

codex alimentarius commission



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Agenda Item 4

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

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ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING

Introduction

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and the provision of scientific advice implemented since the 14th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia which are complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
2. In the achievement of the overall objectives of FAO, an important reorganization has taken place in 2006 in the area of food and food safety. The Food and Nutrition Division, recently renamed the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, which hosts the Codex Secretariat, JECFA Joint Secretariat, JEMRA Joint Secretariat and the staff working in the field of food quality and safety, has been moved from the Economic and Social Department to the Agriculture, Biosecurity, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Department. This move is in line with the farm-to-table approach to nutrition, food safety and consumer protection and the important role that operators in the food chain play in this field. This should provide new opportunities for cooperation between all units involved in the production, processing, handling, storage and distribution of food products, as well as in food safety control and standards development.
3. Similarly in WHO, the Food Safety Department has been renamed Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases following the merger of the units covering zoonoses and food-borne disease previously under the Department of Communicable Diseases with the Department of Food Safety. The new Department illustrates the existing WHO strategy of addressing food safety issues along the entire food chain continuum from primary production to consumers.
4. Information on FAO's and WHO's main capacity building activities in food safety and quality during the reporting period is provided below.

FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific

5. FAO/WHO convened an informal meeting with delegates from Asia and the Pacific attending the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Geneva in order to discuss follow-up to the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific (Seremban, Malaysia, May 2004), as well as current and future capacity building activities in the region.

FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators

6. A preparatory meeting for a possible third FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in conjunction with the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The purpose of the preparatory meeting was a preliminary discussion on the objective, format, content and funding of a possible third Global Forum. The meeting unanimously recommended that a thorough evaluation of GF-1 and GF-2 should be conducted prior to convening GF-3. A survey to evaluate the impact of the FAO/WHO Global Fora of Food Safety Regulators is now underway by the joint secretariat, the results of which will be presented at a side event to be held during the next session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Funding Mechanisms to Improve Food Safety and Quality

7. FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO and the World Bank established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to coordinate the capacity building efforts of these organizations in the areas of food safety and plant and animal health and to provide a funding mechanism for countries and stakeholders to undertake their activities in these areas. The STDF is both a financing and a coordination mechanism. Grant financing is available for private and public organizations in developing countries seeking to comply with international SPS standards and hence gain or maintain market access. Interested countries and stakeholders are encouraged to propose projects and submit them to the STDF for consideration. Further information on the STDF, including the exact deadlines for submission of proposals and meeting dates, the Business Plan, application forms and information on projects approved can be found at the STDF website www.standardsfacility.org.

8. FAO and WHO have established a Trust Fund for Participation in Codex to increase the participation of developing countries and countries in transition in the vital work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The fund provides financial support to increase their capacity to implement those standards in their own country.

9. Following the success of the Codex Training Course initiated by the Codex Trust Fund in December 2005, further expenditures on training and the wider dissemination of the Codex Training Package is envisaged in 2006.

Technical Assistance and Supporting Material for Capacity Building

10. FAO and WHO are engaged in a programme of technical assistance activities and projects at national, regional and international levels. The areas covered include training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts), provision of fellowships for future food regulators, enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, implementation of risk analysis, risk assessment of microbiological hazards in food, support in establishing national Codex committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, fresh fruits and vegetables quality and safety, mycotoxin prevention and control, implementation of the FAO/WHO Guidance to Governments on the Application of HACCP in Small and/or Less Developed Businesses, HACCP in aquaculture, traceability of fish and fish products, good practices for the feed industry, prevention of BSE and other zoonotic diseases and others are included.

11. FAO is presently conducting a programme for improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, which focuses on the application of good practices (GAP, GMP, and GHP) to prevent hazards at appropriate points in the fresh fruits and vegetable chain (production and post-harvest stages - *food chain approach*). Subregional workshops have been held in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Near East (China, Egypt and Morocco) and are planned for other parts of the world. Activities for awareness raising and training at the national level have also been initiated through the implementation of National Action Plans. Four case studies (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay) on the implementation of quality and safety schemes are under preparation. FAO has prepared a Training Package (available in CD-ROM and printed format), providing information that can be used by countries to develop training programmes and implement safety and quality requirements to suit their specific needs and thus enhance their capability to apply Codex guidelines and standards, meet importers requirements, as well as improve the quality and safety of fresh produce on the domestic market. An on-line database (also produced as a CD-ROM) with over 800 documents related to the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables is also available. See also www.fao.org/ag/agn/index_en.stm.

