

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 4, 5, 6, 7

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CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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Comments of Malaysia

Agenda item 4 - Procedural guidance for Committees Working by Correspondence

Malaysia would like to thank the Electronic Working Group chaired by New Zealand and co-chaired by Germany, Japan and the United States of America for preparing the proposed procedural guidance and the stand-alone document on the criteria and procedural guidelines for Codex Committees and Ad-hoc Intergovernmental Task Force working by correspondence.

In principle, Malaysia has no objection for Codex committee to work by correspondence when appropriate, taking into consideration criteria which have been developed by the EWG. In doing so, the Committee should carefully consider ways in adhering to the Commission's core values of collaboration, inclusiveness, consensus building, and transparency. Malaysia also has no objection the use of virtual technology in a CWBC session is provided for as an option, where appropriate, to allow real time discussions and increase transparency in decision making. However, the need to use virtual technology should be clearly justified only as necessary to assist progress of the work.

Malaysia is of the view that CWBC will be an exception, rather than a rule, and should be considered by the Commission under specific circumstances or situations. In this regard, Malaysia would like to recall the decision to set up work on the procedural guidance for committee working by correspondence were to address procedural issues where several Codex Committees which were adjourned sine die have been reactivated and are working by correspondence only. Therefore, Malaysia is of the opinion that before the decision to assign new work to committee to work by correspondence is made, the criteria relevant for selection and assignment of work by correspondence should clearly and explicitly be applicable only prioritise to those committees that have been adjourned sine die and this should be clearly stated in this document.

Agenda item 5 - Revisions/amendments to Codex texts

Malaysia welcomes the proposal prepared by the Codex Secretariat to clarify the definition and use of "revision" and "amendment" of Codex text. The current guides in the Procedural Manual are ambiguous and create uncertainties when making decision for revision. Malaysia believe that clear guidance is necessary to distinguish the differences between these changes, in particular between revision and substantive amendment.

Malaysia is of the view that the criteria for substantive amendment and revision need to be further expounded to assist members to decide whether project documents required when changes to Codex standards and related texts are proposed are as part of amendment or as new work (revision). We are of also the view that it would useful if the explanation and example of different type of amendments are provided for clarity.

Agenda item 6 - Format and structure of the Codex Procedural Manual

Malaysia supports work to improve the usability of the Procedural Manual and proposal to have a digital version of the PM in Codex website which would provide a more user-friendly experience. We agree the structure of the PM should enable easy updating, however removal of relevant sections should be carefully considered.

With regard to the proposal to transfer Sections V and VI to the Codex website, Malaysia is of the view that the TOR of Committees provide mandates to the Committee and thus particularly important to be kept in the PM. Section VI Membership should also be retain however it could be simplified by transferring the list of membership into Codex website and making reference to the list in the PM. However, the TOR for Codex Contact Point is a mandate that we are of a view best retain in Procedural Manual. There may be other important point that may be included as guidance to Member States.

Agenda item 7 - Discussion paper on monitoring the use of Codex standards

Malaysia supports work in considering suitable mechanism to measure the impact or use of Codex standards to Member Countries, in order to address Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

The six Codex Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs) have been conducting surveys to assess the extent of use and relevance of selected Codex texts among Member Countries. A subset of Codex Standards was selected during these surveys rather than all Codex standards in order to encourage Members to take part in the survey. In addition, there was also FAO regional activity among ASEAN countries where implementation status of all Codex standards was consolidated.

We are of the view further deliberation may be needed to look into the overall monitoring of Codex texts e.g. type of Codex text, frequency, method etc. A systematic and sustainable mechanism could provide a more conclusive outcome while avoiding overlapping, provides better understanding to member countries and promotes more participation as resources can be allocated in advance.

In this regard, Malaysia supports further deliberation on a systematic and holistic approach to monitor use of Codex standards including mapping existing data, exchange of information with other standard setting organisations on their monitoring mechanism, and the proposed monitoring approach. Sharing session of monitoring mechanisms established by other standard setting organisations, in particular OIE and IPPC is therefore highly recommended.

Malaysia however, is of a view that, developing a reliable mechanism on monitoring of the use of Codex standard is beyond the mandate of CCGP, which is to deal with procedural and general matters. Deliberation on development of mechanism is best conducted by the CAC through the CCEXEC, and in consultation with RCCs in which the nature and level of acceptance of Codex standard is more closely related to its Members.