

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

June 2005

CAC/28 INF/5

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-Eighth Session, FAO Headquarters

Rome, Italy, 4- 9 July 2005

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY:

SELECTED ACTIVITIES OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

JULY 2004-JUNE 2005

INTRODUCTION

1. In keeping with their respective mandates, FAO and WHO engage in diverse capacity building activities designed to assist developing countries to improve their food safety and quality systems. Together with international organisations, national governments, international and regional financial institutions and NGOs, various capacity building and technical assistance initiatives have been undertaken. This report will focus on capacity building activities undertaken in part or in whole by FAO and WHO in the past year.

2. While the activities and strategies differ and are tailored to specific regions and countries, the overall objective is to support and strengthen national food control systems. This is often done by providing technical assistance in reviewing and analysing the institutional set up for food control and evaluating its effectiveness, identifying main weaknesses, and formulating recommendations and proposals for the establishment of technically sound food control systems which are harmonised with current international standards. Specific activities falling within the realm of capacity building include training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts) in the form of seminars, workshops and study tours to broaden in-country skills and increase the ability of local governments to implement comprehensive food control systems, enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, preparation of training manuals and guidelines, support in establishing and strengthening National Codex Committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks. The remainder of the report will focus on these activities and tools, occurring at global, regional and national level.

GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

International Events

3. The FAO Food Quality and Standards Service (FAO/ESNS) and the Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement (IRD) facilitated a conference (Jaen, Spain, September 2004) to address the issues of food-borne pathogens, anti-nutritional and toxic factors in *fermented foods produced in small-scale units*. This conference promoted sharing of information and viewpoints between scientists and experts from Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean countries on progress in scientific and regulatory knowledge of small-scale units. More information is available from: www.ujaen.es/huesped/foodsafe/index.htm

4. As a follow-up to the successful first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and with the support and approval of the FAO and WHO member countries, FAO/ESNS and the Food Safety Department (FOS) of WHO held the *Second Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators (GF-2)* in Bangkok, Thailand from 12-14 October 2004, under the main theme of: "Building Effective Food Safety Systems". The forum focused on the two following sub-themes: 1) Strengthening official food control services and 2) Epidemio-surveillance of foodborne diseases and food safety rapid alert systems. A number of related side events were also held before, during, and after GF-2, the reports of which are available from the forum website. The complete proceedings (in all languages of the Forum), including the chairmen's summary and all working documents, as well as the nearly 100 Conference Room Documents presented at the Forum are available from: www.foodsafetyforum.org/index.asp. Bound copies in all language versions, including a CD of all documents in all languages will be available in due course. The delegates at GF-2 were generally supportive of holding a Third Global Forum (GF-3), but proposed that further discussion should be held on the objective, format, themes, and timeframe/ location of a GF3. Accordingly, the FAO/WHO Secretariat convened an e- forum from 4 April to 13 May 2005 to further solicit the views of the Member countries and all interested parties on the possible convening of a GF-3. Detailed results of the e-forum are presented as a separate information document (CAC/28 INF.13).

5. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), in partnership with FAO/ESNS, WHO/FOS, and the International Association of Consumer Food Organizations (IACFO), sponsored a *Safe Food International Conference*, under the theme of Crafting a Public Health Agenda for Modern Food Safety Systems in Geneva, Switzerland (8-10 June 2005) at WHO HQ. The Conference intended to bring together consumer groups from all regions of the world to share their concerns about food safety and develop consensus guidelines for monitoring and improving national food safety systems. More information on the Conference is available from: www.safefoodinternational.org

6. FAO/ESNS and WHO/FOS, along with the World Food Safety Organization, World Animal Health Organization (OIE), the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) and the Association for Automatic Identification and Mobility (AIM) sponsored a NextGen Food Conference in Berlin, Germany on 13 and 14 June 2005. Representatives from FAO and WHO delivered the keynote speech on the topic of: *Achieving Food Safety: A Challenge for all Stakeholders*. More information is available from the Conference website at: www.nextgenfood.com

7. FAO/ESNS was on the international scientific board of the 1st International Food and Nutrition Congress, which had the main theme of "*Food Safety and Quality Through the Food Chain: Farm to Fork*". The Congress was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 15-18 June 2005. FAO presented a conference on the "FAO program for improving the quality and safety for fresh fruits and vegetables along the food chain". More information is available from the Congress website: www.tubitakcongress2005.org

8. UPCOMING EVENTS

9. A sampling of the relevant international events that FAO and/or WHO currently have planned for the next year are as follows:

10. The FAO Animal Production and Health Division and the International Feed Industry Federation will be holding a *Global Food and Feed Congress* in Sao Paulo, Brazil from 11-13 July 2005. More information is available from the Congress website: www.globalfeed-food.com

11. The FAO/IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) Training and Reference Centre for Food and Pesticide Control will hold a training workshop on "*Introduction to Quality Assurance/ Quality Control Measures in Pesticide Residue Analytical Laboratories*". The workshop will be held at the FAO/IAEA Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratory, IAEA Laboratories, Seibersdorf, Austria from 12 September - 7 October 2005. More detailed information on the course can be found at:

<http://elearning.iaea.org/ATutor/bounce.php?course=34>

12. FAO/ESNS is on the advisory committee for a MYCO- GLOBE (Integration of Mycotoxin and Toxigenic Fungi Research for Food Safety in Global System) Conference on "*Learning from the EU: Reducing the Impact of Mycotoxins in Tropical Agriculture with Emphasis on Health and Trade in Africa*". The Conference will be held in Accra, Ghana from 13 - 16 September 2005. More information on the project and the Conference is available from the Conference website:

<http://www.iita.org/mycotoxinconf/index.htm>

13. FAO/ESNS will be organizing a parallel symposium on food safety, as well as one on Community nutrition and intervention programmes at the *18th International Nutrition Congress* in Durban, South Africa, from 19 - 23 September 2005. The Congress is organized by the International Union of Nutritional Sciences. More information is available from the Congress website:

<http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/voeding/iuns/scientific%20programme.htm#PS>

Global Projects

14. FAO/ESNS is implementing a global project for the *Enhancement of Coffee Quality through the Prevention of Mould Formation*, which started in December 2000 and will conclude at the end of September 2005. This project is being implemented in Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Uganda, with ongoing collaboration from the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC), and earlier collaboration with the University of Surrey, U.K. The project is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities and the Dutch Government.

15. The project approach emphasises capacity building in coffee-producing countries, with the aim of formulating codes of practice for the coffee industry. Initial activities under the project involved investigation of factors influencing mould growth and ochratoxin A (OTA) formation in green coffee, evaluation of the potential of selected processing and drying technologies to reduce the risk of mould growth and OTA formation, development of guidelines for the application of good hygiene practices along the coffee chain, and building the capacity of national authorities to control and monitor OTA contamination of coffee. Specifically, the project builds capacity at the national level within the industry and responsible government agencies in the application of internationally-agreed principles of food hygiene and a HACCP-based approach to food safety throughout the coffee production and processing chain. The project also builds the analytical capacity and capability required to support national programmes for prevention and control of OTA contamination of coffee. An electronic training resource (web and CD-ROM based) on good hygiene practices along the coffee chain is being developed to guide authorities in the development of national training programmes for various target groups. This is scheduled for completion later in 2005. More information on the project can be found at www.coffee-ota.org.

16. FAO/ESNS 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*). Sub-regional workshops have been held in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia, and are planned for other regions of the world. Activities for awareness raising and training at the national level

have also been initiated through the implementation of National Action Plans. Three case studies 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 the 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. A side event was held in Mexico City, Mexico on 17 May 2005 in conjunction with the 12th session of the Codex Committee of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables to demonstrate the training package and database. More information on this project, training package and database is available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm

17. FAO/ESNS is a part of the working consortium for a European Commission- sponsored project to work to *identify food-related emerging risks*, with FAO utilizing case studies on mycotoxins. More information on FAO's programme related to mycotoxins is available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/quality_myco_en.stm

18. In 2004, the FAO Ag Support Systems Division (AGS) initiated a strategic program "*Enhancing Food Quality and Safety by Strengthening Handling, Processing and Marketing in the Food Chain*" to help stakeholders along the food chain, from production to consumption, in utilizing practical cost-effective technologies, marketing approaches, and management practices to assure that consumers have high quality and safe foods available. FAO is assessing priority problems in over 30 countries in 4 regions to guide the search for cost-effective solutions. Examples of these activities are studies on quality and safety in the fresh produce marketing chain of Asia (case studies in Nepal, India, Philippines, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and China) and quality and safety in food chains in Latin America and the Caribbean. Case studies in Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru; quality and safety in food chains in Africa including issues on traceability, mycotoxins, organic horticultural products, and incentives to implementation of quality systems (case studies in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia); studies on honey quality (Asia, Europe); compliance with food quality standards impacting enterprise choices and profitability in Balkan countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Serbia-Montenegro and Romania); packaging systems (Mexico, Morocco and Tunisia); water and ice quality; methodological analysis on causes and economic impacts of food-borne diseases for popular foods at the urban and rural levels (Central America), and training tools for quality management (Peru). The information gathering is completely on-site.

19. By the end of 2005, FAO/AGS plans to have completed the country reports and will start to develop solutions. As there is a need for high quality food and, at the same time, the farmer and other food chain stakeholders need to assure the competitiveness and sustainability of their businesses and to make a profit, the solutions must be both cost-effective, feasible and practical. One of the strategies to transform these outputs into high-impact contributions to FAO's Member Countries is to develop effective partnerships with relevant organizations.