12. In May 2006 FAO completed implementation of a global project to address the problem of mycotoxin contamination of coffee and protect the health of coffee consumers. Initiated in 2000, the project, “Improvement of coffee quality through the prevention of mould formation”, was formulated in collaboration with the International Coffee Organization (ICO) and the European coffee industry, and was executed by FAO in Brazil, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Uganda. Financing was provided by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), with co-financing from the Government of the Netherlands and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC). For more information on the project, training resources and guidelines on the prevention of mould formation in coffee, visit www.coffee-ota.org.

13. FAO and WHO have recently been engaged in the development of a number of manuals, guidelines and training materials that should facilitate the capacity building effort. Most of these materials are developed jointly except for a few which are prepared under specific field projects operated either by FAO or WHO. These materials include the following:

- Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables training manual and resource database (available from FAO web pages or as a CD-ROM in English, Spanish, French and Chinese - see further description above);
- “Food Safety Risk Analysis and an accompanying CD-ROM training pack: a joint FAO/WHO publication are under finalization;
- The FAO tool “Strengthening the capacity of national food control systems: Guidelines to assess capacity building needs” was pilot tested under the framework of AGNS and STDF projects in Benin, Cameroon and Myanmar, and positive feedback received. The Guidelines have been published in hard copy and on CD-ROM, and posted on the AGNS web site. A complementary, condensed version of these Guidelines “A quick guide to assess capacity building needs” is currently being finalized;
- FAO, together with WHO and ICD, have developed a basic Awareness Course on Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA). The primary objective of this course is to acquaint governments with the general concept of Risk Analysis and how MRA fits into the framework of Microbiological Risk Management (MRM). This course was used as a basis for a training course for South-East European countries in September 2005. In addition, a one day workshop on this issue was implemented in Sydney, Australia targeting participants from the Asian Pacific region. A further training course is being planned for Spanish speaking Latin American and Caribbean countries in October 2006 and one for South-East Asia in November 2006. A preliminary version of the course material (English) is now available on CD-ROM;
- Enhancing Participation in Codex Activities - An FAO/WHO Training Pack designed to strengthen national food safety and quality systems through enhanced participation in the Codex process. It should serve as reference document for those involved in national Codex activities and as a training tool on Codex. A CD-ROM containing the visual aids and relevant reference documents will be included in the manual. It is available in several languages at: www.fao.org/ag/AGN/food/capacity_codex_en.stm. An electronic web-based training course is under active preparation based on this Training Pack;
- The FAO/WHO guidance document for governments on the application of HACCP, in small and less developed businesses (SLDBs) was finalized. The document will soon be available at http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/food/quality_haccp_en.stm;
- FAO and WHO have been engaged in preparing a standardized training package to assist countries in implementing relevant Codex texts related to the food safety assessment of products derived from modern biotechnology. This training package may include a pilot training manual package containing both theory and practical examples of risk assessments of foods derived from modern biotechnology and a guide for training regulators;
- WHO has issued "A Guide for Healthy Food Markets", which contains an annex on measures to reduce transmission of avian influenza in wet markets in developing countries. The publication is available at www.who.int/foodsafety/capacity/healthy_marketplaces/en/;

- WHO has completed the development of the GEMS/ Food Consumption Cluster Diets, which will be used by JECFA and JMPR in estimating long-term exposure to chemicals in food. The diets are available at www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/gems/en/.
14. All these materials, once finalized, will be issued in multi-lingual form for wider use by member countries.

