

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean held its 23rd Session (CCLAC23) virtually, from 22 to 26 July 2024, at the kind invitation of the Government of Ecuador. Mr Rommel Betancourt, General Coordinator for Food Safety, Agencia de Regulación y Control Fito y Zootécnica (AGROCALIDAD), chaired the meeting. The Session was attended by XX Member Countries, XX Member Countries and one Member Organization from outside the Region, and XX Observer Organizations. The list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Esteban del Hierro, Viceministro de Desarrollo Productivo Agropecuario, welcomed the participants, and noted CCLAC Members' efforts to defend the scientific basis for decision-making, calling Member countries of the region to strengthen their analytical capacity, produce scientific information, and make it available to existing global databases to facilitate risk assessment work. The Vice-Minister also recalled that in 2022, after 10 years of scientific data generation and multilateral negotiations, and under the leadership of Ecuador within the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF), five maximum levels for cadmium in chocolate and cocoa products were adopted.
3. The Vice-Minister concluded his intervention by stressing that food safety was everyone's business and inviting CCLAC Members to create the necessary synergies to strengthen national food safety systems.
4. Ms Gherda Barreto, FAO Representative for Ecuador and Ms Sonia Quezada, PAHO/WHO Representative for Ecuador, welcomed the attendees on behalf of FAO and WHO respectively. The meeting was also addressed by Mr Steve Wearne, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Mr Patricio Almeida, Executive Director, AGROCALIDAD, and Mr Farid ElHaffar, Technical Officer, on behalf of the Codex Secretariat.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

5. CCLAC23 adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session and agreed to discuss under Agenda item 11 (Other business), time permitting, the following:
 - CRD07 New work proposals on new food sources and production systems (NFPS); and
 - CRD04 Update on the standards and trade development facility (STDF).

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: "PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD" (Agenda Item 2)²

6. The Representatives of FAO and PAHO/WHO introduced the topic, emphasizing the keynote address' role in stimulating and promoting active discussion and information sharing on common, emerging, or topical issues of interest to the region related to food safety and Codex activities.
7. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Luis Ramos-Guerrero, University of the Americas (UDLA), Quito, Ecuador. The presentation focused on scientific evidence and strategies for preventing and reducing contaminants in foods, emphasizing the following topics: understanding contaminants, implementing effective reduction and prevention methods, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.
8. Regarding the prevention of contaminants in foods, Prof. Ramos highlighted the importance of identifying potential contaminants and associated risks and conducting proper risk assessments. Examples of contaminants relevant for the region, included arsenic, lead, chromium, mercury, poly and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), saturated and aromatic hydrocarbons from mineral oils (MOSH, MOAS), microplastics, nanoplastics, and natural toxins (mycotoxins).
9. Prof. Ramos added that it was important to develop and enhance analytical capabilities for detecting emerging contaminants, using methods such as liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC/MS/MS) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC/MS/MS), immunoassays, high-performance liquid chromatography/ultra-violet spectroscopy (HPLC-UV), high-resolution mass spectrometry, among others.
10. As a second approach, Prof. Ramos stressed the importance for countries to make the necessary efforts to reduce contaminants in foods, by using international standards, such as the Codex Alimentarius texts, as well as the existing scientific literature. Additionally, countries should implement food safety surveillance and control plans and invest in research to identify appropriate methodologies to reduce or eliminate food contaminants.

¹ CX/LAC 24/23/1 Rev.1; CRD07 (Submitted by Singapore); CRD04 (Submitted by the STDF Secretariat)

² CX/LAC 24/23/2; CRD03 (Comments by Chile); CRD10 (PPT - Prevention and reduction of contaminants in food); CRD12 (Comments of Ecuador)

11. Prof. Ramos concluded his presentation by mentioning four recommendations, namely, 1) the need to expand the analytical capacity for the detection of emerging contaminants in the region; 2) promote the participation of academia in food contaminant surveillance and control plans; 3) information from Codex standards and scientific paper were a valuable tools to prevent and reduce contaminants in food; 4), industry, academy, governments and consumers must share information and work together to keep food safe.

