The role of Asian countries in international food trade continues to grow. This has led to the realization among the Member States of the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for South-East Asia [WHO SEARO] of the importance of Codex practices and standards in protecting the health of the populations in the Member States while ensuring fair practices on the food trade. This report is from a regional workshop on capacity building of National Codex Committees in the Member States of South-East Asia, jointly organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the Codex Trust Fund and WHO-SEARO. The report provides information on the overall principles and practices of the Codex Alimentarius and their applications in the Member States; identifies the major determinants and successful applications of Codex standards and principles at the country level, effective utilization of the Codex Trust Fund and efficient communication strategies in Codex matters.
Capacity-building of national Codex Committees in the Member States of South-East Asia

Report of a regional workshop
New Delhi, India, 23–25 October 2013
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Abbreviations

ACFS  Agriculture Commodity and Food Standard
ADI   acceptable daily intake
APMP  Asia Pacific Metrology Programme
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATFC  ASEAN Task Force on Codex
BAFRA Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority
BCCI  Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BCSIR Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
BLRI  Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute
BNCC  Bangladesh National Codex Committee
BSB   Bhutan Standard Bureau
BSTI  Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution
CAC   Codex Alimnetarius Commission
CCASIA Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCCF  Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods
CCFFP Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products
CCFFV Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
CCFH  Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCFICS Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems
CCFO  Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
CCGP  Codex Committee on General Principles
CCNFS DU Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<td>CCP</td>
<td>Codex Contact Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCPFV</td>
<td>Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCPR</td>
<td>Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCRVDF</td>
<td>Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods</td>
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<tr>
<td>CGTF</td>
<td>Consultative Group for the Trust Fund</td>
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<td>CRD</td>
<td>Conference Room Documents</td>
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<td>CTF</td>
<td>Codex Trust Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAE</td>
<td>Department of Agricultural Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEOHFS</td>
<td>Department of Environmental, Occupational Health and Food Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFTQC</td>
<td>Department of Food Technology and Quality Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FAC</td>
<td>Food Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO-RAP</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization’s Regional Office for Asia and Pacific</td>
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<td>FBCCI</td>
<td>Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries</td>
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<td>FDA</td>
<td>Food and Drug Administration</td>
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<td>FFP</td>
<td>Fish Products</td>
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<tr>
<td>FFV</td>
<td>Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</td>
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<td>FNCCI</td>
<td>Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSMS</td>
<td>Food Safety Management System</td>
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<td>FSSAI</td>
<td>Food Safety a Standards Authority of India</td>
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<td>FSSR</td>
<td>Food Safety and Standards Regulations - India</td>
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<td>GEMS</td>
<td>Global Environment Monitoring System</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>HACCP</td>
<td>Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>International Electrotechnical Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGO</td>
<td>Intergovernmental organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International nongovernmental organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISONET</td>
<td>ISO Information Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>JECFA</td>
<td>Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEMNU</td>
<td>Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition</td>
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<td>JEMRA</td>
<td>Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>JMPR</td>
<td>Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>Methods of Analysis and Sampling</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Mirror Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFDA</td>
<td>Maldives Food and Drug Authority</td>
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<td>MFDBA</td>
<td>Myanmar Food and Drug Board of Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>maximum level</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMP</td>
<td>Milk Products</td>
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<td>MoAF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</td>
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<td>MoH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOHFW</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Family Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRL</td>
<td>maximum residue level</td>
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<td>NCC</td>
<td>National Codex Committee</td>
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<td>NCCP</td>
<td>National Codex Contact Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCD</td>
<td>noncommunicable disease</td>
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<td>NFQSC</td>
<td>National Food Quality and Safety Commission</td>
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<td>NSAI</td>
<td>National Standardization Agency of Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSBB</td>
<td>National Standard Body of Bangladesh</td>
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<td>OIE</td>
<td>World Organisation for Animal Health (L’Organisation Mondiale de la Santé Animale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIML</td>
<td>Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAARC</td>
<td>SouthAsian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<td>SARSO</td>
<td>South Asian Regional Standards Organization</td>
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<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Small Island Developing States</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>Sanitary and Phytosanitary</td>
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<tr>
<td>STDF</td>
<td>Standards and Trade Development Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBT</td>
<td>Technical Barriers to Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Technical Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDI</td>
<td>Tolerable Daily Intake</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFFBT</td>
<td>Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWG</td>
<td>Technical Working Groups</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

A regional workshop on capacity-building of national Codex Committees in the Member States of South-East Asia was organized by the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Regional Office for South-East Asia in collaboration with the office of the Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the Codex Trust Fund (CTF), and the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), from 23 to 25 October 2013, New Delhi, India.

