is received).

Format for written comments/national positions
There is no officially endorsed format for the provision of written comments, or for preparing national positions for use by delegations (even if they are not submitted as formal written comments) however, there are some basic components that need to be incorporated into the position:

i. name of the committee and identification of the session;
ii. identification of the agenda item, number and reference documents;
iii. background information to enable the reader to put the position in context;
iv. issues and discussion;
v. a statement of the national position; and
vi. a rationale for the national position.

An example of a format for preparing a national position is given in Box 6 below.

b. Submitting written comments
It is important for African countries to be submitting written comments, particularly on those issues on the agenda of the Codex Committees identified as being of national priority.

Written comments are useful to enable adequate preparation at national level prior to the Codex meeting. This ensures that there is national consensus, and that the best national expertise is included in addressing the relevance of a
Box 6: An example of format for preparing a national position

Agenda item No. (enter agenda item number) C/ (enter reference number)

CODEX COMMITTEE ON (committee name)
Date and location of meeting
Agenda topic

BACKGROUND
The purpose of this section is to provide a brief chronology of events leading up to the current consideration. This should include major decisions, previous country support for, or opposition to, those decisions, etc. This section will serve to put into context the elaboration of the issues and subsequent country position/strategy. Keep it as short as possible.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION
In this section the key issues that will be discussed as part of the agenda item will be identified. The issues should be evaluated from a national perspective; the arguments for and against, the implications, etc. should be identified, as appropriate. Depending upon the circumstances, the “issues/discussion” section may be separated into two distinct sections if such a separation will enhance the clarity and understanding of the country position. The primary purpose of this section is to provide support clearly to the position promoted below. This is primarily for the use of domestic readers who may not be as involved in the issue as the head delegate.

POSITION
This section will outline the national position on the issue(s) under consideration. The position must also be supported by a rationale that should flow logically from the discussion/evaluation section.

Box 7: An example of a format for preparing written comments to the Codex Secretariat

Country (enter country name)

Agenda item No. (enter agenda item number) CL/ (enter reference number)

CODEX COMMITTEE ON (committee name)
Date and location of meeting
Agenda topic

POSITION
This section will outline the national position on the issue(s) under consideration.

REASON
This section will provide the rationale for the position outlined above.

draft standard or issue to the country. Box 7 gives an example of a format for preparing written comments for submitting to the Codex Secretariat.

Written positions are circulated prior to the meeting giving time for countries to see which other countries might form an alliance with them, as they have the same concerns/opinion. Forming alliances before or in the initial stages of a meeting may assist in having one’s views heard.
Written comments are also relevant when resources may not be adequate, or when the meeting is not considered as a priority for sending a delegation. At the meeting, other countries that are present and have the same position can refer to the written comments to promote the position of both countries.

If comments have not been submitted, this will not be possible. Moreover chairs of committees have a responsibility to ensure that the written comments submitted by countries not present at a session are taken into consideration by the committee. If a country is present at a session and has submitted written comments, the speaker can then draw the attention of the committee to those comments.

As discussed under 1.5.4 above, it is the function of the Codex Contact Point to submit the written national comments to the Codex Secretariat in Rome and/or to the applicable host country secretariat.
5. PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE IN CODEX SESSIONS

As mentioned earlier, as soon as a country has successfully established an organized Codex structure and has developed a national position and or submitted national comments to the Codex Secretariat, the next activity is to participate in the sessions of the Commission, Codex Committees and Taskforces. This means sending a national delegation to such sessions.

Determining who should be on a national delegation is always a challenge, as there are a number of factors that may affect the selection process. According to the REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES (AFRICA) CAC/GL 43R-2003, nomination of delegates to represent the country at various Codex meetings is to be done by the NCC. Besides this recommendation, the process of selecting national delegations varies from country to country depending on number of factors. However, whatever process used in putting together a national delegation to attend a Codex session, it is important to clearly outline the responsibilities of the head delegate and that of the other members including non-governmental observers before, during and after a Codex meeting.

In many of the African countries, a country delegation will consist of one person only, owing to a lack of resources, and therefore they will assume the role of head delegate and this makes the selection process even more critical. In addition, when only one person represents the country at a Codex session, preparation of the national position in advance of the meeting is even more important, to ensure a true reflection of the country’s views or concerns on a given topic. In selecting the right person for the task, there are three important facts to bear in mind. First, as mentioned earlier, Codex is an intergovernmental organization; therefore the official delegate must be a government official or an individual contracted to represent the views of the government. It is important to note here that Head delegates represent the views of their governments and not their own.

The second to consider in selecting the right person to represent the country in a given Codex session, is that, Codex is a food standard-setting organization so whoever represents the country should have some food safety/food standard-setting experience.
Third point to consider is that the process of selecting national delegations should be very transparent and devoid of nepotism, political or other societal influences including corruption.

5.1 Process for selecting the head delegate
The following are a number of points the NCC or the CCP (in the absence of an NCC) is to consider in selecting the Heads of delegations to represent a country at the various committees and task forces of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

i. The Chairman of the relevant NCC Subcommittee or a technical person requested by the NCC or CCP to draft a national position and or national comments to be submitted to Codex Secretariat could be selected Head of delegation. In the absence of chairpersons or other technical persons selected previously by the NCC, the CCP could solicit nominations from senior-level managers of departments or agencies active in the national Codex programme. Nominations should based on:
   • terms of reference of the Codex committee for which the head delegate is being selected;
   • position held within a ministry/department with primary responsibility for the Codex committee;
   • technical expertise of nominee in the subject matter of the relevant Codex committee;
   • the degree of experience or involvement in previous Codex activities (e.g. contributions to developing national positions); and
   • other factors, such as level of position if appropriate.

ii. The NCC or the CCP in the absence of an NCC should endorse the nomination submitted by the applicable department/agency, taking into consideration the above criteria.

iii. The nominee’s appointment together with the delegate’s obligations and funding arrangements may be confirmed in writing if desired. Adequate briefing of the delegate is always important, but even more critical when there is a new representative at Codex meetings.