Discussion

12. A Member welcomed and appreciated the keynote address, noting that it addressed the prevention and reduction of contaminants in food in a clear and challenging way. The Member further noted that contaminants in foods were a relevant issue, especially chemical contamination, as they were strictly related to long-term effects on the health of the population. The Member concluded its intervention by stressing the important role of regulatory aspects, monitoring and enforcement, given that contaminants were closely linked to environmental pollution, which was closely associated with anthropogenic activities.
13. The Representative of FAO, BASED IN THE REGION, highlighted that addressing contaminants in food was an issue that required the participation of all stakeholders and that, recognizing its regional importance, FAOs actions were aimed at safeguarding food safety in a comprehensive manner, addressing the prevention and reduction of contaminants as a fundamental part of its efforts to transform agrifood systems towards more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable systems that provide safe and healthy diets.
14. The Representative of FAO, based in the region, further stressed that FAO was supporting member countries through various initiatives such as the evaluation and strengthening of national food control systems, capacity building in risk analysis, and the implementation of projects focused on managing contaminants in foods along the food supply chain, among other actions.
15. The Representative of FAO noted the importance of appropriate analytical detection methods for keeping abreast with currently known and emerging contaminants in the food supply chain. The Representative informed CCLAC about the Analytical Laboratory Network of Latin America and the Caribbean³, RALACA, developed with support of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre, which had an important role in strengthening analytical capacities in the region, producing and storing quality data on contaminants, developing proficiency testing capacities, and sharing validated analytical method with the network members. The Representative also encouraged CCLAC Members to respond to the JECFA call for experts and to several calls for various data (toxicological, occurrence, intake estimates)⁴.
16. The Representative of FAO concluded her intervention by informing CCLAC about a JECFA Toolbox for Veterinary Drug Residues Risk Assessment, which would be finalized by the end of 2024, which aimed at increasing experts' capacities in risk assessment principles, modalities and technical requirements used by CCRVDF in assessing the risks of veterinary drug residues in food and in recommending MRLs.
17. The Representative of PAHO/WHO emphasized the importance of applying risk analysis principles, urging countries to make science-based decisions and collaborate with stakeholders. Countries were recommended to submit data to the GEMS/Food to enable JECFA to evaluate potential health risks associated with food contaminants. The Representative of PAHO/WHO also highlighted PAHOs capacity-building efforts in risk assessment and risk management, and the work of the Interamerican Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL) in promoting cooperation and providing technical-scientific support among food laboratories. The Representative also encouraged CCLAC Members to continue engaging with PAHO/WHO for the development of technical cooperation activities aimed at strengthening National Food Safety Systems.
18. In replying to a series of questions regarding the most studied contaminants in foods and the latest advancements in research related to this field, Prof. Ramos commented on the regional geographic peculiarities, mentioning that in the future food contaminants considered as priority could vary. Prof. Ramos further added the need to establish priorities while proceeding with risk assessments, and establishing preventative and control measures. Prof. Ramos also noted the important role played by new technologies in addressing contaminants in foods, mentioning new tools such as phone applications and the use of artificial intelligence which could become increasingly useful in assisting with data collection and management.

³ www.red-ralaca.net

⁴ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/df6aa9f9-35e5-4b63-944b-825cfa2e432f/content>;
<https://www.fao.org/food-safety/scientific-advice/calls-for-data-and-experts-expert-rosters/en/>

Conclusion

19. CCLAC23:

- i. Expressed appreciation to Prof Ramos for the keynote address;
- ii. Recognized the importance of addressing contaminants in food and noted the importance of the application of the Codex risk analysis principles on this topic; and
- iii. Noted the ongoing work of FAO and PAHO/WHO in this area and encouraged Members to continue engaging with FAO and PAHO/WHO, and in the relevant Codex subsidiary bodies on this topic.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda item 3)⁵

20. CCLAC noted that most items were for information purposes and that the regional standard for Castilla Lulo (at Step 4), and the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031, would be further considered under Agenda item 6 and 8 respectively.

Guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food (at Step 5/8)

21. The Codex Secretariat informed CCLAC23 that the 54th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH54) agreed to forward the guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5/8. The Codex Secretariat further explained that following adoption of this text, and recalling the revision of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969) by CAC45, CCFH54 requested the relevant FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to review their respective texts on street vended foods to ensure consistency with CXC 1-1969 and the guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for foods and consider the necessary follow-up action. Noting that CCLAC also had a text on street vended foods i.e. the *Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods (Latin America and the Caribbean [CXC 43R-1995])*, the Codex Secretariat invited CCLAC to consider possible approaches to review CXC 43R-1995 which would be presented at the next session of the Committee (CCLAC24).
22. In relation to this request, two Members of the region, namely Costa Rica and Brazil, agreed to prepare a discussion paper to address whether a review of CXC 43R-1995 was necessary to ensure consistency with CXC 1-1969 and the guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food, when adopted, and provide suggestions/recommendations for next steps or consequential changes to CXC 43R-1995.
23. The Representative of PAHO/WHO informed CCLAC23 of the publication of the “Good practices in traditional food markets in the Region of the Americas”⁶ which, following adoption by CAC47 of the guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food, could assist Members of the CCLAC region in their implementation.

Environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems

24. New Zealand informed CCLAC Members of the informal workshops on Environmental Inhibitors (EIs) organized as side events to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR55) in June 2024 and of those to be organized at the forthcoming Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF27) in October 2024. The Member further noted that the objective of these side events was to facilitate recognition and understanding of the importance of environmental inhibitors to advancing global interests around mitigating the impact of climate change and transforming food systems, while advancing broader food security and sustainability objectives. New Zealand concluded its intervention by inviting Members of CCLAC to share relevant inputs on EIs and to participate in international discussions on this subject.
25. While appreciating New Zealand’s initiative, one Member noted that although the document presented an analysis of EIs and of their status in Codex, due to the late submission of the CRD, it was not possible to examine it carefully and that they may provide additional feedback on this topic in the future.