20. WHO launched in October 2004 its "*5 Keys to safer food*" strategy - a series of five simple actions which people can undertake at home or at work while preparing and consuming food. These are: keep hands and cooking surfaces clean; separate raw and cooked food; cook food thoroughly; keep food stored at safe temperatures; and use safe water and raw ingredients. WHO has developed a basic training manual based on the 5 keys to safer food meant for food safety professionals, teachers and other interested organizations to use in training selected target groups (including food handlers and schoolchildren, for example). Field testing of "Bring Food Safety Home: How to use the WHO 5 keys to safer food" is now starting around the world. A poster with the 5 keys already translated in 27 languages and more information on the project is available at : <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys/en/index.html>

Global Initiatives

21. FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO, and the World Bank established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in 2003 to coordinate the capacity building efforts of these organizations in the areas of food safety, plant, and animal health and to provide a funding mechanism for countries and stakeholders to improve in meeting WTO SPS standards. An FAO (ESNS) /WHO project to assist the low income countries in Developing Food Standards within a Risk Analysis Framework- pilot application in Asia and the Pacific was approved for funding from this Facility and will be implemented in 2005. Another project was funded to support national implementation of the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health. Interested countries and stakeholders are encouraged to propose projects and submit them to the STDF for consideration. More information on the STDF is available from: www.standardsfacility.org

22. In February 2003, FAO and WHO launched a Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced 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 ability to participate in the establishment of global food safety and quality standards, as well as improve their capacity to implement those standards in their own countries. Participants from 91 countries have been selected to participate in Codex meetings in 2005 with help from the Codex Trust Fund. The Fund will enable a total of approximately 330 participants to participate in Codex meetings in 2005. More information on the trust fund is available from www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/ in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. A complete report of the trust fund is presented as CAC/28 INF.6.

23. In early 2004, FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) launched a joint initiative entitled a “Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases” (GF-TADs). Some of the diseases addressed in GF-TADs are of public health interest and the FAO-OIE activities will have a global objective of re-enforcing Veterinary Services.

24. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is a multidisciplinary area of work in FAO which is attracting a significant and growing demand for assistance from members. GAP work in FAO is focusing on provision of information, technical assistance and capacity building to help developing countries cope with changing and globalizing food systems and the proliferation of GAP standards developed mainly by the food industry, while not compromising their sustainable development objectives. A database of activities relating to GAPs has been developed in the Agriculture Department, and will be available on the website shortly. More information on GAPs can be found at: http://www.fao.org/prods/GAP/gapindex_en.htm

25. In response to resolutions of the World Health Assembly calling for enhanced communication between WHO and its Member States on matters of food safety, WHO, in collaboration with FAO, has established an official International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to be used for targeted and rapid distribution of various information for the protection of public health. One part of INFOSAN will be dedicated to food safety emergency situations (INFOSAN EMERGENCY) where imminent risk of serious injury or death is present. More information is available from:

www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/infosan/en/

26. WHO also manages a global network of laboratories and individuals involved in surveillance, isolation, identification and antimicrobial resistance testing of *Salmonella* (Global Salm-Surv). The network, which links around 800 members from nearly 500 institutions in 138 countries, is currently being extended to include other major foodborne pathogens, e.g. *Campylobacter*.

27. The Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food), implemented by WHO in cooperation with a network of collaborating centres in over 70 countries, continues to provide Member States, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and FAO/WHO expert advisory bodies information on level and trends of chemicals in food and the diet. Access to GEMS/Food data is available through the web portal for Summary Information on Global Health Trends (<http://SIGHT>) or through the WHO food safety Website at:

<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/gems/en/index.html>

Global Tools Available

28. Apart from the direct implementation of activities in the area of food quality and safety in developing countries, FAO and WHO elaborate guidance and technical materials to be used by other implementing agencies working in these areas. This ensures broader and more sustainable impact of the technical assistance provided in the tools. Some of the tools developed on food quality and safety include the following.

29. In an effort to improve information exchange and communication with stakeholders in food safety and quality, FAO/ESNS distributes a monthly electronic newsletter, the *Food Safety and Quality Update*, to over 3,000 subscribers to provide information on recent developments and upcoming activities of FAO and Codex that are related to food safety and quality. Other parties interested in receiving the newsletter can also subscribe by following the simple instructions listed in the newsletter itself. The current newsletter and an archive of past newsletters are available from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/fsqu_en.stm.

30. WHO/FOS periodically sends an electronic newsletter, the *Food Safety News*, to approx. 3000 subscribers and interested parties regarding the activities of WHO in food safety. Current and past issues are available in English, French and Spanish, from: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/newsletter/en/>

31. During its first year of activity, the *International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health* (www.ipfsaph.org) - a joint initiative with IPPC, OIE, Codex and WTO - has handled over 2 million page requests and built up a regular user base of over 5,000 users. In addition to the international standards, notifications, and other official information from the partner international agencies, the portal also provides a view on national legislation and related texts from the EU, USA, and smaller data sets from a pilot group of developing countries (21,000 records in May 2005). The latest version includes up-to-date information on the Codex-established maximum residue limits (MRLs) for veterinary drugs and pesticides, as well as the JECFA and JMPR evaluations of these substances; navigation in English French and Spanish; and a "help desk" for any questions users may have regarding the portal. Regional demonstration workshops will be held later this year. More information on the portal project is available in CAC/28 INF.4.

32. FAO/ESNS released in 2004 the *Worldwide Regulations for Mycotoxins in Food and Feed in 2003*. The number of countries with specific regulations for mycotoxins has increased over the years, reflecting the general concern that governments have about the potential effects of mycotoxins on humans and animal health and their implications for trade. The publication describes the situation of worldwide mycotoxin regulations as of December 2003. The publication, along other FAO publications in the area of mycotoxins is available at:

English www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/quality_myco_en.stm

French www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/quality_myco_fr.stm

Spanish www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/quality_myco_es.stm

33. In 2004, FAO/ESNS published an FAO Food and Nutrition Paper on *Marine Biotoxins* in an effort to support the exchange of scientific information on an important subject of concern for food safety worldwide. This paper provides an extensive review of different aspects of five shellfish poisoning syndromes, as well as one fish poisoning syndrome. The paper is currently available in English and will soon be available in other languages from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/food_marine_en.stm

34. As part of the previously- mentioned global project, FAO/ESNS has developed a *training package and manual* to assist in *Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*. This manual contains materials for trainers to conduct workshops to improve the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The training package is freely available in hard copy, as a CD-ROM, or can be downloaded from the FAO web pages in English, French, and Spanish from:

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm (English)

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/food_fr.stm (French)

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/food_fruits_es.stm (Spanish)

35. As part of the same global project, FAO/ESNS has developed a *database of resources* available in the area of *Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*. The main objective of the database is to improve the safe production, harvesting, handling, storage, transport and marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables by providing access to reference information and information exchange among the chain actors, and tools for training, extension and awareness creation. The database is freely available from FAO web pages in English, French, and Spanish from:

<http://www.fao.org/es/esn/fv/ffvqs?m=catalogue&i=FFVQS&p=nav>

36. FAO/ESNS and WHO provide a platform for the exchange of current information on the topic of Acrylamide through an electronic *Acrylamide InfoNet*, which is operated by the Joint (United States Food and Drug Administration and the University of Maryland) Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN). The Infonet is available from www.acrylamide-food.org/

37. In 2004, the FAO Animal Production Service (AGA) published a Manual on *Good Practices for the Meat Industry*. The manual provides a practical basis for the implementation of the recommendations of the Codex Committee on Meat and Poultry Hygiene and practical guidelines for primary production and the meat industry. The Manual is currently available in English and is in process of translation into French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese. A Manual on *Good Dairy Farming Practices* was produced in January 2004 jointly between FAO/AGA and the International Dairy Federation (IDF).

38. The FAO Fish Utilization and Marketing Service published in 2004 the FAO Fisheries Technical Paper #442: *Application of risk assessment in the fish industry*. This document is available at:

http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/007/y4722e/y4722e00.htm.

39. More recently, the FAO Fish Utilization and Marketing Service published the FAO Fisheries Technical Paper #455 entitled *Application of modern analytical techniques to ensure seafood safety and authenticity*. The document is intended to provide an overview of the application of some analytical techniques to ensure seafood safety and species authenticity.

40. The FAO Agricultural and Food Engineering Technologies Service (FAO/AGST) works to add value and improve the quality of fresh fruit and vegetables, strengthen the capacity of public and private sector organizations to provide relevant post-harvest services to their clients, assist in the development of small-scale agro-enterprises in the food supply chain, and disseminate post-harvest information through the *Information Network on Post-harvest Operations (INPhO)*, found at: <http://www.fao.org/inpho/>

41. FAO/ AGST published the following bulletins in 2004:

- *The Role of Post-Harvest Management in Assuring the Quality and Safety of Horticultural Produce* (FAO Agricultural Services Bulletin 152), which reviews the factors that contribute to quality and safety deterioration of horticultural produce and describes approaches to assure the maintenance of quality and safety throughout the post-harvest chain.
- *Quality and Competitiveness of Rural Agroindustry in Latin America and the Caribbean – Efficient and Sustainable Use of Energy* (Bulletin 153), which proposes comprehensive ways to improve quality and also safety of food products as well as the competitiveness of rural agro enterprises.
- *Food Engineering, Quality and Competitiveness in Small Food Industry Systems* (Bulletin 156), which proposes to apply the systems approach to establish the factors affecting food quality and safety, and hence food industry competitiveness.

Global Tools Under Development

42. FAO(ESNS)/WHO are in the process of finalising a CD-ROM training package on ***Food Safety Risk Analysis***, which includes a framework and overview manual, a training module presentation, case studies in risk analysis, and access to FAO/WHO resources related to food safety risk analysis.

43. In order to assist countries in ***Evaluating Capacity Building Needs for Food Control***, FAO/ESNS and WHO have developed a tool to assist countries to identify and prioritise the areas where capacity building is needed. The tool has been peer reviewed and is currently undergoing pilot testing in selected countries.

