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FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY IN THE REGION INCLUDING CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES

(prepared by FAO and WHO)

BACKGROUND

1. This document presents highlights of food safety and quality issues in the Latin American and Caribbean region, including an overview of current and emerging issues. The document further provides background and analysis of the information collected for presentation and discussion at the 23rd Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for CCLAC23 (2024).

INTRODUCTION

2. The 38th session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC 38) held in March 2024:¹
 - a. “Recognized the role of the region as an important agrifood exporter, working towards the reduction of trade restricting measures;[...] and recommended that FAO strengthen the capacity of governments to respond to the changing needs of trade to increase transparency and support to small and medium enterprises, cooperatives and family farmers for access to markets and participation in global supply chains”; and
 - b. “Acknowledged that one of the main challenges of the region is the difficulty to increase food production, in a sustainable and resilient manner to overcome resource limitations, biodiversity loss, natural resources degradation, climate change, conflicts and economic shocks.”
3. Climate change was considered one of the world’s most dangerous crises in a report² presented by the World Economic Forum in January 2024. The Global Risks Report states that environmental risks³ dominate the risk landscape in the short, medium and long term (two-, five- and 10-year timeframes, respectively). Representatives from 19 countries in the region responded to the survey on Global Risks Perceptions with nine countries identifying extreme weather events as the primary risk among the top five risks to address in the near future.
4. Natural resource shortages related to food and water were ranked fourth in severity at a global level over a 10-year term, emphasizing the significance of environmental risks within the agrifood system.

¹ LARC/24/REP Report of the Thirty-eight Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

² WEF (World Economic Forum). 2024. *The Global Risks Report 2024*. 19th edition. Insight Report. Cologny, Switzerland. www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/

³ Environmental risks: biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, critical change to Earth systems, extreme weather events, natural resource shortages (food, water), non-weather-related natural disasters, pollution (air, soil, water). WEF. 2024. *The Global Risks Report 2024*, Glossary, p. 95.

5. The LARC foresight report⁴ mentioned the cumulative effects of climate change on reduced crop yields, changing rainfall patterns and other extreme effects resulting in economic damage for the region. In the Caribbean, frequent natural disasters have led to food shortages and price increases. In South America and Mesoamerica, variations in climate conditions have impacted the quality and quantity of production export crops, such as coffee and soybeans, affecting the competitiveness of these products in the global market. The report also states that Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the region with the highest pesticide use, posing a threat to biodiversity.
6. Changes in trade, agrifood systems, climate, environmental risks and other broad topics will have an impact on food safety and quality.

EMERGING ISSUES IN FOOD SAFETY

7. At the 21st session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC21), the top three emerging issues in food safety identified at regional level were antimicrobial resistance (AMR), new technologies for food production systems and climate change.⁵
8. For AMR, please refer to the related section below. For new technologies related to new food sources and production systems (NFPS), the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46) report "*highlighted the importance of addressing challenges posed by NFPS and the important role Codex could play in this, noted that the current working mechanisms were adequate to address any new work on NFPS that Members might propose, and encouraged Members to submit proposals for new work on NFPS.*"⁶
9. The CCLAC22 report indicated that Codex work should only consider climate change in terms of its direct impact on food safety and quality, within the Codex mandate. This includes considerations of food safety impacts on crops such as increased mould growth (mycotoxins), contaminated water sources for food/feed production, food losses, pest infestation and plant diseases, among others.
10. FAO's publication *Climate Change: Unpacking the Burden on Food Safety* examines food hazards such as foodborne pathogens and parasites, harmful algal blooms, pesticides, mycotoxins and heavy metals with an emphasis on methylmercury.⁷
11. A guide published by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) on climate change and tailored for healthcare professionals equips clinical providers with the knowledge necessary to identify medical conditions linked to climate change, such as those stemming from contaminated food and water sources.⁸
12. Following a survey conducted from February to March 2024 with the participation of 33 countries in the region, two issues as emerged as priorities: food contaminants and food fraud. The presence of contaminants in foods must be monitored carefully to avoid levels of contamination affecting food quality of the food or making food unsafe. Codex has established 17 Maximum Limits for contaminants including mycotoxins, metals (e.g. arsenic, lead and mercury) and radionuclides (e.g. in drinking water).⁹ The 24th session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection Systems (CCFICS24) defined food fraud as "*any deliberate action of businesses or individuals to deceive others in regard to the integrity of food to gain undue advantage. Types of food fraud include but are not limited to adulteration, substitution, dilution, tampering, simulation, counterfeiting, and misrepresentation.*"¹⁰ CCFICS is in the process of preparing a guidance on the prevention and control of food fraud.¹¹
13. These topics have long been accepted as food safety issues of relevance for CCLAC. Other CCLAC food safety priorities adopted over time include the harmonization of food legislation, food control procedures and protocols, and the detection of chemical residues in food such as pesticide residues and mycotoxins.