⁵ CX/LAC 24/23/3; CRD05 (Submitted by New Zealand)

⁶ <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/59252>

Conclusion

26. CCLAC23:

- i. noted the matters for information arising from CAC, CCEXEC, CCFICS, CCGP and CCFA;
- ii. encouraged Codex Members to:
 - (a) actively engage in opportunities to contribute to the discussions in CCEXEC and CAC (e.g. sharing experience on application of the draft guidance on SoP and providing inputs on the development of Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031);
 - (b) submit discussion papers or new work proposals on NFPS using existing mechanisms available in Codex; and
- iii. requested Costa Rica and Brazil to prepare a discussion paper, to be presented at CCLAC24, to address whether a review of CXC 43R-1995 was necessary to ensure consistency with CXC 1-1969 and the guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food, when adopted, and provide suggestions/recommendations for next steps or consequential changes to CXC 43R-1995.

CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda item 4)⁷

27. The Chairperson introduced the item highlighting its importance for the region, and recalling the process established by CCLAC18 to develop regional positions. The Chairperson recalled the "Regional Workshop for the Socialization of the Work of the Codex Alimentarius in the CCLAC Countries 2022-2024" organized in February 2024 with the Members of CCLAC which identified topics relevant to the region that were included in the paper. In addition, a survey on "relevant Codex work for the region" was conducted from February to March 2024 and its results were also included in the paper. The Chairperson noted that the purpose of this document was to identify Codex work of relevance to the region, to identify ways to address it and to forge a coordinated approach.
28. The Chairperson recalled that at the time CCLAC was created there were no French-speaking members in the CCLAC region and therefore English and Spanish were set as its official languages, in line with Article XIV of the Procedural Manual. Since then, a French-speaking Member had joined CCLAC. The Chairperson highlighted the efforts made by Ecuador as coordinator of CCLAC to provide interpretation in English, Spanish and French, with the support of IICA, to promote a greater inclusion of all Members from the region, and the proposal to include French as an official language of CCLAC.

Discussion*Inclusion of French as an official language for the CCLAC region*

29. One Member highlighted the need to include French to allow for greater participation in the work of the region, recalled that this has been a pending issue for a long time, and requested the endorsement by CCLAC of this proposal.
30. The Codex Secretariat noted that currently no additional resources were available to support the use of additional languages in Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs) and that should there be any resources available, including from regional organizations, CCLAC could pilot the use of French at CCLAC24, subject to confirmation by CAC47.

Topics for the potential establishment of a regional position

31. The Chairperson drew the attention of CCLAC to the proposals contained in Table 2 of document CX/LAC 24/23/4 and proceeded to discuss them committee by committee.

Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL)

32. On the first point, establishment of the definition of added sugars, one Member abstained but did not oppose to adopting a regional position. This proposal was therefore endorsed by CCLAC.

⁷ CX/LAC 24/23/4, CRD03 (comments of Chile), CRD08 (comments of Honduras and Costa Rica); CRD12 (Comments of Ecuador); CRD13 (comments of Brazil).

33. On the second point, labelling of alcoholic beverages, Members expressed the following range of views:
- it was premature to establish a regional position on this issue, noting that the discussion paper for CCFL (CX/FL 24/48/9) which summarised the views of Members in response to a CL on this topic and the possible ways forward had just been published and members needed time to consider these options;
 - there was no need to develop a specific Codex Standard on alcoholic beverages; and
 - they did not oppose to the review of the *General Standard for Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) and the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) to discuss certain aspects related to labelling of alcoholic beverages.

34. CCLAC23 therefore agreed it was premature to establish a regional position on this topic.

35. On the third point, proposed draft annex to the general standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods: guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling, Members did not support the regional position, noting that the proposal was still at step 2 and that there were opportunities to provide comments directly to the proposal.

36. One Member mentioned that the current proposal on guidance on the use of precautionary labelling of food allergens was, in their view, not well balanced and should recognize the possibility of using alternatives. The Member also drew the attention of CCLAC to this topic.

Codex Committee on General Principles

37. Regarding point one (Timely translation of documents into the official languages) and point three (Availability of pre-session documents), Members agreed to merge these two points and adopt the resulting point as a regional position.

38. Members further noted the high importance of timeliness and availability of documents in all languages and their impact on participation to Codex work, in particular the availability of documents for meetings two months in advance, as established by the Procedural Manual, and the translation of Codex texts adopted by CAC in all official languages.

39. The Codex Secretariat acknowledged the issue and noted it was making efforts to improve the timely availability of working documents, also noting its reliance on the timely availability of reports/documents from intersessional work and continued collaboration of chairs of EWGs in this regard. Regarding the backlog of Codex texts to be translated, the Codex Secretariat noted that while efforts were ongoing to address this, the pace of delivery was reduced due to budgetary constraints.