Eighteen representatives from 10 of the 11 Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste – participated in the workshop along with senior staff members from the WHO country offices in Bangladesh, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste. Experts from FSSAI, CTF, and CAC provided technical support to the workshop.

The general objective of the workshop was to strengthen capacities of the national Codex Committees in the Member States of the South-East Asia Region while the specific objectives were: (i) to understand the principles and practices of CAC and their appropriate applications in the Member States of the Region; (ii) to identify mechanisms for effective utilization of the CTF by the Member States; (iii) to engage in a review of the status of national Codex Committees activities in the Member States, including the identification of the major determinants of successful applications of Codex standards and principles at the country level; and (iv) to develop efficient communication strategies appropriate to national requirements for Codex.

The three-day programme was divided into plenary and group work sessions. Presentations were delivered during the plenary sessions on ‘Commemorating 50 years of Codex Alimentarius Commission – an
overview’; principles of risk assessment and challenges in their implementation; understanding the principles and practices of Codex Alimentarius; effective utilization of the CTF; enhancing country capacities to generate, collect, and submit data; harmonizing national standards with Codex standards; and strengthening communication in Codex. Participants from the 10 Member States presented country reports indicating the status of national Codex Committees and related activities in their countries. There were two group work sessions on conducting shadow committee meetings to prepare national responses to various agenda items and developing new work proposals.

1.2 Opening

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia in his message read by Dr Kunal Bagchi, WHO Regional Adviser for Nutrition and Food Safety welcomed participants to the regional workshop organized by the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia in collaboration with the CAC, the CTF and the FSSAI.

He pointed out the importance of Asia in international food trade because more than 50% of the world population resides in the Asia region, which has also reported a significant increase in food production over the years. There has been a growing realization among Member States of the importance of Codex in protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

The CAC was established jointly by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to develop international standards, a code of practices, and guidelines and other recommendations to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. WHO, in collaboration with FAO, has been providing assistance to Member States to enable them to take full advantage of the CAC’s activities, including the participation of Member States at various CAC standard-setting meetings. These efforts have been enhanced to a considerable extent by the financial and technical support extended by the CTF, which was established to enhance the participation of Member States in Codex activities and is administered by WHO under the direction of the Consultative Group for the Trust Fund (CGTF) comprising senior WHO and FAO staff.
Dr Plianbangchang reminded attendees that a National Codex Contact Point is designated when a country becomes a member of CAC. The contact point is expected to promote and coordinate Codex activities and serve as a link with the Codex Secretariat, the food industry, consumers, and other interested parties. The success of a country’s Codex activities depends on the effectiveness of the Codex focal point. Ten Members States of South-East Asia Region – Bangladesh, Bhutan, The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand – are members of the CAC. National Codex Contact Points have been identified and designated in these Member States. However, the range of their activities varies considerably, depending largely on the level of technical capacity and availability of resources, which are often limited in several Member States. It has also been noted that the extent of communication between different stakeholders involved in aspects of food safety and the dissemination of Codex standards and protocols, as well as their applications, are not carried out appropriately, thus affecting the quality of the overall food control systems in several Member States.

The Regional Office for South-East Asia continues to collaborate with the CAC and the CTF as well as the Food and Agriculture Organisation’s Regional Office for Asia and Pacific [FAO-RAP] in the organization of several technical activities, including meetings of the Codex Coordinating Committee Asia (CCASIA) in 20120 and 2012. These activities are aimed at improving an understanding of Codex, establishing international standards, and improving and strengthening related technical areas. The Regional Office also maintains close linkages with the national Codex Committees and has provided technical support on a regular basis. It has recently published an ‘Overview of the national Codex Committee in the Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region’ that describes the status of various Codex activities in the Region.