⁴ LARC/24/INF/15. Foresight drivers and triggers relevant for Latin America and the Caribbean NO578.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/94526c8b-a67c-48eb-a6ee-268bc17cea84/content>

⁵ CX/LAC 19/21/3

⁶ REP23/CAC

⁷ FAO. 2020. *Climate change: Unpacking the burden on food safety*. Food safety and quality series No. 8. Rome.

⁸ PAHO (Pan American Health Organization). 2020. *Climate change for health professionals: A pocket book*. Washington, DC. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52930>

⁹ The Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food defines Contaminants as "substances that have not been intentionally added to food. Food production processes can lead to substances entering the food at any moment: during manufacturing, handling, storage, processing or distribution. Contaminants can also enter the food from the environment. The presence of such substances in food must be monitored carefully to avoid contamination effecting the quality of the food or making the food unsafe."

¹⁰ [CX/FICS 18/24/7 Discussion Paper on Food Integrity and Food Authenticity](#)

¹¹ [CX/FICS 23/26/6 Proposed draft guidelines on the prevention and control of food fraud](#)

Contaminants have been a CCLAC priority since the Committee's first session in 1976. Food fraud surfaced along with new sources of food for human consumption during CCLAC21 (2019).¹²

UPDATE ON FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE LAC REGION

Antimicrobial resistance

14. The tripartite collaborative project "Working together to combat antimicrobial resistance", funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by FAO, PAHO and WOA, commenced in 2019 and finalized activities in November 2023. The project aimed to: i) support development and evaluation of the implementation of One Health AMR national action plans; ii) strengthen surveillance and monitoring of AMR and the consumption/use of human and veterinary antimicrobials in compliance with international standards; iii) stimulate the private sector to participate in AMR control; and iv) strengthen research and innovation on AMR and alternatives to antibiotics while fostering international cooperation. The participating countries were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Notable project outcomes included: i) the development and application of the methodology "Policy Benchmarks on AMR in Medicated Feed Manufacturing and Use-Guidance for Policy Makers and Managers", and the determination of existing national capacities for each participating country to contain AMR through medicated feed policies and their governance, both at national and regional level; ii) the publication of national legal reports on "Legislation linked to AMU and AMR in terrestrial animal production", and iii) the development of a methodology entitled "Alignment of the national AMR risk communication policy in line with the Global Action Plan on AMR and FAO and WOA international policies from the agri-food sector".
15. March 2024 marked the end of activities under the national tripartite collaborative project "Fighting Antimicrobial Resistance in Peru under the One Health approach" (2022–2023), the only AMR Multi-partner Trust Fund (MPTF) project in the LAC region. The achieved outcomes included: a framework Law for Antimicrobial Resistance (currently with the Peruvian Congress); assistance provided to five reference laboratories of the ministries of Health, Agriculture and Fisheries, respectively, to lay the groundwork for joint AMR surveillance; guidance on best practices for AMR containment in the agrifood sector; and the inclusion of environmental issues in discussions on AMR with non-agrifood government actors.
16. Under the scope of an agreement between PAHO and the Government of Guyana to strengthen the national public health preparedness and response system, a series of capacity-building activities were carried out to strengthen Guyana laboratory capacities to assess the microbiological risks from food and animal sources and investigate AMR along the food value chain. In 2023 and 2024, theoretical and hands-on training was provided for sampling, detection and identification techniques for pathogens in the poultry production chain, accompanied by training in molecular AMR techniques.
17. PAHO also provided capacity-building programmes including hands-on-training to Bolivia, Mexico and Uruguay on phenotypic and quantitative methods to assess AMR, with a focus on implementing new methods in official food laboratories. A pilot study is being implemented with official laboratories in Bolivia and Cuba which will receive technical support for the assessment of AMR in *Salmonella* spp. from foodstuffs under a One Health approach.
18. The project "Implementation of Codex standards to support containment and reduction of foodborne antimicrobial resistance (AMR)", or the Action to support implementation of Codex AMR Texts (ACT) Project (2021–2026), financed by the Republic of Korea and implemented by FAO in six countries,¹³ works at both the global and local levels to support the implementation of Codex standards, especially those related to the monitoring, surveillance, containment and reduction of foodborne AMR. The project also assesses the use and impact of Codex standards related to AMR. The implementation of AMR Codex standards aims to improve management of foodborne AMR in the six focus countries.
19. A series of webinars planned and implemented through the above ACT Project seeks to strengthen capacity in Codex topics of interest for the LAC region and promote the application of Codex standards to strengthen national food control systems. The activity was initiated in 2022 by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO RLC) jointly with the Phyto and Zoonoses Regulation and Control Agency of Ecuador (AGROCALIDAD), representing Ecuador as Coordinator of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC). The series is scheduled to continue until 2025.