44. FAO/ESNS and WHO are currently developing a training manual on ***Enhancing Participation in Codex***, designed to strengthen national food safety and quality systems through enhanced participation in the Codex process. It was field-tested in Tanzania (with participation from Kenya and Uganda). It was also used, in draft form, in relevant FAO training activities in Burkina-Faso and Syria. It will be available in final form (in five languages) in the second half of 2005. The manual provides information on the Codex process and the development of national Codex programmes. It should serve both as a reference document for those involved in national Codex activities and as a training tool for national/regional training courses on Codex. A CD-ROM containing the visual aids and relevant reference documents will be included in the manual.

45. FAO (ESNS) and WHO are in the process of developing guidance for governments to address the ***obstacles to the application of HACCP, particularly in small and less developed businesses (SLDBs) and approaches to overcome them***. A technical meeting was held on the subject in December 2004, to review existing materials and further develop the guidelines. The draft document was presented to national governments at the 37th session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene as CRD6. The draft will be peer reviewed in June – July and is expected to be finalised towards the end of 2005.

46. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), FAO/ESNS, and WHO are preparing a ***monograph on mycotoxin prevention***. The publication is currently undergoing finalization and will be available in the upcoming months.

47. As part of the global project for the Enhancement of Coffee Quality through the Prevention of Mould Formation, FAO/ESNS is developing an electronic training resource (web and CD-ROM based) on ***good hygiene practices along the coffee chain*** to guide authorities in the development of national training programmes for various target groups. This is scheduled for completion later in 2005. More information on the project can be found at www.coffee-ota.org.

48. FAO/ESNS and WHO together with the Industry Council for Development (ICD) are developing a ***Basic Awareness Course on Microbiological Risk Assessment*** in the context of its use in risk management. This course has been developed with both risk managers and scientists/future risk assessors in mind. It is aimed towards participants from both government and scientific institutions or academia. The course will be implemented initially on a regional basis following pilot testing in September 2005 and subsequent finalisation.

49. Work has commenced with the newly created IDF/ISO/FAO lactic bacteria action team on ***methods for the assessment of probiotic microorganisms*** as a follow up of the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Health and Nutritional Properties of Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria, held in Cordoba, Argentina 2001. The Team will soon finalize standard methods on determining antibiotic resistance and on determining species and strain identity. More information on this work is available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/food_probio_en.stm

50. An FAO inter-departmental working group on ***Biosecurity*** (encompassing the areas of food safety, animal and plant health, as well as biosafety) is in the process of developing a number of tools to assist countries in their effort to integrate ***Biosecurity***-related disciplines and activities. These tools include a) ***Guidelines to Assist Countries to Develop and Implement National Biosecurity Frameworks***; b) ***Biosecurity Capacity Needs Assessment*** and c) ***Manual on Risk Analysis in the Field of Biosecurity***. The tools will address the commonalities between the various sectors and will complement the existing sector-

specific tools available in each of these areas. These tools will be peer reviewed, pilot tested, and published in the upcoming year. More information on FAO's approach to and work in the area of *Biosecurity* is available from: <http://www.fao.org/biosecurity/>

51. As part of a field project on the safety of street foods, FAO/ESNS is in the process of preparing a *Training of Trainers Manual in Hygienic Practices for Street Food Production and Sale* to assist countries in improving the safety of this important source of nutrition for many cultures.

52. FAO/ AGS is working to develop training materials for trainers of associations for small and medium entrepreneurs. The training materials currently in the pilot phase are related to the *application of cost-effective technologies and management practices for improvement of food quality and safety*, under a quality management approach.

53. The FAO Fish Utilization and Marketing Service is in the process of developing the following tools related to *fish safety and quality*: a) a primer on risk assessment; b) Responsible use of antibiotics in aquaculture; c) Detentions and rejections in international fish trade; d) Proceedings of 5th World Congress on fish inspection; e) HACCP audit and verification; and f) WTO related training material.

54. All these materials, once finalized, will be issued in multi-lingual form for wider use by member countries.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Regional Workshops

55. FAO/ESNS and WHO convened a workshop on *Effective Food Control Systems: Practical Approaches for the African Region* at FAO HQ in Rome, Italy on 24 January 2005, immediately prior to the 16th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. Presenters from FAO and other African countries presented the FAO/WHO guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems, case studies from selected countries of the region on the development of a national strategy for food control, and the role of food borne disease surveillance and monitoring in food control. The full report of the workshop, along with the presentations given is available in English and French from:

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_workshops2005_en.stm.

56. An FAO/Consumers International regional workshop on the theme of *Street Vended Foods (SVF) in Eastern and Southern Africa: Balancing Safety and Livelihood* was organised in Lilongwe, Malawai from 15 to 17 June 2005. The main objective of this workshop was to formulate a consensual plan of action for promoting safer SVF and secure livelihood for vendors in Africa with particular focus on Eastern and Southern Africa. Seven countries from the region participated in the workshop: Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

FAO Regional Projects

57. FAO is involved with a project to assist the countries that are members of the African Union in the *Establishment of a Common Market for basic food products*. The project will: i) collect and collate relevant information concerning state of agricultural commodity markets in Africa and existing trade and marketing constraints that hinder intra-continental trade in agricultural commodities and; ii) undertake the necessary analyses to allow the formulation of a Strategy and Plan of Action to assist in furthering agricultural market integration and trade in agricultural products in Africa. The 18-month project is scheduled for completion in September 2005 and is implemented jointly by the Basic Foodstuffs Service and ESNS.

58. A *Special Regional Program for Food Security* covering the Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) countries, was initiated in December of 2001 and will continue through December 2005. The project was implemented by several divisions within FAO. The objectives of the activities

undertaken by ESNS under phase one were to improve harmonisation of regulation and upgrade the institutional capacity of food control institutions. The activities of the project include review of existing food legislation and regional harmonisation, training of food control inspectors and upgrading laboratory facilities.

59. In early 2004, FAO launched a project to improve the *quality and quantity of gums and resins in Africa* (used in making Gum Arabic, a natural multi-functional food additive) to help the rural poor who live in the semi-arid zones of thirteen African countries bordering the Sahara to achieve self-sufficiency. Specific objectives of the project related to food safety and quality include: 1) To generate information and develop databases on production and marketing of gum and resin resources and products in order to facilitate the participation of producing countries in international trade; 2) to provide training in gum and resin production and primary quality control in order to improve the income for small farmers and rural communities; and 3) Transfer of appropriate technologies to valorise exported products.

WHO Regional Activities

60. The WHO resolution AFR/RC53/R5 endorsed by the 53rd WHO Regional Committee for Africa, held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2003, urged the WHO Regional Director to work with Member States in order to improve the safety of the food of the African Region. The WHO Regional Office received a number of requests from Member States aimed at making food safer along the entire food chain and which were addressed through the following activities:

61. In 2004, a workshop was organized on the procedures and work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission jointly with FAO. This was attended by 24 members of the National Codex Committees of Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

62. A regional Expert Group Meeting on Aflatoxins and Health was organized in Brazzaville, Congo from 24 to 27 May 2005 that reviewed existing knowledge and made recommendations for action and research to WHO. The report will be available in English, French and Portuguese in due course.

63. The third in a series of training courses on foodborne disease surveillance and microbiological monitoring was organized by the WHO Global Salmonella Surveillance (GSS) network for the Francophone African countries was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon and was attended by 25 nationals from 10 countries.

64. A regional strategy for Africa on food law/legislation for use by member states to update national food law/legislation was developed by WHO and will be available in English, French and Portuguese in due course. Based on this regional approach, Gabon, Guinea, Mali and Rwanda are in the process of preparing national plans of action/strategies for food safety.

65. The WHO Regional Office conducted in 2004 a survey on food safety, which analysed the health risks associated with food handling. An awareness-raising workshop was organized in Bamako, Mali with food safety officials from the region. The results of the regional survey were discussed at this workshop. Sixty participants from 30 countries attended the workshop.

66. A WHO training guide for the informal food trade on the causes of foodborne disease and safe food handling was developed in 2004. It will be used in training activities aimed at improving street food safety in the Region.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

National Workshops

67. FAO/ ESNS and the FAO sub-regional office organized a National Workshop in Madagascar on 25-26 April 2005, involving officials and other stakeholders aiming at enhancing the awareness on Codex issues and assess the needs and activities for a project on strengthening the food safety and quality sector in the country.

FAO Field Projects

68. Under its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), FAO has implemented numerous projects on critical aspects of food control in many countries. FAO/TCP is designed to assist Member Nations in solving their most pressing development needs. In the field of food safety these include: strengthening of national food control systems, enhancing laboratory facilities and analysis capacities and improving the ability of member countries to comply with new trade regulations. TCP projects are generally of one to two year duration, with the possibility for a second phase of funding if warranted. Projects have also been implemented from other funding sources as indicated.

69. An FAO/ESNS project to assure the quality of food products in Benin began in late 2003 and is scheduled for completion in October 2005. The project supports the implementation of a system of management and quality assurance of agricultural products.

70. FAO/ESNS has also begun a project to improve the quality of street foods in Benin. The expected project outputs are mainly to reduce the negative impact of urban pollution on consumer health and to improve the food safety at all the production-to-consumption levels. This project contains an important training component to horticulture producers, wholesale and retail food vendors and to food inspectors. A national strategy will be drawn to define the actions to be taken by the relevant governmental institutions to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes. The project was approved in September 2003, the activities began in May 2004 and are scheduled to continue until October 2005.

71. The first phase of an FAO/ESNS project to improve the Quality of Street foods in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso began in September of 2002 and continued through December 2003. The second phase of the project was implemented from January to December 2004. The main activities of the project were to undertake a survey on the quality and safety of street foods, provide training on Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) to street food vendors and on food control techniques to the inspectors. A municipal strategy for reorganizing the informal food sector in Bobo Dioulasso has been formulated as a major outcome of the project.