5.2 Process for selecting members of the national delegation

5.2.1 Government advisers
If a country has adequate resources, it may choose to select people in addition to the Head delegate to form a country delegation to attend the Codex session. Again, selection of persons to join the Head delegate in forming the
national delegation has to be very transparent. It is important to note here that national delegations usually consist of a head delegate, government advisers and nongovernmental observers.

One way of getting other members of the national delegation besides the Head delegate is for the CCP to circulate invitations and provisional agendas for upcoming Codex sessions to governmental and non-governmental organizations that have expressed an interest in the relevant Codex committee session. Replies to the invitation are received by the CCP and reviewed by the CCP and the head Delegate and finally approved by the NCC where it exist based on their expertise and experience relative to the issues being considered by the committee and their ability to contribute to the effectiveness of the delegation in promoting the country’s interests. The following criteria may be applied for selection of members of delegations:

i. expertise relevant to the items on the agenda;

ii. regard for an appropriate balance of expertise and skills within the delegation;

iii. assistance required by the head delegate for certain items on the agenda;

iv. representation of the individuals, groups and organizations that have an interest in the items on the agenda;

v. representation of the individuals, groups and organizations that might be affected by standards to be considered;

vi. extent to which the individual contributed to the development of national positions for the session of the committee;

vii. some African countries have embassies in the countries hosting some of the Codex sessions and have also designated an embassy technical person who attend and follows activities in the respective Codex committee; and

viii. Committee memory – is very important in selecting members of the national delegation. Going to a Codex meeting is not just a travel abroad. Preparing for a Codex meeting is not something a delegate can start worrying about when he/ she is told he/ she is going to participate—it is a living process as such continuity in the national representation has to be considered.

The final composition of all delegations should then be reviewed by the NCC and endorsed on behalf of the government. In the absence of NCC the CCP may contact the right authority in the relevant ministry for necessary approval.

5.2.2 Persons from non-governmental organizations

African governments, especially through the CCP, should ensure public
participation in the activities of Codex by the CCP identifying and maintaining a list of people and organizations that have expressed an interest in activities of one or more of the Codex committees. Such identified individuals and organizations should receive regularly information on Codex activities, including invitations to participate as part of a delegation to Codex meetings. Again, the selection of members of the national delegation from the non-governmental organizations should be transparent and such that a balance is achieved of non-governmental delegates representing the various non-governmental sectors, e.g. consumer groups, industry associations and professional associations.

The CCP should also inform the public that Codex committee sessions are normally open to the public, as such additional non-governmental representatives are free to attend plenary sessions of the committee as observers, provided space in the meeting room permits. These public observers do not sit in the meeting with the delegations and cannot make comments.

In all cases, non-governmental representatives, whether considered for official delegate status or not, should be given the opportunity to participate in the process of formulating national positions including providing written comments to the head delegate on the issues to be discussed at the committee session. Comments from stakeholders are solicited prior to the establishment of an official position on an issue, and copies of draft positions should be made available to stakeholders prior to any Codex committee meeting.

It is important that the selection process of representatives of non-governmental organizations on delegations is transparent and equitable. Countries, through the NCC are therefore encouraged to establish criteria for this process, and to make such criteria available to all interested parties. In developing national criteria for the selection of non-government members of delegations to attend a Codex meeting, the NCC should take into account the following:

i. Only those individuals and organizations listed with the Codex Contact Point and/or National Codex Committee (or its equivalent) should be considered as candidates for non-governmental representatives on delegations. It is the responsibility of an organization to submit nominations to the Codex Contact Point for consideration and endorsement by the NCC as potential delegates.

ii. Preference should be given to organizations that have national status and have indicated an interest in a broad spectrum of issues. Organizations with a more localized membership could be given consideration, particularly if
such groups have expertise in the subject matter.

iii. Nominees for delegation membership should have knowledge of the issues on the committee’s agenda. Preference should be given to nominees who have recognized credentials in the area of work related to the mandate of the Codex committee in which their participation is being considered.

iv. Organizations should act on behalf of their membership, and should be prepared to disclose information concerning their organization (e.g. membership, charter, process used to establish their position, develop comments and select their recommended nominee, etc.).

v. Final composition of all delegations should be subject to endorsement by the National Codex Committee.

5.2.3 Language Issues

This is a very important topic to consider when selecting a representative. A mastery of languages is not essential in some international meetings, because there will be simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, French and English.

However, in informal meetings for reaching group consensus or in meetings of working groups that are put together during the plenary session to resolve specific issues, the language will generally be English. The same is true for any conference room documents circulated: they will be available only in the original language, and many of them will be incomprehensible to delegates who speak only one language. If the delegate speaks only one language, it must be recognized that some negotiating options such as informal consultations with delegations speaking other languages will be limited. In this case, greater importance will have to be given to the groundwork that the Codex national coordinator will do before the meeting to line up partners for the country’s proposals.