¹² CX/LAC 22/22/5

¹³ Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan in Asia, and Bolivia and Colombia in LAC.

Food control systems

20. The Analytical Laboratory Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (RALACA)¹⁴ is a non-profit network of laboratories and associated institutions that aims to improve technical capabilities and encourages cooperation between laboratories belonging to the network. Information sharing is key to enhancing regional opportunities. The RALACA was established with the support of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to date consists of 54 institutions in 21 Member Countries. A recent initiative has officially enabled 16 countries of the region belonging to the network to launch the Data Sharing Committee of RALACA (RALACA-DSC), which promotes the use and share of analytical data to strengthen risk analysis in the region and promote science-based decision-making in food safety. RALACA has also established a database of chemical residues and contaminants which is currently hosted by the IAEA. Since data on chemical contaminants and residues are considered sensitive information, there are strict requirements for maintaining confidentiality and security. Within this framework, sharing of food safety data is voluntary and offers enormous advantages. The database helps the region to utilize existing aggregated data to show trends and challenges in food safety, and to carry out preliminary, first tier, risk assessments. The benefits include focusing limited resources on risk-based needs and implementing risk-based monitoring programmes based on information provided by the subregion, thus enhancing the protection of regional consumers and safeguarding trade.
21. FAO has implemented the project “Strengthening of the national food safety and quality system” (2023–2024) at the request of Chile to assess the performance of the national food control system through application of the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool. This tool assists responsible government authorities in assessing the adequacy of resources and the appropriateness of their controls and surveillance systems. It also functions as a useful instrument for competent authorities to review their interactions with stakeholders such as food chain operators, consumers and trade/commercial partners. As of June 2024, the tool has been introduced to focal points of the Ministry of Health, the Agriculture and Livestock Service, the National Fisheries Service, the Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality, the Undersecretariat of International Economic Relations and the Regional Health Secretariats of each of Chile's 16 regions. In Chile, application of this tool will enable the identification of priority areas for improvement and the planning of sequential and coordinated activities to achieve targeted results, with comparisons made over time. Application of the tool began in August 2023 and is expected to be completed in November 2024. Barbados will be the next country to deploy the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool.
22. The Council of Mayors in Uruguay submitted a request to FAO RLC to review the national food control system and determine food sanitary registration requirements for food enterprises in the country, using countries in the region as a reference. This small project ended in December 2023, with recommendations from FAO based on Codex texts and further food legislation review. The Council of Mayors will liaise with the competent authorities to advance work further in this area.
23. In December 2023, FAO RLC organized a two-day food safety meeting in Peru with the public and private sectors under the “Fresh and Safe” project. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation and from the Ministry of Production, and managers from national wholesale food markets. The meeting included a lively discussion on food safety and quality issues in the wholesale markets with participation from guest speakers and the audience.
24. PAHO has assisted Belize and other Caribbean countries in their efforts to enhance their risk-based food inspection systems. PAHO's manual *Risk-Based Inspection in the Caribbean*¹⁵ has been embraced and implemented by several Caribbean countries. PAHO has developed an online training programme for food handlers, which has been adopted by all Caribbean countries.
25. PAHO has also published the *Manual for Risk-based Food Inspection: Food Producers' Establishments*,¹⁶ which aims to guide countries' official food control services in the implementation of a risk-based inspection system. The goal is to modernize and make inspection systems more efficient, as well as optimize the use of human and material resources.