40. Regarding the second point, translation of fair/equitable trade in Spanish, the Codex Secretariat noted that this issue would be addressed in the 29th edition of the Procedural Manual that would be published before CAC47. Members therefore agreed to remove it from the list of regional positions.

Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food (CCRVDF)

41. Regarding the first point (identification of priority compounds of interest to the region, in order to carry out joint data collection efforts for submission to JECFA), Members agreed to invite countries from the region to make efforts to identify priority compounds and collect data in joint work, for submission to JECFA, taking into account the CCRVDF database on MRL needs and the support of international organizations. This topic was therefore included among the regional positions.

42. On the second point, new work, the Chairperson stressed the need to share data on MRLs in milk among countries from the region to support risk assessment work. One Member from outside the region recalled that CCRVDF had developed a database on countries' needs for MRLs which could be used as a starting point in identifying priority areas for data collection. Members therefore did not support the regional position.

Regional Positions Adopted by CCLAC at its 22nd Session

43. The Chairperson drew the attention of CCLAC to the topics in progress contained in Annex II of document CX/LAC 24/23/4 and proceeded to review them committee by committee.

Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)

44. Members noted that the *Guidelines for the Recognition of Active Substances or Authorized Uses of Active Substances of Low Public Health Concern that are Considered Exempted from the Establishment of Maximum Residue Limits or do not give rise to Residues* (CXG 97-2022) had been adopted by CAC45 and thanked Chile for its leadership of the EWG. The topic was therefore removed from the list of regional positions.

Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF)

45. The PAHO/WHO Representative drew the attention of CCLAC23 to the ongoing JECFA call for data on arsenic (inorganic and organic) by 1 December 2024⁸ and encouraged Members to submit data for a more representative assessment.
46. The Chairperson noted that this topic (Proposal for the establishment of maximum levels (ML) of inorganic arsenic in molluscs and fish) could therefore be removed from the list of regional positions and noted the importance of submitting data. The topic was therefore removed from the list of regional positions.

Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC)

47. The Chairperson noted that this topic (Implementation of the Statements of Principle on the role of science and the extent to which other factors are taken into account) was still relevant and proposed to mention as a regional position the CAC46 conclusions regarding usefulness of the draft guidelines and the need for additional experience in the implementation of the guidelines. This topic was therefore kept in the list of regional positions.

Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV)

48. This topic (Discussion Paper on an Amendment to the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars*, CXS 247-2005) was considered to be still relevant for the region as work was ongoing. CCLAC encouraged Brazil to continue leading this work through the related EWG and keeping the region informed. This topic was therefore kept in the list of regional positions.

Codex work of regional interest not included in the document

49. Referring to the discussion at CCEXEC86, several Members expressed their concern regarding the Codex Secretariat's budgetary situation. While appreciating the Codex Secretariat's efforts to provide detailed budgetary information, these Members requested that additional information be provided at CCEXEC87 regarding financial matters and in particular a breakdown of the budget by programme and activities. Members also supported the efforts made in CCEXEC to develop proposals aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of budget execution leading to informed decision-making. Members also highlighted the need for WHO to increase its contribution to the Codex Secretariat's budget. A regional position was agreed by Members and included in the list of regional positions.
50. The Codex Secretariat noted that additional information on the budget would be submitted at CCEXEC87, in line with the recommendations of CCEXEC86.
51. The Chairperson informed Members that the regional positions adopted by CCLAC22, as revised by CCLAC23, and those positions not included in the document, would be all referred in Appendix II of adopted regional positions.

Conclusions

52. CCLAC23 agreed:
 - i. to support ongoing work in various Codex Committees, including CAC and CCEXEC, that is of relevance to the region;
 - ii. to confirm that the areas contained in Appendix II, are the key priority areas for the CCLAC region; and
 - iii. to propose, on a pilot basis, the addition of French as a language of CCLAC24, should the appropriate extra-budgetary resources be available.

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY IN THE REGION INCLUDING CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES (Agenda item 5)⁹

53. The Representative of FAO, BASED IN THE REGION, introduced the item noting the recommendations of the Member States of the region at the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC 38) held in March 2024, which highlighted the need to strengthen the capacity of governments to respond to the changing needs of trade and to address the regional challenge of increasing food production in a sustainable and resilient manner in the face of various drivers such as economic slowdowns, conflicts and climate change, among others.