5.3 Responsibilities and obligations of delegations

5.3.1 General considerations

There are number of considerations to be taken seriously by any one in a national delegation to a Codex session. These considerations are that:

i. Codex sessions are international negotiations on the safety and quality of foods without which there will be no human life. The negotiations are about the safety and quality produced and or traded in the country. So is about the life of the nationals the delegate is representing. Similarly, the negotiations are about the food the country exports. So is about the life of the peoples of the world buying the country’s food. And by signing ones attendance in a
Codex session, the represented nation becomes a contracting party to the decisions reached at that session. Codex decisions usually end up in a form of international food standards which are recognized under the WTO-SPS Agreement as the benchmarks for trade in food.

- as a national delegate, one carries the respective nation’s social-cultural and even political values. And being from Africa, one also carries the African continent values. So, besides having the technical knowledge on the different items on the agenda of a Codex session, a national delegate should also have adequate knowledge on international negotiations and for this matter, a briefing from the country’s departments or ministries of Foreign Service and or International Trade Negotiations will always be useful.

- Delegations participate in Codex sessions in accordance with the Codex Procedural Manual, Guidelines for Codex committees and intergovernmental task forces, including Conduct of meetings. It is the responsibility of all delegates to become familiar with the contents of this Procedural Manual. Delegates who are participating for the first time in a Codex meeting, besides reading the Procedural Manual, should brief themselves on some of the practical questions, and read the guidance for first-time delegates on the Codex webpage www.codexalimentarius.net.

- Non-government delegates should advise the head delegate of the concerns of the organization they represent, and make every effort to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the delegation at Codex sessions.

- Delegates are expected to attend all plenary sessions and any meetings convened by the head delegate. With the concurrence of the head delegate, non-government delegates may also attend working group meetings held during the session. Experience has shown that some delegates just sign their attendance and thereafter go shopping in the host city. This is great failure of the official duty and should be discouraged.

  For example, the WHO staff responsible for the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) are forced to monitor the attendance of the delegates sponsored by the CTF to ensure their full and continuous participation in the meeting, failure of which is reported to their respective governments.

- Generally, non-governmental observers should not negotiate on behalf of their country’s government, and should only do so with the express permission of the head delegate.

- If, during informal discussions, non-governmental observers express views that differ from the official country position, they must clearly indicate that these views are their own, or those of the non-governmental organizations they represent, and not those of their country’s government.

- Non-governmental observers should exercise discretion to ensure that
their activities are not prejudicial to the effectiveness of the delegation. A non-governmental observer may be asked to withdraw from the delegation if such activities occur.

ix. A delegate may not serve concurrently during a Codex committee session as a member of any other country’s delegation, or on the delegation of an accredited observer organization to the Codex session.

x. Members of the delegation are not immune from any laws or regulations of their country or the host country as a result of participation on a national delegation.

5.3.2 Responsibilities of the head delegate at Codex sessions

The head delegate to each session of a committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in consultation with the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee, is responsible for:

i. Identifying the advisers with an interest in, and expertise relevant to, the terms of reference of the committee, as well as the specific items on the provisional agenda of a particular session. The advisers may be selected from representatives of the various government ministries or departments. Observers may also be identified from nongovernmental organizations.

ii. Striving to ensure the formation of a delegation of government officials and nongovernmental representatives with an interest in, and expertise relevant to, the items on the provisional agenda.

iii. Preparing draft positions for each agenda item, for endorsement by the National Codex Committee (or its equivalent).

iv. Soliciting comments by correspondence or electronic means, or at a public meeting, on the draft positions for each item on the provisional agenda. This consultative process may be conducted through the Codex Contact Point, and can be facilitated by the National Codex Committee if one exists.

v. Conducting a discussion of the draft positions on each agenda item with officials from other countries that may share common views.

vi. Presenting the draft positions for each agenda item to the National Codex Committee (or its equivalent) for review, amendment as necessary and endorsement.

As positions reflect official national government opinion, it is important that the positions be endorsed by the appropriate government authority.

vii. Providing copies of the final draft positions to:

• the Codex Contact Point;
• each member of the delegation;
• all interested stakeholder organizations; and
• the designated contacts in other countries as appropriate
viii. Organizing in consultation with the CCP and the relevant national Subcommittee (where formed) before the national delegation leaves home, a final wrap-up meeting to go over the issues and take last-minute decisions, in light of the latest information received. Sometimes there will be “Add” documents (containing country comments, for example, which may have arrived late) and it is important to review them together with other members of the NCC, because they might change the position or the strategy adopted on certain issues.

ix. Presenting, defending and promoting the positions on each agenda item to the Codex committee, taking into account issues raised by other delegations while ensuring consistency with national policy. Where a particular agenda item falls within the mandate of a ministry represented by another member of the delegation, the head delegate should consider asking this delegate to speak on behalf of the country with respect to this item;

x. On returning to the country, prepare a report on the outcome of the session for the Codex Contact Point and the National Codex Committee. Preparation of this report may be delegated to another member of the official delegation. All members of the delegation should, however, endorse the final delegation report. In some countries, it is standard practice to present this report orally to the National Codex Committee, where such a committee exists;

xi. Continuing to coordinate preparation of responses to circular letters issued with respect to the committee, with consultation as per items (iv) and (v) above, as appropriate. The reply should be submitted to the Codex Secretariat via the Codex Contact Point, and presented to the National Codex Committee for information.

5.3.3 Registration, travel itineraries, accommodation and visas

The CCP should inform all the persons endorsed by the NCC or such other authority to be members of the national delegation well in advance to enable them start preparing internal documentation for requesting travel authorization and for obtaining visas if these are required for citizens of the country to enter the country hosting the meeting.