Dr Plianbangchang mentioned that the idea for this workshop emerged from a discussion between the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, the CAC, and the FSSAI, India’s highest regulatory body responsible for food safety programmes and standard-setting. The Chairperson of the CAC and his colleagues, along with senior staff members of the FSSAI, have been actively and closely collaborating with the Regional Office for South-East Asia in organizing this workshop. These two agencies
will also provide technical experts to conduct different sessions of the workshop. Dr Plianbangchang expressed his gratitude to the Chairperson, CAC, his staff, and the FSSAI for their support and efforts to further strengthen Codex activities in the Region. He was also confident that the collaboration with the CTF will be further strengthened through this workshop. He realized that to achieve the objectives of the workshop would be a challenging task, but with the participation of so many eminent experts, he was sure these objectives would be met fully and a strong community of national Codex Committees would emerge in the Region. He wished all participants a successful workshop and a pleasant stay in New Delhi.

Mr Shri K Chandramauli, Chairperson of the FSSAI pointed out in his address that the CAC, a joint body of WHO and FAO established in 1963, was celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. He also mentioned that over the years, the CAC has grown in stature, beginning with 30 Member Countries in its inaugural year and growing to 185 Member Countries, plus the European Union. Almost 99% of the population of these member countries is covered by Codex. The CAC is shouldering the responsibility of laying down the global standards of quality and safety of food products for human consumption. This, in turn, ensures the health of consumers and fair practices in the export and import of food products, especially when global food production and consumption have grown substantially.

Mr Chandramauli informed participants that India became a member of the CAC in 1964. A National Codex Contact Point is designated when a country becomes a member of the CAC and the Contact Point was established in India’s Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. However, with the establishment of the FSSAI in 2008 under the Food Standards and Safety Act of 2006, FSSAI is now the Contact Point. As per the Codex Procedural Manual, Contact Points act as a link between the Codex Secretariat and the Member Country and is a channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex members. This includes promoting Codex activities throughout the country and acting as a liaison point with the food industry, consumers, traders, and other interested parties. The success of a country’s Codex activities depends on the effective functioning of the Contact Point and their interaction with the Codex Secretariat and other Member States.
In India, for each Codex Committee a parallel Shadow Committee has been constituted that works for that particular Codex Committee for wider participation from various stakeholders. The various stakeholders for each committee are representatives from different government ministries and departments, research institutions, industry associations, and consumer organizations.

The National Codex Contact Point for India receives the provisional agenda and the detailed agenda items from the Codex Secretariat electronically, and is then further circulated to all the Shadow Committee members. After reviewing the agenda items, Shadow Committee meetings are conducted to formulate India’s viewpoints on the various agenda items. The viewpoints are then sent to the Codex Secretariat. However, while formulating a national response on various agenda items, India is also constrained due to a paucity of data. The country is also in the process of building linkages with institutions and tapping into experts who can assist in framing responses that are steeped in science. Therefore, the challenge lies not only in participation in various Committee meetings but also in effective participation at all levels, namely electronic working groups and physical working groups.

Mr Chandramauli stated that, currently, there are 23 Member Countries in the CAC Asian Region and in the WHO South-East Asia Region except Timor-Leste, the remaining 10 Member States of the WHO Region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, The Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are members. While national Contact Points have been identified and designated from these Member States, their range of activities varies considerably and is dependent on the level of technical capacity and the availability of human and financial resources, both of which are limited in most Member States. Despite these limitations, he was glad that all the participants from the Region would be not only sharing their experiences, but also working on preparing national responses, developing work proposals, and looking at ways to generate, collect and submit data.

Standard setting in Codex is based on consensus and developing countries need to play a more active role in this process. At a regional level too, there is a need to look at areas of interest for development of Regional Standards. Co-hosting of various Committees is also a way to enhance
country capacity. A forthcoming Codex Committee meeting in November 2013 on Food Hygiene is being co-hosted by Viet Nam. Similarly, Thailand is co-hosting the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in February 2014.

Mr Chandramauli mentioned that regional workshops of this kind go a long way in enhancing the capacities and he complimented the Regional Office for South-East Asia for taking the lead. He wished all the best for a successful workshop, hoped all participants would find it useful, and anticipated it would lead to far more effective participation from the Member countries of the Region.

2. Presentations

2.1 Commemorating 50 years of Codex Alimentarius Commission: an overview
Sanjay Dave, Chairman, Codex Alimentarius Commission

By reminding the audience that this year is the fiftieth anniversary of Codex with its theme “Fostering harmony for better food safety”, the speaker introduced the Codex Alimentarius. Under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, Codex is one of “the three sisters” – or nongovernmental organizations – dealing with human health. These are: Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), whose Codex standards have become the benchmark against which national food measures and regulations are evaluated; the Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), which oversees the fight again animal and zoonotic diseases; and the International Plant Protection Convention, which is charged with protecting cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests.

