



Agence des Normes et de la Qualité  
Cameroon  
CCAFRICA



European Union

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# REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE 6TH PAN-AFRICAN MEETING OF NATIONAL CODEX CONTACT POINTS

**VENUE: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

**DATES: 15-18, June 2015**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Most African countries are endowed with a wealth of agricultural resources and cheap labour, offering an opportunity for production of food, development of agro-food industries and participating in both regional and international trade in food. These will in turn increase food security, create employment and incomes for farm communities, and open up rural areas by integration into the rules-based global trading system for agricultural and food products. Often, importing countries require that imported food does not pose a risk to their citizens and that food imports comply with their national food safety requirements and standards.

Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) was established in 1963 under the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization/ World Health Organization (FAO/WHO) Food Standards Programme to develop food standards, guidelines and related texts such as codes of practice in order to protect health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. Codex also promotes the coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations. Functions and activities of FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) are currently coordinated by Cameroon.

One of the greatest concerns of African countries is the lack of opportunity for regional or sub-regional consultations on issues of interest to members of CCAFRICA and to African Union Member States before, during and after Codex sessions where such issues would be addressed.

To address some of the challenges hindering effective participation of African member states in the work of Codex, the AU-IBAR and the Coordinator for CCAFRICA coordinate their effort to

work closely on issues concerning food safety, regulations and generally support the work of the Coordinator.

The participants of the meeting comprised mainly of Codex Contact Point Officers from the African region. Experts from different African member countries who have participated in Codex sessions and were familiar with current issues in the Codex *Alimentarius* Commission made presentations on various draft standards and other topics of significance to the region

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING**

The specific objectives of the meeting are:

1. To collate national views and develop regional positions on issues of interest to Member States currently being discussed in Codex *Alimentarius* Commission (CAC), particularly during the 38th Session of the CAC scheduled to take place from 6-11 July 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. To Sensitize National Contact Point Officers on Codex draft standards being elaborated by various Codex Committees with analysis and guidance notes from African Food Safety Experts in order to enable them initiate national consultations on these standards.
3. To achieve effective participation of all countries in the Region in the activities of Codex *Alimentarius* Commission and its subsidiary bodies
4. To promote the establishment/strengthening of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees in Member Countries of the African Region
5. To create a forum for information sharing on food safety issues which are of interest to the African region.

### **OPENING CEREMONY**

The opening ceremony was consisted of three speeches:

- The welcoming remarks by the Representative of the Coordinator of CCAFRICA
- The welcoming remarks by the Representative of the Director of AU-IBAR
- The opening remarks by the Representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources, Sanitation and Food Security

### **OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING**

1. National Codex Contact Point Officers sensitized on current issues in the various Codex Committees which are of interest to the African region
2. Common Positions reached and adopted on matters to be discussed at the 38th Session of the CAC and the lead roles were distributed among African member states on effective participation during the 38th Session of the CAC

3. Recommendations made on effective participation of African Union Member States in the Codex work.
4. Common positions on various agenda items of 38th Session of CAC are provided to Codex Contact Points for better preparations prior to the meeting
5. Continental and national policies on food safety matters are discussed with an objective for streamlining and harmonization.
6. The NCCPs agreed and adopted common positions that they will be articulated by the delegates during the 37th Session of CAC. The meeting also adopted a number of recommendations related to enhanced participation in Codex work and better organization of national Codex committees

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Sudan should take lead on the Electronic Working Group to prepare a discussion paper on the proposal to review the INS number assigned to Gum Arabic in considering the existence of two stereoisomers – one dextrorotatory and the other levorotatory properties for further elaboration and discussion at the next session of the CCFA.
- 2) CCAFRICA Coordinator to re-circulate the EWG invitation letter on gum Arabic from Sudan to all member states for action.
- 3) The committee agreed to the formation of a physical working group to do further discuss the issues of the parasites in Fish.
- 4) AU-IBAR to support countries in the analysis of rice and fish towards the collection of data for the relevant Codex Committee to address the provision for this information in setting maximum levels (MLs) or on maximum residues levels (MRLs) to back African positions in various Codex standards.
- 5) Lack of data on MLs and MRLs from the African continent is a major concern in the standards development processes of the various Codex committees. Africa could not provide any data on the contaminants that were looked at in the previous year especially Inorganic/total arsenic in rice (polished and husked rice). Data is still required for inorganic arsenic in husked rice.
- 6) Countries are encouraged to generate data to submit to the GEMS/Food database.
- 7) Encourage member countries to look into possible ways of soliciting funds to facilitate participation in relevant Codex meetings.
- 8) Sensitization of Codex activities at the African Union summit level is crucial
  - a) AU-IBAR should consider funding the generation of data regionally or on a continental basis. The African Reference Laboratory in Kenya is a competent Reference laboratory and this could be the starting point. Countries should therefore be requested to submit samples to this laboratory for the analysis of inorganic arsenic in rice for data collection.