Information Exchange Mechanisms

15. The International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (www.ipfsaph.org) - a joint initiative with IPPC, OIE, Codex and WTO - has continued to develop during its second full year of operation. Numbers of page requests to the website on a monthly basis regularly exceed 400 000; numbers of visitors per month are typically in excess of 35 000. The portal is adding a number of new data sets on pesticides and food additives and now contains over 25 000 records, while collaboration has been strengthened with the EU through contacts with DG Trade's Exports Helpdesk. A particular initiative worth highlighting is the ongoing work to develop a low bandwidth version of the portal to facilitate access from developing countries which has been made available progressively from April 2006.

16. With funding from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), work is now proceeding to reinforce the technical system which underpins the portal, while STDF-funded projects are actively encouraged to make use of the portal as a resource, and consider possible further national data sets for inclusion.

17. INFOSAN, the International Food Safety Authorities Network, developed and maintained by WHO in collaboration with FAO, was inaugurated in October 2004. Identified as a priority need by both Codex and the World Health Assembly, 150 Member States have joined the network as of May 2006. INFOSAN is an information network for the dissemination of important global food safety information and serves as a vehicle for food safety authorities and other relevant agencies to exchange food safety information and improve collaboration among them. Since its creation, INFOSAN has responded to requests for information for Member States by providing 11 INFOSAN Information Notes on timely food safety topics including avian influenza and genetically modified foods. INFOSAN EMERGENCY, the emergency arm of the network, has so far investigated 11 incidents of contaminated food in international commerce and issued to INFOSAN Emergency alerts. INFOSAN EMERGENCY is intended to complement and support the existing WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network ([GOARN](http://www.goarn.org)) which includes a Chemical Alert and Response component.

18. The WHO International Health Regulations (IHR) have recently been updated to cover agents causing serious health risks connected to food in international trade. The adapted IHR version will come into effect by June 2007.

19. In 2004, WHO inaugurated its new Strategic Health Operation Centre (SHOC). The SHOC is a shared information and communications centre designed to facilitate collaboration and problem solving in order to better improve health outcomes in countries. The SHOC both virtually and physically supports WHO Operations at HQ, Regional and Country Office levels in responding to crises in public health. INFOSAN EMERGENCY is part of the operational support structure of SHOC.

20. FAO also supports the development and maintenance of FishPort, a web-based system for dissemination of scientific and technical information on fish safety and quality.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

21. The FAO/IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) Training and Reference Centre for Food and Pesticide Control held a training workshop on "Introduction to Quality Assurance/Quality Control Measures in Pesticide Residue Analytical Laboratories". The workshop took place at the FAO/IAEA Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratory, IAEA Laboratories, Seibersdorf, Austria from 12 September to 7 October 2005. More detailed information on the course can be found at: www.elearning.iaea.org/ATutor/bounce.php?course=34.

22. FAO held a workshop on "Genetically Modified Food Safety" at FAO Headquarters from 13 to 14 October 2005. The purpose of this workshop was to expose FAO professional staff to a range of expert opinions on selected questions related to the safety of GM foods. Further information on this workshop can be obtained from: www.fao.org/ag/AGN/food/meetings_workshops2005_en.htm.

23. The FAO Expert Consultation on Biosafety (Rome, 28 February to 3 March 2006) considered a number of present and future applications of new biotechnologies in various sectors with the aim of seizing opportunities for consolidating future activities on Biosafety for sustainable agriculture and food production, within a *Biosecurity* context. Discussion focused on three issues: governance for Biosafety, cooperation for Biosafety, and technical grounds for Biosafety. Within these, the Consultation made several recommendations on establishing a coherent interdisciplinary approach on Biosafety, strengthening the policy and legislative frameworks for Biosafety in food and agriculture, technical assistance and capacity building, cooperation with external partners, information capacities and data sharing, and research.

24. FAO/WHO/OIE organized a joint Expert Consultation on “Antimicrobial Use in Aquaculture and Antimicrobial Resistance” from 13 to 16 June 2006 in Seoul, Korea. The Consultation addressed all aspects related to regulation, marketing, distribution and use of microbials in aquaculture, the magnitude of their use in aquaculture and the public health impact of such use. Further information on this consultation may be obtained from: www.fao.org/ag/agn/foodrisk_antimicrobial_en.stm.