The CAC is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the WHO 50 years ago. Currently, the CAC has 185 Member Countries and one Member Organization – the European Union (EU). The main function of Codex is to adopt standards based on science with a mandate to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practice in the food trade. The process of adoption of Codex standards is inclusive, transparent, and based
on consensus. During the adoption process, all Member Countries work in a collaborative manner where, in building consensus, their concerns are heard, as clearly explained in the Codex Procedural Manual.

In the organizational structure of Codex, there is the Commission (CAC); an Executive Committee of the Commission which consists of the Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons, six Regional Coordinators, and six members from the regions; the Codex Secretariat; and active Codex Subsidiary Bodies, which consist of 10 General Subject Committees\(^1\), 7 Commodity Committees\(^2\), 6 Regional Coordinating Committees\(^3\), and 2 ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces\(^4\).

To support CAC as a science-based activity, the following long-term Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees have been established for the following areas: Food Additives (JECFA); Pesticide Residues (JMPR); Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA); and Nutrition (JEMNU).

There are many reasons why Codex is relevant to the work of Member Countries, as follows: based on scientific principles and risk analysis; consensus-based approach (truly global); covers a wide range (products, codes of practice, methods, MRLs, audits, ethics, equivalence, etc.); easy to harmonize national legislations; provides flexibility in adaptation; exchange of information is standardized; saves time and facilitates trade; helps settle differences; and reference standard in Sanitary and Phytosanitary SPS Agreement.

After 50 years of activities, numerous products have been created by Codex including: Codex standards, Guidelines, Code of Practice and other documents. The following is a list of Codex’s major achievements:

1. General Subject Committees on: Contaminants in Food (CCCF); Food Additives (CCFA); Food Hygiene (CCFH); Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS); Food Labelling (CCFL); General Principles (CCGP); Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS); Nutrition and Foods for Speical Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU); Pesticide Residues (CCPR); and Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF).

2. Commodity Committees on: Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP); Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV); Fats and Oils (CCFO); Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV); Sugars (CCS); and Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCCH). NOTE FROM EDITOR: What are these two committees? I couldn’t find them on the CAC’s website. CCMH and CCMMP.

3. FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for: Africa (CCAFRICA); Asia (CCASIA); Europe (CCEURO); Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC); North America and South West Pacific (CCNASWP); and Near East (CCNEA).

➢ Membership has increased from 30 countries to 185 countries + the EU

➢ From 16 international organizations Budget: US$ 55 000 to US$ 8.3 million

➢ Milk to several Codex Committees (vertical and horizontal)

➢ Procedural Manual and strong Codex Secretariat / FAO / WHO Teams

➢ Collaborative, inclusive, and transparent approach

➢ Risk analysis principles

➢ Codex texts became a reference in the World Trade Organization

➢ Capacity-building – CTF, Co-hosting, e-working

➢ Contribution of developing countries – makes Codex a truly global body

➢ Mycotoxins, Melamine, Dioxins, Heavy Metals (CCCF)

➢ General Standards for Contaminants & Toxins (CCCF)

➢ MRLs for Pesticides and Vet. Drugs (CCPR, CCRVDF)

➢ General Standards for Food Additives (CCFA)

➢ Codes of Practice and Control of Viruses in food (CCFH)

➢ National Food Control System (CCFICS)

➢ Foreign on-site Audits & Assessments (CCFICS)

➢ Judgment of Equivalence (CCFICS)

➢ Principles of Risk Analysis (CCGP)

➢ GM and Nutrition Labelling (CCFL)

➢ Several Nutrition (CCNFSDU) and MAS texts (CCMAS)

➢ Several commodity standards, and more.

Various activities have been performed and will be conducted by Codex, and the priorities are: improving food security through food safety; improving nutritional security (new Strategic Plan); funding for scientific
advice; addressing emerging/unknown risks; data generation for risk assessment (developing countries); more active participation of developing countries; consensus building (controversial cases are rare); strengthening Codex/food control at national levels; enhancing awareness about Codex among consumers; and enabling developing countries to enhance trade. In addition to priorities, there are also suggestions for consideration, as follows: identify the capacity-building needs; harmonize standards with Codex and become strong; introduce guidance texts for small business/farmers (e.g., Good Manufacturing PracticesGAP, Good Manufacturing Practices GMP, Good Hygienic Practices(GHP, conformity assessment); strengthen laboratory network; engage in equivalence negotiations; introduce formal food safety education; and play an active role in Codex.