The CCP should assist and ensure that all the members of the national delegation fill in the registration forms from the Codex Secretariat and submit them to the Codex Secretariat and may be a copy to the host country secretariat if so advised. It is important to note that the registration exercise has a deadline to enable the Codex Secretariat and the secretariat of the committee host country enough time for making adequate arrangements for the meeting.
Experience has shown that sending copies of the registration forms to the embassy of the country hosting the committee in the country and to the embassy of the country in the country hosting the committee greatly facilitates travel arrangements. Equally important is for the NCC to work in close consultation with the offices of the FAO or WHO Representatives in the country including giving them copies of the registration forms of the members of the national delegation.

Travel reservations should be made well in advance. Invitations to Codex sessions are sent to the CCP by the Codex Secretariat at least two months and sometimes several months before the date of the meeting. So, as soon as the composition of the national delegation is endorsed by the NCC or such other authority, members of the delegation should be informed and advised to make travel reservations. It is recommended to book the most direct route to the venue of the session. For security reason, it is highly recommended to seek for daytime arrival and departure times in the venue of the meeting. Most travel agents will be of help for such selection however, most of the major airlines do also have corporate cost effective travel packages.

The CCP should also advise members of the national delegation to make hotel reservation as this is sometimes demanded by some embassies before issuing an entry visa. The invitation from the Codex Secretariat is in most times accompanied by a list of hotels the rates of which would have been negotiated for the delegates to the session. In some other cases, the secretariat of the host country provides such information. The negotiated hotel rates are in some cases still too high for some of the African countries economies depending on the city of the venue of the meeting. In such cases, the country embassies in the country hosting the meeting can be requested to arrange for safe budget accommodation with known address.

The CCP should check with the relevant authorities whether members of the national delegation will require entry visas to the country hosting the meeting. If visas are required, each member of the national delegation should apply for an entry visa as early as possible to avoid last minute rush and some of the host countries require longer time before an entry visa is issued.

It is also important for the CCP to advise the members of the national delegation as to whether they will also require what is known as Repatriation Insurance, especially if the Codex session is to be held in one of the Schengen Countries. A total of 25 countries, including all European Union countries
(except Ireland and United Kingdom) and three non-EU members (Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland) have signed the Schengen agreement. However, only 15 countries have implemented the common border control and visa. When preparing the travel authorization, one should have full information on the procedure, which in some countries can take several days or weeks.

5.3.4 Vaccinations

It is important for the CCP to find out sufficiently in advance whether the members of the national delegation will need vaccinations to enter the country hosting the Codex session, as immunization may take several days to become effective before the trip.

5.3.5 Codex Trust Fund arrangements

If the travel of one or more of the members of the national delegation is supported by the FAO/WHO Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (Codex Trust Fund), arrangements should be made well in advance of the meeting, with the WHO secretariat managing the fund (codextrustfund@who.int; http://www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/index.html).

Important documents that should be carried to a Codex session

As the members of the national delegation prepares to leave the country to a Codex session, they should carry the following documents with them:

i. Invitation, Provisional Agenda and other Working documents;

ii. Report(s) of the last Session(s) of the Codex committee or task force to be attended;

iii. Back-to-Office Report (personal report) of the head of delegation who attended the last session;

iv. The Codex Procedural Manual;

v. A Briefing for the head of delegation containing the position on relevant agenda items and related comments;

vi. Invitations to informal meetings;

vii. All other relevant documents such as the report of the last Commission session.

Similarly, it is useful to remember to have the following information at hand:

i. Contact data for the embassy officials, telephone numbers, address, how to get there;

ii. Information on the place of accommodation;

iii. Information on the place of the meeting (remember that if there is to be a
physical working group before the meeting begins, it will not necessarily be held in the same place as the plenary; pay attention to all the information in the invitation);

iv. A city map; and

v. How to get to the meeting—you can get information from the committee’s Secretariat or via the Internet on means of transportation from the airport to the hotel and from the hotel to the meeting site.

5.3.6 Arriving in the city/town where the Codex meeting is being held

It is greatly advised that members of the national delegation are given the chance to go through the online courses offered by the UN Department of Safety and Security (https://training.dss.un.org/courses/v21/pages/dss_login_register.php) or similar such courses to equip them with the necessary security knowledge when in a foreign country and city. In some cases, and especially if the embassy people are advised of the arrival of the national delegation in advance, they will be at the arrival point to welcome the national delegation and at that time give the necessary security briefing.

As recommended earlier, efforts should be made to take the most direct route to the venue of the session and to seek for daytime arrival times. It is highly recommended to cooperate fully with security and immigration staff at the airports regardless of whether one is entering or leaving a country.

Study the name and address of the hotel or other accommodation to be used for the period of the Codex session, get a map of the area and know the street(s). Know your surroundings and the people approaching you. Note that as a foreigner, you are easily identified by many people with questionable intentions. These range from the taxi drivers who will exploit you by taking you several kilometres before getting you to your hotel so that the you pay several kilometres as per the taxi meter reading to people who would con or rob you directly. From the arrival point if there are no arrangements to be picked by staff from the country’s embassy, it is advised to take hotel transport, if provided. Otherwise take public transport including commuter trains and buses. If you are to take a taxi, make sure you take one from a reputable company. It is also recommended for the national delegation to get into the same taxi or at least two persons in a taxi to the hotel. Upon checking in at the hotel, always request for a room on the second or third floor. Understand the hotel surroundings and move in and out in a group where feasible.
5.3.7 Finding the meeting venue and registration

The address of the Codex session is usually clearly detailed by the Codex Secretariat and the Secretariat of the host country. However, it is always recommended to take some time on the arrival day (usually a day or two before the date of the meeting) to identify the hotel and room or conference hall where the meeting will be held including identification of the most convenient transport to the venue. In most of the Codex meetings, registration starts early, usually on the day before the date of the meeting. In this case one can already register and also collect any documentation which would have been put out for pick up by delegates. If the meeting room would have been set for the meeting, one can already identify the nameplate (flag) and the seat(s) reserved for the country’s delegation.