72. An FAO/ESNS project was approved in May 2004 to support the implementation of a strategy to control and monitor the quality and safety of food products in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project is scheduled to continue until October 2005.

73. An FAO/ESNS project to strengthen the National Food Control System of Gabon began in October 2003 and was completed in March 2005. The objective of the project was to help the country to develop the efficiency of the control of commercialized foodstuffs by the training of food inspectors and laboratory staff. Another objective was to define the necessary strategies to ameliorate the quality of prepared street food.

74. An FAO/ESNS project to improve the quality and safety of street foods in Guinea Bissau was funded in October 2002 and continued until February 2005. The project objectives were to identify practical actions to ensure the quality and safety of street foods and protect consumers and to better integrate the street food sector into the socio-economic context of the city's urbanisation. These objectives were met through the conducting of diagnostic studies of street food sector in terms of prevalent hygienic practices, sanitary infrastructures, legal framework and socio-economic aspects. A plan of action for improving the environmental conditions where street foods are sold and ensure hygienic preparation of the food has been elaborated.

75. An FAO/ESNS project to Support the Informal Food Sector in Guinea began in June 2003 and is scheduled to continue through July 2005. The objective of the assistance is to help the Government to define the strategies necessary to improve the quality of food prepared and sold on the street. The project is carrying out research and pre-test feasible actions to improve the safety and quality of food sold on the street. Consumers will receive information on associations and other institutions working to protect the safety and quality of food and learn where further information on the subject can be found.

76. FAO AGST has coordinated a training of trainers for extension staff in Kenya to raise awareness of mycotoxin contamination and develop appropriate post-harvest practices for its control. To ensure

sustainability, trainees were mandated to sensitise farmer groups and facilitate development of action plans for aflatoxin control at farm level. The action plans are intended to serve as pilot projects that can be replicated in other communities. A second phase of the project targeting other stakeholders is on-going in 2005.

77. An FAO project to provide capacity building and assistance in the review of sanitary and phytosanitary legislation in Namibia was funded in May 2004 and is scheduled to continue until November 2005. The three objectives of the project are: (a) to assist the Government in the review and assessment of existing legislation on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) matters; (b) to draft, in collaboration with national counterparts, updated legislation on SPS matters to enable Namibia to meet its WTO obligations; and (c) to build capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture on WTO and SPS matters, strengthening the analytical and negotiating capacity of Namibia's trade negotiators. ESNS is involved in this project, along with the FAO Legal Service and Plant Protection Service.

78. An FAO/ESNS project to implement a National Integrated Food Sanitation Program in Nigeria was approved in September 2004. The activities proposed in the project will address the main problems hindering the implementation of the food sanitation programme in Nigeria, including the following: a) ignorance of the relationship between poor food sanitation and food borne diseases amongst the citizenry; b) ignorance of basic hygiene necessary for adequate food sanitation; c) poor capacity for surveillance and enforcement; d) financial constraints resulting in poor capacity for food sanitation management in terms of personnel and logistics for effective programme management; e) lack of legislative tools for enforcing food sanitation standards e.g. food act, food sanitation guidelines.

79. A project has been approved to assist in the control of pesticide residues in fruit and vegetable products for export in Senegal. The project, funded in May 2003, is led by FAO's Plant Production Division, in collaboration with ESNS.

80. An FAO TCP project was approved in early 2005 to assist in the control of mycotoxins in South Africa. The project activities have recently been initiated and will continue to be implemented in the upcoming months, with ESNS as the lead technical unit. The objective of the project is to carry out a preliminary assessment of the level of contamination by mycotoxins (mainly OTA and DON in selected commodities) and to enhance the government's capabilities in the sampling, monitoring, prevention and control of mycotoxins in foodstuffs with a view to ensure maximum consumer protection and promote international trade in foodstuffs. The proposed activities are currently centred on data generation and analysis, with a view to improve monitoring and control activities, perform scientific based risk assessment with local data, as well as to feed in the network of information exchange in SADC countries.

81. An FAO project to Strengthen the National Food Control System and National Codex Organisation in Tanzania was completed in January 2005. The objective of the project was to improve the quality, safety and nutritional value of food produced in Tanzania and to ensure the acceptability of food imports/exports into/from the country. In particular, it aimed at reviewing and improving the current food control administration; upgrading food inspection and food analysis through training programmes; and improving the capabilities of the Tanzania Codex Contact Point within the Tanzania Bureau of Standards. The project is being implemented by ESNS and the FAO sub-regional office for Southern and Eastern Africa.

82. An FAO project funded by the STDF to implement national nodes of the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health in two pilot countries, including Uganda, was initiated in February 2005. The project aims to: 1) develop a portal implementation handbook to assist countries in the establishment of a national internet-based site for the exchange of official legislation and regulations on food safety, animal and plant health; 2) promote the use of the portal as a valuable source of information in the area; and 3) assist countries meet their transparency obligations under the SPS Agreement by ensuring that legislation in force is "available in such a manner as to allow interested Members to be come acquainted with them".

WHO national activities:

83. WHO provided Kenya with technical assistance during the outbreak of acute aflatoxicosis associated with contaminated maize in 2004. Working together with partners, a survey was conducted to evaluate the burden of disease and identify the predisposing factors.
84. National Authorities in Kenya were also supported to conduct a prosecution course for 26 Public Health Officers to strengthen food law enforcement. National tools were also drafted for foodborne disease surveillance.
85. WHO provided assistance to Seychelles to organize training courses on food inspection and handling for staff from the health sector and prepare a draft proposal for equipping national laboratories to detect foodborne pathogens, their toxins and antibiotic residues from imported meat products.
86. WHO, in collaboration with FAO and UNIDO, assisted Niger to organize two seminars on food safety and the safety of meat.
87. In Benin, WHO implemented a program on school food safety and laboratory supplies were provided for foodborne disease surveillance and monitoring.
88. WHO also assisted The Republic of Congo in strengthening the capacity for microbiological monitoring of foods.
89. Gabon was assisted in conducting a national food safety survey and in sensitizing street food vendors and other food handlers on safe food handling.
90. Support was also provided to Eritrea for the establishment of a National Codex Committee and to Mali for the establishment of a National Food Safety Agency.

FAO UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

91. FAO/ESNS has received many requests by national governments for future projects.
92. At the request of the National Food Research Institute of Botswana for FAO assistance in strengthening its national food safety system, a project proposal has been prepared. This project was developed by ESNS in collaboration with the FAO sub-regional office for Southern and Eastern Africa and is in the approval phase.
93. A request to FAO (ESNS) has been received from the government of Cote d'Ivoire to formulate a project to strengthen the food control system. This project is in the formulation stage.
94. A request has been received from the government of Rwanda to address the Hygienic Handling of foods of animal origin. This project is in the formulation stage. The request was submitted to the FAO Animal Production Service, in collaboration with ESNS.
95. The Government of Senegal has requested assistance from FAO/ESNS in strengthening and supporting Quality Assurance Systems in Food Safety Laboratories. The request is currently in the approval process.
96. Funding is currently being sought for a sub-regional programme proposal developed by FAO/ESNS to facilitate trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states through food standards and food safety management.
97. At the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa, preparations are underway for a FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa, to be held in Harare, Zimbabwe from 3-6 October 2005. This Conference is part of a series of regional conferences on food safety that FAO/ESNS and WHO/FOS are convening in response to requests from member countries for policy advice and capacity building in food safety management. More information on the Conference, including the provisional agenda, reports of the briefing meetings, information on how to participate in the Conference, guidelines for the submission of Conference Room Documents, as well as the working papers and other useful information as it becomes available, can be accessed in English and French from:

<http://www.foodsafetyforum.org/african/index.asp>

98. FAO/ AGST will be studying the safety and quality aspects of organic fruits and vegetables in selected countries in Africa in 2005. Whilst the protocols for growing organic produce are well established, there is little information on post-harvest handling, storage and processing standards for organic products. The study will include an assessment of potential health hazards and quality issues.

WHO upcoming activities

99. Capacity building aimed at strengthening foodborne disease surveillance, food control systems and to enhance participation in the health-related committees of the Codex Alimentarius will continue. In particular the training on food borne disease surveillance and laboratory monitoring will be expanded to include the Anglophone and Lusophone countries.

100. There will be projects in Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Botswana and others to improve food safety in schools and markets by applying the WHO 5 keys for safer food and the healthy setting approach. A project aimed at strengthening food laws and the implementation of Codex Standards in selected countries is also planned.

101. The following workshops/consultations are also planned: i) Expert workshop on Codex Procedures and risk analysis; ii) Training of trainers in food safety for the informal food; iii) Workshop on foodborne disease surveillance and laboratory monitoring of foodborne pathogens.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN ASIA

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Regional Workshops

102. The FAO Animal Health and Production Division held an *FAO regional workshop on Food and Feed Safety* from 19 to 22 July 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Workshop was held in collaboration with OIE, DLD (Department of Livestock Development, Thailand) and JLTA (Japan Livestock Technology Association). The Workshop was organized in order to review the current situation of Food and Feed Safety in Member Countries in the region and to set directions for food and feed safety programmes and concurrently to define priority areas for capacity building. As follow-up, Member Countries in the Region are planning to develop a Food and Feed Safety Network, using FAO and OIE expertise, to improve food and feed safety, through coordinated surveillance and risk analysis activities, laboratory procedures and information sharing.

103. FAO/ESNS and WHO jointly organized a workshop on "*Functional Foods: Safety and Regulatory Aspects*" on 6 September 2004 in Jeju-do, Republic of Korea, immediately prior to the 14th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia. The workshop was not intended to make recommendations to FAO/WHO, Codex, or the member countries regarding functional foods or to propose definitions of functional foods, but to provide information and identify specific areas that require further attention and that could be addressed in the future. The complete report of the workshop is available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm.

