CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION E

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

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Agenda item 3 **CX/FICS 21/25/3**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Twenty-Fifth Session

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INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS

(Information from FAO, WHO and IPPC)

The present document is a report on the tools produced and made available to Member States and the relevant activities carried out since the last meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export and Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS).

A. ACTIVITIES OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) and WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool

1. The FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool has been published and translated into Spanish, French, Arabic and Russian languages. The publications with these language versions are available on the FAO and WHO websites.

- FAO: http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca5334en/

- WHO: http://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241515719

2. This tool allows Member Countries to assess, in structured, transparent and measurable ways, the performance of their food control system throughout the entire food chain, identify priority areas for capacity development, and measure and evaluate progress over time.

3. FAO has successfully concluded assessments in Malawi, Sudan and Tunisia in 2019, and further assessments have been initiated, or will be initiated in a very near future in The Emirate of Abu Dhabi (the United Arab Emirates), Azerbaijan, Belarus, The Bahamas and Guyana.

4. To facilitate widespread use of the FAO/WHO Assessment Tool, FAO and WHO are developing a video animation and a supplementary booklet for Members. FAO and WHO also plan to hold global and regional webinars in 2021 to disseminate information about the tool content and approach and the benefits of performing such an assessment.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

5. In order to provide scientific advice, a joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting was held in 2018 in collaboration with OIE on Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance: Role of the Environment, Crops and Biocides. The meeting report (MRA 34) was published in 2019. http://www.fao.org/3/ca6724en/ca6724en.pdf

6. The United Nations Interagency Coordination Group on AMR (IACG) was convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after the UN High-Level Meeting on AMR. The IACG brought together partners across the UN, international organizations and individuals with expertise across human, animal and plant health, as well as the food, animal feed, trade, development and environment sectors, to formulate a blueprint for the fight against AMR. The Secretariat for the IACG was provided by WHO, with contributions from FAO and OIE. The IACG completed its mandate on 29 April 2019 upon the handover of its report to the UN Secretary-General. https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/final-report/en/

7. Specific recommendations were made for the Tripartite. The Secretary-General provided a follow-up report to the UN High-Level Meeting on AMR, which was published in May 2019. The report highlights progress made by Member States and the Tripartite Organizations in addressing antimicrobial resistance, noting that urgent support and investments are required to scale up responses at the national, regional, and global levels. https://undocs.org/en/A/73/869

8. In November 2020, FAO, OIE and WHO (the Tripartite) launched the One Health Global Leaders Group on AMR, a group created in response to one of the recommendations of the IACG on AMR. This is a 20-member group comprising of Heads of States, current and former Ministers of different countries, leaders from private sector and civil society. The group is currently co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Barbados (H.E. Mia Amor Mottley) and Prime Minister of Bangladesh (H.E. Sheikh Hasina). The DGs of FAO, OIE and WHO are ex-officio members of the group, and the Executive Director of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) is also joined as ex-officio (https://www.who.int/groups/one-health-global-leaders-group-on-antimicrobial-resistance). The inaugural meeting was held in January 2021 (more information at https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/amr-gcp-tjs/glg-inaugural-meeting-report.pdf?sfvrsn=1c171c9_12). The group is tasked to provide advocacy and advisory functions to ensure that action is taken to address the challenge of antimicrobial resistance (more information at : https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/global-leaders-group-on-amr-terms-of-reference.pdf?sfvrsn=9402309d_16).

9. The terms of reference for an Independent panel on Evidence on AMR have been approved by the three tripartite directors general, and referred to the UN Secretary General. Terms of reference for an AMR partnership platform are under development.

10. Further to a two-year consultation, the Tripartite has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Global Action Plan (GAP) with a harmonized list of indicators for monitoring at the national and global levels. The Tripartite is currently developing guidance to countries on developing national monitoring frameworks for NAPs through in country and country desk assessments(https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/global-action-plan/monitoring-evaluation/tripartite-framework/en).