### 2.2 Risk assessment principles: The challenge of implementation

(Dedi Fardiaz, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia)

The FAO/WHO publication on “Food Safety Risk Analysis: A guide for national food safety authority” is an important reference for developing risk analysis activities in Member States. Risk analysis is a powerful tool for carrying out evidence-based analysis and for reaching sound, consistent solutions to food safety problems. By using risk analysis we can promote ongoing improvements in public health and provide a basis for expanding international trade in foods. Risk analysis has very clear objectives: to develop an estimate of the risks to human health; to identify and implement appropriate measures to control the risks; and to communicate with stakeholders about the risks and measures applied.

According to Codex definitions, Risk analysis is a process consisting of three components: risk assessment; risk management; and risk communication (Figure 2.1). In this presentation, we will be specifically discussing risk assessment, which is a scientifically based process consisting of the following steps: hazard identification; hazard characterization; exposure assessment; and; risk characterization. The following are descriptions of each step based on Codex.

- **Hazard identification** is the identification of biological, chemical, and physical agents capable of causing adverse health effects and which may be present in a particular food or group of foods.
➢ **Hazard characterization** is the qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation of the nature of the adverse health effects associated with biological, chemical, and physical agents, which may be present in food. For chemical agents, a dose-response assessment is performed. For biological or physical agents, a dose-response assessment should be performed if the data are obtainable.

➢ **Exposure assessment** is the qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation of the likely intake of biological, chemical, and physical agents via food, as well as exposures from other sources if relevant.

➢ **Risk characterization** is the qualitative and/or quantitative estimation, including attendant uncertainties, of the probability of occurrence and severity of known or potential adverse health effects in a given population based on hazard identification, hazard characterization, and exposure assessment. Once the risk to human health has been estimated then food safety standards can be determined based on the risk. Furthermore, food safety standards can be applied to protect the health of consumers and to facilitate a fair food trade.

*Figure 2.1: Codex generic format for risk analysis*
In risk assessment, Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for food additives and pesticide and veterinary drug residues, as well as Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) for chemical contaminants are values to indicate the safety margin of a hazard such as a food additive, pesticide, or veterinary drug residue or chemical contaminant. By definition, ADI is an estimate of the amount of a substance in food or drinking water, expressed on a bodyweight basis, that can be ingested daily over a lifetime without appreciable risk (standard human = 60 kg). The ADI is listed in units of milligrams (mg) per kilogram (kg) of body weight. While TDI is analogous to ADI, the term “tolerable” is used for agents which are not deliberately added, such as contaminants in food. By assessing the exposure of hazard to a population, the risk can be characterized and food safety measures can be determined. Furthermore, the risk manager may determine maximum level (ML) and maximum residue level (MRL) based on the risk characterized. The Codex ML for a contaminant in a food or feed commodity is the maximum concentration of that substance recommended by the CAC to be legally permitted in that commodity, while MRL is the maximum concentration of residue in a food or animal feed resulting from use of a veterinary drug or a pesticide, (expressed in mg/kg or μg/kg on a fresh weight basis).

Risk assessment is conducted in Codex by the risk assessors, who are from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) for food additives, chemical contaminants, and veterinary drug residues; Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) for pesticide residues; and Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA) for microbiological hazards. Furthermore, risk managers, who are members of the General Subject Committees, will determine MLs or MRLs based on risk assessment results. CCFA, CCCF, and CCRVDF communicate with JECFA, CCPR communicates with JMPR, and CCFH communicates with JEMRA.