¹⁴ www.red-ralaca.net

¹⁵ PAHO. 2019. *Risk-based food inspection manual for the Caribbean*. Washington, DC.

www.paho.org/en/documents/risk-based-food-inspection-manual-caribbean

¹⁶ OPS (Organización Panamericana de la Salud). 2023. *Manual de inspección de alimentos basada en riesgos*.

Establecimientos productores de alimentos. Washington, www.paho.org/es/documentos/manual-inspeccion-alimentos-basada-riesgos-establecimientos-productores-alimentos

26. In collaboration with LAC countries, PAHO and WHO have jointly developed the guide *Good Practices in Traditional Food Markets in the Region of the Americas*.¹⁷ The guide is available in English, Spanish and Portuguese, and aims to provide recommendations for enhancing infrastructure and ensuring hygienic-sanitary conditions in traditional food markets. Additionally, the guide is intended to assist with efforts to mitigate the risk of potential spillovers of diseases between animals and humans through food. Pilot implementation studies have been carried out in Colombia and Paraguay.
27. Members in the region actively participated in the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to ensure alignment of their national food safety systems with international standards and collaborate on food safety emergencies. INFOSAN facilitated rapid exchange of information between countries during food safety incidents through its platform.
28. The joint FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat continued to enhance the Network and build Members' capacities to prepare and respond to food safety events. In 2023, the INFOSAN Secretariat was involved in 19 food safety incidents affecting nine Member States in the region. The Secretariat, through the INFOSAN emergency contact points of these Member States, facilitated rapid information exchange, aiming at establishing risk management measures to provide prompt responses to food incidents.
29. PAHO has a dedicated team on early detection and risk assessment to identify signals of food safety related incidents, actively collaborating with Members in the region and INFOSAN Secretariat. PAHO is in the process of updating the list of INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points for the region."

Food safety risk analysis

30. The project "Improving food safety risk analysis capacity in Latin America through a South-South cooperation approach to facilitate regional trade", funded by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) of the World Trade Organization (2024–2026), is implemented by FAO RLC, the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO) and the University of Minnesota, USA. This project seeks to strengthen food safety risk analysis capacity in eight countries (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru) and will receive support from Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, which will serve as mentors and participate in the online training programme. The project also aims to provide guidance on developing the competencies necessary for risk analysts (risk assessment, risk management and risk communication) working in the agrifood sectors.
31. The 3rd Latin American and Caribbean Risk Assessment Symposium (LARAS 2024) will be hosted by the University of Costa Rica, the Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Commerce of Costa Rica, and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment. It is co-organized by PAHO, FAO, IAEA, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN), the Portuguese Authority for Food and Economic Safety (ASAE), the Ministry of Commerce and Industries of the Republic of Panama, and the Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality (ACHIPIA). Scheduled to take place in San Jose, Costa Rica on 10–12 December 2024, the symposium aims to foster understanding and discussion of the latest research and approaches in risk analysis. It will gather together professionals in food safety to explore effective collaboration strategies in food risk analysis and management across Latin America and the Caribbean. This event will serve as a platform for comprehensive discussions and the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the region.
32. PAHO and WHO delivered a food safety risk analysis training programme for El Salvador in January 2023 to improve overall understanding on the use of food safety risk analysis principles within the country's food control system. A regional capacity-building activity on food safety risk management also took place in July 2023, in Quito, Ecuador, with the participation of representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The activity focused on the establishment of maximum levels of contaminants in food. A series of following-up webinars, starting in the second semester of 2024, will continue the capacity-building programme.
33. The Inter American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL), coordinated by PAHO, conducted training sessions for qualifications in liquid chromatography equipment, food microbiology, risk analysis and the position of ISO 17025:2017 Lead Auditor. The INFAL also organized proficiency tests designed to determine the presence of foodborne pathogens (*E. coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella*) in meat products with the involvement of 58 participant laboratories from 12 countries, and to detect the presence of pesticides in pineapple with the participation of seven laboratories from five countries.