104. The sixth in the series of conferences organized for the South Asian region under the global FAO (ESNS)/ ILSI Cooperative Framework was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 25-27 November, 2004. This *Regional Meeting on Food Safety in the SAARC Region* involved: 1) discussion on harmonization of national standards with Codex; 2) presentations and discussion on horizontal standards; and 3) discussion on further steps required towards the integration of science- based food control among SAARC countries. The full programme for the conference can be accessed at:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_workshops2004_en.stm

105. As part of FAO/ESNS's global programme for improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, FAO and the Department of Agriculture of the Thailand Government held an Asian Countries Sub-Regional workshop on "*Improving the Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: A Practical Approach*" in Bangkok, Thailand from 28 February - 04 March 2005. The complete report of the workshop, including the papers presented, agenda and background information note are available from:

www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_workshops2005_en.stm

Regional Projects

106. The New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZ AID) signed an agreement with FAO/ESNS to implement, in cooperation with WHO, a three-year project to *improve food safety and its management in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam*. The project will provide support to develop modern and science-based food control systems as a means to reduce food safety risks for domestic consumers in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam and promote economic development through increased food and agricultural exports that meet international sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. Project activities will begin in mid- 2005.

107. WHO, through its regional office for South-East Asia (SEARO) is supporting the development of national policies that will further promote the safety of food from production to consumption. Responding to requests from countries, WHO developed materials for educating consumers on food safety risks and on safe food handling behaviours that can help minimize those risks. The WHO "Five Keys to Safer Food" poster was translated in 17 South-East Asian languages and widely distributed. Many recipients of the over 150 000 posters and 5000 booklets distributed in South-East Asia, which includes public health authorities, small and medium scale food and restaurant business owners/food vendors, food and sanitary inspectors, hospitality businesses students, consumer organizations and schoolteachers are using these materials in their daily work.

108. Additional advocacy efforts in the region included the development and distribution by WHO through its Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) of a video on the need for governments to address food safety along the entire food chain. It also included collaborative action with the Philippines' Food Safety Committee of the Department of Health and Consumers International (CI) to enhance consumer representative access to information on food safety and Codex.

109. WHO WPRO also finalized a web-based network of trainers of food safety regulators (<http://www.wpro.who.int/fsiguide/index.asp>) and a forum was initiated to identify core competencies that need to be addressed in the training of food inspectors.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

FAO Field Projects

110. An FAO/ESNS TCP project on Strengthening Food Control in Bangladesh was approved in May 2003 and was completed in May 2005. The project objective was to strengthen the regulatory food control system in order to improve consumer protection by ensuring the safety and quality of both the domestic and imported food supplies. The project objective was achieved through improving local food control capacity by providing on-site training in food control administration and management including review of legislation and development of food quality and food safety standards and regulations. Training was provided to laboratory analytical staff, laboratory management, food inspectors and others involved in food quality control.

111. An FAO/ESNS TCP project on Strengthening Food Control and Codex began in Bhutan in June 2000, with funding for Phase 2 of this project approved in February 2004. The project is oriented toward the re-organisation of the food control administration in the country. A new food act has been proposed and the inspection service has been centralised. Some activities are still ongoing for upgrading the food chemical analysis laboratories.

112. A two-year FAO/ESNS 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's activities involve the participation of different actors, aiming at a) heightening the awareness of quality and safety control managers, in small and middle-size food producing enterprises, about basic food hygiene and food safety requirements; b) strengthening the links between residue monitoring and agricultural extension services with regard to pesticide related information and; c) training farmers in safe and effective use and application of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

113. An FAO/ESNS TCP project for Mongolia to Strengthen Food Import Control commenced in June 2002 and was closed in October 2004. The objectives of the project were 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 has addressed the institutional set-up for the control of food import in Mongolia, provide training to food inspectors, strengthening laboratory facilities and train analytical staff associated with border food control. It has 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. All project activities were not completed prior to project closure, and a phase 2 has been requested to allow implementation of remaining activities.

114. An FAO/ESNS TCP project on strengthening SPS compliance for fresh fruits and vegetables commenced in Thailand in December 2003, and will continue through October 2005. The project has been requested by the Government of Thailand given the great potential in Thailand for exporting fresh and processed fruits and vegetables. Project activities will focus on management of programs 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.

115. An FAO TCP project to improve coffee quality in Thailand began in June 2004 and is scheduled for completion in February 2006. Activities under this project include 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. The project is being implemented by the Industrial Crops officer of the FAO regional office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with ESNS.

116. An FAO TCP project to improve coffee quality and prevent ochratoxin A (OTA) contamination in Vietnam began in September 2002 and was completed in May 2005. The project involved defining mould formation mechanisms, identifying critical control points, evaluating optimal drying conditions, and developing the necessary tools (e.g. GAP, GMP and HACCP) to control and monitor OTA production. The project was implemented under the leadership of the Industrial Crops Group of the FAO regional office for Asia and the Pacific with the collaboration of ESNS.

WHO NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

117. The importance of national food safety programmes founded on risk assessment or its elements (hazard identification, hazard characterization, exposure assessment and risk characterization) is clearly identified in both the WHO global and regional food safety strategies. Consequently, WHO WPRO strengthened the capacity of its Member States with support for targeted contaminant monitoring in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam while, in the Philippines, a review was undertaken to determine what information was available on the contamination of the food supply.

118. WHO WPRO also advanced efforts that had been earlier initiated in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, to strengthen foodborne disease surveillance in Viet Nam. In support of the programme of active surveillance, case-control studies, household survey, and clinical laboratory-practice survey, progress made by the Food Administration of Viet Nam was reviewed and technical expertise to enhance data collation and interpretation was provided.

119. WHO provided support to Cambodia, China and Lao People's Democratic Republic to review their current food safety situation and to further develop national food safety policies and/or plans of action. At the request of the Ministry of Health in China, WHO reviewed the organization of the food safety system and identified strategies and actions to enhance the food safety control structures; identified how the newly formed State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) will coordinate action on food safety with the Ministry of Health; collaborated with the Development Research Center (DRC) on how a farm to table approach could be applied to food safety in China; and prepared a proposal for possible European Union (EU), WHO and FAO collaborative action to strengthen food safety systems in China. In Cambodia,

120. Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, food laws and/or regulations were reviewed and in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam new food laws were approved. Support was also provided to enable the Food and Drug Department of Lao People's Democratic Republic to disseminate information regarding its legislation.

121. In Viet Nam, food safety training materials were developed and applied to the training of food managers and handlers in canteens; training courses were conducted in a number of key locations for food producers and food traders; and training was provided in relation to laboratory techniques, laboratory quality assurance and laboratory environmental management.

122. In China, supplies were provided for food hygiene information management and information sharing in China. An international conference on food safety supported by WHO and other international agencies was organized to discuss China's food safety system and future options to strengthen it.

123. Also, in order to enhance access of school children to key food safety messages, WHO WPRO developed and tested food safety information for teenagers and food safety instructional activities for school children in the Philippines.

124. Based on an assessment of the food safety situation done by WHO in Banda Aceh, Indonesia after the tsunami, the Indonesian Government is currently implementing a programme to reduce the risk of foodborne and diarrheal illness in tsunami-affected areas.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

125. FAO, OIE, and WHO are convening an Expert Consultation on the human health aspects and regulatory control in the production, distribution and marketing of live food animals in Asia with special reference to avian influenza. The consultation will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 4 to 6 July 2005. The objective of the Consultation is to identify steps to be taken to develop and apply evidence-based risk management strategies related to human health and the strengthening of regulatory control in the marketing of live birds and animals for food.

126. The FAO-Agriculture Department and FAO/ESNS, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture of Thailand, will organize a regional workshop on *Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* in Bangkok, Thailand from 14-16 September, 2005.

127. The Government of Myanmar has requested assistance from FAO/ ESNS 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. The matter is under active consideration of FAO (ESNS), with a consultant mission planned for late 2005.

128. 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 is expected to start in the second half of 2005.

129. The Government of Pakistan has requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) 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.

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

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

132. A project has been proposed by the Industrial Crops Officer of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with ESNS, to assist Asian countries in the Quality Improvement of Pepper. The project is currently in the review phase.

133. An FAO/ WHO project to Develop Food Standards within a Risk Analysis Framework with pilot application in the low income countries of Asia and the Pacific has been funded by STDF in 2004, with project activities to begin in mid- 2005. In response to needs expressed by FAO member countries, this programme is designed to: a) increase the capacity of low income countries to: i) Develop their own food standards; ii) Participate in the Codex standard- setting process; and iii) Understand and comply with, in the development of these standards, international obligations under the relevant WTO Agreements; and b) provide a model for implementation of this programme in other regions of the world.

134. As a result of studies carried out in India, Nepal, Pakistan, P.R. China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, FAO/AGSF is organizing a regional workshop in late 2005 on the main *safety and quality issues in horticultural marketing chains* and the incentives for farmers to make quality and safety improvements. This workshop will be aimed at awareness creation, identifying the issues to be addressed and the planning and initiation of specific programmes and will be a joint effort with the FAO Regional Office and the Association of Food and Agricultural Marketing Agencies in Asia and the Pacific (AFMA).

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Regional Workshops

135. FAO and WHO jointly held a sub-regional workshop for the *Development of National Food Safety Strategies in South Eastern Europe (SEE)* in Brijuni, Croatia from 5-7 July 2004. This workshop was organized as part of the Food Safety Project of the SEE countries within the framework of the Stability Pact Initiative for social cohesion in the Balkans. The main objectives of the workshop included: a) Needs assessment for the development of a national food safety strategy; b) Drawing up guidelines to support national authorities in developing their respective food safety strategies; c) Strengthening intersectoral collaboration between the Ministries of Health and Agriculture to promote food safety; and d) Provision of a platform for discussion on how to better coordinate current capacity building initiatives in food safety with other international agencies. A meeting of SEE Food Safety Project National Managers was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina in March 2005.