Global projects

25. The Government of Norway recently signed a Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with FAO, with the overall objective of supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries through the work of FAO, for the period 2005-2006. One of the principal objectives of this project is “Improved Food Safety and Quality at National Level and along the Food Chain”. Activities are being conducted in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Cambodia, Laos, Nicaragua and Burkina Faso. Outcomes to be reached include: acceptance and use of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP); capacity building and awareness raising for integrated natural resource governance and management (SARED), support to food quality and safety and Codex related work and guidelines, advice and instruments related to small-scale/artisanal fisheries implemented/developed.

26. Under the same Programme Cooperation Agreement, Norway is also supporting a series of activities aimed at strengthening FAO’s earlier work on the integration of food safety, animal health, plant health and biosafety under the Biosecurity framework. The activities include application of the biosecurity framework at national level, development of additional tools and guidelines, as other practical guidance material.

Global tools under development

27. FAO conducted an expert panel from 2 to 4 November 2005 in Rome to peer review three parts of the FAO *Biosecurity* Toolkit designed to assist countries in their effort to integrate *Biosecurity*-related disciplines and activities, namely the *Biosecurity* Principles and Components (Part 1), *Biosecurity* Capacity Assessment Tool (Part 2) and *Biosecurity* Risk Analysis Manual (Part 3). This toolkit is being pilot tested and will then be made widely available. More information on FAO’s approach to and work in the area of *Biosecurity* is available from: www.fao.org/biosecurity.

28. FAO/AGNS is preparing a manual on food inspection and auditing of food safety management systems.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN ASIA

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

29. FAO/AGNS, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture of Thailand, organized a regional workshop on “Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables” in Bangkok, Thailand from 14 to 16 September 2005.

30. FAO and WHO implemented a five-day pilot regional training course on the development of food standards within a risk analysis framework for selected countries of Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, from 12 to 16 December 2005.

31. FAO and the UNESCO Microbial Resource Centre for Marine Biotechnology (MIRCEN) held a workshop on “Molecular Techniques in Aquaculture and Seafood Safety” in Mangalore, Karnataka, India, from 13 to 17 February 2006. The purpose of this workshop was to introduce researchers from 8 countries in Asia to various molecular techniques as applied to aquaculture and fish safety assessment.

32. FAO/AGNS collaborated with the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Government, the American Food Safety Consortium and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development of Alberta, Canada, in the joint organization of the “International Forum on Food Quality and Safety China 2006”, which was held in Harbin, China, from 15 to 18 June 2006. The aim of this forum was to strengthen food quality and safety and promote international exchange and cooperation in food science. Further details on this forum may be obtained from: www.hljagri.gov.cn/IFFQSC2006.

33. FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture of China organized a five-day national workshop for China on a practical approach to improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The workshop aimed to enhance information access and exchange as a means to improve the safe production, harvesting, handling, storage and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables. Further information on the workshop is available from: www.fao.org/ag/agn/food/meetings_workshops2006_en.stm.

34. FAO participated in the APEC Workshop on capacity building for developing member economies in applying SPS measures in Hanoi, Vietnam, 26-28 July 2006. FAO's contribution to the workshop highlighted the organization's technical assistance related to Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and recommendations on strategy for developing countries to meet existing obligations of the SPS Agreement.

35. FAO participated in the ISO Regional Seminar on Food Safety Management Systems and ISO 22000 “Food Safety: A Concern for Global Food Trade” in Jakarta, Indonesia, 13-15 August 2006. The overall objectives of the seminar were to support the dissemination process of the ISO 22000:2005 standard, to help actors in the food chain to understand the benefits of this standard and modern techniques of food safety management, explore the importance of food safety in the context of global trade, give an overview of the ISO 22000 family of standards, provide information on conformity assessment to support food safety, share experiences in implementing ISO 22000 and address the issue of mutual recognition in food safety certification. FAO contributed to the workshop by giving a presentation on the impact of private food safety standards on global trade which highlighted FAO's support to harmonization of food safety standards.

