

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - Fax: (+39) 06 5705 4593 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

REP15/NEA

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Thirty eighth Session
Geneva, Switzerland, 6 - 11 July 2015**

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF
THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST
FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
1 – 5 June 2015**

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The 8th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Committee:

- agreed on the need for revitalisation of regional coordinating committees and made comments on several proposals for their revitalisation (paras 28, 29, 31, and 32);
- agreed to recommend that Iran be appointed as Coordinator for the Near East for a first term (para 78).

Other matters for information

The Committee:

- noted matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other subsidiary bodies (paras 5 - 14);
- noted FAO and WHO capacity building activities on food quality and safety within the Region including capacity development needs and the successor initiative for the Codex Trust Fund and made a number of comments and recommendations (paras 17 and 22);
- acknowledged the information submitted by members of the Region on food control systems, consumer participation in food standards setting and use of Codex standards at national level and recognised the challenge of balancing the involvement of consumers and industry in the work of Codex while addressing the question of how best to make the food safety systems work and agreed to continue examining this question in future (para 35);
- returned the proposed draft Regional Standard for Dough for further development, comments and consideration at its next session (paras 40 - 41);
- retained the proposed draft Regional Standard for Labneh awaiting the advice of the Commission on the possible amendment of the Standard for Fermented Milks (paras 48 - 49);
- returned the proposed draft Regional Standard for Zaatar for further development, comments and consideration at its next session (paras 72 - 73);
- discontinued consideration of a standard for camel milk and that Member countries of the Region interested in this matter could present a paper for consideration by the Committee in future (para 76);
- agreed with the Strategic Plan for CCNEA 2016-2019 (para 77);
- noted the information provided by Sudan on Gum Arabic vis-à-vis the discussion on this matter in the Committee on Food Additives and encouraged Member countries of the region to submit the necessary data to the FAO/WHO Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives to carry out the safety risk assessment when such data will be requested (paras 81 – 84);
- agreed to consider food quality and safety issues around ready-to-eat pre-packaged salads at its next session (para 88); and
- noted the interest of Lebanon to stand for the candidature of the member to be elected on a geographical basis for the Near East (paras 89 - 90).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CAC | Codex Alimentarius Commission |
| CCCF | Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods |
| CCEURO | FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe |
| CCEXEC | Executive Committee |
| CCFA | Codex Committee on Food Additives |
| CCFH | Codex Committee on Food Hygiene |
| CCFICS | Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems |
| CCFL | Codex Committee on Food Labelling |
| CCMAS | Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis |
| CCNEA | FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East |
| CCPFV | Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues |
| CCNFSDU | Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses |
| CCSCH | Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs |
| CL | Circular Letter |
| CRD | Conference Room Document |
| CTF | Codex Trust Fund |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| eWG | Electronic Working Group |
| GSFA | General Standard for Food Additives |
| HACCP | Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point |
| IDF | International Dairy Federation |
| IFPRI/Harvest Plus | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| IHR | International Health Regulations |
| INFOSAN | International Network of Food Safety Authorities |
| INS | International Numbering System |
| JECFA | Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives |
| MC | Microbiological Criteria |
| ML | Maximum Level |
| OIC | Organisation of Islamic Cooperation |
| RCC(s) | Regional Coordinating Committee(s) |
| SMIIC | The Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNEA) held its eighth Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 1 to 5 June 2015 in cooperation with the Government of Lebanon. The Session was chaired by Mrs Léna Dargham, Director General, Lebanese Standards Institution. The Session was attended by ten Member countries, three Observer countries, one Observer Member organisation (European Union), three observer organisations and one special Observer country (Palestine). The list of participants is given in Appendix I.

OPENING

2. Mrs Léna Dargham, Chairperson of CCNEA, welcomed the delegates and the special Observer of Palestine. Mrs Dargham explained that this Session had been scheduled to be held in Lebanon, and in addition to taking special security measures, the Government of Lebanon had completed all the procedures to host the Session and ensure a successful meeting. She further explained that the decision to move the session to Rome was out of the control of the Government of Lebanon, but a decision of the Codex Secretariat. She summarised the challenges in terms of food safety and security in the region and emphasised the importance of regional collaboration within the framework of the clear strategy which makes countries of the region an essential participant in all Codex activities in order to ensure food safety and fair trade practices. She expressed her appreciation for the support shown to Lebanon, in its role of Coordinator, over the last four years.
3. Mr Tom Heilandt, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, expressed his regret for the change of venue which had been beyond the control of the Codex and Lebanese Secretariats. He expressed the hope that the possibility of more colleagues from the Codex Secretariat and FAO attending the meeting would be of benefit to CCNEA delegations.
4. Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, thanked Lebanon for the excellent work done during their mandate as CCNEA Regional Coordinator. She informed the Committee that she had made it a top priority to attend all the sessions of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees during the 2014-2015 cycle. She also stated that developing countries looked forward to the materialisation of the Successor Initiative to the Codex Trust Fund.
5. Dr Soren Madsen, Technical Officer, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, Centre for Environmental, welcomed delegates, including the special Observer of Palestine on behalf of WHO. Dr Madsen expressed his appreciation that the meeting was taking place in spite of the challenges and difficulties faced in the Region. He recognised the importance of Codex for consumers and the food sector in the Region with food safety *being* an issue in WHO member states. He reminded delegates that WHO had dedicated the 2015 World Health Day to food safety and that celebrations both at regional and national level would be continuing throughout the year. He looked forward to a productive and dynamic meeting and wished to see regional coordinating committees as strong bodies to be relied on whenever food safety activities needed to be strengthened.
6. Dr Renata Clarke, Head, Food Safety and Quality Unit, welcomed delegates and the special Observer of Palestine, on behalf of FAO. Dr Clarke underscored the importance of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees in facilitating strong inputs into the work of Codex. She drew the attention of the Committee to the Item on the Revitalisation of the regional coordinating committees and the side event which would provide an update of the FAO/WHO capacity development tools.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

7. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session and agreed to consider the following matters in addition to those scheduled for discussion subject to availability of time:

Agenda Item 11 - Other business and future work

- Establishment of regional standards on:
 - Quick Frozen Green Jew Mallow
 - Molasses from Sugar Cane ("*sugar cane honey*" / "*black honey*")
 - Non-alcoholic Malt Drinks
 - Ready-to-Eat Pre-packaged Salads
- Member of CCEXEC for the Near East Region
- Re-evaluation of the Codex Specification for Gum Arabic (INS 414)
- Update on bio-fortification

¹ [CX/NEA 15/8/1](#)

8. The Committee also agreed to establish an in-session working group chaired by Lebanon to revise the draft Strategic Plan for CCNEA 2016-2019.

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 2)²

9. The Committee noted matters referred arising from CAC36 and CAC37 as follows:
- Adoption of the [Regional Code of Practice for Street-Vended Foods](#) (CAC/RCP 71R-2013).
 - Approval of new work on regional standards for labneh and mixed zaatar.
 - Adoption of the [Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#).
 - Appointment of Lebanon as Coordinator for the Near East for a second term.
 - Endorsement of the monitoring framework for the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan (2014 – 2019).
10. The Committee took note of the progress made on the proposals for international standards as follows:

Proposal for standards for chilled and frozen meat

11. Following the recommendation of CAC36 to: clearly identify the scope of the work, identify gaps within the relevant Codex texts, in particular those related to hygiene applicable to foods and/or meat products; and seek the advice of CCFH to address this proposal in an appropriate manner; the Delegation of Egypt had prepared a revised project document for consideration by CCEXEC70.