136. FAO and the Hungarian Food Safety Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of Hungary held an "*International Workshop on the Development of National Food Safety Strategies*" in Budapest, Hungary, from 6 to 8 September 2004. The workshop was held to a) Review responses to the Food Strategy Evaluation Questionnaire to provide information on country experiences, obstacles and progress related to the development of their national food safety strategies; b) Provide guidance to participants through expert lecturers, technical material and discussions on the development of food safety strategies regarding various aspects of food safety; c) Provide on-site demonstrations of the HACCP system in food processing plants and retail establishments; d) To identify activities in which Central and Eastern European countries, FAO and the expert community can cooperate in ensuring that the

recommendations of the Pan-European Conference on Food Safety (PEC) and Quality, endorsed by the 23rd and 24th FAO Regional Conference for Europe, are followed-up/implemented.

137. Within the framework of the International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and European Integration Processes (20 – 23 September 2004, Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro), the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe supported the implementation of a session on Harmonisation of Quality Systems in Agriculture. Presentations and country reviews on the *Status of Harmonization of National Food Quality Systems with International Standards*, revealed significant differences in meeting international standards. It was noted that regardless of the level of harmonization and institutional development, in all three countries in attendance, (Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro) there is still a gap, if not a vacuum, in the dissemination of information on quality standards and requirements among farmers and small scale producers.

Regional Projects

138. An FAO project in the South Eastern European subregion (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania) on *Strengthening food safety in South East European transition countries – A regional approach to food legislation and control* was approved in December 2004. The overall objective of the assistance is to assist these transition countries in establishing a modern food safety and control system and is being implemented by ESNS and the FAO Legal Service. The project plans to convene several workshops to assist in the development of national food safety policies, including inspection, control and legislation. Additionally, two training courses are planned to train food inspectors in modern approaches to food inspection and food industry experts in food hygiene (HACCP, GMP).

139. An FAO/ESNS TCP project to improve food safety in Food Quality and Safety System of Armenia and Georgia was approved in early 2005 and is scheduled to be completed in late 2006. The main objectives of the project are to strengthen the priority components of the system for strategic planning and coordination of food control activities, harmonization of food standards, inspection programmes and laboratory networks, and quality assurance programmes in agro-processing sectors.

140. The WHO Food Safety Programme in Europe has drafted a document containing “*Essential elements for the development of intersectoral Food Safety Strategies in the European Region*” which is currently under revision. This document is based on the outcome and experience of intersectoral workshops held at national and sub-regional levels in the region.

141. The WHO Nutrition, Food Security and Food Safety European Programmes have published the book “*Food and Health in Europe: a new basis for action*” which promotes the development of food and nutrition policies which protect and promote health and reduce the burden of food related diseases, while contributing to socioeconomic development and a sustainable environment. Details on this publication are available at : <http://www.euro.who.int/foodsafety/publications/whopub>

142. The WHO Global Salmonella Surveillance (GSS) network has organized a 2nd level course for microbiologists from 10 Russian speaking countries at the Institute Pasteur in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2004 and a follow up course in collaboration with FAO in June 2005.

143. A 3rd level course of the WHO GSS was organized for epidemiologists and microbiologists of 17 Central, Eastern and South Eastern countries in Poland in 2004. The Food Hygiene Center in Warsaw has been designated official Regional Training Center for Central, Eastern and SEE (May 2004). As a follow up project, Slovenia has proposed to study the burden of food borne diseases in the country.

144. The Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Food Contamination Programme in Europe published online the Summary Information on Global Health Trends (SIGHT) database in 2004 including European data on exposure and intake of chemical food contaminants. Additional information is available at:

http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/FOS/Chemical/20040728_1

145. WHO organized in collaboration with the National Institute for Agronomic Research of France (INRA) the third International Workshop on Total Diet Studies Paris, France, May 2004. In connection with this workshop a Regional training on Total Diet Studies was organized for more than 20 francophone countries.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Field Projects

146. An FAO TCP project to improve the diversification of value-added production and certification in environmental farming systems in Croatia was approved in April 2003 and is scheduled for completion in June 2005. The specific objectives of the project are to a) develop a strategy to support organic and special quality agricultural production; b) build national capacities in specific certification, production and research requirements; and c) improve certification systems. The project is led by the being jointly facilitated by the Food and Nutrition Division and the Environment and Natural Resources Service of FAO.

147. An FAO/ESNS TCP project to strengthen the Food Quality and Safety System of Turkey was approved in April 2003 and was completed in May 2005. The specific projects objectives were to strengthen the national capacities of a) food safety and quality inspection and control systems; b) risk analysis and risk assessment; c) development of a rapid alert system; d) food certification system; and e) use of information network systems in food control practices.

148. An FAO/ESNS TCP project to provide assistance in improving a laboratory of safety and quality of food and agricultural products in the Ukraine was initiated in March 2005 and is scheduled to be completed in September 2006. The project aims to a) provide on-site technical advice in planning and organizing the new Ukrainian Laboratory for Quality and Safety of Food and Agricultural Products; b) provide assistance in preparation for accreditation of this laboratory according to ISO 17025; c) build capacities of laboratory technical staff in specific advanced analytical techniques; and d) create awareness and develop effective dialogue about food safety related issues among all stakeholders.

149. WHO has organized workshops for the development of intersectoral national food safety strategies in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in September 2004 and in Tbilisi, Georgia in March 2005, and in Moscow, Russian Federation, in June 2005.

150. A meeting of the interdisciplinary working group for the development of Food Safety strategy at the Republic of Croatia was organized at the Croatian Food Agency, Osijek, Croatia in February 2005. Similar national meetings of the inter-ministerial commissions of food safety task forces are being organized in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia & Montenegro and Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

151. In the framework of the implementation of the Biennial Collaborative Agreement, Albania requested WHO to organize a 2nd HACCP training for Food inspectors as a tool for risk management. This workshop was organized in Tirana, Albania from 2nd to 6th May 2005. In Albania, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is implementing an EU CARDS project which aims to develop a solid framework for the establishment of Border Inspection Points at the national level.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

152. There are a number of projects currently in the formulation and approval phases.

153. A bilateral project between Albania and Italy, with FAO (ESNS) as the implementing agency, is currently in the final stages of approval. The project seeks to strengthen the Albanian national food control system, in particular the laboratories.

154. The government of Azerbaijan has requested technical assistance from FAO (ESNS) in the area of food safety. A project proposal has now been sent to the government for their consideration.

155. The government of Bulgaria has requested to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Netherlands to establish a food safety training centre for food inspectors, laboratory staff and food industry experts. This project may be implemented by FAO (ESNS) and funded by the government of the Netherlands.
156. The government of Croatia has requested FAO (ESNS) assistance in strengthening Codex activities in that country. The project is in the initial formulation phase.
157. The government of the Czech Republic has requested FAO (ESNS) assistance to non-governmental organizations of Central and Eastern Europe related to implementation of food safety guarantee policy. The project is currently in the formulation phase.
158. Biannual Collaborative Agreements to develop National Food Safety Strategies have been signed between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Ministries of Health of Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro and Uzbekistan for the period 2004-2005.
159. The WHO Food Safety Programme in Europe will continue the implementation of the project to “Strengthen Food Safety and Nutrition Services in South Eastern Europe (SEE)” in the framework of the Stability Pact Initiative for Social Cohesion in the Balkans.
160. The WHO Food Safety Programme is planning to organize pilot studies for the adaptation of the WHO manual on Bringing Food Safety to Home: Five Keys for Safer Food, through the European Health Promoting Schools Network in the Central Asian Republics.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Regional Events

161. FAO/ESNS and the WHO Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)/ Instituto Panamericano de Protección de Alimentos (INPPAZ) implemented a workshop on *Food Control Systems* immediately prior to the 14th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean meeting on 28 November 2004 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The programme included presentations of the FAO/WHO guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems, national case studies on the development of a national strategy for food control, and related topics. More information on the workshop is available from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_workshops2004_en.stm.
162. The 4th Meeting of the Pan American Commission on Food Safety (COPAIA 4) was held in Mexico City, Mexico on 20 April 2005, prior to the 14th Inter-American Ministerial Meeting on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA 14). The purpose of COPAIA 4 was to examine the progress and constraints related to the advancement of the Regional Food Safety Program. A successful experience on the development of an integrated food safety system was presented by the Venezuelan delegation. Lessons learned on experiences and cooperation between PAHO/WHO and Consumers Organization in the Region of the Americas were also presented and discussed. The final report of COPIA 4 was submitted to RIMSA 14/7 (additional information is available at: <http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/vp/rimsa14index-e.htm>).
163. RIMSA 14 was held in Mexico City, Mexico from 21 to 22 April 2005. RIMSA is a ministerial forum for coordination of the agriculture and health sectors in matter of mutual interest. The objectives of RIMSA 14 were to discuss agriculture and health policy issues of mutual interest and to analyze PAHO/WHO's compliance with the mandates of its Governing Bodies, regarding veterinary public health, including the plans of action for the 2006-2007 biennium of its specialized centers—the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA) and the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses (INPPAZ) The meeting addressed current topics, such as the Summit of the Americas and the development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (MDGs) for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; international cooperation on emerging issues in agriculture and health; productive

municipalities; and advances in science and technology—their application, inter alia, in the food production chain. A complete final report can be found at <http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/vp/rimsa14index-e.htm>

Regional Projects

164. Two FAO sub-regional projects to strengthen the analytical activities, laboratory quality assurance and capacity building of the Interamerican Network of Food Analytical Laboratories (INFAL/ RILAA), were approved in December 2004 (countries are assigned into one of the two projects in Central America or South America, based on geographic location). The main objective of these projects is to assure that the laboratories provide reliable analytical results for the national food control system, as well as for the certification of food imports and exports. The project's activities attempt to facilitate the product conformity assessment through harmonization or establishing the equivalence of the analytical results at the international level. The main activities to be undertaken by the project include the implementation of training activities and the elaboration of national action plans for strengthening the technical, analytical and administrative skills for laboratory analysis of microbiological and chemical contaminants. A total of nineteen countries from the Latin American and Caribbean Region are benefiting from the implementation of these projects. The project is implemented by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and ESNS.