36. FAO participated in the “The First International Conference on Halal Science: Halal Food-Halal Nutrition”, Bangkok, Thailand, from 1 to 2 September 2006. The conference was organized by the Halal Science Centre and the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand in cooperation with the Nutrition Association of Thailand under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and the Food and Nutrition Partnership of Thailand. The objectives of the conference were to provide an international forum on research and development in the area of Halal science, act as a forum for Halal scientific laboratory international networking, explore the outcomes of relevant surveillance databases related to Halal inspection, share opinions and best practices in the establishment of a Halal-GMP/HACCP system for food manufacturers, restaurants and other businesses and project current and future needs for education and training involving Halal science.

37. FAO participated in the “International Symposium on Production Management for Agricultural and Livestock Produce Safety” in Seoul, Korea from 12 to 15 September 2006 organized by the Rural Development Administration (RDA), Korea. The Symposium aimed at identifying the international status of production management and establishing an integrated management system for agricultural and livestock safety. FAO contributed to the Symposium by giving a presentation on international trends in food safety standards setting and the role of FAO.

38. WHO's guidance materials on ‘Five Keys for Safer Food’ have been translated in regional and local languages and are currently being used to produce adapted manuals for awareness and training purposes, in all countries of South East Asia.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

FAO Field Projects

39. A two-year FAO/AGNS TCP project on Strengthening Testing Capability for Food Safety which was requested by the Government of China began in late 2004. The overall objective of the project is to protect the health of consumers and to enhance the competitiveness of their fresh produce in the international market through strengthening the country's capabilities for inspecting, testing and monitoring fresh produce for pesticide residues and contaminants. The project has strengthened laboratory facilities and trained analytical staff. It has improved the monitoring capabilities through introducing Multi Residue Screening Methods. In addition, the project has also raised the awareness of different actors throughout the food chain

about quality and safety requirements and harmonization of national regulations in Codex, and enhanced the extension services with the pesticide related information and the appropriate use of pesticides.

40. An FAO/AGNS TCP project for Mongolia to Strengthen Food Import Control commenced in November 2002 with Phase 2 of the project starting in August 2005. The objectives of the project are to establish and strengthen the national system of control of food import quality and safety. This is extremely important for Mongolia as over 80% of the food consumed in Mongolia is imported. Specifically, the project addressed the institutional set-up for the control of food import in Mongolia, provides training to food inspectors, strengthening laboratory facilities and training analytical staff associated with border food control. It also raised awareness of national authorities of the work of Codex internationally, the relevance of this work nationally and the importance of full stakeholder participation in food control matters. During Phase 2 of the project a food inspection guidance document is under preparation and training for food analysts is being undertaken.

41. An FAO/AGNS TCP project on strengthening SPS compliance for fresh fruits and vegetables commenced in Thailand in December 2003. The project was requested by the Government of Thailand given the great potential in Thailand for exporting fresh and processed fruits and vegetables. Project activities focus on management of programmes for the prevention and control of microbiological hazards in these products, technical capabilities of food producers, training on food safety and quality assurance systems for producers, processors and government officers responsible for the implementation of these systems. In addition, the overall export inspection and certification system of fruits and vegetables will be improved. A second phase of the project is being processed to finalize project activities.

42. An FAO TCP project to improve coffee quality in Thailand began in June 2004 and was completed in February 2006. Activities under this project included training in GHPs along the coffee chain to reduce mould growth and mycotoxin formation in green coffee. It provides training in monitoring and analysis of ochratoxin-A and in mycological analysis. The project was led by the Industrial Crops officer of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with AGNS.

43. An FAO-executed trust fund project funded by NZAID commenced in May 2005. This project, “Improving food safety and its management in Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia” aims to help the participating countries to develop or improve national food safety policy, strengthen the legal framework for food control and build the technical capacities required to enforce food safety requirements. The project also includes components on food safety education and food-borne disease surveillance that will be implemented in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Asia.

44. A three-year project to be funded by the Government of Japan and for execution by FAO is presently under formulation. This three-year project will aim to improve food safety in selected ASEAN countries through the strengthening of national food inspection systems.

