Importance of Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Structure and Functions (Item 3)

at

FAO Regional Training Workshop: “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries”
(Tokyo, 8-11 September 2015)

Ms. Shashi Sareen
Senior Food Safety & Nutrition Officer
FAO Regional Office for the Asia & the Pacific
E-mail: shashi.sareen@fao.org
Coverage

• Importance and overview of Codex Alimentarius Commission
• Codex Procedural Manual
• Organizational Structure (Commission, Executive Committee, Secretariat, and Subsidiary Bodies)
• Importance of Codex and participation in Codex standards setting for countries
Codex Alimentarius Commission

• An Intergovernmental body

• **Founded** in 1962 to implement the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme – jointly hosted by FAO & WHO (1\textsuperscript{st} session 1963) – 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary 2013

• **Mandate**
  - protect the health of consumers
  - ensure fair practices in international food trade

• **Membership** – 185 countries + 1 member org (EU) – representing 99% of world population

• **Observers:** 234 international organizations:- 54 IGOs, 164 NGOs, 16 UN (representing scientific, industry, trade, consumers)

• Currently meets annually

• Work through subsidiary bodies (Committees and Task Forces)
Functions of Codex

• Develops harmonised international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice (for consumers health and fair trade practices)

• Promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

• Determines the priorities, initiates the preparation of standards, once finalized after consultation with the national Governments, it publishes them - also amends standards in the light of latest developments
Why is Codex Important

• Codex food standards are international benchmarks and address the food safety needs of all countries.

• International standards important to promote food safety across borders and reduce technical barriers to trade.

• Codex standards recognized under WTO non-tariff Agreements, specifically SPS and TBT Agreements.

• WTO members encouraged to harmonise with Codex.
SPS agreement

Harmonization  Article 3

• Encourage use of international standards

  Food safety     Animal health     Plant health

      Codex          OIE          IPPC

• SPS measures *conforming to international standards*, are presumed to be consistent with SPS Agreement

• Right to impose more stringent requirements if based on scientific justification or risk assessment
**Codex outputs/Documentation**

- *Codex alimentarius* in Latin means food code - it is a collection of food standards, guidelines and related texts ie the documentation developed by the CAC

- **Standards/guidelines for**
  - Food Hygiene
  - Food Labelling
  - Food additives and contaminants
  - Residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs
  - Inspection and certification systems
  - Commodities (e.g. milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, processed foods)
  - Foods derived from biotechnology

✓ All Codex texts are available from the [List of standards](http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/) of Codex website
✓ The numerical Codex standards for [food additives, veterinary drugs maximum residue levels](http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/) & [pesticide maximum residue levels](http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/), can also be accessed via databases that facilitate their use.
Principles of Codex elaboration Procedure

• Inclusiveness
  ➢ Step by step (8-step)
  ➢ Broad participation by all members interested
  ➢ Consensus - every member included - every members concerns considered before decision taken

• Transparency- Open discussion and communication, Free to all interested

• Science-based & timely available scientific advice

• Collaboration

• Objectives of consumer health protection and fair trade practice

• Standards applicable globally
Scientific basis for Codex

- Codex – **Risk management**

- FAO/WHO Expert Bodies - **Risk assessment**

Functional separation of risk assessment and risk management

- to ensure the scientific integrity of the risk assessment
- to avoid confusion over the functions to be performed by risk assessors and risk managers
- to reduce any conflict of interest

**Risk Communication** – throughout the RA process

Codex committees, when developing standards, rely on independent scientific advice provided by expert bodies organized by FAO/WHO.
THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF CODEX

International Risk Assessment Bodies

- JMPR: Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues
- JECFA: Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives
- JEMNU: Joint Expert Meeting on Nutrition
- JEMRA: Joint Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
- Ad Hoc Expert Meetings (biotechnology, probiotics)

International Food Standards

Consumer Protection & Food Trade

http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/
Codex Strategic plan 2014-2019

• **Vision:** The CAC should be the *pre-eminent international food standards –setting body* to protect the health of the consumers & ensure fair practices in the food trade

• **Core values:** collaboration, inclusiveness, consensus, transparency

• **Strategic goals:** 4
  1) Establish international food standards - current & emerging food issues
  2) Ensure application of RA principles in development of Codex standards
  3) Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members
  4) Implement effective & efficient work management systems/ practices

• **Objectives & work plans** - activities, milestones, measurable indicators
Codex Procedural manual

- Intended to help Member Governments participate effectively in the work of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
- Outlines the agreed set of rules to ensure the Commission and its subsidiary bodies work in a uniform manner
- Contains
  - Statues of CAC
  - Rules of Procedure
  - Additional procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards & related texts, basic definitions and guidelines for the operation of CAC & its subsidiary bodies (Codex committees).

The Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:
• provide the legal basis for the Commission's work;
• provide its mandate or terms of reference;
• describe the formal operating procedures; and
• reflect the concepts behind and reasons for the establishment of Codex.

The Statutes can be found in Section I of the Codex Procedural Manual.
The mandate of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is clearly specified in the first article of its Statutes:

Article 1 – Mandate
(a) protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade;
(b) promoting coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations;
(c) determining priorities and initiating and guiding the preparation of draft standards through and with the aid of appropriate organizations;
(d) finalizing standards elaborated under (c) above and publishing them in a Codex Alimentarius either as regional or worldwide standards, together with international standards already finalized by other bodies under (b) above, wherever this is practicable;
(e) amending published standards, as appropriate, 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.

Membership conditions
To become a Member of the CAC, two conditions must be met:

1) The country must be a Member of either FAO or WHO.
2) The country must notify either the Director-General of FAO or of WHO of its wish to become a Member.
Organizational Structure

The Codex Alimentarius Commission consists of the following main organizational elements:

- Commission
- Executive Committee
- Codex Secretariat
- Codex subsidiary bodies

With the exception of the Codex Secretariat, all these elements are made up of Codex Members (i.e. national delegations and representatives of “observers”), endeavoring to reflect stakeholder views as appropriate.
**Organization Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Subject Committees</th>
<th>Commodity Committees</th>
<th>ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Principles (France)</td>
<td>Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Hungary)</td>
<td>Animal Feeding (Switzerland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Additives (China)</td>
<td>Pesticide Residues (China)</td>
<td>Antimicrobial Resistance (Republic of Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contaminants in Foods (Netherlands)</td>
<td>Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (USA)</td>
<td>Biotechnology (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Hygiene (USA)</td>
<td>Food Labelling (Canada)</td>
<td>Fruit and Vegetable Juices (Brazil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Australia)</td>
<td>Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Germany)</td>
<td>Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>active</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and Milk Products (NZ)</td>
<td>Processed Fruits and Vegetables (USA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and Fishery Products (Norway)</td>
<td>Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats and Oils (Malaysia)</td>
<td>Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (USA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars (Colombia)</td>
<td>Spices and Culinary Herbs (India)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| adjourned                                               |                                       |                                      |
| Meat Hygiene (New Zealand)                              | Vegetable Proteins (Canada)            |                                      |
| Natural Mineral Waters (Switzerland)                    | Cocoa Products and Chocolate (Switzerland) |                                      |

| Regional Coordinating Committees                       |                                       |                                      |
| Africa (Kenya)                                          | Latin America and the Caribbean (Chile) |                                      |
| Asia (India)                                            | North America and the Southwest Pacific (Vanuatu) |                                      |
| Europe (Netherlands)                                    | Near East (Iran)                        |                                      |
The Commission

- The decision-making body of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

- Consists of member governments, as well as a number of international government (IGOs) and non-government organizations (INGOs) which have official observer status with the Commission

- Presently meets annually, with meetings alternating between Rome (FAO Headquarters) and Geneva (WHO Headquarters)
The Executive Committee

- Executive Committee is established by CAC - CCEXEC acts as the executive organ of CAC.

- Responsible for managing the standards development process, developing the draft strategic plan, reviewing applications for observer status and making other recommendations about the general direction of the Commission’s work.

- The Commission elects executive officers for a period starting at the end of the session in which elected until the end of the following regular session.

- Elected officials include a chairperson and three vice-chairpersons elected among the delegates of the Members of the Commission. (These officers are chairperson and vice-chairpersons of the CAC & CCEXEC).

- The CCEXEC meets between Commission sessions.
The Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee is geographically balanced - one member country elected from each geographic regions:
  1. Africa
  2. Asia
  3. Europe
  4. Latin America and the Caribbean
  5. Near East
  6. North America
  7. The Southwest Pacific

- The Regional Coordinators of the six regions
- Chair is same as of CAC
- The total membership of the CCEXEC is 17
The Secretariat

• The Codex Secretariat assists the CAC in the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

• Reports to the Director-Generals of FAO and WHO.