¹⁷ PAHO. 2024. *Good practices in food traditional markets in the region of the Americas*. Washington, DC. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/59252?show=full>

Contaminants in foods

34. The project “Reduction of cadmium content in cocoa from the Amazon” helps actors in the cocoa chain to innovate, adopt and diversify management practices to increase the value of Amazonian cocoa as a product of Amazonian Indigenous heritage by ensuring Cadmium levels are below the thresholds permitted by trading partners such as the EU. The project is being implemented in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) with the support of FAO RLC.
35. The Codex Secretariat is conducting a case study to evaluate the use and impact of Codex Alimentarius standards, focusing on the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals* (CXC 51-2003). This pilot study aims to examine the initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders in Brazil to reduce fumonisin contamination in maize while adopting the standard CXC 51-2003. Additionally, the study seeks to determine optimal practices for implementing the Code of Practice and to identify lessons learned that can help other countries gather and submit data on contamination levels in cereals. This process will also identify opportunities for enhancing the development of Codes of Practice by the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF). FAO and PAHO were interviewed during this case study.

Climate change

36. In collaboration with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), PAHO is implementing the EU-funded project "Strengthening Climate-Resilient Health Systems in the Caribbean" across the CARIFORUM region, which consists of 14 Caribbean Community Member States and the Dominican Republic. The project, slated for implementation from 2020 to 2025, aims to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change on health systems. As part of the project's food safety component, PAHO and CARPHA have assessed the capacity of CARIFORUM countries to mitigate emerging food safety risks associated with climate change. They have conducted laboratory training focused on testing food and water pathogens and have developed a subregional training programme on risk-based food inspection to address climate-related food safety risks. The project has also raised awareness about the impact of climate change on food safety through a variety of means including videos, training sessions and other communication materials.
37. Under the project, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago were selected as pilot countries to develop their Climate Resilient Food Safety Plans. After workshops held in September 2023 and January 2024, with the participation of representatives from different government bodies, proposed drafts of climate resilient food safety plans were agreed for both countries. The plans aim at providing both countries with a food safety risk management tool based on a systematic, preventive and resilient approach. This tool will enable the countries to respond to food safety challenges that might arise during different stages of food production, processing, distribution and consumption under the effects of climatological changes and natural disasters.
38. Currently, PAHO and CARPHA are developing a guideline document to aid countries in establishing climate-resilient national food safety plans. A call for experts to contribute to the development of the guide was launched by PAHO in May 2024.

Implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Food Safety

39. In collaboration with the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an inception meeting for the creation of the WHO Alliance for Food Safety was held in May 2024 to support implementation of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2023–2030, a key component of which is the surveillance of foodborne diseases. The meeting included the participation of different WHO Collaborating Centres and other institutions that have demonstrated leadership and technical competency on this issue. Terms of Reference and a work plan were developed for adoption at the next virtual meeting scheduled for September 2024.
40. In consultation with Member States, PAHO is developing a Regional Technical Cooperation Strategy for Food Safety, aligned with the goals of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2023–2030. This document will provide a strategic framework to guide PAHO/WHO's technical cooperation on food safety during the period 2025–2030. The proposed strategy has three main priorities: i) build capacity of national food safety systems, ii) strengthen risk analysis of existing and emerging food safety risks, and iii) improve regional coordination of food safety systems and services. The strategy will be adopted by PAHO's Directing Council in September 2025.

CODEX TRUST FUND PROJECTS

41. Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana and Honduras were the focus of Codex Trust Fund (CTF) projects. PAHO guided and supported the implementation of CTF projects in Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana and Honduras, while FAO provided guidance and support in Cuba.