Proposal for a standard for Halal food

12. The Delegation of Egypt, summarised the discussion and recommendation in CAC, CCEXEC and Codex committees in particular CCFL and CCFICS (CX/NEA 15/8/2) and noted that, together with all interested Member countries, they will continue to work by electronic means to revise the project document for consideration by CCFL43. The revised project document will address gaps in relation to the labelling of halal food so that CCFL43 can make a decision on the possible revision of the [Guidelines for the Use of the Term Halal](#) (CAC/GL 24-1997). The Delegation stressed the need for comprehensive work on halal food within Codex in order to address all relevant aspects related to the production of halal food.
13. Several delegations highlighted the following: the importance of halal food for Muslim countries; the global nature of halal food; work on halal food should be limited to labelling for the time being; any work in Codex on halal food should take into account the standards and related texts developed at the level of Islamic countries in particular the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation / Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries as reference documents; and work on halal food should have full participation of all interested Member countries.
14. Based on the above discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend that work on halal food should be limited to the revision of the *Guidelines for the Use of the Term Halal* in CCFL for the time being with full participation from Member countries taking into account the standards and related texts developed at the level of Islamic countries e.g. OIC/SMIIC as reference documents.

FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3)³

FAO/WHO activities relevant to the Region, identification of priorities and capacity development needs

15. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that no paper had been prepared for this agenda item. She emphasised that food safety was a priority issue for the Near East and North Africa Region. She explained that four areas of work had been identified as priorities for the region. Being a net food importer, the region relied heavily on food imports and therefore FAO had focused on working with inspection services in member countries for developing their capacities and for moving from end point inspection to systems based on risk analysis. The second priority area was the assistance provided to national Codex committees and for harmonising national food standards with those of Codex. The third area of work was focused on capacity building of officials in risk analysis and in applying HACCP. As regards the fourth area of work, FAO was assisting countries in mainstreaming food safety in food and nutrition security policies at the national level.
16. The Representative of WHO informed the Committee of the following points:

² [CX/NEA 15/8/2](#); [CX/NEA 15/8/2-Add.1](#); [CRD1](#) (Comments of Tunisia); [CRDs 8 and 9](#) (Comments of Egypt)

³ [CX/NEA 15/8/3](#) (Not issued); [CX/NEA 15/8/3-Add.1](#)

- Antimicrobial resistance from food animals due to use and abuse of antimicrobials is an area that is receiving increased attention from WHO as current usage patterns could lead to some human medicine losing its effect. A workshop on this subject is planned for Iran.
 - International Health Regulations are covering food safety events when they are classified as a public health event of international concern. Presently, only 5 of 22 Member countries have reported 100% implementation of IHR in the area of food safety. WHO is assisting Member countries in establishing these capacities.
 - INFOSAN, a network of food safety authorities had been set up and was being operated with FAO. Member countries could benefit from information sharing and support in situations where food safety events or outbreaks of food borne disease occur. Some Member countries have not yet appointed focal points for this network and are encouraged to do so and thus benefit from the support available.
 - Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group will report the global burden of disease from major sources of foodborne disease later this year. This data would help governments identify and prioritise their food safety efforts on an informed basis.
 - A mycotoxin in sorghum project in Sudan and 3 other African countries jointly implemented by the CTF, FAO and WHO was about to come to a close and a final workshop would be held later this month. The project outcome could lead to the establishment of Codex maximum levels for mycotoxins in sorghum and would therefore be relevant for all sorghum-consuming countries.
 - The Regional Office offered individual support for capacity building in Member countries upon request. Examples are preparations for accreditation of the public health laboratory in Qatar, food sampling techniques in Lebanon, risk assessment in Iran and support for food borne disease outbreak management in Sudan.
 - World Health Day 2015 activities would continue for the rest of the year and the Regional Office was preparing a series of missions to Member countries in order to develop food safety profiles and identify gaps in food safety systems of the region.
17. The delegates expressed their appreciation for the support of FAO and WHO on the various capacity development activities related to Codex and food quality and safety. They recommended that the outcomes of these activities be published on the FAO and WHO websites to be available to Member countries of the region.

Successor initiative to the Codex Trust Fund

18. The Administrator of the FAO/WHO CTF called attention to the fact that, given that CCNEA was taking place quite late in the cycle of FAO/WHO regional coordinating committees, [CX/NEA 15/8/3-Add.1](#) had been superseded by [CX/CAC 15/38/18-Add.5](#) which contained the FAO/WHO project proposal for the successor initiative to the CTF that was being tabled for CAC38. The Administrator gave some highlights from the project proposal to give an update to member countries of the region.
19. In addition to the information-gathering from Member countries, the design and development of the successor initiative (CTF2) had taken into consideration the findings and conclusions of the final project evaluation of the current CTF. Both these findings and the analysis of FAO/WHO had allowed the parent organisations to conclude that: 1) CTF1 had been successful in acting as a catalyst to participation of beneficiary countries in Codex and raising awareness of the importance of Codex to countries; 2) there were still barriers to effective engagement in Codex that would need to be addressed to further strengthen the capacity of countries to participate fully and effectively in the Codex process. Based on this analysis the focus on the successor initiative would be on assisting countries to address these barriers, most of which were found at national level in national Codex structures and in political and economic support for Codex. This would be the focus of the successor initiative over the 12 year lifespan of CTF2.
20. In order to address barriers to effective engagement CTF2 will:
- Provide support to countries or groups of countries to address specific barriers to effective engagement in Codex. Countries/groups of countries will carry out a self-assessment of their capacity for engagement in Codex to diagnose strengths and weaknesses. Using the results of this assessment, countries/groups of countries can apply for support from the CTF for multi-year projects. Funding will be provided for key activities to address priority barriers in the country or group of countries.
 - Support will also be provided for tailored FAO/WHO capacity building that will be targeted, for example, at a group of countries which face the same barriers to effective engagement in Codex to help them build their capacity independent of whether they are being supported through a country or group application.

21. Next steps include agreement by Member countries on the project proposal at CAC38, development of implementation mechanisms and instruments between September and December 2015, kick-off of CTF2 on 1 January 2016 with a first round of applications opening early in 2016.
22. The delegates expressed their appreciation and support for the CTF and indicated that they would examine the document and provide comments to CAC38. They indicated that the CTF had allowed countries of the region to participate further and more effectively in Codex meetings and raised awareness of the importance of countries' participation in these meetings. They also indicated that the criteria for eligibility should facilitate participation of developing countries in Codex meetings and that the particular situation of political unrest in the Near East region should also be taken into account to continue to support participation of countries of the region in Codex meetings and related activities.