⁸ Link for the call: [https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/food-contaminants-101st-meeting-joint-fao-who-expert-committee-on-food-additives-\(jecfa\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/food-contaminants-101st-meeting-joint-fao-who-expert-committee-on-food-additives-(jecfa))

⁹ CX/LAC 24/23/5; CRD03 (Comments of Chile)

54. The Representative of FAO, BASED IN THE REGION, also highlighted the emerging issues in food safety raised at CCLAC21 and CCLAC22 related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), new technologies for food production systems, and climate change. The Representative further noted the results of a survey carried out in February and March 2024, which received answers from the 33 countries of CCLAC, that identified two priority issues as the most relevant for the Members of the region, namely, contaminants in food and food fraud.
55. The Representative informed CCLAC that, over the past two years, FAO had worked on three projects related to AMR: i) "Working together to combat antimicrobial resistance" (2019-2023), funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by FAO, PAHO, and WOAHA in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay; ii) "Fighting Antimicrobial Resistance in Peru under the One Health approach" (2022-2023) funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF); and iii) "Actions to support the implementation of Codex AMR texts (ACT)" (2022-2026), implemented regionally in Bolivia and Colombia. Within their respective scopes, the projects had focused on risk management through medicated feed, risk communication, strengthening legislation and surveillance systems, and raising awareness.
56. With respect to food control systems, the Representative further noted that FAO had implemented the project "Strengthening of the national food safety and quality system" (2023–2024) to assess the performance of the national food control systems through the application of the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool.
57. The Representative of FAO, BASED IN THE REGION, further informed CCLAC that, in relation to strengthening the capacity for food safety risk analysis, FAO, in conjunction with PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO and the University of Minnesota, would implement the project "Improving Food Safety Risk Analysis Capacity in Latin America through a South-South Cooperation Approach to Facilitate Regional Trade" between 2024 and 2026, which aimed to strengthen food safety risk analysis capacity in eight countries, namely, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru, with Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay serving as mentors.
58. The Representative concluded the intervention by recalling that regarding contaminants in food, FAO was working to start the implementation of the project "Reduction of Cadmium Content in Cocoa from the Amazon" with Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. The Representative clarified that the project aimed to assist stakeholders in the cocoa chain to innovate and use various practices to increase the value of Amazonian cocoa as a product of Amazonian indigenous heritage, ensuring that cadmium levels were below the thresholds allowed by trading partners such as the EU.
59. The Representative of FAO informed CCLAC that the support offered by FAO/IAEA Joint Centre to the Analytical Laboratory Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (RALACA) would continue over 2024-2026 with activities focused on three areas: (i) capacity development/training to prepare laboratories for accreditation according to ISO standards 17025, 17034 and 17043; (ii) development of a database of chemical residues and contaminants, currently hosted by the IAEA, while maintaining confidentiality and security. The aggregated database has potential to help identify trends and challenges in food safety, and to carry out preliminary, first tier, risk assessments; (iii) inter-laboratory proficiency testing.
60. The Representative further invited interested CCLAC countries to register online, on free enrollment basis, using the web page of RALACA¹⁰, to contribute and share with the network members validated analytical methods and other relevant information.
61. The PAHO/WHO Representative summarized the technical cooperation activities in the CCLAC region aimed at strengthening National Food Safety Systems, emphasizing their role in tackling antimicrobial resistance. The Representative further informed CCLAC on the progress made on the implementation of the "Risk-Based Food Inspection Manual" and the guide "Good Practices in Traditional Food Markets for the Americas Region".
62. The Representative also provided an update on INFOSANs work in the region and shared information about PAHO/WHO's efforts to improve overall understanding on the use of risk analysis principles. This included details about the third Symposium on Risk Assessment for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARAS 2024) and the activities of the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL/RILAA).
63. The Representative also provided information about ongoing activities aimed at addressing the impact of climate change on food safety, noting that PAHO was developing a guide to help countries establish national food safety climate-resilient plans. The PAHO/WHO Representative also informed CCLAC that WHO continued to implement the Global Food Safety Strategy 2022-2030 and was updating the study on the global burden of foodborne diseases, while, at the same time, PAHO was also formulating a technical cooperation strategy on food safety.

¹⁰ <https://www.red-ralaca.net/registration>

64. In relation to the Codex Trust Fund (CTF), the Representative highlighted the progress made by the ongoing projects in Guyana, El Salvador and Guatemala, and informed CCLAC about the closure of projects in Bolivia, Cuba and Honduras.
65. The CTF Programme Administrator provided an update on the status of applications on round 8 for CTF2 support, noting that two applications from CCLAC, one individual and one group, met the technical requirements and were awaiting funding approval. The CTF Programme Administrator informed CCLAC that CTF2 faced financial challenges due to the declining contributions and long-term commitments of donor countries, noting that for the third consecutive year, expenditures were expected to exceed contributions, making additional funding crucial for sustaining CTF2 operations.