If the meeting venue cannot be found one day before the date of the meeting, it is recommended for all the members of the country’s delegation to arrive well before the starting time of the meeting to get ample time for registration and for collecting any CRDs, INFs and any other documentation that would have been put out by the Secretariat or other delegations. It is also important to register early to get time to identify the country’s designated seat(s). Again is important to note here that Codex does not establish the number of delegates by country, except for the physical working groups, where it is normal to limit the delegation to two or three representatives per country. However, there may not be room for all the delegates of the country to sit at the country’s designated place. In these cases, delegates will take turns in accompanying the head of delegation, depending on their areas of expertise. In the case of large delegations, it is essential to inform the Codex Secretariat in advance.

5.3.8 Informal meetings

It is normal practice for different countries and interest groups to hold informal meetings in advance of a Codex session to address agenda items with the view of seeking support on a country position or reaching consensus on some of agenda items. Invitations to informal meetings are usually sent to the CCP. The CCP should present such invitations to the NCC for review and support as necessary. The invitations and the positions of the NCC should be given to the head of the national delegation before he/she travels to the meeting.

If the country knows that there is a small group of countries that share its national position, an initiative can be taken to call for a meeting with the delegates of those countries. To do so, the CCP will have to contact the others by e-mail.
It is best to hold such meetings on the opening day of the formal session, because in this way there will usually be space available in the meeting venue for talks between interest groups. If the issue is really important, the embassy is an ideal place to meet, if it has enough room. In this case, arrangements have to be made in advance and send out the invitations. It is important to note that most delegations arrival a night before the meeting, as such meetings should be planned in such way that as many of the target delegations as possible may participate.

It is a standing practice now for the Coordinator of CCAfrica to call for informal meetings of CCAfrica member countries at the beginning and in the course of a Codex session.

5.3.9 Attending in the meetings
It is important to note that all Codex meetings follow the same uniform format and are conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for Codex Committees and ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces as set out in the Codex Procedural Manual.

5.3.9.1 Opening of the session
Codex sessions are normally opened by a senior representative of the host government. After the opening, the Chairperson proceeds to the adoption of the agenda. It is at this stage of the proceedings that as a Member country, may propose additional items for consideration, which, if agreed upon will be discussed under Other Business as time permits. Once comments on the provisional agenda have been considered, the Chairperson will request that the committee or task force adopt the provisional agenda or amended agenda as the agenda for the session.

5.3.9.2 Role of the Chairperson
The Chairperson ensures that all questions are fully discussed, including written comments of Members and observers not present at the session. At appropriate intervals during the discussion of each agenda item, the Chairperson will summarise the discussion by stating what appears to be the generally accepted view. The Chairperson also ensures that conclusions of the discussion are clearly understood by all participants.

5.3.9.3 How are decisions reached?
Decisions at committee or task force level are normally reached by consensus.
Voting at this level is extremely rare and efforts are made to come to a solution that is acceptable to all. At the Commission level, voting may take place including for the adoption of amendments to the Rules of Procedure.

5.3.9.4 When are you allowed to speak?
Members and observers are permitted to intervene on issues under consideration. Normally the head of delegation has the right to speak. However, another member of the delegation may speak (e.g. on technical matters) but with the permission of head of delegation. Comments are always directed at the Chairperson. Protocol states that Members speak before observers and delegations speak only when acknowledged by the Chairperson.

It is important to ensure that, before requesting to speak, the national position is sufficiently worked out in advance and have the document translated into other languages, if there is an interest in lining up more countries in its support. We need to note here that mere submission of a country position paper is not enough for the comments to be taken seriously and the head of delegation will need to ask for the floor and present the position orally during a Codex meeting. It is not recommended to read out the entire text of documents already submitted in writing, for as mentioned earlier, the floor time is limited to two minutes. It is better, then, to focus on highlighting the salient points of the document and to indicate that further details on the position can be found in the published document (citing the Codex identification number assigned to the document).

It is also important to note that not all interventions will flow from the documents the delegate has brought along. At times, the delegate will have to respond to other countries’ reactions, offering counterarguments that may not have been considered back in the capital.

5.3.9.5 How do I indicate my delegations desire to speak?
As head of delegation you need to indicate your desire to speak/intervene by holding up the country nameplate (sometimes referred to as flag) and placing it in an upright position until acknowledged by the Chairperson. In some cases, an electronic system is used to indicate request to make an intervention.

5.3.9.6 How many times your country can intervene?
There are no uniform rules within Codex regarding the number and duration of interventions. The general practice is to intervene only once on a particular issue, although a second intervention may be allowed at the discretion of the
Chairperson, normally to clarify a point or reply to a question raised by another delegation. It is important to keep interventions short and concise (not more than 1 – 2 minutes) and to speak slowly to allow for effective and accurate simultaneous interpretation.

5.3.9.7 Report of the meeting

A draft report of the session’s proceedings is prepared by the Codex Secretariat for consideration on the final day of the session. It is customary, depending on the workload, that the second to last day of the meeting is set aside for the drafting of this report (i.e. no plenary session is held). The draft report is made available early on the last day of the session to allow delegates to familiarise themselves with its contents.