45. A five-year project with eight components for improving food safety and quality and official food control in Bangladesh is currently under formulation. This project will take up the conclusions and recommendations from the FAO TCP/BGD/2901 project “Strengthening Food Control in Bangladesh” which was completed in 2005. The project will support the Government of Bangladesh to develop and strengthen the implementation of a comprehensive and coherent national food control system that is based on modern scientific principles and practices, and the participation of all relevant stakeholders from farm to table.

Direct advice to developing countries

46. FAO is also assisting the Government of Malaysia in its efforts to enhance their current capabilities on risk assessment of chemicals in food, in particular food additives.

47. In addition, FAO provided assistance to India through the FAO/UNESCO Microbial Resource Centre for Marine Biotechnology (MIRCEN) for the organization of an ASM/FAO/UNESCO International Workshop on Molecular Techniques in aquaculture and seafood safety. This activity will facilitate efforts of institutions from 8 countries from the region to enhance the current activities on this field and to contribute to fill some data identified by JEMRA that are relevant for those countries.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

48. During 2006 FAO/AGNS will be providing direct assistance to the Government of the Philippines in the establishment of a national Codex committee.

49. The Government of Myanmar requested assistance from FAO/AGNS in assessing the exact needs of the country in the area of food safety and quality in order to improve the national food control system in a comprehensive manner. A consultant mission took place in late 2005.

50. The Government of Myanmar has also requested the support of FAO/AGS to formulate an “Oil Crops Development Project”, within the framework of the Government’s cooperation arrangements with the OPEC Fund for International Development. The project will support the enhancement of institutional agro-industrial capacity for edible oil processing and quality assurance, including the turn-key establishment of new processing plants and the development of national edible oil standards and strengthening of national capacity for oil quality control. This project formulation phase has been finalized and its implementation commenced in the second half of 2005.

51. The Government of Pakistan has requested assistance from FAO (AGNS) for building national capacity for food quality and safety. Specifically, the Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) is seeking assistance in reviewing and revising national SPS laws, remodelling animal and plant quarantine services, enhancing the capabilities of reference laboratories, forging technical linkages and fostering cooperation with developed economies. The request is still in the initial formulation phase.

52. The Government of Pakistan has also requested assistance from FAO (AGNS) in the area of improving the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables. The request is in the formulation phase.

53. The Government of Sri Lanka has requested assistance from FAO (AGNS) in the area of training in food safety and quality and certification. The request is in the formulation phase.

WHO NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

54. As a result of WHO's support to Bangladesh, the national authorities amended the 1959 “Pure Food Ordinance Act”, constituted a National Food Safety Advisory Council and established the Pure Food Courts in each district of the country.

55. WHO Bhutan, provided support to enable the Ministry of Health, in close collaboration with the agricultural sector, to acquire and install the capacity for microbiology testing at the Public Health Laboratory.

56. Since 2004, WHO has provided continuous support to India through a consultant, to strengthen the Food Adulteration Act, especially in the issuance of Notifications. In 2005, a number of training manuals on HACCP, GMP GHP were developed, covering the catering sector, and the fruits and vegetables, dairy, bakery, meat and poultry sectors.

57. In Indonesia, WHO supported the National Agency for Drug and Food Control to establish a food safety information system linked to a national network, including a mechanism for microbiological risk assessment. Seven training modules on risk assessment were developed for this purpose. Since 2005, significant support to Indonesia has been provided by WHO Jakarta to the Ministry of Health to develop food safety based awareness and training materials to prevent and control the spread of the avian influenza virus in live animal markets. More information is available at: http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section23/Section1001/Section1110_11528.htm.

58. WHO’s collaboration with Nepal has allowed the issuance, in 2005, of several specific HACCP and GMP guidelines.

59. Following the 2004 Tsunami, WHO Maldives supported the Department of Public Health and other national authorities in establishing the basis for setting up the national integrated food safety system, based on risk analysis principles. Specific training was given to food inspectors in close collaboration with the catering sector.

60. WHO is currently collaborating with the Asian Development Bank and the State Food and Drug Administration of China to strengthen that Administration's coordination capacity and to review the current food control situation in China. At the same time, WHO is committed to building the capacity of health authorities to effectively implement their responsibilities in relation to food safety in China.