In conducting a risk assessment, a significant amount of scientific data – either primary or secondary data – are needed. Sources of scientific information for risk assessments among others are: published scientific studies; specific research studies carried out by a government agency or external contractors in order to fill data gaps; unpublished studies and surveys carried out by industry, such as data on the identity and purity of a chemical under consideration as well as toxicity and residue studies carried out by the chemical’s manufacturer. (Manufacturers often may agree to
supply data only if it remains confidential. Risk managers must judge the need to trade off transparency so as to obtain relevant and sufficient data; national food monitoring data; national human health surveillance and laboratory diagnostic data; disease outbreak investigations; national food consumption surveys and regional diets, e.g. those constructed by FAO/WHO; use of panels to elicit expert opinion where specific data sets are not available; risk assessments carried out by other governments; international food safety databases; and international risk assessments carried out by JECFA, JMPR, and JEMRA.

There are general characteristics required in food safety risk assessments as follows: A risk assessment should be objective, transparent, fully documented and available for independent scrutiny; the functions of risk assessment and risk management should be carried out separately to the extent practicable; risk assessors and risk managers should engage in an iterative and ongoing dialogue throughout risk assessment; risk assessment should follow a structured and systematic process; risk assessment should be based on scientific data and should take into account the whole “production-to-consumption” food pathway; uncertainties in risk estimates and their origins and impacts should be clearly documented and explained to risk managers; a risk assessment should be subject to peer review, if considered appropriate; and a risk assessment should be reviewed and updated as new information permits or requires.

In developing countries, generating scientific data for implementing risk assessment is a real challenge. From the four steps required in implementing risk assessment, exposure assessment is the step which should be carried out in the country, because data or information on hazard identification and characterization can be obtained from published scientific resources. In particular, data and information from JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA, and other relevant resources are available and can be used for implementing risk assessment. Data from national food consumption surveys, national food monitoring activities, and from disease outbreak investigations are commonly generated in a country and can be used for risk assessment purposes. It is suggested that each Member State start to initiate the implementation of risk assessment based on data generated in the country.
2.3 Understanding the principles and practices of Codex Alimentarius Commission  
(Annamaria Bruno, Codex Alimentarius Secretariat)

An overview of the Codex was presented, which covered the meaning and structure of Codex, how it works, and its successes and challenges. The result of Codex activity is the Codex Alimentarius, which is a collection of standards, guidelines, and codes of practice. Codex is an intergovernmental structure and process to find a consensus on the texts that make up the Codex Alimentarius. It consists of multiple partners, which include national contact points, governmental ministries, the Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO, and nongovernmental organizations, among others, working in a common project to protect the health of consumers, ensure fair practices in the food trade, promote coordination of all food standards work undertaken by International Organisations (IGOs) and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs); and develop and maintain a collection of international food standards, which is the Codex Alimentarius. Currently, the number of Codex Members States is 185 + the EU, representing almost 99% of the world’s population.

Codex actually means information and exchange of information in an international forum to negotiate and define standards. These Codex standards are not obligatory and each country decides how these standards will be applied. Codex standards by themselves do not guarantee food safety, therefore, each country needs to monitor the application of these standards for food safety assurance and ensure an effective food control system is in place. Various products which have resulted from Codex activities are:

1. Horizontal standards, which include General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA), General Standard for contaminants and toxins in food (GSCTF), labelling, and methods;
2. Product standards, both individual standards and group of standards;
3. Guidelines, including principles, certification, inspection, risk analysis, and sampling;
4. Codes of practice such as for hygiene and for prevention of contamination;
(5) Pesticide MRLs;
(6) Veterinary drugs MRLs; and
(7) Regional standards, codes and guidelines.

There are three committees under the structure of the CAC (see Figure 2.2), namely, General Subject Committees, Commodity Committees, and FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees. Figure 2.2 shows various subjects discussed in the General Subject Committees and the coordinating country that leads the discussion. Under the Commodity Committees there are five commodities discussed in five active committees.

Figure 2.2: Structure of Codex Alimentarius Commission organization
Standards setting in Codex is conducted through several steps, as shown in Figure 2.3.

As in CAC decision 1995, the food standards, guidelines, and other recommendations of Codex Alimentarius shall be based on the principle of sound scientific analysis and evidence, involving a thorough review of all relevant information, in order that the standards assure the quality and safety of the food supply. JECFA and JMPR are Joint FAO/WHO scientific advice teams dealing with chemical hazards and JEMRA deals with microbiological hazards. As a risk assessor, JECFA will send the results of risk assessments to CCFA, CCCF, CCRVDF, JMPR to CCPR, and JEMRA to CCFH. Other ad hoc consultations are TFFBT for biotechnology, CCCF for biotoxins, and CCFH for active chlorine.