As the report is the official record of the Codex meeting it is essential that delegations carefully read it to ensure that it accurately reflects the meeting’s views, recommendations and conclusions. To the benefit of the conciseness of the final report, views and opinions summarised may not be associated with the names of specific delegations and observers. During the review of the draft report, the Chairperson calls up each paragraph or section. This allows delegations who wish to amend the text to intervene at the appropriate moment. When doing so, it is important to make concrete proposals for changes (e.g. additions or deletions). At this stage, it is not possible to re-open discussions; nor is it possible to record in the report what was not stated during the discussion. Once adopted the report becomes the official record of the committee or task force session and is called a REPORT (previously ALINORM). As mentioned earlier, reports are identified by the term REPxx/yy where xx is the year of the Commission which will discuss the report and yy the Committee acronym e.g. REP 13/FH for the report of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene reporting to the Commission in 2013. The Secretariat distributes the final report, in all the working languages of the respective committees or task forces, to all Codex Contact Points. The report is also posted on the Codex website.

5.3.10 Reporting and debriefing

The head of the national delegation should submit a report of participation to the CCP. The report should be submitted as soon as possible but within a period of 30 working days from the last date of participation in the meeting. Such report should enclose any additional agenda items/notes tabled in the meeting – conference room documents/position papers circulated by other Member Countries and a copy of the draft report as adopted in the meeting.
It is suggested that the report should be submitted in the following format, and should bear the signature of the leader and other members of the delegation with their names and designations:

i. Subject of the meeting;
ii. Place of the meeting;
iii. Dates of the meeting;
iv. Names and designations of the leader and other members of the delegations;
v. List of additional documents as tabled in the meeting, along with a copy of each document;
vii. A copy of the draft report as adopted in the meeting;
viii. A summary of salient recommendations/decisions arrived at in the meeting which have economic and trade implications on the country.

viii. A gist of deliberations on each of the items of the agenda concerning the country, covering the following points:
- Topic of the agenda.
- Document No.
- Paragraph No.
- The country’s position, as provided by the CCP of the country.
- Views of the country’s delegation as expressed in the meeting.
- Whether the views expressed are in conformity with the national policy/legislation/regulation – if not, the extent of divergence and the reasons thereof.
- Names of countries supporting country
- Whether any informal meeting/get-together with other Member Countries was arranged and if so, the outcome thereof.
- An extract of the recommendation as arrived at in the meeting.
- Future course of follow-up action on the part of the country, if any.
- Whether any issue requires attention by other Codex Committees.
- Did all members of the delegation abide by the directive of the leader and official decorum? If not, the specific instance of non-compliance.
- Additional remarks/suggestions, if any.

Each member of the national delegation should, besides the report of the head of delegation to NCC through the CCP, deliver a back-to-office report to his/her authorities, so as to maintain interest in the issues the delegate was involved in, and also to raise other questions that may have emerged during the meeting. That report should also inform the authorities about any contacts made with FAO/WHO, and any offers the country may have received to participate in other meetings to pursue joint projects, etc.
5.3.11 Follow-up action

The follow-up action of recommendations of any Codex meeting, based on the report of participation of the delegation, forms the base for interaction in the future meetings. It is, therefore, extremely important that the CCP undertakes the following steps:

i. Within one month from the date of receipt of the report of participation of the national delegation, the CCP should arrange a meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the NCC Committee or a meeting of the delegation with the Chairperson and the Secretary NCC, depending on the outcome of the report and the need for subsequent follow-up action. The head of the delegation will highlight the outcome of country’s participation and subsequent follow-up action needed to be prepared for the next meeting of the concerned Committee/other Codex Committees/Commission.

ii. The extract of the summary of the salient recommendations/decisions, as highlighted by the head of the national delegation in the participation report, should be circulated to the members of the NCC as well as to the members of the Technical Subcommittee and any other relevant stakeholder in the country.

iii. The National Codex Committee should draw up a schedule of activities for the short, medium and long terms, relating to committee issues. Keep in mind that, depending on the outcome of the meeting’s handling of the issues, some will remain on the agenda without moving on to the Codex Commission, while others will require scientific input from the Codex expert groups, which will give the country an opportunity to present data (in these cases consultations with the country’s research centres and universities are essential to know whether the country has produced studies or has data on the topic in question). Still other documents will be passed to the Commission for approval, in which case a future meeting should be proposed to assess the final texts and define the national position to be taken to the Commission.

The work of analyzing the new topics proposed by the committee should begin on the basis of countries’ presentations so that arguments can be prepared to support the country position for the Commission meeting that will have to decide whether or not to undertake new work.

If the authorities intend to continue the process, when it comes time to prioritize activities for the coming year, be sure the schedule includes a provision for travel to the next committee meeting.
AU through AU-IBAR has been carrying out initiatives to help AU Member States to participate effectively in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and also in ensuring effective use of the Codex Alimentarius at the national level and regional levels.

For example AU-IBAR is implementing a project known as The Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard setting Organizations (PANSPSO) funded by EU under which the following activities have been implemented:

i. holding physical meetings of African experts (four experts) to prepare scientific arguments on proposed Codex standards which are submitted to CCAFRICA CCP through the CCAFRICA Coordinator for reference during the national consultations before the submission of their comments or positions to the Codex Secretariat;

ii. supporting the participation of lead African Experts to sessions of identified Codex Committees;

iii. organization of sub-regional and continental workshops on food safety;

iv. coordinating with CCAFRICA Coordinator to organize informal meetings with the other FAO/WHO Joint Coordinating Committees to share similar positions; and

v. preparation of a Handbook providing an easy to read guidance to African Member Countries and Observers of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and to help them to better understand the Codex Alimentarius Commission and thereby enhancing their participation in the activities and standard setting procedures of the Commission.