REVITALISATION OF FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEES: PROPOSALS ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND PLATFORM OF RCCS (AGENDA ITEM 4)⁴

23. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item and pointed out that the document had been prepared as a joint effort between FAO and WHO to explore avenues to strengthen the role of RCCs. The Secretariat noted that the Terms of Reference of RCCs supported and enriched both the normative work of CAC and the work of FAO and WHO in food quality and safety fields (including capacity development activities). The Secretariat summarised the challenges identified in the paper concerning: better mechanisms for collection and presentation of data from the region; the need for consistency and complementarity between regional strategic plans and the Codex Strategic Plan; regional positions regarding the role of the RCCs in assisting the coordinator in defining the issues of interest to the region. The Secretariat also drew the attention of the Committee to the summary outcomes of the discussions from the different RCCs as contained in [CX/CAC 15/38/10](#).
24. The Representative of FAO, speaking on behalf of FAO and WHO, recognised the valuable work and role of RCCs and noted the importance of this discussion on revitalisation, as a means to deepen the work at regional level and to help RCCs to focus on contributing to improving food safety governance. Within this context, discussions at RCCs should serve as the basis for better identification of needs including current and emerging issues as well as informing the FAO/WHO capacity building activities within the region. The Representative added that the focus of this Session should be to agree on a vision for improved functioning of the Committee, while implementation of the vision would take more time.

25. The Committee focused its discussion on proposals 3.1 to 3.4 as follows:

Proposal 3.1 – Alignment of RCCs agendas - inclusion of standing items

26. The Committee agreed to the proposal to align the agenda of all RCCs with a view to have key standing items on: Food safety and quality situations in countries in the region; key note address; monitoring the Codex Strategic Plan; and food standards in the region.

Proposal 3.2 – Platform for information sharing on food control systems and roles and responsibilities in food safety

27. The Representative of FAO noted the proposal aimed at establishing a better mechanism for data collection and analysis of food safety and food control issues, currently collated through the use of a circular letter. The Committee was requested to provide feedback on what types of information they saw a value in sharing and was prepared to invest time and effort in providing. It was proposed that the platform could be useful for sharing information within and outside the region; and would also assist FAO/WHO on the current status of activities in the region. The Representative noted the current challenges related to the use of CLs where data analysis was on an *ad hoc* basis and often disjointed, and proposed to have an online system as a mechanism to collect and share information.
28. The Committee supported the proposal to replace the current CL with an online system to collect the data, but noted that such a system should take into account the organisational structure in and needs of Member countries especially the challenges related to: collection and in putting data and information into the system at national and regional level and coordination of multiple stakeholders to ensure validity and quality of data. It was further agreed that there would be a need to identify the type of data to be collected. The Committee also called upon FAO/WHO to assist in this regard.

⁴ [CX/NEA 15/8/4](#)

Proposal 3.3 – Identification of needs and priorities in regions (persistent and emerging food safety/quality issues)

29. The Committee agreed with the proposal for establishing better mechanisms for identification of needs for the region for improved participation in the CAC work and that such mechanisms should be adapted to the region and would require the cooperation of all members. The Committee further noted that the mechanisms/avenues for identification of needs would include: national/regional capacity building workshops; and FAO/WHO national/regional projects.
30. The FAO Representative emphasised that there were potential linkages between the different proposals for the Committee and various FAO and WHO activities – one could be informed or be supported by the other, e.g. future discussions at CCNEA could inform FAO/WHO capacity building programmes, including the CTF successor initiative; and FAO/WHO workshops and projects at national and regional level could contribute to better identification of needs and issues, which could be further discussed at the Committee.

Proposal 3.4 – Regional Strategic Plan

31. The Committee noted that the CCNEA Strategic Plan (2016 – 2019) was intended to bring together the efforts of Member countries of the region to improve the coordination between these countries and to enhance their participation in Codex activities. The Committee noted that this was within the framework of the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan and therefore effectively addressed the principle of complementarity between the regional strategic plan and the Codex Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

32. The Committee endorsed the proposals set out under 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 as presented above and agreed to continue developing a regional strategic plan that would complement the Codex Strategic Plan.

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (REPLIES TO CL 2015/4-NEA) (Agenda Item 5)⁵

33. The Chairperson informed the Committee that, with regard to questions contained in [CL 2015/04-NEA](#), four countries had provided their responses and other countries were welcome to provide summaries on this subject, especially on the following two main issues: (i) Challenges facing national food control systems and national needs; and (ii) The use of Codex standards at the national level and the challenges faced in this regard especially those related to the use of Codex general standards and related texts in the elaboration of national standards that should be based on scientific evidence.
34. In addition to the replies provided in writing, the Committee noted the following interventions:
- The Delegation of Egypt informed the Committee that they were in the process of drawing up a strategic plan for risk analysis in food with a scientific basis. Also they hoped that FAO and WHO could support them to establish this work.
 - The Delegation of Libya introduced their national food control system and noted that the system was based on their national standards which were harmonised with international standards and covered all locally produced and imported products. If no national standards were available, regional or international standards could be consulted.
 - The Delegation of Lebanon highlighted the challenge of risk communication with respect to the management of scientific information in situations where the media mainly focused on the negative aspects of a particular situation. The Delegation also outlined the difficulties they face when adopting some Codex standards, in particular the [General Standard for Food Additives](#) (CODEX/STAN 192-1995) where certain additives were not permitted or mentioned in the GSFA, but allowed in other international and regional references.

⁵ [CL 2015/04-NEA](#); [CX/NEA15/8/5](#) (Comments of Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia); [CRD 2](#) (Comments of Lebanon)

- The Delegation of Sudan referred to the challenges they face in the field of food safety risk assessment and reported on several points as follows. (i) Some of their food laboratories had been accredited. (ii) The Sudanese Law for accreditation had been promulgated in preparation for the establishment of the Sudanese accreditation board. (iii) A decision had been taken to ensure conformity prior to import to guarantee the quality of imported foods. (iv) Memoranda of understanding were signed with countries including China, Turkey and Egypt for inspection according to standards. (v) The national committee for consumer affairs had been established and included members for all supervisory bodies to guarantee food quality and raise public awareness. (vi) The number of internationally accredited companies has increased in Sudan (vii) Laws were promulgated regarding bio-safety, fertilizers, food supplements and food re-packaging.
 - The Delegation of Tunisia reported that from 2012 to 2015, they had continued to implement a strategic legal and institutional reform in order to establish a national food control system based on risk assessment (the creation of a single body for food safety). The system also provided for the set up of an early warning system, as well as evaluation of product quality by using international standards. The Delegation highlighted a project on issuing an online service that was expected to improve the efficiency of food safety control. They mentioned that a project of accreditation of the food safety control division in the Ministry of Health was underway.
 - The special Observer of Palestine pointed out the challenges in their territory including the weak food control system coupled with many informal border entries. Currently, they were focusing on the standards and testing for microorganisms and food additives. The Delegation also referred to a project led by FAO with the support of the Dutch Government to establish a national strategy for food safety before the end of 2015.
35. The Chairperson concluded that common problems were faced in the region with regard to food safety systems. The problems related specifically to national legal frameworks governing food control systems, the existence of different authorities involved in this control with the absence of a good coordination, and the difficulties in performing food safety risk assessment and applying traceability systems. In addition, war and refugee problems faced by the region were well recognised with relation to the above issues.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOUGH (Agenda Item 6)⁶