165. PAHO/WHO has also provided technical cooperation for strengthening food analytical services through the Inter American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL). As part of the INFAL Action Plan 2003-2005, the online information system was updated, containing data on: analytical methods, standards, QC & QA procedures, as well as capabilities and needs of member laboratories. Technical Cooperation efforts have been focused on subjects related to quality assurance, such as proficiency testing (3 rounds for micro and chemical analysis) and distance leaning courses through the Internet (validation of methods for chemical analysis), where more than 300 people from 17 countries participated from their own work places.

166. An FAO regional project (TCP/RLA/2904) to strengthen the management of National Codex Committees and Application of the Codex Alimentarius standards of the Andean Countries was initiated in September of 2002 and continued until December 2004. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are participating in this project. The main objectives are to strengthen the management of the National Codex Committees; to develop a national and sub-regional training program and to promote the harmonisation of the national standards to Codex. The project is implemented by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and ESNS. The complete project, including objectives and activities with the corresponding reports and documents, is available at:

www.rlc.fao.org/prior/comagric/codex/rla2904/default.htm

167. Two regional project have received financial support through WHO: a) From the AGFUND, a project for Food Safety Practices in Healthy Markets in four countries (Bolivia, Guyana, Dominican Republic and Paraguay) was approved, and b) From DFID, a project to adapt and validate the WHO manual on Bringing Food Safety Home in primary schools of four countries (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela) was approved. These projects are being currently executed and are expected to conclude in 2005.

Other Regional Activities

168. With FAO's support, the Latin American Food Composition Network (LATINFOODS) continued working on the update of the Regional Food Composition Table which is available from: www.fao.org/Regional/LAmerica/bases/alimento/default.htm. A CD- ROM with this table was published and distributed. The Second Electronic Conference on Food Data Quality Evaluation for Data Base and Food Chemical Composition Table was carried in October 2004 (<http://www.rlc.fao.org/foro/latinfoods/default.htm>).

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Field Projects

169. The second phase of an FAO TCP project to Strengthen food control and safety of fish for export from Antigua and Barbuda was approved in January 2004 and is scheduled for completion in mid 2005. The objective of the assistance is to provide the basis for the establishment of an effective national food control system, capable of ensuring the quality and safety of food supply in the country. Specifically, the project will assist the Government in: a) the inspection and certification of export fish and fishery products; b) training of food control personnel i.e. food analysts; and c) upgrading of the analytical capabilities of the food control laboratory. The project is implemented jointly by ESNS and the FAO Fish Utilization and Marketing Service.

170. An FAO TCP project to evaluate the capacity, infrastructure and logistics for post-harvest management of living modified organisms (LMOs) and identification of strategies to apply Article 18,2a) of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Argentina was implemented from March 2003 - November 2004. The scope of the project included the evaluation of field operations, handling, storage, infrastructure, transportation logistics, and export of grains, as well as the estimation of the capacity to establish segregated production and post-production chains with traceability, with emphasis on corn and soybeans. The project was led by the Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service (AGPS), with the Agricultural and Food Engineering Technologies Service (AGST) and other FAO Services providing technical support.

171. An FAO project to strengthen the biosecurity framework in Belize was funded in April 2005 and is scheduled to continue until March 2006. The objectives of the project are: (a) support the up-dating of the biosecurity legal framework and b) strengthen the national capacity for effective implementation of biosecurity approaches and system. The project is led by the FAO Development Law Service, with ESNS providing technical support.

172. An FAO/ESNS TCP project on the prevention of mould formation (Ochratoxin A - OTA) in coffee in Ecuador started in July 2004 and is expected to be completed in December 2005. The project is being implemented with the participation of the public and private sectors. The main objective is to create awareness at the national level of the effect that mould formation in coffee, due mainly to Ochratoxin A, could have on public health, as well as the subsequent economic and social implications. The project's activities include in the identification of cost-effective control systems and the implementation of a HACCP-based training programme targeting the actors involved. One of the outputs of the project will be a National Action Plan for the prevention and control of mould formation in coffee, which will be elaborated by consensus among the food chain actors and disseminated at the national level.

173. An FAO TCP project to improve the quality and safety of spices produced in Grenada was approved in March 2004 and is scheduled to be completed in April 2006. The objective of the project is to enhance farmer returns from the production of nutmeg and mace, through improving the overall quality of these products and their oil extractives for international trade and minimizing the environmental contamination due to nutmeg processing by-products. The immediate objectives are to: a) upgrade harvesting, post-harvest handling, treatment, processing of nutmegs and mace; b) strengthen the capacity to support a quality assurance programme for the nutmeg and mace industry; and c) build capacity in by-product processing. The project is implemented jointly by ESNS and the FAO Agricultural and Food Engineering Technologies Service.

174. An FAO project designed to strengthen the Food Control System in Guyana began in May 2002 and was completed in October 2004. The project assists the Government in upgrading the food law and harmonising national food standards with international standards. Efficiency of the food inspection system will be improved in order to facilitate compliance with the WTO Agreements on SPS and TBT. The analytical capabilities of the Government food control laboratory will be upgraded, to ensure the monitoring of food contaminants and permit the certification of exported products. The capability of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and the National Codex Committee will be strengthened, facilitating more active and effective national participation in Codex work. The project is being implemented by the FAO sub-regional office for the Caribbean and ESNS.

175. An FAO/ESNS project to rehabilitate the analytical capacity of laboratories in the faculty of agronomy and veterinary medicine in Haiti began in December 2004 and is scheduled for completion in December 2005.

176. FAO/SLAC has been assisting in the Establishment of a National Codex Committee in Jamaica and will assist the Jamaica Bureau of Standards in preparing its Plan of Action for the Codex National Committee.

177. An FAO project to strengthen the National Codex Committee in Paraguay (TCP/PAR/2801) began operations in October 2002 and was completed in July 2004. The main objectives of the project were to support the work of the National Codex Committee and Codex focal point, to establish linkages between government sectors, industry and consumers, develop an action plan to update national food standards in harmony with Codex guidelines and to establish a web site for exchange of information on Codex. The project is implemented by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and ESNS. More information can be obtained from: www.rlc.fao.org/prior/comagric/codex/par2801/default.htm.

178. An FAO project to strengthen the food control system of Suriname will continue through January 2006. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the National Food Control System through providing training, upgrading laboratory facilities and supporting the functioning of the National Codex Committee and its Working Groups. The expected project outputs include amended national food laws, regulations and standards which comply with international guidelines, improved food inspection service which applies modern quality assurance and HACCP principles, improved laboratory facilities capable of contamination monitoring in primary agricultural products and processed foods and a plan of action on food safety, conforming to Codex Commission recommendations. The project is being implemented by ESNS and the FAO sub-regional office for the Caribbean.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

Field Projects

179. The Government of Argentina has requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) for an Integrated Program for Mycotoxin Prevention and Control. The project is in the formulation phase.

180. The Government of Argentina has also requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) to assist the city of Buenos Aires in training in food hygiene and nutrition. The project is in the formulation phase.

181. The Government of Dominica has requested assistance from FAO in the area of coffee production development. The project is currently in the formulation phase.

182. The development of a sub- component on food safety in strengthening the national food control system in the Dominican Republic under the International Development Bank loan (DR-0138) "Support to the Competitive Transition of the Food and Agriculture Sectors" has been approved and will be implemented with the assistance of the FAO sub-regional office for the Caribbean in the upcoming months.

183. A regional project for capacity building in Latin American consumer organizations is being prepared by FAO and Consumers International- Latin American Regional Office.

184. The government of Nicaragua has requested assistance with the prevention of OTA in coffee. The project is currently in the formulation phase.

185. FAO/ AGS is currently formulating a project in Uruguay on strengthening the agri-food chains suppliers to national food and nutrition programs, with emphasis on those directed to primary schools. One of the objectives of the project is to improve the quality and safety of foods delivered to schools, including nutritional quality, as well as those properties of benefit to children's health.

186. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators, in line with the 123rd FAO Council's instructions and at the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, preparations are underway for a Joint FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean. A briefing meeting with the delegates of the region to the 28th Codex Alimentarius Commission Meeting is planned for 8 July 2005 to further discuss the logistical and technical details of the Conference.

187. An FAO/ sub-regional project on “Improving the food safety of street foods through establishing a food inspection system based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system in Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries” is scheduled to begin in September 2005.

188. Based on the results of several studies to identify the main safety and quality issues in the production and marketing chains for a range of fruits, vegetables, spices and oil crops in Latin America and the Caribbean countries, a Regional Workshop is being organized by FAO/AGS and the FAO Regional Office. This late 2005 workshop will be aimed at awareness creation and identifying the issues to be addressed, as well as the planning and initiation of specific programmes.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN THE NEAR EAST

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

189. In an effort to facilitate the discussion of practical actions and capacity building recommendations to promote food safety in the countries of the Near East region, FAO/ESNS and WHO convened a Regional Meeting on Food Safety for the Near East in Amman, Jordan on 5 and 6 March 2005. The Meeting was held immediately prior to the 3rd session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East (Amman, Jordan, 7-10 March 2005). This Meeting was the third in a series of regional events (Europe- Budapest, February 2002; Asia and the Pacific- Seremban, May 2004) that FAO and WHO are convening at the request of member countries to meet their needs for policy guidance and capacity building in food safety. A full report of the outcome of the Near East Meeting is available at CAC 28 in Arabic, English and French at the FAO publications desk. The discussion papers and background information on the Meeting, in addition to the final report are also available from the Meeting website: <http://www.foodsafetyforum.org/index.asp>

190. The FAO Animal Production and Health Division, along with FAO/ESNS, held a regional workshop on Food and Feed Safety in Tunis, Tunisia on 20 September 2004, which focused on Good Practices for the Poultry Sector in Northern Africa and addressed issues such as the application of good practices in the production of poultry feed. A similar workshop is being planned to be held in Cairo in the upcoming months.