AU through AU-IBAR with the support from the Codex Office of the United States of America, has also developed a Manual for Africa’s Codex Contact Points as a tool for African CCPs.
7. **FAO AND/OR WHO EFFORTS TO HELP CODEX MEMBER COUNTRIES TO IMPLEMENT OR MAKE USE OF THE CODEX STANDARDS?**

It is important to note here that the Codex Alimentarius Commission, is an independent intergovernmental body for the development of food standards and does not provide technical assistance for participation in the work of Codex or for implementing its outputs at national or regional levels. Article 10 of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission clearly states that “All expenses (including those relating to meetings, documents and interpretation) involved in preparatory work on draft standards undertaken by Members of the Commission, either independently or upon recommendation of the Commission, shall be defrayed by the government concerned”. For this reason, FAO and WHO have been engaging in a variety of capacity-building activities in an effort to support countries that wish to harmonize their national standards with those of Codex and thereby comply with international trade regulations.

FAO undertakes food safety capacity building activities in support of member countries wishing to strengthen their food control programmes and activities. These include: policy advice on specific issues; institutional development and/or strengthening; review and updating of food legislation; harmonization of food regulations and standards with Codex and other international regulatory instruments; training of technical and managerial staff in a variety of disciplines related to food safety; and studies and applied research on specific food-related subjects.

FAO Capacity building activities also include the organization of national and regional workshops and seminars on matters related to food safety and enhancing opportunities for international trade. These also include the development and dissemination of manuals, guidelines, training materials and other tools needed to support these programmes. Activities are undertaken by FAO headquarters in Rome and the FAO Regional Offices.

WHO on the other hand, has a specific mandate for the protection of public health, which is “the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health”. The WHO Global Strategy for Food SafetyI states WHO’s goal in the area of food safety, namely “to reduce the health and social burden of food-borne disease”. This goal is to be achieved through a number of approaches, notably surveillance of food-borne diseases; improved (tools for) risk assessment, including assessment of safety of new technologies; promotion of increased
involvement of the public health sector in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; improved risk communication; increased coordination in international cooperation, and capacity building. Further information is available at the FAO homepage www.fao.org.

The structure of WHO is such that in the area of food safety, as for most technical areas, normative functions are undertaken at the level of its headquarters in Geneva (through its Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases), mainly in close collaboration with FAO. These activities include the development of tools and guidelines and of a risk analysis framework, the performance of risk assessments and international standard-setting activities related to the Codex Alimentarius. Most of the activities related to technical cooperation, capacity building and country programmes are implemented by WHO’s six regional offices through a network of country-based offices (office of the WHO Representative). Further information is available at the WHO homepage www.who.int/foodsafety.

In keeping with their mandates, FAO and WHO engage in their diverse capacity building activities designed to assist developing countries to improve their food safety and plant and animal health systems. These various initiatives are often undertaken together with other international organizations, national governments, international and regional financial institutions and non-governmental organizations.

A variety of mechanisms are used by FAO and WHO to provide technical assistance in response to the needs of member countries. Owing to the different structures and mandates of the two Organizations, technical assistance activities may vary and include field activities, workshops, seminars and development of different development tools. Joint activities are undertaken wherever possible and appropriate.

7.1 Field projects
Projects aimed at building national capacity in developing member countries for the management and control of food safety and quality may be funded through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, or by other donors, or even by the country itself. The projects focus on the needs of both public sector institutions with responsibilities for food safety and those in the industry sector. Projects may deal with many aspects of official food control, industry food safety and quality programmes, and broad stakeholder participation in food safety and
quality regulation.

7.2 Workshops, seminars and training courses
These activities are conducted to meet specific national, and in some cases regional, needs. They may cover a range of topics, including: support in strengthening national Codex programmes, developing tools for food-borne disease surveillance; improving the quality of street foods; food safety risk analysis; developing food safety strategies; ensuring the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables; and enhancement of laboratory facilities and analysis capabilities.

7.3 FAO/WHO Trust Fund for Participation in Codex
The FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (CTF) was launched on 14 February 2003 aiming to seek US$40 million from donors over a 12-year period. Daily management of the Project and associated funding is implemented by WHO following normal WHO procedures, through its Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses and in close coordination with FAO under the guidance of an FAO/WHO Consultative Group consisting of senior FAO and WHO staff.

By end of December 2012, a total of US Dollar 16,574,320 had been donated by several donor countries including Australia, Canada, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United States.

CTF aims to support broader and more effective participation in the implementation of the Programme of Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), its committees and task forces. The main focus of the Project and Fund is the low-income and lower-middle-income countries. Funds are made available to enable these countries to both prepare for and participate in Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings, committee meetings and meetings of task forces. In association with such support, a small proportion of funds is also used to enable countries to prepare and present scientific/technical positions and data related to the work of Codex.

Clear criteria have been formulated which take into account the varying interests and objectives among donor and recipient countries. The criteria balance the need to assist all eligible countries while focusing on the low-income countries, while also ensuring that the right people are sent to the right meetings.
The World Bank economic classification of countries for the year 2003 was used to classify countries into three categories namely Low income Lower middle income Upper middle income. Table 2 list AU Member States eligible to seek funding from the FAO/WHO Trust Fund for Participation in Codex, by Codex Region in 2003 and 2013.