36. The Chairperson recalled that CCNEA07 had not been able to consider the standard in detail in the absence of Iran, the country who had led the development of a regional standard for doogh in CCNEA and possessed the expertise on this product. The standard had subsequently been revised in an eWG led by Lebanon and presented for consideration by CCNEA08. The Chairperson further noted that one of the questions raised at CCNEA07 was about the difference between “ayran” and “doogh” as there seemed to be similarities between the products. In this regard, the Chairperson reminded the Committee of the decision taken in CCEURO29 to discontinue work on a regional standard for ayran and requested the views of delegates as to whether this decision could impact on the work on doogh in CCNEA.
37. The Delegation of Iran indicated that “ayran” and “doogh” were two different products, especially the percentages of milk protein and milk solids-no-fat which were much lower in doogh compared to ayran. In addition, they had different properties in relation to the physical, chemical, microbiological and organoleptic characteristics as well as the volume of annual production and potential for export. The Delegation further noted that “doogh” was a traditional and very ancient drink based on fermented milk that did not fit into the definition of fermented milk / drinks based on fermented milk in the [Standard for Fermented Milks](#) (CODEX STAN 243-2003) as the fermented milk content required for drinks based on fermented milk, and the milk protein content defined for fermented milk in this Standard, were much higher when compared to doogh (amongst other differences). In view of this, the Delegation reasserted the need for a separate standard for doogh that could be developed as a regional standard in CCNEA. The Delegation recalled that this decision was consistent with the advice of CCMMP08 when it revised the *Standard for Fermented Milks*.

⁶ [CX/NEA 15/8/6](#); CX/NEA 15/8/6-Add.1 (Not issued); [CRD3](#) (Comments of Iran)

38. The Codex Secretariat noted that the Codex Alimentarius Commission encouraged the development of horizontal standards when addressing similar products as opposed to vertical, detailed commodity standards (when feasible and suitable) to facilitate their application by Codex members. The *Standard for Fermented Milks* is an example of this approach. In addition, worldwide standards are preferable to regional standards based on trade of the product. The Secretariat further noted that the recommendation of CCMMP08 to develop regional standards for “ayran” and “doogh” was made because the proposal for inclusion of these products in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* was tabled when the Committee was finalising the revision of the Standard before adjourning *sine die*. The Secretariat also noted that if CCNEA considered it appropriate to proceed with a regional standard for doogh, the standard should be drafted in such a way as to address essential composition and quality factors, in addition to a clear product definition, and food additive and labelling requirements that would facilitate the incorporation of doogh into the *Standard for Fermented Milks* in future.
39. The Observer of IDF noted that CRD3 indicated that doogh is currently being exported to countries outside the CCNEA region and therefore it would be beneficial to align the proposed standard with the *Standard for Fermented Milks* as per those general provisions applicable to fermented milks including doogh. The Observer recalled that the *Standard for Fermented Milks* was the result of a compromise among Codex members on a number of provisions such as the minimum fermented milk content for drinks based on fermented milks, and the subsequent milk protein content for fermented milks, which might have to be further lowered to allow the inclusion of doogh in the Standard. Clarification was also needed on some provisions in the current proposal that might require relocation under other sections of the standard or further discussion as per their technological need and levels proposed. The Observer expressed the willingness of IDF to assist the Committee with the elaboration of a standard for doogh if CCNEA considered appropriate the elaboration of a regional standard for this product.

Conclusion

40. The Committee noted general support for the development of a regional standard for doogh and therefore agreed to retain doogh as a regional standard and to establish an eWG led by Iran working in Arabic and English to prepare a revised proposed draft standard for consideration at its next session with a view to its completion and final adoption by CAC40 in 2017.

STATUS OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR DOOGH

41. The Committee agreed to return the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for revision, circulation for comments and consideration by the next session of CCNEA.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR LABNEH (Agenda Item 7)⁷

42. The Delegation of Lebanon, as lead country on the development of the regional Standard for Labneh, introduced the item and reminded the Committee that CCNEA07 had agreed to recommend new work on a regional standard for this product and that CAC36 had approved the new work. The Delegation highlighted the importance of this product for Lebanon and countries of the region as shown in the data on trade volume provided in the project document submitted in support of the proposal for new work at CAC36.
43. The Delegation acknowledged that labneh was included as an example of concentrated fermented milk in the *Standard for Fermented Milks*. However, they stated that the general provisions of this Standard did not sufficiently cover the specific attributes of labneh and thus the development of a regional standard would better accommodate the particular characteristics of labneh and would facilitate and increase trade in this product.
44. The Codex Secretariat indicated that it would not be appropriate to develop a regional standard for labneh while the issue of having labneh covered by a worldwide standard for fermented milks remained. In light of this situation, the following options were available for consideration by the Committee: 1) to remove labneh from the *Standard for Fermented Milks* and to continue the development of a regional standard for labneh or 2) to amend the *Standard for Fermented Milks* to better accommodate labneh in this standard. In both cases, a document containing the technical justification for such a proposal should be prepared and submitted to CCEXEC for consideration under the Critical Review. Meanwhile work on labneh in CCNEA should not proceed in the Step Procedure to avoid potential technical barriers to trade by having two standards covering the same product.

⁷ [CX/NEA 15/8/7](#); CX/NEA 15/8/7-Add.1 (Not issued)

45. The Codex Secretariat also noted that if there was consensus within the Committee to keep labneh as a regional standard, the current proposal should be re-drafted to align the layout with the Codex format for commodity standards in particular the *Standard for Fermented Milks*. The new draft should focus specifically on those sections dealing with the scope, product description, essential composition and quality factors, food additives and labelling, as these are the aspects that commodity standards are mainly focused on. Provisions in these sections should be drafted in such a way that would facilitate the insertion of labneh in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* at a later stage. This would be in line with the recommendation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to move towards the establishment of international horizontal standards (grouping similar products when possible and appropriate) to facilitate their implementation by Member countries.
46. The Observer of IDF cautioned the Committee against a hasty removal of the reference to labneh from the *Standard for Fermented Milks* as labneh was mentioned as one example of a concentrated fermented milk. Furthermore, cross-referencing the existing international standard and specifically section 2.2 should, if appropriate, be included in the proposed regional standard, which could aid the adoption of the regional standard in due course. The Observer explained that cross-referencing might subsequently also facilitate specific requirements for labneh being included in the existing international standard, as was the case for the specific fermented milk types of “kefir” and “kumys”. This course of action did not exclude the possibility of deleting the reference to labneh in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* at a later stage if that became desirable or necessary.
47. The Observer further noted that international Codex standards were intended to protect consumer health and to ensure fair trade practices. He added that Codex regional standards were developed for food products moving exclusively or almost exclusively in intra-regional trade. When looking at a regional standard for labneh, it would be wise to take into account the international trade in products called labneh outside the CCNEA region as well as within to ensure that there were no barriers to such wider trade. The Observer also suggested that the content of the proposed regional standard should confine itself to those requirements and characteristics that were essential to labneh, and avoid content that was not strictly needed or necessary, because the more detail that is included in a standard the more difficult it would be to achieve the necessary agreement to ensure progress. In this case it would be wise to identify the specific shortcomings in the existing *Standard for Fermented Milks* with regard to labneh, as doing so could facilitate those requirements being included in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* standard at a later time. The Observer reasserted the readiness of IDF to assist experts within the CCNEA region in further developing the proposed regional standard for labneh.