11. Given the transnational and multisector nature of AMR and the support requested from countries and other stakeholders, the Tripartite organizations are scaling up existing efforts to support countries to urgently counter this immediate threat through a One Health Approach and has launched the AMR-Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The AMR-MPTF is a strategic, inter-sectoral, multi-stakeholder initiative inviting partnership and financing to leverage the Tripartite convening and coordinating power as well as mandates and technical expertise to mitigate the risk of AMR and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by catalyzing the implementation of One Health NAPs on AMR.

12. The FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite organizations have established a standing Tripartite Joint Secretariat (TJS) to lead and coordinate the global response to AMR in close collaboration across and beyond the UN organizations. The TJS consolidates cooperation between FAO, OIE, and WHO drawing on their respective core mandates and comparative advantages to address needs of the global response across the One Health spectrum.

13. After consensus on the vision of a shared AMR data portal, the vision of The Tripartite Integrated Surveillance System (TISSA) has been reached at all levels by the Tripartite organizations and approved by Tripartite Executive meetings in 2017 and 2018, a feasibility study has been developed with technical details discussed and agreed by the Tripartite staff from the 3 organizations working on AMR surveillance-related issues on 30 April 2019. The TISSA platform represents an initial step towards an integrated system for surveillance on AMR and Antimicrobial Use (AMU), but there is flexibility in the current proposed IT structure to be broader and host other types of data, links and documents. The TISSA platform represents an opportunity to showcase the success of Tripartite collaboration. It will likely have great impact globally but also at country level by stimulating efforts to build up national databases on AMR/AMU.

Early warning/alert and response to food safety emergencies

14. The Secretariat of the joint FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), continues to develop and strengthen the Network. The INFOSAN Secretariat responded to more than 120 food safety emergencies in 2020, facilitating rapid communication among INFOSAN members across all regions. During such food safety incidents, the INFOSAN Secretariat relies on the swift action of national INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points to respond to information requests. Information shared through INFOSAN enables members around the world to implement appropriate risk management measures to prevent foodborne illness.

15. Membership to INFOSAN has continued to grow. Of particular note for 2020 is the number of Member States with a registered INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, which has increased from 172/194 (89%) in 2019 to 178/194 (92%) in 2020. The number of Member States with at least one or more registered INFOSAN Focal Points increased from 138/194 (71%) in 2019 to 155/194 (80%) in 2020. Outreach continues to all Member States to grow the network and ensure members are designated from all national authorities with a stake in food safety.

16. INFOSAN members' knowledge and capabilities to participate actively in the Network and respond effectively to food safety emergencies has been further developed through the delivery of several webinars conducted by the INFOSAN Secretariat as well as several national and regional training workshops which shifted to a virtual modality in 2020. Several of these virtual training workshops including emergency simulation

exercises to test national and international coordination mechanisms and bolster preparedness for food safety emergency response activities.

17. The new INFOSAN Members' Guide was published in 2020 and is available online in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian. The purpose of this document is to serve as a functional reference guide for members of INFOSAN. The guide is split into two parts covering both organizational and practical information about INFOSAN and member participation. The first part of the guide provides a general overview of the structure and functions of INFOSAN, network organisation, roles and responsibilities of the INFOSAN Secretariat, Advisory Group and members, as well as information about the INFOSAN Community Website. The second part provides details about the operational aspects around the communication of international food safety incidents. Sources of information are described along with guidance on the process for reporting food safety incidents to the INFOSAN Secretariat. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240000230

18. The Template for INFOSAN/IHR Communication (national protocol for information sharing with national and international partners during food safety events and outbreaks of foodborne illness), has been published as a web annex to the INFOSAN Members' Guide. It is available online in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian. The document can serve as a starting point for the development of a national protocol for information sharing among various stakeholders involved in food safety emergency response in all Member States. This includes members of INFOSAN, the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) National Focal Point (NFP), and other stakeholders as appropriate. The final document, when adapted to each national context, should provide a clear guidance about the procedures for communication between domestic authorities, as well as WHO, including the INFOSAN Secretariat. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240012288

19. The study of INFOSAN that was launched in 2019 has concluded. This study represents the first ever to explore and describe the experiences of INFOSAN members with respect to their participation in network activities to improve global food safety and prevent foodborne diseases and to describe the characteristics of INFOSAN as a community of practice. The results suggest that INFOSAN is a valued platform, utilized globally to reduce the burden of foodborne illness and save lives. Results from this study can inform the prioritization of future activities to further strengthen the network and support participation of members. Links to the published results from the study are available from the WHO INFOSAN website. https://www.who.int/activities/responding-to-food-safety-emergencies-infosan