- a. **Honduras (CTF2 2018–2022)** has completed its project which aimed to enhance the capabilities of the National Codex Committee (NCC). The initiative involved establishing a legal framework for the creation of the NCC, along with the development of a Strategic Plan for the period 2022–2026. This plan serves as a management tool guiding the execution of actions while considering the role of different stakeholders. In a bid to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCC, Honduras created a comprehensive communication strategy focusing on Codex Alimentarius and food safety within the country. Additionally, a capacity-building plan is being implemented to enhance the skills and knowledge of NCC members. Codex Honduras had the opportunity to showcase the outcomes of the project at a CTF side event during CAC46 in Rome on 1 December 2023.
- b. **Cuba (CTF2 2019–2023)** has recently finalized the project “Strengthening the sustainable management of the National Codex Committee in Cuba and its consultation mechanisms to promote a food safety culture”. The country has developed and implemented a procedural manual for Codex Cuba, strengthened the structure of the Codex Contact Point (CCP) and the National Codex Committee in Cuba, and prepared a national strategy for information, education and communication. Codex Cuba was invited to present the project results at the CTF side event during CAC46.
- c. **Bolivia (CTF2 2019–2023)** has also concluded its project which culminated in the development of a legal framework for the CCP and the NCC as well as a Strategic Plan for the period 2022–2025. In addition, an information management system has been established to bolster institutional memory preservation, streamlining the work of both the National Committee and its Technical Subcommittees. Bolivia has undertaken extensive awareness campaigns for the Codex Alimentarius targeting key stakeholders, accompanied by the formulation of an ongoing capacity-building strategy to ensure the sustained effectiveness of the NCC.
- d. **Guyana (CTF2 2021–2024)** has developed a communication strategy for the NCC and designed a new website. Representatives from Guyana’s NCC had the opportunity to participate in a twinning programme visit and engaged with stakeholders from Costa Rica’s NCC to better understand the functionalities and structure of Costa Rica’s Codex programme, with the aim of developing a sustainable Codex structure in Guyana for increased participation in the work of Codex.
- e. **El Salvador/Guatemala (CTF2 2021–2025)** have been granted an extension for their joint project until 2025. El Salvador has updated its CONACODEX Regulation to ensure effective management of the National Codex Programme. Both countries have carried out efforts to raise awareness of Codex work, focusing on different stakeholders and developing training for NCC members (e.g. application of risk-analysis principles). In 2023, both countries participated in benchmarking missions to Ecuador and Uruguay and disseminated lessons learned during the visits.

WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY 2024

42. Over the last four years, the organization of World Food Safety Day has been a joint endeavour of regional and international organizations (FAO RLC, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO, OIRSA, IICA and CCLAC), with each organization taking a turn to lead coordination of the agenda, and a variety of food safety topics explored linked to the overall World Food Safety Day theme. This year, the theme “Food safety: Prepare for the unexpected” underscores the crucial need for multisectoral collaboration with the involvement of multiple stakeholders – from producers to consumers. Each actor plays a significant role in preventing, detecting and managing food-related risks. In addition to national World Food Safety Day celebrations, this day represents an important occasion to come together and share country experiences and lessons learned in food safety in Latin America and the Caribbean.

CONCLUSIONS

43. It is important to maintain ongoing discussions with Member countries on current and emerging food safety issues in the LAC region and to establish a roadmap for their prioritization in the short and medium term. The results of these discussions and the roadmap will help guide the work of FAO and WHO in food safety at the regional and national levels.
44. Member country participation is important to identify and understand emerging issues and their significance at the national and regional levels. A coordinated regional response by CCLAC requires the participation of all 33 Members to address emerging food safety issues at an appropriate scale.
45. When identifying food safety challenges, it is particularly important to ascertain whether these problems are caused by recurring or emerging issues in the region. Specific needs for capacity development programmes in food safety will vary according to the national contexts and existent gaps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

46. Members are encouraged to share information and updates on the following:
- improvements needed for the exchange of information between countries on different aspects of food safety that guide regional work and approaches to aid the identification of new and emerging issues in the region;
 - new issues affecting food safety and quality in the region that have emerged since CCLAC22; and
 - new developments, approaches and good practices to address emerging food safety issues.
47. Members are also encouraged to suggest follow-up actions to address food safety and quality concerns related to:
- recurrent issues that have been previously identified by CCLAC Members; and
 - emerging issues and activities identified at regional and national level.