Conclusion

48. The Committee agreed with the proposal to retain labneh as a regional standard. It was agreed that Lebanon, with the assistance of interested Member countries, would prepare a document to provide the technical justification for the removal of the reference to labneh in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* for consideration by CCEXEC. It was further agreed that Lebanon, with the assistance of interested Member countries, would continue to work on the technical provisions specific to labneh while awaiting the decision of CAC on this matter.

STATUS OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR LABNEH

49. The Committee agreed to retain the Standard at Step 4 and to reconsider the Standard at its next session in light of the advice of the Commission.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR ZAATAR (Agenda Item 8)⁸

50. The Delegation of Lebanon, as lead country on the development of the regional Standard for Zaatar introduced the item. They requested general comments on the different sections of the standard that could be taken up by an eWG in the further elaboration of the standard with a view to its finalisation by the next session of CCNEA.
51. The Committee agreed to hold a general discussion on each section of the standard and noted that the standard should be revised in light of these comments:

Title and scope

52. The title of the standard should be amended to reflect the fact that the product was a mixture of different ingredients having zaatar as the main ingredient by referring to e.g. “blended zaatar” or “mixed zaatar” or “table zaatar”.

⁸ [CX/NEA 15/8/8](#); CX/NEA 15/8/8-Add.1 (Not issued)

Description

53. The description “raw zaatar” should include additional varieties of zaatar existing in the region, and the description of “mixed zaatar” should highlight the essential ingredients as well as the optional ingredients that could be added in some types of mixed zaatar.
54. The product should derive its colour from the raw zaatar (i.e. green) and summak (i.e. red) and so no colours should be added.
55. Olive oil or other types of vegetable oils and citric acid may be added as part of the optional ingredients.

Classification

56. Classification should be based on quality requirements rather than on the composition of the product. The levels of some ingredients (i.e. composition) expressed as percentages may not represent the true nature of the product as sold in the market in different countries of the region.

Essential composition and quality factors

57. **General requirements:** Clarification is needed on the use of the words “powder” as opposed to “chopped in fine particles” as well as on the use of terms such “flavours and odours” as opposed to “taint”.
58. **Chemical requirements:** Since zaatar is a mixture of products, setting chemical requirements would be difficult as it necessitated determination of the composition of each ingredient and might be a challenge for laboratory testing.
59. The volatile oil content and protein content are associated with the percentage of zaatar and sesame in the product therefore the percentage of these ingredients should be set to avoid fraudulent practices.
60. There is a need to carefully consider the relevancy of pH and acidity and the high levels of ash with respect to the quality of the product.
61. The sentence related to the ingredients being compliant with the relevant Codex standard should be relocated at the beginning of the section.

Food Additives

62. The use and amount of citric acid used should be clarified and CCFA may be consulted in this regard.
63. The Codex Secretariat noted that citric acid was listed under Table 3 in the GSFA; and that additives under this category were considered generally safe for use in foods at GMP level. The Secretariat further explained that it was the responsibility of CCNEA to provide a technological justification for the use of the additive in the product, including the levels which should be expressed in mg/kg.

Contaminants

64. There might be a need to indicate maximum levels for contaminants in zaatar and/or some of the ingredients if no MLs were available in the [General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed](#) (CODEX STAN 193-1995) to ensure the safety of the product.
65. The Codex Secretariat indicated that if there was a need to establish MLs for zaatar or certain ingredients in the mixture, this was within the remit of CCCF and according to the Codex Procedure for the establishment of Codex MLs for contaminants, a safety assessment should be first carried out by JECFA before CCCF could consider the establishment of such MLs. This would imply that interested countries would have to provide relevant data in order for JECFA to carry out the risk assessment.

Hygiene

66. Divergent views on the establishment of specific microbiological criteria were noted, those views in favour of establishing MC noted that processing conditions could expose the product to microbial contamination and thus there was a need for such criteria, while those views against the establishment of MC recognised the need for such criteria but they should be set at national level rather than in a regional standard taking into account the particular characteristics of the product and the processing condition in the country concerned.

67. The Codex Secretariat explained that before establishing microbiological criteria, the Committee should take into account the current work of the CCFH which entailed the possible development of microbiological criteria for low moisture foods, including spices and dried aromatic herbs and advice from FAO/WHO. However, should the Committee wish to proceed with establishing MC in the Standard, the criteria should be in accordance with the [Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods](#) (CAC/GL 21-1997). Special note should also be taken with regards to the components of and considerations for MC, and in order to allow endorsement by CCFH, justification for the MCs established would have to be provided.

Packing, storage and transportation

68. This section should be deleted in light of the provisions on food hygiene under Section 7.

Labelling

69. The term “food additive” should be replaced with “citric acid”. In addition, consideration should be given as to whether it was necessary to include “expiry date” in addition to the date of packing.

Methods of Analysis

70. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that the methods would have to be sent to CCMAS for endorsement at an appropriate time and that CCNEA could raise any question of concern with respect to analytical methods and general sampling with this Committee.

General comments

71. The Codex Secretariat noted the need for the alignment of the layout of the standard with the Codex format for commodity standards in particular those that were used in CCPFV and CCSCCH so as to ensure consistency. In particular the section on essential composition and quality factors should be brought into line with the format used in the aforesaid standards. The Secretariat further noted that the revision should exclude hygiene and contaminants as the standard provisions (as presented in the current proposal) are those generally applied across commodity standards unless there was a need to address a particular issue that would then be subject to endorsement by CCCF and/or CCFH.

Conclusion

72. The Committee agreed to establish an eWG led by Lebanon, working in Arabic and English, to prepare a revised proposed draft standard for consideration at its next session with a view to its completion and final adoption by CAC40 in 2017.

STATUS OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR ZAATAR

73. The Committee agreed to return the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for revision, circulation for comments and consideration by the next session of CCNEA.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON A STANDARD FOR CAMEL MILK (Agenda Item 9)⁹

74. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that this issue has been discussed at several sessions of CCNEA including CCNEA07. The Committee had decided to defer discussion on this matter to a later stage when more scientific information would become available as to the properties of the product and a complete review of the available Codex texts including relevant FAO and WHO documents had been carried out. This work would guide the Committee in determining whether work in CCNEA was needed, what aspects of the product should be addressed and the type of document that should be developed for this purpose.

75. The Chairperson further recalled that the United Arab Emirates was to have carried out this task and present the results to the present session of CCNEA, however, no document had been submitted and there was no delegation of UAE present at the current session.

Conclusion

76. The Committee agreed to discontinue consideration of this matter and that should Member countries of the region be interested in this issue in the future they could present a discussion paper for consideration by CCNEA.