Food Fraud

20. FAO organized an informal workshop in November 2019 to reflect on different perspectives about food fraud (regulatory frameworks; inter-institutional cooperation; analytical considerations; information and intelligence sharing; approaches for the food chain operators; country/regional approaches) as a way to inform FAO further activities in that area. Based on the learnings from the workshop and the Regional Food Safety Conference conducted in Asia in November 2020, a booklet for the Asia and Pacific is being finalized with the support of FAO's legal office, entitled "Food frauds – intention, detection and management". In addition, papers extracting learnings from the November 2019 workshop on how countries are addressing food fraud from a regulatory point of view are being developed in cooperation with participants of the workshop.

21. Following up to the keynote address on food fraud at CCEURO31 (2019), and the agreement on the need for enhanced action and increased cooperation across sectors and countries to address food fraud, a regional desk review was completed in 2020 in collaboration with the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority of Romania, and a virtual meeting to exchange information on issues of relevance to the region is planned for the second half of 2021.

22. Multi-disciplinary insights on addressing food fraud was the theme of a side event conducted in November 2019 on the margins of the 10th session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East.

23. The INFOSAN Secretariat has organized a working group series for their members on various emerging themes around the management of international food safety events. The working group series features INFOSAN members who are most frequently involved in food safety events. The most recent working group was held on 22 and 24 March 2021 and it focused on food fraud and food authenticity. This working group explored specific case studies, regulatory regimes and jurisdictions of members, identification, priorities and surveillance and the impact of COVID-19 on food fraud. The outputs from the working group series will be summarized in an overview and shared with all INFOSAN members in the second quarter of 2021, with the potential to further develop and strengthen specific areas within INFOSAN.

High-level advocacy activities for food safety: The First FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference and the FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade

24. FAO and WHO in collaboration with African Union convened the First FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference (Addis Ababa, 12 and 13 February 2019), and co-organized the International Forum on Food Safety and Trade (Geneva, 23 and 24 April 2019), in collaboration with the World Trade

Organization (WTO). The participants in these events discussed how to align food safety strategies and approaches across sectors and borders to tackle emerging food safety challenges resulting from ongoing changes in climate as well as in global food production and supply systems and discussed more in-depth trade related issues of food safety. A technical summary of two conferences prepared by FAO and WHO was published in 2020 (http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8386en/).

25. The conclusions from both conferences were integrated into the Resolution WHA73.5, ''Strengthening efforts on food safety'' (https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_R5-en.pdf). This resolution was adopted by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly in 2020, which confirmed that food safety is a public health priority and governments must act at the global, regional, and national level to strengthen food safety, as well as recognizing the contribution of food safety to the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. Particularly, Member States requested WHO to update the Global Strategy for Food Safety to address current and emerging challenges, incorporate new technologies and include innovative approaches for strengthening national food safety systems.

26. In order to better advance on the requests in the resolution, WHO has established a new Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Food Safety: Safer Food for Better Health. The first TAG meeting on the update of WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety was held during 8-10 February 2021. This meeting agreed on the role of food safety in the global development agenda, the drivers of change for the future of food safety, the aim and the vision, and the proposed six strategic priorities. A follow-up meeting is planned in the week of 19 to 23 April. Besides, WHO is also in coordination with FAO and in contact with World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) throughout the whole development process to ensure that ''One Health Approach'' is the guiding principle for the new WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety.

27. As a follow-up to the international food safety conferences held in 2019, the 27th Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture held in October 2020, has requested the FAO to update its Food Safety Strategy, aligned with the development of the new FAO strategic framework 2022-2031 to reflect the changes in food systems, the challenges resulted from the pandemic and contribute to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (COAG27 Report, paras 40-46: http://www.fao.org/3/ne021en/ne021en.pdf).