Figure 2.3: The process of Codex standard setting
In terms of the Codex Committee for Asia, currently there are 23 Member Countries in the Asian Region. The first meeting was coordinated by Malaysia was held in New Delhi in 1978) and the eighteenth and last session was coordinated by Japan and held in Tokyo in 2012. Regional standards, which have been discussed in CCASIA, are: gochujang, ginseng, fermented soybean paste, sago flour, chilli sauce, tempe, and Guidelines for Codex Committee Focal Points (CCPs) and National Codex Committees (NCCs). Standards under development are non-fermented soybean products, laver, and street vended food. Edible crickets were indicated for possible future work.

Codex has a long story of success and the following are keys to the success of Codex: activities are driven by the members; decisions in Codex are based on consensus; Codex always maintains transparency. All information is uploaded on the Codex website, which can be seen by observers; procedures in standard setting are flexible and allow all members to comment; and food safety standards in Codex are always based on science and risk assessment.

There are still challenges faced by Codex such as the speed of standard development while remaining inclusive and transparent, finding consensus in a heterogeneous membership, participation of developing countries, and existing private standards. To speed up the standard development, the Executive Committee recently has developed guidance for monitoring the standards setting process and application of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities.

It was mentioned previously that Codex works mainly by consensus. Codex and its Member recognize that building consensus can take time. It was also noted that some votes in the past have been divisive. Therefore, one of the responsibilities of a committee chairperson is to facilitate consensus and to rule when it has been reached. Consensus in Codex does not have to be unanimous but there is also no definition. At this time, there is a common understanding but there is also some concern that the concept is not applied equally across Committees.

Enhancing the participation of developing countries in Codex activities is very important. Efforts have been made by strengthening of the CTF and, through FAO and WHO capacity-building activities in developing countries,
including regional workshops and STDF projects. Other efforts are to continue co-hosting Codex sessions in developing countries, encouraging mentoring mechanisms through intraregional cooperation, and ensuring the timely distribution of documents in the official languages. Data show that the number of members attending the Commission sessions has increased during the last 50 year period (1963-2013).

2.4. **Mechanisms for effective utilization of the Codex Trust Fund**

(Annamaria Bruno, Codex Alimentarius Secretariat)

An overview of CTF was presented, including reasons why it was established, CTF expected outputs and results, and future directions. In 2002, WHO and FAO recognized that developing countries and countries with economies in transition were not participating fully in the work of the CAC. The main reason it was established is because developing countries had not been at the Codex table. This was commonly due to budgetary constraints at the national level. The response to this problem and issue will be setting up a fund to act as a catalyst to countries participation at Codex meetings and other Codex activities. Data show that developing country participation rates in General Subject Committees only increased slightly from 18% in 2001 to 28% in 2008 and in Commodity Committees from 11% in 2001 to 19% in 2008. With the CTF it was expected that there would be an increase in participation, better quality, and more scientific/technical participation from developing countries in various Codex activities.

According to CTF rules, the criteria for eligibility of countries are as follows:

1. The country should be a Member of Codex.
2. The country should have an identified Codex Contact Point.
3. National Objectives in the framework of Codex should be outlined.
4. Coordination between governmental entities should be demonstrated.
5. Submission of reports on previous participation should be available in the online system.
Codex classifies countries into several country groups based on a country’s income and human resources development, as shown in Table 2.1. The application process for 2014 can be followed and the applicant form can be obtained by browsing the WHO website under programmes and projects CTF.

**Table 2.1: Classification of countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Group</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1a</td>
<td>least developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1b</td>
<td>low income + low or medium human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>lower middle income + medium or high human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3a</td>
<td>upper middle income + medium human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3b</td>
<td>upper middle income + high human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>LDCs + SIDS who have graduated from regular support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>After 8 (group 1), 6 (group 2), and 4 (group 3) years of participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Least Developed Countries (LDCs) according to official list of the United Nations
(2) Small Island Developing States (SIDS) according to official list of the United Nations

CTF was launched in 2003 for the first year of operation in 2004. It was given a 12-year mandate to assist developing countries in becoming self-supporting. This mandate ends in 2015. The entire amount of funding supported by donors was US$ 16.5 million, as of December 2012. Between 2004–2013, the total number of countries which have been eligible for support was 150. In 2014, 79 countries are eligible for support and 99 countries will be graduated by year end 2013. The total Codex membership has grown from 169 in 2003 to 185+1 in 2013.