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCNEA 2016-2019 (Agenda Item 10)¹⁰

77. The Committee agreed with the Strategic Plan for CCNEA 2016-2019 as revised by the in-session Working Group led by Lebanon (Appendix II).

⁹ CX/NEA 15/8/9 (Not issued)

¹⁰ [CX/NEA 15/8/10](#)

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 11)¹¹

78. The Committee agreed to recommend to CAC38 that the Islamic Republic of Iran be appointed for a first term as Coordinator for the Near East. The Delegation of Iran accepted the nomination and expressed its commitment to the region to continue the work successfully carried out by Lebanon.
79. The Committee expressed its thanks to Lebanon for the excellent work carried out as Coordinator of CCNEA during the 4 years of its term.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 12)¹²**Regional standards for Quick Frozen Green Jew Mallow; Molasses from Sugar Cane and Non-Alcoholic Malt Drinks**

80. The Committee noted that Egypt would re-submit revised proposals for consideration at CCNEA09.

Gum Arabic

81. The Delegation of Sudan informed the Committee of their request to CCFA47 to re-evaluate the Codex Specification for Gum Arabic (INS 414) by describing each types separately given that the scientific information available demonstrate that both types have different characteristics from each other and from the other types of gum. The Delegation further indicated that Sudan had conducted extensive research on the product; and that it is safe for use in food including food for infants and young children. They requested support from CCNEA Member countries on this request when the matter would be considered in CCFA.
82. The JECFA Secretariat noted that the request from Sudan was discussed at CCFA47; which had agreed to include Gum Arabic in the CCFA Priority List for JECFA safety assessment and establishment of specifications. This evaluation would be scheduled by the JECFA Secretariat taking into consideration the requests to JECFA from other Codex committees. A public call for data would be issued when the evaluation is scheduled for consideration by JECFA.
83. The Codex Secretariat mentioned that Member countries of the region, who would like to support the request of Sudan, should submit relevant data to JECFA when the call for data is issued, so that JECFA can carry out the risk assessment and establishment of the specification and so that CCFA can make a decision in this regard.
84. The Committee took note of the information provided and encouraged members to submit the necessary data to JECFA when requested.

Ready-to-eat pre-packaged salads

85. The special Observer of Palestine noted that a variety of fresh and chilled salads were widely traded and consumed in Palestine and in the Near East region, however existing Codex standards did not cover these products. The Observer proposed that CCNEA should consider elaborating single or general standards for these types of products.
86. The Committee noted that these products were widely consumed within the region and elsewhere and that commodity standards could be useful to ensure their quality and safety. The Committee noted that before it could proceed with the matter, a number of issues needed clarification such as the identification of the concerns around these products, whether such concerns could be addressed through existing standards and/or related texts, and, if not, what kind of standard and/or related text could be developed.
87. The Codex Secretariat clarified that Palestine could prepare a discussion paper for the next CCNEA that: clearly defines the nature of the problem (i.e. quality and/or safety issues involved); the gaps within applicable Codex standards and related texts - especially those related to food hygiene; production and trade volumes. Based on the discussion paper, the Committee would be in a better position to take a decision at its next session.
88. The Committee agreed that Palestine would prepare a discussion paper for consideration at its next session.

The representation of geographical basis

89. The Delegation of Lebanon informed the Committee of their intention to stand for the candidature for the member to be elected on geographical basis for the Near East.
90. The Committee noted the information provided.

¹¹ [CX/NEA 15/8/11](#)

¹² [CRD4](#); [CRD5](#); and [CRD6](#) (Comments of Egypt); [CRD7](#) (Comments of Sudan); [CRD10](#) (Comments of Palestine)

Update on bio-fortification

91. The Observer of IFPRI/Harvest Plus informed the Committee on the ongoing work on food bio-fortification in staple foods (i.e. sweet potatoes; cassava; rice and pearl millet) aiming to increase the level of micro nutrients such as Vitamin A; Zinc and Iron in foods with a view of combating malnutrition. She also updated the Committee on the progress towards developing a definition for bio-fortification through CCFNSDU and called upon CCNEA for support in this work.
92. The Committee noted the information provided.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 13)

93. The Committee was informed that its 9th 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 the 38th Session of the Commission and in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.

ANNEX
SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

| SUBJECT MATTER | STEP | ACTION BY | DOCUMENT REFERENCE REP15/NEA |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Proposed draft Regional Standard for Doogh | 2/3 | eWG (Iran) Governments CCNEA09 | Para. 41 |
| Proposed draft Regional Standard for Labneh | 4 | --- | Para. 49 |
| Proposed draft Regional Standard for Zaatar | 2/3 | eWG (Lebanon) Governments CCNEA09 | Para. 73 |
| Discussion paper on camel milk | Discontinued | --- | Para. 76 |
| Draft Strategic Plan for CCNEA 2016-2019 | Completed | Coordinator / Codex Contact Points | Para. 77 Appendix II |

APPENDIX I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

Chairperson/Présidente/Presidenta:

Mrs Lena DARGHAM
Director General
The Lebanese Standards Institution- LIBNOR
Sin El Fil, City Rama Street,
LIBNOR building
Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: 9611485927
Fax: 9611485929
Email: libnor@libnor.org
Website: www.libnor.gov.lb

EGYPT - ÉGYPTÉ - EGIPTO

Mr Kamel MOHAMED
(Head of Delegation)
Manager of Food Standards Department
Egyptian Organization for Standardization & Quality
Food Standards Department
16 Tadreeb El- Modarben- Cairo
Tel: 20222845531
Fax: 20222845507
Email: kameldarwish@ymail.com

Dr Reda ABDEL GALIL
Food Safety and Regulatory Manager
Chamber of Food Industries (CFI)
Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)
Cairo
Tel: 002 0100 650 5752
Email: redaabdelgalil@gmail.com

Mr Mustafa EL DEEB
Regulatory and Quality Assurance
Manager
Bel Egypt Expansion Company
Cairo
Tel: 002 01006090755
Email: Meldeeb@groupe-bel.com

**IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) -
IRAN (RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D') -
IRÁN (REPÚBLICA ISLÁMICA DEL)**

Dr Amir MORTAZAVIAN
Member of national CCNEA of Iran
Faculty of Nutrition Sciences and Food Technology
National Nutrition and Food Technology Research
Institute
Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences
Tel: 0098-912-7114977
Email: mortazvn@sbmu.ac.ir

Dr Heshmatolah RAZAVI MOSAVI
Member of CCMMP in Iran
Ministry of Health
Email: H.mosavi@fda.gov.ir

Dr Mohammad Hossein SHOJAEI ALIABADI
Senior Scientific advisor of Institute of Standards
and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI)
Director and Laboratory Manager
Farogh Life Sciences Research Laboratory
Tel: +0989121591766
Email: faroghlab@gmail.com

JORDAN - JORDANIE - JORDANIA

Mr Fiesal Rasheed Salamh AL ARGAN
Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO
Rome

LEBANON - LIBAN - LÍBANO

Mrs Mariam EID
Ministry of Agriculture
Agro-Industries Department
Beirut
Tel: 00961 1824100
Email: meid@agriculture.gov.lb