- b)** The AU-IBAR to liaise with the Expert Committee and Codex Contact Point of Kenya to visit the African Reference Laboratory (BECCA) in Kenya for further discussions (MOU) on data generation (and negotiations on cost) especially for arsenic in rice and data for other contaminants being considered by Codex .
- 9) For future purposes of data generation, competent laboratories should be identified in all countries or on a sub-regional basis to undertake analysis. This could be done by the outgoing CCAFRICA Coordinator submitting questionnaires to all African countries requesting for information on their accredited laboratories.
  - 10) Delegates attending Codex meetings should ensure that feedback is given to their National Codex Committees and their respective governments concerning proceedings especially in areas of data submission (collection and analysis).
  - 11) There is the need to have an all-inclusive, functional and well-structured National Codex Committees in all African countries for dissemination of information.
  - 12) African countries should be committed to submit various required data at GEMS/FOODS database for WHO/FAO Scientific Advisors utilization on setting safe limits.
  - 13) All National Codex Committees should take the issue of data collection seriously by involving academia, researchers, manufacturers, private sectors etc.
  - 14) The outgoing CCAFRICA Coordinator is nominated to spearhead the issue on data collection in collaboration with the Committee of Experts and financial support from AU-IBAR.
  - 15) During the Colloquium meeting held in Tanzania from 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Africans were requested to submit ***proposals on areas of new work that are of interest to Africa for consideration by Codex to*** CCAFRICA coordinator before the deadline which was **31<sup>st</sup> December 2014**. It has been noted that there was no response to that effect; members are therefore encouraged to submit their proposals latest by **31st July, 2015** after consultations with their NCCs and governments.
  - 16) It has been identified that African countries have a challenge with data collection and analysis especially in situations where there is available data. Countries could therefore send requests to the FAO/WHO Expert Committees such as JECFA, JEMRA for assistance or capacity building in such areas. Additionally, Experts in Africa could be identified to undertake such exercises.
  - 17) African Cocoa producing countries especially Ghana, Cameroun, Cote D'Ivoire should generate data on the MRLs of Metalaxyl and Metalaxyl-M levels in Cocoa. This is being held for data generation and data should be submitted by December, 2016.
  - 18) Member States need to have timely operational Codex National Committees to ensure inclusiveness of all stakeholders.

- 19) The members agreed that after the takeover of the new coordinator, the status of the Codex Trust Fund and the requirement of country to benefit from the Trust Fund.
- 20) The delegates while appreciating the communication on visa application process requested that further ease in facilitating the issuance of visas for various delegates from within Africa to travel for these critical multilateral meetings. The need for transparency in communication on visa fees and timely processing of visas, especially visa being issued at the destination. Member representatives of various countries were urged to communicate this need with the relevant government institutions.
- 21) CCAFRICA Coordinator to raise the stringent conditions Africans delegates are facing while applying for visa to attend Codex meetings in Schengen countries among others, to be presented at the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the CAC under “Other Matters”.

#### **LIST OF COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED.**

**Fifty African** Delegates from Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti. Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, G. Equatorial, Kenya, Mali, , Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, RCA, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Cameroon (Coordinator of CCAFRICA). Three observer organizations were in **attendance namely the EU representative, ECOWAS and IGAD.**

# **JOINT WORKSHOP AU-IBAR AND BTSF**

Venue: Hotel Golden Tulip    Date: 18 June 2015

## **Objective**

- To gather views from national food safety experts on the food safety management systems at national and continental levels in light of the African Union initiatives to create a food safety management coordination mechanism (FSMCM - food safety authority) and a rapid alert system for food and feed.
- To collect views from them on the five priority functions of the FSMCM
- To update them on the state of play of the FSMCM

## **Participants**

The joint workshop was attended by both participants who attended the BTSF and the NCCPs workshops. The total number of participants is 112.

## **Outcome of the workshop**

A questionnaire was sent to all participants prior to the joint workshop and the analysis of the responses constituted the elements of the discussions and conclusions.

### *Functions of the FSMCM*

1. Mapping of food safety institutions and capacities
2. Strengthening food safety policy and legal framework
3. Liaison with international agencies and development partners
4. Toolkits (manuals, model regulations) and training for management of food safety controls
5. Developing a professional association and standards for food safety officers
6. Scientific advice and risk assessment

7. Identification and building capacity of product testing laboratories (including reference laboratories) and food safety related quality infrastructure services
8. Establishing a rapid alert system for food and feed/integration with INFOSAN
9. Strengthening professional education for food safety officers
10. Strengthened for food safety research
11. Communication and public relations
12. Developing food safety related technical training and advisory services for private sector agents/ business
13. Developing mechanisms for investment support for food businesses

#### *QUESTIONS FOR WORKING GROUPS*

1. WHAT ARE THE TOP 5 PRIORITY FUNCTIONS FOR THE AU FSMCM
2. HOW WILL THE AU FSMCM LINK WITH
  - RECS
  - MEMBER STATES
  - ON PERFORMING ITS FOOD SAFETY FUNCTIONS

#### *RESULTS*

The two graphs below are clear indications of the priorities provided by the participants.

These results will be analyzed by the meeting of the task force scheduled to take place at the EU Delegation in Burkina Faso on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