World Food Safety Day

28. The second UN World Food Safety Day (WFSD) was celebrated on 7 June 2020. Under the general theme "Food safety, everyone's business" and with a specific focus on "Safe food in markets", a virtual event was hosted by WHO and FAO on 5 June through a Facebook livestream. Multiple webinars targeting different audience were organized during the whole month. A WHO campaign page presented the campaign guides and advocacy materials (posters, banners, videos) to promote global food safety awareness and call different stakeholders to action. Following the successful campaign, WHO and FAO together released a summary report in late September 2020. The report, World Food Safety Day 2020 - Overview of an inspiring virtual celebration, provides a glimpse of more than 100 different activities, events and campaigns that were held in more than 60 countries. As countries went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the observances to mark 7 June took place online and many went beyond the designated date. Additionally, the 24-page publication documents the five calls to action, which shaped not only the global campaign materials, but in some instance, gave structure to the events with speakers addressing how to promote food safety from different sectors and perspectives. The report is available in six UN official languages.

29. FAO and WHO are working closely on the preparation of the World Food Safety Day 2021. The campaign was launched on 18 February 2021 with the announcement of the theme, ''Safe food now for a healthy tomorrow'' for this year's celebration. A newscast including contributions from FAO, WHO, the secretariats of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Food Safety Authorities Network, plus guests from around the world discussed why food safety is everyone's business and set the scene for the third occurrence of the World Food Safety Day on 7 June 2021. Campaign materials and campaign guide to World Food Safety Day 2021 in six UN official languages are available on the FAO and WHO WFSD webpages http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/wfsd-homepage/en/; www.fao.org/world-food-safety-day.webpage.

30. FAO RLC is organizing with the CCLAC coordinator, PAHO, OIRSA, IICA a regional 2-day webinar for WFSD for June 2021.

FAO guidance on risk-based inspection

31. FAO continues its update of existing and the production of new guidance on risk-based inspection, as part of the Food Safety and Quality series. The most recent issue in the series is "Principles for risk-based meat inspection" which has recently been published in English and is available at http://www.fao.org/3/ca5465en/ca5465en.pdf. Publication of the Arabic and French translations is expected very soon. Moreover, drafting of new guidance is ongoing with regard to:

- Risk categorization of food businesses as the basis for improved inspection planning,
- Risk based fish inspection (update of an earlier publication)

Regional and national activities

32. During the past two years, FAO and WHO have continued to implement a large number of capacity development activities covering a wide range of food safety topics in countries around the globe. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major impact on progress as resources at country and regional level were repurposed to support the response to the pandemic or as a result of lockdowns and travel restriction.

33. In the Africa region, FAO conducted more than 20 training workshops on a range of subjects including risk analysis principles, risk profiling, microbiological criteria, and food safety emergency response as part of the effort to strengthen national food control systems. FAO supported twelve countries to strengthen their capacity in participating in the work of Codex Alimentarius through the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund (Ghana, Madagascar, Cabo Verde, Mali, Rwanda, The Gambia and Nigeria through individual projects, and Uganda, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, South Sudan and Burundi through a group project) and is expected to support few more in 2021. A regional project, funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with COMESA is currently implemented to strengthen capacities in COMESA member states in the area of science based standard setting and risk-based imported food inspection processes.

34. In the Near East region, FAO and WHO activities were focusing at strengthening food control systems, in order to facilitate regional trade in food, while increasing protection of public health from foodborne diseases. As a response to countries requests, FAO and WHO designed and implemented activities related to:

i. Use of a common approach for assessing national food control systems (FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool) to measure performance, identify needs and inform strategic activities for improvement at system level (assessments in Sudan and Tunisia were funded by a SIDA/UNIDO/FAO project).

ii. Development and use of regional Codex guides to promote knowledge, strengthen national Codex infrastructures and operations to improve participation in this international standards setting process (activities funded by a SIDA/UNIDO/FAO project).

iii. Support the country to participate actively to CCNE activities as decided, in particular regarding data sharing and elaboration of ambitious and realistic regional strategy regarding food safety standards.

iv. Support regulatory authorities to develop a risk-based food import framework according to the principles and guidance in the FAO Risk-Based Imported Food Control Manual (2016) In Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia.

v. In collaboration with WFP, support to the implementation of a one stop shop laboratory to scale up the capacity of the laboratory in Port Sudan.

vi. Support regulatory authorities to implement an effective surveillance both for exported food and those for local market.