Prof. Joseph MATTA
Head of Laboratories Division
The Industrial Research Institute- IRI
Beirut
Fax: 9615467830
Email: chem@iri.org.lb

LIBYA - LIBYE - LIBIA

Ing. Elhadi E.E. ELZANATI
Alternate
Permanent Representative of Libya to FAO in
Rome, Italy
Email: faoprly@gmail.com

Mahmud K. AL-TELLISI
 Ambassador of Libya to FAO
 Permanent Representation of Libya to FAO
 Tel: 0039 324 6885583
 Email: faoprly@gmail.com

QATAR

Dr Shaikha Abdulla AL-ZEYARA
 Head of Environmental Health
 Supreme Council of Health/Qatar
 Food Safety & Environment Health, PHD
 P.O.Box 42
 Doha
 Tel: (+974) 44070160
 Email: salzeyara@sch.gov.qa

SAUDI ARABIA - ARABIE SAOUDITE - ARABIA SAUDITA

Mr Hani MANSI
 (Head of Delegation)
 Regional and International Standards Dept. Manager
 Saudi Food and Drug Authority
 Dept. of Technical Regulations & standards
 North Ring Road - Al Nafal Unit (1)
 Riyadh
 Tel: +966112038222
 Email: codex.cp@sFDA.gov.sa

Mr Mohammad ALGHAMDI
 Head of codex national committee
 Saudi Food and Drug Authority
 Dept. of Technical Regulations & standards
 North Ring Road - Al Nafal Unit (1)
 Riyadh
 Tel: +966112038222
 Email: codex.cp@sFDA.gov.sa

SUDAN - SOUDAN - SUDÁN

Mrs Sana ELSHAFI
 Planning and Research Director
 Sudanese Standard & Metrology Organization
 Planning and Research Department
 Eljamaa Street
 Khartoum
 Tel: +249912389023
 Email: sanaelshafie2013@gmail.com

Mrs Maha IBRAHIM
 Excutive Office Manager
 Sudanese Standard & Metrology Organization
 Eljamaa Street
 Khartoum
 Tel: +249127460726
 Email: maabmoib2391960@gmail.com

TUNISIA - TUNISIE - TÚNEZ

Mr Lazhar RAZGALLAH
 (Head of Delegation)
 DIRECTEUR
 Centre technique de l'agroalimentaire
 12, rue de l'usine - Charguia 2 -
 2035 Tunis
 Tel: +216 71 940 198
 Email: ctaa@ctaa.com.tn

Dr Wassila GZARA
 Inspecteur - Médecin vétérinaire
 Ministère de la santé
 Direction de l'hygiène du milieu et de la
 protection de l'environnement
 Rue jebel Lakhdar - Beb Saadoun
 1006 Tunis
 Tel: +216 71577282
 Email: wassilajaibi@yahoo.fr

Mr Hamdi MEJRI
 Sous Directeur
 Agence Nationale de Contrôle Sanitaire et
 environnemental des produits - Ministère de la
 santé publique
 Contrôle sanitaire des produits Alimentaires et
 des Eaux-ANCSEP
 2 Rue Ibn Nadim, Montplaisir.
 1073 Tunis
 Tel: +216 71 903 942
 Email: mejry@yahoo.fr

YEMEN - YÉMEN

Mr Abdullah Na'ami QUTRAN AL –NA'AMI
 Alternate Permanent Representative
 Embassy of the Republic of Yemen
 Via Antonio Bosio, 10 – 00161 Rome
 Italy
 Tel: 06 4423 1679
 Email: segreteria@yemenembassy.it

OBSERVER COUNTRIES - PAYS OBSERVATEURS - PAÍSES OBSERVADORES

EUROPEAN UNION - UNION EUROPÉENNE UNIÓN EUROPEA

Ms Barbara MORETTI
 Administrator
 European Commission
 DG Sante
 Rue Froissart 101
 1049 Brussels, Belgium
 Email: barbara.moretti@ec.europa.eu

NETHERLANDS - PAYS-BAS - PAÍSES BAJOS

Ms Heleen VAN ROOTSELAAR
Policy Officer
Ministry of Economic Affairs
Plant Supply Chain and Food Quality Department
PO Box 20401
The Hague
Tel: +31 70 378 5042
Email: h.vanrootselaar@minez.nl

MOROCCO - MAROC - MARRUECOS

Mrs Hasna FAHMANE
(Head of Delegation)
Veterinarian
National Food Safety Office of
Standardization
Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui Agdal Rabat
Rabat
Tel: +212661221841
Email: fahmanehasna@yahoo.fr

**SPECIAL OBSERVERS -
OBSERVATEURS SPECIAUX -
OBSERVADORES ESPECIALES****PALESTINE - PALESTINA**

Mr Saleem JAYYOUSI
(Head of Delegation)
Chairman
Technical Regulations Committee
Palestine Standards Institution
Jerusalem St, Attal District
P.O. Box 2258
Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: +970-(0)2-2984144/2965191
Email: sjayyousi@psi.pna.ps

Mr Mamoun BARGHOUTHI
Palestine Embassy
Rome, Italy
Email: fao@ambasciatapalestina.com

Ms Suha SAWALHA
Director
Food Safety
Ministry of Health
Palestine
Email: suha.arar@gmail.com

SWITZERLAND - SUISSE -SUIZA

Mrs Awilo OCHIENG PERNET
Chair, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office
FSVO
Division of International Affairs
Bern, Switzerland
Email: awilo.ochieng@blv.admin.ch

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS -
ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES -
ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES****INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION
(IDF/FIL)**

Mr Michael HICKEY
Delegate
Irish National Committee of IDF
Derryreigh, Creggane, Charleville
Co. Cork, Ireland
Email: mfhickey@oceanfree.net

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL
HEALTH (IFAH)**

Dr Olivier ESPEISSE
Director of EU and Africa Government Affairs
IFAH
ELANCO SANTE ANIMALE - Lilly France
13, rue Pagès
92158 Suresnes Cedex
FRANCE
Tel. No.: +33 1 5549 3535
Email: espeisse_olivier@elanco.com

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH
INSTITUTE (IFPRI)**

Dr Anne MACKENZIE
Head, Standards and Regulatory Issues
IFPRI
HarvestPlus
6442 Aston Rd.
Ottawa, Canada
Tel: 613 6920211
Email: a.mackenzie@cgiar.org

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) -
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR
L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE (FAO)
ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA
LA ALIMENTACIÓN Y LA AGRICULTURA (FAO)**

Dr Fatima Hachem
Food and Nutrition Officer
Regional Office for the Near East
P.O. Box 2223 Cairo
Egypt Tel: +20.2.331.6144 Fax: +20.2.749.5981 Email:
Email: fatima.hachem@fao.org

Dr Renata CLARKE
Head, Food Safety and Quality Unit
Department of Agriculture and Protection
Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: renata.clarke@fao.org

Mrs Mary KENNY
Food Safety and Quality Officer
Food Safety and Quality Unit
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: mary.kenny@fao.org

Dr Masami TAKEUCHI
Food Safety Officer
Food Safety and Quality Unit
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: masami.takeuchi@fao.org

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) -
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA
SANTÉ (OMS) -
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LA
SALUD (OMS)**