191. FAO implemented a workshop for countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from 14 to 15 September 2004 in Rome, Italy, on modern biotechnology and its application in food and agriculture. The focus of the workshop was on food safety and related regulations in the area of foods derived from modern biotechnology. The workshop was intended to provide a platform for the Member States of the GCC to discuss a common regulatory framework for genetically modified foods within the GCC region. More information on the workshop is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm

192. The WHO Global Salmonella Surveillance Network level 3 Course for Epidemiologists and Veterinarians was conducted in 2004.

193. In October 2004, WHO/EMRO translated the Five Keys to Safer Food poster into Arabic and distributed 5000 copies to all regional member states. The Five Keys to Safer Food advice was included in a prototype school health CD-ROM and interactive media tool being developed for use in the schools of the region.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

National Seminars/Workshops

194. WHO/EMRO conducted 4 workshops on HACCP in Iran in September 2004 and organized a seminar in Tunisia in March 2005 to discuss and adopt a food surveillance plan.

Field Projects

195. An FAO/ESNS project to assist the Government of Algeria in setting up and strengthening of a National Codex Committee (NCC) was approved in May 2004 and is scheduled to be completed in late 2005. Besides implementing a fully functional and active NCC, the project aims at reviewing national food standards and proposing an action plan for their harmonisation with international standards, mainly Codex standards.

196. An FAO/ESNS project to support the Management and Control of Pesticides, Animal Drug and Chemical Residues in Foodstuffs was initiated in Iran, in August 2000, with a second phase starting in 2002. The objective of the project is to promote the application of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) in the use of pesticides and Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHP) in the use of prescribed animal drugs and to enhance the government's capabilities in the monitoring and control of residues (pesticides, animal drugs and other chemical residues) in foodstuffs. The objectives of the project are met through a series of training activities, improvements in the capability of national laboratories to detect pesticide and veterinary drug residues in foods and establishment of National Maximum Residue Limits that take into account Codex recommendations on these matters.

197. An FAO/ESNS TCP project to assist in the Analysis of the Control and Management of Mycotoxins in Foodstuffs was initiated in Iran in April 2003 and is scheduled to be completed in late 2005. The objective of the assistance is to enhance the government's capabilities in the prevention, monitoring and control of mycotoxins in foodstuffs with a view to ensure maximum consumer protection and promote international trade in foodstuffs.

198. An FAO/ESNS project to strengthen the National Codex Committee and update/harmonise food standards and regulations began in Syria in November 2002 and is due to complete in mid 2005. The objective of the assistance is to strengthen the capacity of the Syrian National Codex Committee to effectively serve as an advisory body to the government on national food control matters and, in the process, harmonise Syrian food standards and regulations with the CAC requirements as well as update and consolidate older food regulations. The ultimate aim is to enhance the Government capacity to improve the level of national standards in conformity with international trade requirements.

199. An FAO/ESNS project to Strengthen National Food Control Systems and Establish a National Codex Committee in Yemen was approved in early 2004 and will continue through September 2005. The objectives of the project are to improve the coordination between the institutions involved in food control in the country and to set up a fully operational NCC.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

200. As part of FAO/ESNS's global programme for improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, FAO is planning a Near East sub-regional workshop on "*Improving the Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: A Practical Approach*" to be held in late 2005. More information on this project and the forthcoming workshop are available from the FAO website:

http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/food_fruits_en.stm

201. There are many FAO projects in the both the formulation and approval phases.

202. The Government of Afghanistan has requested FAO (ESNS) advice on food control activities. A project formulation mission was carried out in February 2005 with a project proposal currently in the formulation stage.

203. The Government of Egypt has requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) in Strengthening Quality Control Systems for Cereals and Groundnuts. The request is in the review stage.

204. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries have requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) in establishing a regional risk assessment body and in reorganizing the food control system. The projects are currently in the review and formulation stages, respectively.
205. The Government of Lebanon has requested assistance from FAO in the area of food safety. The project is currently in the formulation phase.
206. The Government of Libya has requested assistance from FAO in the area of food safety. The project is currently in the formulation phase.
207. The Government of Morocco has requested assistance from FAO (ESNS) in the area of consumer affairs and food safety. The project is currently in the review phase.
208. The Government of Qatar has requested assistance from FAO in improving Quality Control and Standards. The project is in the final formulation stages.
209. An FAO (AGST/ESNS) project on the Development of Food Industries Division at the National Agricultural Research Center in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently under formulation.
210. The Government of the United Arab Emirates has requested assistance from FAO in the area of food safety. The project is currently in the formulation phase.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WHO WPRO Activities

211. WHO WPRO strengthened the analytical capacity of Fiji through support for targeted contaminant monitoring on mercury in tuna, arsenic in drinking water, cadmium in taro and *Salmonella* in eggs and poultry products. In collaboration with USA's Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Fiji School of Medicine and the Fiji Ministry of Health, initial steps towards foodborne disease surveillance were taken in Fiji. WHO also collaborated with Fiji on food legislation and as a consequence the Food Safety Act was approved by parliament in that country.
212. WHO WPRO provided Papua New Guinea with technical expertise and other support to enable it to plan a food consumption survey as the basis for determining dietary exposure to hazards in food, and a trial survey period was initiated.
213. As part of the process of enhancing the sharing of food legislation information in the Western Pacific, the legislation of several Pacific island countries has been collected and collated by WHO WPRO and posted in a database on the website <http://fsi.wpro.who.int>. To facilitate more effective enforcement, 16 import inspection and health personnel from eight Pacific island countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) were trained in the use of the WHO web-based database and on import inspection planning and practices. Countries, including Federated States of Micronesia and Tonga, were provided technical advice and supplies and equipment to strengthen their participation in the work of Codex; and WHO WPRO finalized and distributed a training manual on the Codex process for Pacific island countries.
214. Also WHO supported the training of inspectors in the Solomon Islands in order that they would be able to more effectively apply Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles in their inspections. A web-based network of trainers of food safety regulators was finalized and a forum initiated to identify core competencies that need to be addressed in the training of food inspectors (<http://www.wpro.who.int/fsiguide/index.asp>). In cooperation with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, inspectors from Fiji were trained in various aspects of food safety including Codex, HACCP and import inspection. The competency of regulators was also enhanced through undergraduate training of Fiji regulators in New Zealand; training of inspectors from Kiribati at the Fiji School of Medicine; training of Fiji

inspectors in relation to the new food legislation; and training of inspectors in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

FAO-SAPA/RAP Activities

215. A sub-regional FAO project to strengthen Food Analytical Capabilities in the Pacific was operationally completed in May 2005. This project, which involved Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, conducted during its duration a range of capacity building activities on Food Database Compilation, Basic Food Analysis, Food Contaminant Analysis (Pesticide Residue and Heavy Metals), and a Regional Round Table Meeting on Food Composition. In addition selected delegates from member countries participated in a Study Tour on Multi Residue Screening of Pesticides and an International Course on Food Composition Data in Nutrition. The project also upgraded the analytical facilities of the Food Laboratory of the Institute of Applied Science, University of the South Pacific (USP) and in the participating countries. International accreditation (IANZ) for nutrient analysis was awarded to Food Laboratory of the University of the South Pacific. Furthermore, the project supported research and the publication of the 2nd edition of the Pacific Islands Food Composition Tables.

216. A sub-regional project on Capacity Building in Codex, Food Regulation and International Food Standards Harmonization will be completed in July 2005. The project involved the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu and conducted training courses on Food Regulation and Standards - Food Control and Quality Assurance, Food Import/Export Inspection and Certification Systems and Management of the National Codex System and Codex Contact Point. In addition, communications equipment is being provided to the offices of the Codex Contact Point to facilitate efficient communication.

217. A one day regional workshop on Codex, Food Control and International Standards was held for members of the Regional Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) on 18 October 2004 in Apia, Samoa.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

218. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has approved a Regional Trade Facilitation Project to Strengthen the Capacity of the Pacific Forum Island Countries (FICs) to Establish and Enforce Harmonized Food Legislation and Standards to Promote Trade, to be implemented by the University of the South Pacific, FAO and WHO. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of FICs to establish and enforce internationally recognized food laws, standards and inspection procedures to promote unhindered trade in safe and wholesome food. Project activities are scheduled to begin in September 2005.

219. An FAO Regional Program for Food Security in the countries of the Pacific plans to undertake the following activities related to food quality and safety: (1) Needs Assessment and Situation Analysis (NASA) studies on Trade Facilitation and Agriculture Policies focusing on the following (a) Food Safety and Standards; (b) Bio-Security and Quarantine; (c) Commodity Studies; (2) A regional workshop to present and endorse findings of the NASA Studies. In addition, the workshop will further prioritise, discuss and endorse an implementation plan for the implementation of findings clearly distinguishing their regional and national significance; (3) Training Program on Food Standards and Food Safety/Bio-Security and Quarantine; and (4) Training Program on Commodity Study. These activities will be implemented in the upcoming months.

220. The Government of Malaysia has requested FAO assistance to facilitate a Regional Training Programme on Strengthening National Capacities on Risk Assessment and Traceability in the Seafood Trade for the South West Pacific Region. The request is being addressed by the FAO Fish Utilization and Marketing Service, in collaboration with ESNS and is currently in the formulation stage.