The number of countries assisted to effectively participate in the work of Codex depend upon the funds made available to the Fund by donors, approximately US$ 4.0 million per year to cover the costs associated with sending a total of more than 600 participants annually from all eligible countries to Codex meetings, as well as providing some capacity building and training support directly related to such participation. Countries are expected to cover all costs of participation after a set number of years as follows:

a. Low-income countries - 8 years,
b. Lower middle-income countries - 6 years and
c. Upper middle-income countries - 4 years.

The Upper middle-income countries were expected to participate in costs sharing already in the first year.

Finally, it is envisaged that the Fund will reinforce collaborative national Codex structures and stakeholder participation in all recipient countries. It is important to note here that CTF comes to an end in 2015 and no other funding mechanism has been suggested as such, all the AU Member States need to mainstream Codex activities (including participation in Codex meetings) in their regular government budget in order to sustain the benefits gained as a result of the CTF support.

7.4 Supporting tools

In support of the capacity-building activities, FAO and WHO are also engaged in the development of manuals, guidelines and training materials. Most of these materials are developed jointly, except for a few which are prepared under specific field projects operated either by FAO or WHO, or which relate to specific organizational mandates. Some examples of such materials are:

- Improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables – A practical approach.
- (Microbiological Risk Assessment Series Nos 1 and 2.)
- Good hygiene practices for the preparation of street-vended foods: a training manual. (FAO publication in preparation.)
- Bringing food safety home: how to use the WHO 5 keys to safer food to create effective food safety training for specific target audiences. (WHO publication in preparation.)

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8. REFERENCES

1. Codex official website: www.codexalimentarius.org
### APPENDIX I

African Union member countries with the dates of independence including Codex accession dates (see also Table 1)

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<td>27.</td>
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<td>Republic of Liberia</td>
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<td>*Libya</td>
<td></td>
<td>1972</td>
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<td>Republic of Malawi</td>
<td>Jul.06.1964</td>
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<td>Nov.28.1960</td>
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<td>Jul.01.1962</td>
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<td>Feb.27.1976</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Republic of Seychelles</td>
<td>Jun.29.1976</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<td>43.</td>
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<td>Republic of Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Apr.27.1961</td>
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<td>Jul.01.1960</td>
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<td>Jul.09.2011</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jan.01.1956</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>48.</td>
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<td>Sep.06.1968</td>
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<td>Togolese Republic</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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</table>
Standard Setting Process of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

*Joined the Joint FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East
**Not yet member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Source: African Union, Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2013

APPENDIX II

Examples of where some countries have located their Codex Contact Point

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/NO</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Location of the Codex contact Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Ministério da Agricultura e do Desenvolvimento Rural</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Ministère de l'Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>National Food Control Laboratory, Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Sécurité Alimentaire (MASA)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Bureau Burundais de normalisation et contrôle de la qualité (BBN)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Ministère de l'Industrie, des Mines et du Développement Technologique, Direction de l'Industrie, Cellule de la Normalisation et de la Qualité</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Agência de Regulação e Supervisão de Produtos Farmacêuticos e Alimentares - ARFA</td>
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<td>Centrafrique Chef de Service des Normes et de la Qualité, Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie,</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Directeur de la planification du Ministère de la Santé Publique</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
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<td>Congo</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>Directeur des Productions Alimentaires et de la Diversification, Ministère d'Etat et de l'Agriculture</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Sous-directeur du Contrôle de la Qualité et des Normes, Direction du Commerce et de la Normalisation, Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality (EOS)</td>
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<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>Director General de los Servicios Veterinarios y Alimentación Ministerio de Agricultura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/NO</td>
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<td>Location of the Codex contact Point</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Director General, Regulatory Services Department, Ministry of Agriculture</td>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Ethiopian Standard Agency (ESA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>Chargée d'Etudes au cabinet du Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage, de la Pêche et du Développement Rural</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>National Nutritional Agency (NaNA)</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
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<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Directrice Générale, Institut National de la Normalisation et de la Métrologie, Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Ministry of Trade and Industry, Cooperatives and Marketing</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Ministry of Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Libyan National Center For Standardization &amp; Metrology (LNCSM), Ministry of Planning,</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Chef de service des Normes et de la Qualité, Ministère du Commerce</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Director General, Malawi Bureau of Standards</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Directeur Général, Agence Nationale de la Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments, Ministère de la Santé</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Directeur, Institut National de Recherches en Santé Publique, I.N.R.S.P. (Ex-Centre National d'Hygiène)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Divisional Scientific Officer (Dairy Chemistry Division/Food Technology Laboratory), Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production &amp; Security,</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Division de la Réglementation et de la normalisation (ONSSA) - Service de la Normalisation</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>Direcção Nacional de Saúde Pública, Laboratório Nacional de Higiene de Alimentos e Águas, Ministerio da Saúde</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Direction de la Nutrition, Ministère de la Santé Publique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/NO</td>
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<td>Location of the Codex contact Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Director General, Standards Organisation of Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Head of Food and Agriculture Section and Regional Coordinator, Rwanda Bureau of Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>Directeur scientifique du - CIAT/STP, Ministère de l'agriculture, développement rural et pêche</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Division des soins de Santé primaires, Ministère de la Santé et de la Prévention,</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Manager, Standardization and Information Services, Seychelles Bureau of Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Programme Manager, Food and nutrition, Ministry of Health and Sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Department of Food Quality Control, Ministry of Health, Puntland State,</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Deputy Director: Inter-Agency Liaison and Regulatory, Department of Health, Directorate: Food Control</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Standard and Quality Control Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Togo</td>
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