Discussion

66. Members expressed appreciation for the working document, presentations and efforts of FAO and PAHO/WHO in the region and made the following points:

Procedure to collect and prioritize relevant information on current and emerging issues related to food safety and quality in the region

67. The CCLAC Secretariat recalled that the aim of the regional survey “Codex work relevant to the region” was to identify priority issues for the region, noting that such a survey had been prepared considering topics discussed in Codex committees held from November 2022 to April 2024. The CCLAC Secretariat further noted that the survey also included two questions regarding potential topics of interest for the keynote address and for the adoption of regional positions. The survey, which was circulated in the region in February and March 2024, received answers from all the 33 Members of the region, and such answers had been taken into account when preparing the documents for the agenda of CCLAC23.
68. A Member highlighted that some of the food safety issues identified in CX/LAC 24/23/5 continued to represent a problem for food production in the region, stressing that they were rather recurrent issues than emerging issues. The Member further noted that, in their view, no emerging or priority issues had been identified by the region, expressing concerns regarding the methodology used to collect information from Members. The Member concluded the intervention by suggesting establishing a procedure for future meetings of CCLAC, to ensure that relevant food safety issues for the region could be identified correctly.
69. CCLAC noted the proposal to establish a process to collect and prioritize relevant information on current and emerging issues related to food safety and quality in the region, and, recalling previous CCLAC meeting experiences, agreed that this agenda item would be prepared by the CCLAC Secretariat according to the following procedure:
- conduct a specific survey on current and emerging issues related to food safety and quality in the region;
 - ensure that the survey is sent to Codex Contact Points at least six months in advance of the CCLAC meeting;
 - compile and present a prioritization proposal through a discussion paper, requesting comments through a Circular Letter; and
 - during the CCLAC meeting, the region defines or endorses the current and emerging issues prioritizing them based on their greatest impact.

Case study to evaluate the use and impact of Codex Alimentarius standards

70. A Member expressed appreciation to the Codex Secretariat for a case study which aimed to examine the initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders in Brazil to reduce fumonisin contamination in maize while adopting the standard *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals* (CXC 51- 2003), noting that such a study would help Members of the region better understand the application of CXC 51- 2003.

Codex Trust Fund

71. Recipient countries expressed appreciation for the support received through the CTF.

Food safety risk analysis

72. In response to a request for clarification regarding the starting date of the project “Improving food safety risk analysis capacity in Latin America through a South-South cooperation approach to facilitate regional trade”, the Representative of FAO, BASED IN THE REGION, clarified that this project would begin in the second half of 2024.

Conclusions

73. CCLAC23:

- i. thanked FAO, PAHO/WHO and the CTF Secretariat for providing the information and the technical support to the region;
- ii. underlined the importance of sustainable funding for the CTF; and
- iii. agreed on the proposed procedure to collect and prioritize relevant information on current and emerging issues related to food safety and quality in the region as described in paragraph 67.

DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR CASTILLA LULO (AT STEP 4) (Agenda item 6)¹¹

74. Colombia, as Chair of the Electronic Working Group (EWG), speaking also on behalf of the co-Chair, Mexico, introduced the item, provided background to the work, noted that the EWG had not identified any outstanding issues to be addressed and proposed that CCLAC consider advancing the regional standard for castilla lulo to Step 5/8. Referring to CRD02, the EWG Chair explained the key changes made, also considering comments received in reply to CL 2024/61-LAC, which included the use of one name in the English version for the product, i.e. “Castilla lulo (naranjilla)”, and proposals to align the provisions to the layout for standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Discussion

75. CCLAC noted the general support to advance the regional standard to Step 5/8 and in addition considered the standard section by section, introduced editorial corrections, and made the following comments and decisions on respective sections:

3.1 Minimum requirements

76. CCLAC considered the proposal by a Member outside the region to delete “free of trichomes (fuzz covering the fruit)” noting that it would contradict the provisions included under Section 2 “Definition of Produce” i.e. “the surface of unripe Castilla lulo (naranjilla) is covered by yellow or red fuzz”.

77. CCLAC agreed to delete “free of trichomes (fuzz covering the fruit)” from Section 2.

3.2.3 Class II

78. CCLAC considered the proposal by a Member outside the region to amend the first bullet (indent) of Class II to differentiate the requirements for Class I and II. The first bullet (indent) was therefore amended to read as follows: “defects in shape, reasonably well-formed”.

79. CCLAC also considered amending the fifth and sixth bullet (indent) of Class II, and further merging them, noting the challenges in distinguishing if bruises were caused by mechanical damage or pest, and consequently deleting “caused by pest”. The fifth and sixth bullet (indent) were therefore amended to read as follows: “healed damage or bruises on skin”.

Conclusion

80. CCLAC23 agreed to forward the proposed draft standard to CAC47, included in Appendix III, for adoption at Step 5/8, noting that the provisions on food additives and on food labelling would be forwarded for endorsement to CCFA and CCFL.

CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025: IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION (Agenda item 7)¹²

81. The CCLAC Secretariat presented the working document highlighting the progress that had been made to implement the regional work plan, noting that to further evaluate the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 in the region, the CCLAC Secretariat organized the “Regional Workshop for the popularization of Codex Alimentarius work in CCLAC countries 2020-2024” and that results of such workshop had been reflected in CX/LAC 24/23/7.

Discussion

82. There was general agreement with the proposed activities for the period 2024-2025 and, in addition to some editorial changes for clarity, CCLAC also supported the inclusion of a regional activity in relation to the celebrations of World Food Safety Day under 3.2.1 which replaced activities related to the 60th anniversary of Codex.