35. In the Asia and Pacific region, FAO organized the “Regional Food Safety Conference: Food safety in the era of COVID-19 – earning consumers’ trust’ with in-depth discussions on food control systems in the region and existing and emerging food safety issues. It also addressed food safety in the context of COVID-19 which, despite not being a food safety matter, is influencing all players and actions along the food chain as well as regulation by competent authorities. An easy to understand regional technical food safety tool kit is being published in nine booklets on topics ranging from food fraud to parasites to organic foods to highlight how collaboration between national governments, experts and producers is vital for food safety. A regional guidance document on development and validation of food safety indicators is ready for publication. Multiple regional and national workshops on Codex-related topics including risk-based categorization, risk-based inspection and development of national pesticide residue monitoring programmes were delivered. Food safety activities or projects were implemented with the ASEAN grouping as a whole and with their individual member states such as Cambodia and Myanmar. Projects were also delivered or continuing in Bangladesh, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka. A major risk profile study of Group B Streptococcus (GBS) in freshwater fish has been completed. Seven countries are being supported to strengthen their capacity to engage in Codex work through the Codex Trust Fund (Samoa and Tonga through individual country projects, and India, Nepal and Bhutan, as well as Myanmar, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Cambodia through group projects)

36. Over 2020 and 2021 FAO and WHO provided technical support to developing the APEC Food Safety Risk Communication Framework through workshop presentations, sessions’ moderation and draft review.

37. In the Europe and Central Asia region, technical capacities of national food control authorities and food businesses on risk-based approaches were strengthened with national and regional activities. Due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, the project implementation modality shifted to the virtual format. Trainings and meetings with member country institutions and other counterparts are taking place on line. In Tajikistan, FAO and ITC are working with the national authorities to enable market access for Tajik honey and apricot products. Guidance and technical trainings are provided on risk-based approaches to the regulatory framework and practical use of agro-chemicals and veterinary medicines (e.g. inspections, sampling, labelling). With the support of FAO, Azerbaijan and Belarus are assessing the food control system using the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool, and building capacities on risk-based inspection. FAO is providing technical support to Belarus on WTO accession, food safety requirement guidelines were developed to facilitate market access of food products; guidance is given on the control of veterinary medicinal products and drug residues. Work in Armenia is ongoing with reviewing risk-based inspection procures, in particular to meat sector. National technical capacities were improved via trainings on conducting chemical and microbiological risk assessments and using them for risk management decisions. FAO supports Kyrgyzstan to build capacities of the food producers and guidance capability of the inspection officers on food safety management systems in fruit and vegetable sector. A regional FAO project is supporting Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to strengthen official food controls and risk communication including effective food safety emergency response systems. In Azerbaijan, FAO legal and technical experts worked together and provided guidance on the development of secondary technical regulations on a range of topics (on Labelling; food products of special categories; biologically active substances; food contact materials). With technical support of FAO to implement the diagnostic tool, Azerbaijan subsequently submitted a successful application to CTF to improve national Codex capacities. At regional level, FAO in collaboration with WHO-EURO, are preparing a brief to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on food safety control and management at government, private businesses and consumer level. FAO and WHO regional offices jointly support the regional capacity development on Codex with activities including a virtual training delivered on effective use of the Codex diagnostic tool which will be followed by two more trainings on Codex in the pipeline this year.

38. In the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, several activities were implemented by FAO in relation to AMR to collect relevant information and assist countries in the implementation of their national action plans. To date, ten countries have applied a FAO RLC qualitative risk assessment methodology to address AMR and identify gaps in the terrestrial and aquatic animal production sectors. This methodology was also applied in two African countries during 2021. The EU-funded Tripartite project “Working together to fight AMR” initiated activities in seven South American countries. FAO, PAHO (PANAFTOSA) and University of Minnesota convened country meetings from Nov 2020 – April 2021, to obtain information on country needs in risk analysis within the development of the STDF funded project to develop a South-South capacity building project in risk analysis for nine countries in Latin America. Finally, FAO supports Cuba’s capacity building to engage in Codex work through the Codex Trust Fund.

