

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE
Fifty-second Session
Virtual**

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Opening Remark from Mr Steve Wearne, the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Distinguished representatives of FAO and WHO, Mr Chairperson, Mr Codex Secretary, distinguished delegates – good morning, good afternoon and good evening to you all.

It is my great pleasure and honour to address you briefly this morning at the opening of this, the first Codex subsidiary body meeting of a new calendar year, with warmest wishes from me and from vice-chairpersons Allan Azegele, Diego Varela and Raj Rajasekar. Together, we four have committed ourselves to work in the service of the membership, ensuring we are close to members, to committees and committee chairs, so that we understand your issues and the debates and can help guide the Codex family through them.

Our work continues to be facilitated by our virtual working environment and our continuing adaptation to it. It has allowed greater levels of participation by members in our discussions, contributing to enhanced transparency and collaboration. We must retain these benefits. But as we look forward, we should also ensure that we nurture, renew and grow the personal and professional relationships, and the opportunities for informal discussion, that characterise the Codex family when working at its best.

As we turn now to the agenda for CCFH52, I want to record the appreciation of current and past chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the Commission for all the work undertaken by this committee and its working groups to develop standards and texts and prepare for their adoption. Your chairperson, Dr J. Emilio Esteban, often remarks on the long and collaborative working relationships enjoyed by delegates to this committee, which I was pleased to experience first hand as part of the UK national delegation to two of the three most recent CCFH sessions, in Chicago and Cleveland.

The collaborative and positive spirit I experienced on those occasions is due in large part to the skill of Emilio as your chairperson. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Emilio's outstanding service to the Codex family, not least his chairpersonship of each session of this committee since CCFH40 in 2008, although his involvement with the work of the committee started even before then.

I recognise the appetite there is across many delegations to move issues forward at this session, and the focus of this session on advancement of issues in the Codex step process. I applaud this appetite for advancement of consensus-driven and science-based standards and texts, and the willingness to compromise where necessary in the interests of Codex and the people everywhere that our work will protect.

The discussion of safe use and re-use of water in food production exemplifies our adaptation to the food safety challenges posed by changes in the world around us. As the proposed draft standard says, water is a dwindling resource worldwide and water in food production should be managed in such a way that the safety of food is ensured, while avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste.

In closing, my best wishes on behalf of the chairperson and vice-chairpersons of the commission for a productive meeting.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.