¹¹ CX/LAC 24/23/6; CRD06 (Comments of Peru); CRD12 (Comments of Ecuador)

¹² CX/LAC 24/23/7; CRD11 (Comments of El Salvador)

Conclusion

83. CCLAC23:

- i. noted the activities conducted in the region between 2022 and the first half of 2024 to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025; and
- ii. adopted the proposed activities to be implemented in the region in 2024-2025 (Appendix IV).

CODEX COMMUNICATION WORK PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT (Agenda item 7.1)¹³

84. The Codex Secretariat presented the progress that had been made in the implementation of the regional communications work plan and commended the good progress of the region in this regard. The Codex Secretariat noted that CCLAC met many indicators established in the communications work plan, and in particular exceeded the goal of 30 news stories included under point 2 of the same plan, with a total of 75 news published. The Codex Secretariat also invited Members of the region to continue and further increase the level of participation in Codex communication activities.
85. The Codex Secretariat further presented the outcome of the survey undertaken among Members in the region to measure progress in implementing the plan (Appendix IV), noting that in terms of communication approaches in the region, email was highlighted as the most used tool, while the use of WhatsApp messages and chat was also highlighted.

Conclusion

86. CCLAC23:

- i. noted the satisfaction survey on regional communications (Appendix V); and
- ii. adopted the communications work plan 2024-2025 (Appendix IV).

CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031: STATUS AND NEXT STEPS (Agenda item 8)¹⁴

87. The Codex Secretariat introduced this item, recalling the process agreed by CCEXEC to develop the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031, noting that CCEXEC86 further developed a first draft of strategic goals and outcomes for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031, to allow a subsequent round of engagement and discussion with Members and Observers. In particular, a CL would be issued in September 2024 requesting comments on the draft strategic goals and outcomes.

Discussion

88. Members appreciated the work carried out by CCEXEC so far and noted the mechanism to engage in this process. Members also expressed the need for indicators to monitor the Strategic Plan 2026-2031 that were measurable, verifiable and realistic, and that were established through a participatory process.
89. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the draft outcomes of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 were still under discussion and that it was planned to approve them at CCEXEC87 and CAC47 in November 2024. The Codex Secretariat would propose a monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 following the approval of the goals and outcomes, that would be reviewed by CCEXEC and CAC. In doing so, the recommendation of CCEXEC84 to take into account the development and implementation of the monitoring framework of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 when developing the monitoring framework of the Strategic Plan 2026-2031 would also be considered.

Conclusion

90. CCLAC23:

- i. Noted the process for the formulation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031;
- ii. Encouraged CCLAC Members to actively engage in the further process for finalizing the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031; and
- iii. Noted the importance of including in the Strategic Plan 2026-2031 measurable, verifiable and realistic indicators, defined in a participatory manner, from the initial stages.

¹³ CX/LAC 24/23/7 Add.1; CRD11 (Comments of El Salvador)

¹⁴ CX/LAC 24/23/8 and CRD09 (comments of Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay); CRD11 (Comments of El Salvador)

USE AND IMPACT OF CODEX STANDARDS IN THE REGION (Agenda item 9)¹⁵

91. The Codex Secretariat recalled the process to build a mechanism on the use and impact of Codex texts as approved by CCEXEC and CAC, which foresaw an annual survey, case studies and collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Codex Secretariat noted that this work was funded by extra-budgetary resources by the Republic of Korea, and that such source of funding was not sustainable in time.
92. The Codex Secretariat noted that the Codex Member survey on the use and impact of Codex texts had been developed with the intent to implement it on an annual basis. The Secretariat further explained that the survey included questions related to Codex texts in general, and questions related to specific Codex texts to facilitate a more in-depth analysis and identification of trends over time. The envisaged three-year cycle of standards to be surveyed would allow the use and impact of the same Codex texts to be measured over time.
93. The Codex Secretariat also informed CCLAC that a first case study on the application of the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals* (CXC 51-2003) in Brazil, was carried out in March 2024, while the Codex Secretariat planned to start collaboration with WTO in the fall of 2024 on the use and impact of Codex texts.
94. The Codex Secretariat presented the responses from the region to the 2022 and 2023 surveys, together with the preliminary results of the Case Study.

Discussion

95. Members appreciated the work undertaken by the Codex Secretariat and the exhaustive presentation made. Members further noted the relevance of Codex for the region, the importance of the role of science, and the preliminary lessons learned from the case study, which could be replicated in other countries of the region.
96. Members noted the plan of the Codex Secretariat to engage with WTO to gather information on the use and impact of Codex texts and requested additional information in this regard.
97. The Codex Secretariat explained that it was planning to start a collaboration with the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee on their notification system, together with the other standard-setting organizations, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), the so called “three sisters”. The Codex Secretariat further noted that collaboration among the three sisters was ongoing, with regular exchanges on lessons learned on monitoring the use and impact of their respective standards.
98. Members appreciated the information provided and looked forward to the results of the planned collaboration with WTO.
99. The FAO Representative underscored that Codex standards were of value to guide food safety actions, and that FAO supported their elaboration through scientific advice to ensure standards were based on the latest science and also their application through the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) and through field projects on strengthening national food control systems and enhancing countries’ capacities for Codex work. An example of the use of Codex standards is the FAO/WHO Food Control Systems Assessment Tool.¹⁶
100. The PAHO/WHO Representative reaffirmed the commitment to technical cooperation activities aimed at assisting countries in strengthening their National Food Safety Systems. The Representative also encouraged CCLAC Members to further engage with the organization.