• The Codex Secretariat is located at FAO headquarters in Rome.
The Subsidiary Bodies

Under its Rules of Procedure, CAC is empowered to establish four kinds of subsidiary bodies:

- **General Subject Committees** (sometimes referred to as horizontal), which establish standards and guidelines applicable to all foods;
- **Commodity Committees** (sometimes known as vertical), which prepare standards for specific commodities;
- **FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees**, through which regions or groups of countries coordinate food standards activities in the region, including the development of regional standards;
- **Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces**, which are time-limited and prepare standards and guidelines on specific issues.
Codex General Subject Committee

- General Principles – France
- Food Additives – China
- Contaminants in food – Netherlands
- Food Hygiene – USA
- Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems – Australia
- Methods of Analysis & Sampling – Hungary
- Pesticide Residues – China
- Residue of Veterinary Drugs in Foods – USA
- Food Labelling – Canada
- Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses - Germany
Codex Commodity Committees

- Commodity Committees that are active:
  - Milk And Milk Product – New Zealand
  - Fish And Fishery Products – Norway
  - Fats And Oils – Malaysia
  - Sugars – Colombia
  - Processed Fruits and Vegetables - USA
  - Fresh Fruits And Vegetables – Mexico
  - Cereal, Pulses and Legumes – USA
  - Spices and Culinary Herbs – India

- Commodity Committees that have been adjourned:
  - Meat Hygiene – New Zealand
  - Natural Mineral Water - Switzerland
  - Vegetable Proteins - Canada
  - Cocoa Products And Chocolates - Switzerland
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees

- Have no standing host countries - are hosted by the member countries in each region who is regional coordinator. Meetings held in country of the coordinator or in cooperation with the coordinator in another country of the region.

- Host country rotates amongst members of region - needs to have capacity to provide logistic/ administrative support for organizing meetings - pay part or all costs associated with hosting meeting.

- The role of regional coordinator - coordinate views of the region in preparation of texts for submission to CAC. Also assist CCEXEC and CAC as required, by advising them of views of their region on various matters.

- Coordinators are nominated at each session of the Coordinating Committee and appointed at next session of Commission. They hold office from the end of this session and may be re-appointed for a second term.
Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces

• Ad hoc intergovernmental task forces established (since 1999) with a specific mandate - for a limited period of time - are hosted by a member country - dissolved once their work is completed - may be re-activated if additional work is required.

• Examples of ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces are:
  - Task Force on Animal Feeding, 2000–2004 and 2011-2013; and
Importance of Codex and participation in Codex standards setting for countries
Codex Alimentarius Commission and Member Countries

• Most of Members use some of Codex Standards/texts as the basis of their legislation/regulations/guidelines etc.

• Because
  – Internationally recognized
  – Based on sound science
What are the benefits to Countries

- **Better public health outcomes** - Achieve national food safety and public health goals

- **Improved access to international markets** - good for industry and trade; benefits for the whole economy and all national agencies

- **Increased confidence in national food safety laws and regulations** - Important objectives for Health, Agriculture and trade ministries

- **Codex standards** also **impact on the environment** - by supporting good agricultural practices, good veterinary practices and prudent use for pesticides, chemicals and veterinary drugs
What are the costs of not participating

• A country’s interest will not be captured in international standards potentially creating trade barriers

• No opportunity to promote regional or global standards of interest to country

• Loss of networking opportunities with other countries and learn from each others’ experiences
Active participation in Codex

• Codex considers a standard/text that countries need

• The standard/text reflect the information/data in a country

• The standard/text can be used in country’s regulation/guideline etc.
Management of Codex activities at National level

1) **Strengthening National Codex capacity** through improving familiarity and understanding of Codex structures and processes - establishment and strengthening of NCCP, NCC, Codex Country Manual/working procedures, websites;

2) Providing **practical guidance** on how to participate in Codex committees;

3) **Support networking and collaboration** at the national level bringing together all interested parties – National Codex Committee, website
Important aspects of participation by countries in Codex

1. Submit information/data in response to request from committees/JECFA/JMPR etc.
2. Propose new work
3. Comments on proposed draft/draft standards
4. Establish the position of your country
5. Actively participate, physically if possible
Some Recent FAO Regional Activities in relation to Codex

- Projects – ASEAN, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia

- Cover
  - understanding working of CAC
  - Strengthen national structures to support efficient management of Codex activities
  - Support development of food safety and quality standards based on Codex
  - Strengthen capacity for country participation in Codex

- Standards – clarity between voluntary and regulatory standards; harmonization

- Trainings materials
  - Food recall and traceability -Application in National food safety control:
  - Strengthening Capacity in Data Collection and Generation for Food Safety Risk Analysis
  - Design and Evaluation of Mycotoxin Sampling Protocols
  - Enhancing risk communication in food safety
Status of National Codex activities in ASEAN Countries

• Food control system framework
• Institutional infrastructure for food standards/Codex

• National standards & standards setting
  ➢ List of national standards
  ➢ Process of standards setting

• Level of Codex implementation
  ➢ National Codex Committee
  ➢ National Codex website
  ➢ Codex country manual

• Data collection and analysis system
  ➢ national standard setting?
  ➢ international standard setting?
  ➢ provided data for international standardization/areas
  ➢ capacity for data analysis

• Prioritized needs for capacity building

http://foodafetyasiapacific.net/
THANK YOU

Welcome Questions!