39. In the WHO African Region, capacities of laboratory scientists from 11 countries (Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were further strengthened on integrated surveillance of antimicrobial resistance of foodborne bacteria using a “One Health approach”. In addition, a pool of national trainers in Zambia and Zimbabwe were trained in the implementation of the protocol for Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase-Ec surveillance concurrently in the food chain, humans and the environment. There is ongoing work to support six countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe) to initiate pilots for the implementation of the ESBL-Ec. tricycle protocol. Six countries are being supported to strengthen their capacity to participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission through the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund. A series of webinars jointly organized by the WHO, FAO, and the African Union were held for Member States in November 2020 to enhance active participation in the network and strengthen national networks and response systems.

40. In the WHO South East Asia Region, in-country training for capacity building on standard setting procedures and process was conducted to review and provide feedback on specific subject of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems in Bhutan and Nepal under a Codex Trust Funds (CTF) project. This workshop was facilitated by experts and resource persons from WHO, Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Export Council of India. Outcomes resulting from this increased collaboration have already included bilateral agreements between India and each of the two other countries to improve their food safety labs and/or harmonize food standards and procedures. The project will be facilitating joint position and intervention during discussion on draft Codex standards on National Food Control System. The project supported Codex activities at country level. WHO facilitated participation of Member States in meeting of the Codex Committee for Asia (CCASIA) in 2019 in Goa (India) where Member States were encouraged to apply for Codex Trust Fund Project through interactive side event on CTF. As a result, Myanmar took initiative to apply for CTF project together with Cambodia and Lao PDR based on the example of and lessons learned from group CTF project implemented by Bhutan, India and Nepal. FAO and WHO provided technical support to Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao People’s Democratic Republic to organize intercountry consultation and to submit an application to the Codex Trust Fund which was approved as group CTF project in 2020. Food safety risk analysis is one of the areas for capacity building raised during Codex meetings by Member States and

chemical contamination of food is an emerging challenge and barrier to international trade. WHO facilitated development of training module for risk analysis under Codex Trust Fund project considering regional context including case studies on heavy metal, aflatoxin, pesticides and veterinary drug residues, as these are common food contaminants in the region. WHO supported organization of food safety risk analysis training workshop in Lucknow (India), including participation of food safety officials from Bhutan, India and Nepal. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to understand the importance of data generation and validation, total diet studies and role of FAO/WHO Expert Group (pesticides, food additives and microbiological risk assessment) in providing scientific advice to Codex.
http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/news-and-events/news-details/en/c/1205017/

41. In the WHO European Region, WHO supported Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to strengthen their participation in Codex through adoption of Codex standards and guidelines into national policy and legislation. In Kyrgyzstan, 35 Codex standards were adopted into the national food legislation, while Kazakhstan was supported to strengthen its Codex programme and capacity as Regional Coordinator for Europe. In collaboration with the Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC), WHO also provided technical advice to EAEC members on establishing MRLs for pesticide and veterinary drug residues in food with the purpose to facilitate export of food and agriculture products from the EAEC Members. INFOSAN continues to play an important role in facilitating rapid exchange of information during food safety emergencies in the region, facilitating the communication between EU and non-EU countries. In November 2020, a joint FAO/WHO webinar was conducted for Member States to strengthen their familiarity and participation in INFOSAN.

42. In the WHO Region of Americas, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO conducted ten days Risk-based Food Inspection training for government representatives from Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Jamaica, Guyana, based on the teaching of the manual on risk-based food inspection for the Caribbean http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/51775. In Latin America, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO organised a three days online training on risk-based food inspection that was followed by government representatives from Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay. It was recently published a practical comprehensive manual on “Microbiological Risk Assessment” in Spanish for the easy understanding and implementation of concepts, methodologies and models for quantitative and qualitative microbiological risk assessment. https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53292. Its translation into Portuguese and English is ongoing. A regional consultative technical group (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Uruguay and Comité Veterinario Permanente Conosur (CVP)) finalized a practical manual on “Risk Based Food Inspection for Latin America”. The manual contains practical examples for risk categorization, inspection plans and tools adapted to Latin American reality. The manual is under revision to be published within this year 2021. Finally, PANAFTOSA-OPS/OMS is accompanying the implementation of four CTF projects in the region: Honduras, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, El Salvador/Guatemala and Guyana.