Mr Soren MADSEN
Technical Officer
World Health Organization
Food Safety
P.O. Box 926967
11190 Ammam, Jordan
Email: madsens@who.int

Mrs Catherine MULHOLLAND
Administrator, FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund
World Health Organization
Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses (FOS)
20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
Tel: 41 22 791 3080
Email: mulhollandc@who.int

**CODEX SECRETARIAT -
SECRÉTARIAT DU CODEX -
SECRETARÍA DEL CODEX**

Mrs Gracia BRISCO
Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: gracia.brisco@fao.org

Mr Patrick SEKITOLEKO
Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: patrick.sekitoleko@fao.org

Ms Lingping ZHANG
Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: lingping.zhang@fao.org

Mr Tom HEILANDT
Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: tom.heilandt@fao.org

APPENDIX II**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST (CCNEA) 2016-2019****1 Introduction**

Meeting the recommendations of the safety and quality standards adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission can open markets for food products in many parts of the world resulting in increased income for exporting countries. This is the reason why regions that have not traditionally been major exporters of food products, like the Near East, are moving to meet Codex standards.

Most Near East countries have already taken steps to improve their food safety systems. However, in a region dominated by the export of commodities such as fruit, vegetables, olive oil and fish, the complexity of meeting ever-evolving standards, requires boosting the capacity of local experts and the existing food regulatory infrastructure.

2 Elements of the Strategic Plan

The Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for the CCNEA region contains the goal, strategic objectives and actions to achieve the expected outcomes within a four (4) year time frame. The Strategic Plan for CCNEA has been aligned to support the CAC Strategic Plan 2014-2019, seeking to achieve better coordination and interaction among Member countries for strengthening national food safety systems and promoting harmonisation with Codex.

2.1 Global goal

To enhance the role of the countries of the Near East region in Codex activities and to strengthen their collaboration in order to promote the use of Codex standards and protect their interests.

2.2 Core values

In fulfilling its strategic vision, CCNEA adheres to Codex core values that include:

- collaboration
- consensus building
- transparency
- inclusiveness

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies 4 strategic objectives for the region for the period 2016-2019. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of CCNEA to determine the progress and identify gaps.

| Objectives | Outcomes | Proposed Activities | Time | Responsible | Indicators |
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| 1. Enhance the participation of countries of the region in Codex activities | A. Identify Codex committees, task forces and working groups that are of particular interest to the region | - Conduct periodic surveys via questionnaire about Codex committees priorities for countries of the region and schedule priorities according to the common interests among countries of the region | June 2016 | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - List of priorities |
| | B. Encourage stakeholders' engagement in Codex activities | - Explore different means, including the use of CTF2 to ensure continued effective participation of countries of the region in priority Codex committees and related Codex activities | Ongoing | Countries of the region in collaboration with the Coordinator | - Reports of participation - Documents submitted to meetings - Number of participating countries in Codex activities |
| | C. Share information on specific topics, scientific data and research areas of interest to the region | - Establish and activate a website for CCNEA - Exchange of scientific information and experiences | June 2016 | Codex Secretariat Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - An active and operational CCNEA website |
| 2. Strengthen regional communication, experience sharing and coordination among CCNEA Member countries in Codex activities | A. Exchange views and information on all matters related to Codex | - Conduct a survey via a questionnaire about the meeting's agenda to identify the points of interest for the region and to include observations from countries on their specific points | Two months prior to the meeting | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - Number of replies to the questionnaire |

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| | B. Define a common position of the region on Codex issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish an updated list of names and contacts of countries of the region (Heads of delegations) participating in Codex meetings from countries of the region. | One month before the defined session | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated list of Heads of delegations distributed among countries of the region |
| | C. Coordinate the participation in Codex events and enhance regional communication through different tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up, where possible, the availability of Codex documents in a timely manner especially in Arabic language - Organise electronic groups when necessary to discuss specific topics of common interest for countries of the region | Ongoing | Coordinator and member countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents downloaded on the Codex website in Arabic and on time |
| | D. Set the SOP's for Codex documents follow-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange of written notes among countries of the region on draft standards and Codex issues and ensure that these observations are well defended during Codex meetings even in the absence of the country concerned - Ensure that the agenda of CCNEA sessions include all Codex matters which are of interest to the region | 1 month prior to the meeting Every session CCNEA session | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points Coordinator Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG reports - Codex meetings documents with the region comments - Compiled CCNEA report |

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| 3. Promote use of Codex standards and the development and/or review of Codex standards and related texts taking into account regional situations and needs | A. Identify specific food products and areas of interest to the region that require standards and related texts to be developed and/or reviewed | - Conduct a survey among countries of the region in order to highlight the draft standards of interest to the region that could be presented as Codex work | 2 months before CCNEA meetings | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - CAC and CCNEA reports mention the accepted standards proposal |
| | B. Promote the use of standards in regulations to facilitate trade within the region | - Provide CCEXEC subsequent to CCNEA sessions with a summary of the problems and /challenges experienced by countries in the adoption of Codex standards as well as the proposed solutions | After every CCNEA session | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - Reports of CCEXEC and CCNEA |
| | C. Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, industry, consumers, academia, professional bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)). | - Organise workshops on the importance of the adoption of Codex standards | Ongoing | Coordinator | - Numbers of workshops conducted and - Number of participants |
| 4. Build capacity of countries of the region in relation to risk assessment | A. Identify and prioritise the common regional risks | - Conduct periodic surveys about the problems faced by countries of the region on the issue of food safety, scientific advice and research needs | 2 months before the next session | Coordinator, Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees | - Responses and proposals from members |
| | B. Identify the needs for scientific research | - Organise meetings on the sidelines of the Codex meeting to discuss food safety and quality issues in the region | Ongoing | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - Number of meetings and number of participants - Reports from Member countries on capacity building from food safety organisations |

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| | C. Implement pilot programmes to assess these risks and to communicate the results | - Explore ways to conduct risk assessment in areas of importance to the region | End of 2016 | Coordinator and countries of the region | - Number of risk assessments performed at regional level |
| | D. Enhance the involvement of experts from the region in the FAO/WHO scientific committees | Establish an updated database of experts from the region and provide this list to FAO and WHO | Ongoing | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - Number of experts included in the database |
| 5. Strengthen capacities of Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committees | A. Supply National Codex Committees and Codex Contact Points with the required references, trainings and tools so they can perform their roles properly | - Update list of Codex Contact Points in the countries of the region | February 2016 | Coordinator | - Updated lists |
| | B. Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points/delegates to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues | - Conduct a survey on the structure of Codex in countries within the region | April 2016 | Coordinator and Codex Contact Points | - Lists; and data available |
| | | - Develop operating procedures for the work of the Coordinator with countries of the region in order to facilitate communication | End of 2017 | Coordinator and countries of the region in consultation with the Codex Secretariat | - Operating procedures written |
| | | - Explore ways and means for organising workshops for National Contact Points, National Codex Committees and the regional Coordinator in regards to the affairs of the Codex Alimentarius and the tasks assigned to them | Ongoing | Coordinator in consultation with the Codex Secretariat | - Number of workshops and number of participants |