Conclusion

101. CCLAC23:
 - i. noted the results of the survey on the use and impact of Codex text, in particular those relevant to the region and encouraged the Codex Secretariat to continue with this work;
 - ii. invited CCLAC Members to draw lessons from the case study to improve the prevention and control of contaminants in food; and
 - iii. supported the plan to engage with WTO on the use and impact of Codex texts and looked forward to the results of this work.

¹⁵ CX/LAC 24/23/9 and CRD11 (Comments of El Salvador)

¹⁶ <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-helpdesk/champion/article-detail/food-control-system-assessment-tool/en#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20FAO%20and%20WHO,a%20national%20food%20control%20system.>

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda item 10)¹⁷

102. CCLAC23 unanimously agreed to recommend to CAC47 that Uruguay be appointed as the next Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.
103. Uruguay thanked all delegations for their support, expressed their strong commitment to fulfil the duties of the Coordinator, and further thanked Ecuador for its work.
104. Delegates, FAO, PAHO/WHO also expressed their appreciation to Ecuador for their excellent work as Coordinator.
105. The Chairperson thanked the authorities of the Government of Ecuador, all the Member Countries and Observers of CCLAC, IICA and AGROCALIDAD for the support received during the years of coordination of the region.
106. The CCLAC Secretariat thanked the delegates for the support received over the years, stressing its commitment to Codex also in future roles, noting at the same time the willingness to work closely with Uruguay to ensure an orderly handover of the role.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 11)***New work proposals on new food sources and production systems (NFPS)¹⁸***

107. Singapore presented initial information regarding two new work proposals under development related to NFPS that specifically focused on cell-based foods, as contained in CRD07, recalling the decision by CCEXEC86 to submit the proposed code of hygienic practice to CCFH in response to the CL requesting new work proposals, and the proposed guidelines on safety assessment to CCFA.
108. Singapore further noted that:
- The range of NFPS was extensive and it was therefore important for Codex to focus and prioritize specific areas within the NFPS for new work, stressing at the same time that cell-based foods were truly novel, produced with technologies that the world had never seen before in food production;
 - As the statutory purpose of Codex was to protect the health of consumers and to facilitate fair practices in the food trade, it was crucial for Codex to be responsive in addressing current and emerging issues in a timely manner; and
 - The safety of cell-based foods covered a range of aspects such as cell lines, cell culture media, production, and manufacturing practices, and the two proposals by Singapore would focus on the safety assessment of cell culture media components; and hygiene practices for the manufacture of cell-based foods.
109. In response to a request for clarification regarding if there was sufficient information to start new work on cell-based foods and on the value of these products in international food trade, Singapore initially clarified that while cell-based foods were a novel product, some countries, in collaboration with industries, had already approved these products at national level and that experience and data could be shared with Codex Members.
110. Singapore further clarified that it was their understanding that the volume of trade criterion specifically related to commodity standards, and, as the proposed texts were addressing two areas of general guidance, the more pertinent criteria to be considered were those relevant to general subjects such as the criterion on the global magnitude of the problem or issue.

Conclusion

111. CCLAC23 thanked Singapore for the presentation and noted the information provided in CRD07.

Update on the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)¹⁹

112. The STDF Secretariat introduced the document recalling that 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the STDF, which was established in 2004 by FAO, WHO, WOH, the World Bank and WTO. The STDF Secretariat further explained that STDF acted as Global Platform, which also convened and connected diverse public and private sector organizations across agriculture, health, trade and development to exchange experiences, promoting a

¹⁷ CX/LAC 24/23/10; CRD11 (Comments of El Salvador); CRD12 (Comments of Ecuador)

¹⁸ CRD07 (Submitted by Singapore)

¹⁹ CRD04 (Update on the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) - prepared by the STDF Secretariat); CRD14 (PPT - STDF)

more coherent approach to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) capacity development.

113. The STDF Secretariat also informed CCLAC23 that STDF provided funding for the development and implementation of projects that strengthen capacity to implement international standards like Codex standards, and facilitate safe trade. The STDF Secretariat concluded its intervention by inviting interested Members from the region to apply for STDF funding, and that further information, including application forms, was available on the STDF website²⁰.

Conclusion

114. CCLAC23 thanked the STDF Secretariat for the presentation and noted the information provided in CRD04.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 12)

115. CCLAC23 was informed that its 24th Session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by CAC47 and further consultation with the Codex Secretariat.

²⁰ <https://standardsfacility.org/>