43. To strengthen integrated AMR surveillance in the Americas, the FAO/OIE/PAHO Tripartite Alliance is implementing the project “Working Together to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance” funded by the European Union to help selected countries implement their National Action Plans (NAP), share experiences, advocate for best practices and stimulate collaboration. The beneficiary countries of the project are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. A landscape analysis was conducted in beneficiary countries to identify gaps and weaknesses in their AMR integrated surveillance system as well as countries’ National Action Plans were submitted and revised by FAO/OIE/PAHO. A series of online trainings were conducted to improve countries’ AMR integrated surveillance. The project started in January 2019 and is to finish in April 2023.

44. In the WHO Western Pacific Region, in 2018/2019, monitoring of AMR in the food chain in Malaysia has improved through implementation of The Tricycle Project - WHO Integrated Global Survey on ESBL-producing *Escherichia coli* using a "One Health" approach. In China, provision of technical support and collaboration with China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) contributed to enhance monitoring of AMR in the food chain. Collaboration with the tripartite partners FAO and OIE is ongoing. In 2018, at the biregional meeting to accelerate prevention and control of neglected foodborne parasitic zoonoses in selected Asian countries, the tripartite and Member States agreed on multisectoral action priorities to address identified issues and challenges and accelerate prevention and control of neglected foodborne parasitic zoonoses. In support of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan, in February 2019, the tripartite partners supported the AMR One Health Tokyo Conference to discuss the operationalization of the Asia-Pacific One Health Initiative on AMR (ASPIRE) and strengthen multi-sectoral engagement at the country level to combat AMR. In 2020, a Biregional Joint Statement of Intent to Coordinate was signed by FAO, OIE, WPRO and SEARO to work together on zoonosis, AMR and food safety. A table-top IHR-INFOSAN emergency communication exercise was conducted to verify procedures for communication between National IHR Focal Points and INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points. Progress and experiences in rapidly sharing information in food safety emergency situations were reviewed, options to strengthen regional cooperation to respond to food safety emergencies were identified and an approach to strengthen the exchange of food safety information recommended during

the INFOSAN in Asia – Meeting to strengthen food safety emergency response through rapid exchange of information. Member State participation in *Codex Alimentarius* committees and in INFOSAN were boosted as a result of coordinated activities to support countries in generating science-based evidence and improving capacities to respond to food safety and other health emergencies. WHO collaborating centres provided critical support, especially the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment and the Singapore Food Agency. The Agency sponsored trainings on contaminants and data collection to support the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods. Meanwhile, the China National Center and WHO hosted an expert consultation on strengthening food safety systems in Beijing, China, in March 2019. Support was given to Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam to adopt risk-based approaches to food safety risk management through capacity-building and ongoing studies to prioritize higher-risk foods. A series of virtual roundtables focusing in the strengthening of food safety systems was held in March 2021 to discuss challenges and share experiences from Member States on food safety policy and legal frameworks, risk based inspection and enforcement, food safety information underpinning evidence, food safety incidents and emergency response, and food safety communication and education.

B. ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)

Electronic certification

45. The International Plant Protection Convention's ePhyto Solution is fully operational; this includes both the Hub, which countries with their own national electronic certification system can connect to directly, and the Generic National System (GeNS) which is a web-based system developed by the IPPC's IT partner, the United Nations International Computing Centre, for countries without their own national system. At the present time, more than eighty countries are either using the system "live" (i.e., exchanging phytosanitary certificates in digital form as a normal part of doing business), or in the process of getting ready to do so this year. Entities exchanging as a part of normal business include the United States of America, Argentina, South Africa, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Samoa, Fiji, and the European Commission. At present, the system is handling approximately 11,000 certificates per month effortlessly, with the capacity to handle (in the current configuration) up to 100,000 certificates per day. The system was built with initial resources provided by the Standards and Trade Development Facility specifically to facilitate the digital exchange of certificates, initially phytosanitary certificates, but any certificate once coded in XML can be exchanged. For additional information, please visit: www.ephytoexchange.org