

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Eighty-third Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

14 – 18 November 2022

### Opening remarks

#### Mr Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO

Dr Naoko Yamamoto, Assistant Director-General WHO

Chairperson Steve Wearne

Vice chairpersons

Distinguished members of the Executive Committee

Colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to the eighty-third session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

I am extremely happy that after so many virtual sessions you can finally come and meet in person. We just held our Programme Committee and Joint Committee, and it's a big difference to be able to meet in person. The Deputy Director General, Maria Helena Semedo is currently participating in the COP 27 in Egypt and she sends her greetings and apologies that she couldn't be here.

I believe that when we are together, we can truly gauge the feeling in the room and understand the positions of our fellow committee members allowing us to tackle complex issues, negotiations and discussions more easily.

And you have before you, with a critical review on your agenda items, a series of tasks of great responsibility and some complexity.

I trust as a committee you will engage wisely and assess as a team the priority issues in the most productive way to ensure you build consensus in accordance with the core values of Codex.

The recommendations you provide to the Commission will support the smooth passage of items of great interest to the wider membership.

I join ADG Yamamoto in calling for countries' continued support to ensure the FAO/WHO scientific advice programmes are adequately resourced to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

And what will be the food safety challenges of tomorrow? I note the topics on your agenda include new food sources and production systems, but as you know, our system is facing challenges of risk and uncertainty. So we have to try to do our best to be able to have some predictive power of what will happen in the future as a world responds and adapts to the global threats and challenges. How Codex sets its path regarding food safety standards will influence the safety of food and food security of many, so the responsibility is extremely high. FAO Members have recently endorsed two key thematic strategies: on Science and Innovation; and on Climate Change. I assure you that Codex has the full support of FAO as your work is closely linked to these shared fields of cooperation.

Only by working together on these and other topics can we achieve the important task that FAO has given itself as a strategic framework: the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for *better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life*, leaving no one behind.

In the words of one great scientist, Marie Curie:

“Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”

I wish you a successful meeting, and thank you so much

**Dr Naoko Yamamoto, Assistant Director-General, WHO**

Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of FAO.

Mr Steve Wearne, Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends.

On behalf of the World Health Organization, welcome to the 83<sup>rd</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

I am happy to see the meeting back in person.

Over the past two years, you have managed to handle this difficult situation with resilience and adaptability.

I am confident that you will use this opportunity to move forward with your consensus-building discussions.

WHO continues to provide scientific advice to Codex and its Member States in the context of the FAO/WHO programme and the development of WHO guidance.

Codex food safety, nutrition standards and guidelines should be clearly based on science.

The workload of scientific bodies is increasing. That's a good sign, but it requires adequate resources, which we attempt to secure.

I express again my thanks to all Member States for their support to our activities.

Please allow me to share progress on four key issues.

First, about new foods and production systems.

For example, the field of cell-based foods has expanded with more than a hundred innovative start-ups for meat or seafood production.

WHO, in collaboration with FAO, is developing the requirements and procedures for assessing safety, quality, and sustainability of new foods and food production systems.

Second, One Health Quadripartite. It developed a Joint Action Plan, which outlines the commitment of the four organizations, WHO, FAO, WOA and UNEP, to support the implementation of the "One Health" approach.

This year, WHO is the Quadripartite chair. We have developed a vision document with key strategic priorities.

Third, the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety. The strategy which is in 2022-2030, was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May.

WHO is preparing the roadmap to support the implementation with tools and indicators.

This will guide Member States in assessing their national systems and preparing implementation plans.

Finally, a few words on the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund-2.

To date, 48 countries have benefitted from it through direct project support and through training tailored to the specific needs of countries.

The Trust Fund is currently undergoing its mid-term evaluation, which will help to better respond to country needs.

Thank you for your commitment to ensure all people have access to safe and nutritious food.

I wish you a productive meeting.

I thank you.

**Mr Steve Wearne, CAC Chairperson**

Welcome to CCEXEC83, on behalf of me and of the vice-chairs Allan, Diego and Raj. This is our first physical meeting of CCEXEC since our meeting February 2020 and it is good to see so many of you here in person.

As I did at CCEXEC82, I would like to take this opportunity to report back on the work to date of the vice-chairs and me. We have continued our informal consultations on zilpaterol and the vice-chairs have led work in our three active subcommittees, on operationalisation of the statements of principle, on new food sources and production systems, and on a blueprint for the future of Codex. With your valuable input through consultations, virtual discussion, and here this week I hope we will be able to complete our consideration of the work of the first two subcommittees and make recommendations to CAC45. On the blueprint for the future of Codex, I hope that we can agree how to engage the broader Codex family to inform our substantive discussion scheduled for CCEXEC84 in July next year.

As I say in my short article in the Codex magazine to be published next week, I've also taken time to reflect on what my priorities should be in my role as chairperson, in fulfilment of the direction in our Procedural that I should "exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Commission". For me, three things have been important in my first year as chairperson – making connections; advocating for Codex; and building coalitions.

In my view, the work of Codex is not done when the ink is dry on a new international standard. In many ways, this is when the hard work starts. I have therefore worked to cement the coalitions that we have built with key partners in the initiation and funding of projects that implement Codex standards, particularly in developing countries. This work is critical to us, if we are to deliver impact, deliver our strategic plan ambitions, and realise our vision of standards that protect everyone, everywhere.

We have an interesting agenda for our meeting, with a range of forward- looking topics. I would invite you to participate actively, with enthusiasm, and in a spirit of constructive collaboration, so we may lay the foundations for a positive outcome from our first physical Commission meeting for three years.