The results to date show that there has been very good progress by CTF in supporting participation and delivering Codex capacity-building. As many as 1942 participants from 134 countries have been able to participate in Codex meetings and 705 participants were supported in training courses. Good progress is also seen in country participation after graduation, and more progress needed in effective participation by countries and institutional capacity at country level. However, there has been little
progress to date on increasing scientific/technical participation. Currently support has been given to four countries to carry out data surveys on mycotoxins. The situation of CTF grouping of South-East Asia countries is shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: CTF grouping of South-East Asia countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1a</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1b</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3a</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Bhutan (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sri Lanka (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility pending Codex membership</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of delegates from South-East Asia supported by CTF in Codex meetings in the period of 2004–2012 are as follows: CCASIA (47), CAC (28), CCPR (17), CCFA (14), CCFH (14), CCFCS (13), CCFL (10), CCGP (10), CCFPP (6), CCNFSDU (6), CCFFV (5), CCF (5), CCMAS (4), CCCF (3), CCMMP (3), CCRVDF (3), TFAM (2), CCNMW (1), and TFFDB (1).

In 2015, CTF support will end and countries should look at sustained physical participation, obtain political and economic support, explore and secure other funding mechanisms, take greater advantage of participation, and gain from each other’s experiences.

Physical participation does not equal effective participation. Therefore, to enhance effective participation, it is important that countries prioritize their interest in Codex, prepare for Codex meetings (before and after), participate in electronic working groups, coordinate positions at the
national level through the role of a CCP, share views with other countries in the region through the role of a regional coordinator, and prepare and submit written comments on time.

3. Country Reports

3.1 Bangladesh

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) is an autonomous entity responsible for developing and promoting industrial standardization through drafting of standards for food as well as non-food items. BSTI has been designated as the Codex Contact Point for Bangladesh. Bangladesh National Codex Committee (BNCC) was established in the BSTI chaired by the Director General of BSTI. The members of BNCC consist of 14 representatives from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), and the Hortex Foundation.

Main objectives of BNCC are as follows: (1) to oversee the Technical Committee for the adoption of Codex Standards as National Standards; (2) to ensure safe food for consumers; (3) to accelerate the export and removal of trade barriers for food products; (4) to give scientific advice to the Government on food safety and quality and in making policy regarding non-hygienic food products; and (5) to help the developing food industry in the country and the Government in taking necessary decisions regarding this purpose.

Progress regarding the Codex-related activities in Bangladesh are the formation of a National Codex Committee and formulation of 630 National Standards of various products out of which 152 are harmonized with the Codex Standards and 117 are ISO Standards. Future Codex activities have been planned; among others are the establishment of an exclusive Codex desk at BTSI; capacity development of the National Codex Contact Point and BNCC through training both in-country and abroad; organizing
seminars and workshops on Codex Standards; and establishing a linkage with National and International Codex Committees.

Specifically, the status of National Standard Body of Bangladesh (NSBB) was described. BSTI as well as BCSIR are the National Standards Bodies of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Accreditation Board also plays an important role in developing and promoting industrial standardization. Keeping in view that Standardization, metrology, testing and quality control in the industrial spheres are the basic pre-requisite of the infrastructure necessary for sound economic development of the country, the Government of Bangladesh has established the BSTI with the merger of the Bangladesh Standards Institution and the Central Testing Laboratories in 1985 through the passage of The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Ordinance, 1985 (Ordinance XXXVII of 1985).

The main functions of BSTI include responsibility for: the formulation of national standards for industrial, food, and chemical products keeping in view regional and international standards; quality control of the products which are ensured as per specific national standards made by the technical committees formed by divisional committees of BSTI; implementation of the metric system and overseeing the accuracy of weights and measures in the country; and providing management systems certification. In supporting these functions, BSTI is facilitated by standards, physical testing, chemical testing, certification, metrology, and administration wings.

In terms of the regional and international activities of BSTI, the Institution became a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 1974. At present, BSTI is the Member/Affiliate Member/Contact Point/Nodal Point of the following regional and international Organizations: International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML); Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) of FAO/WHO; International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC); Asia Pacific Metrology Programme (APMP); Asian Forum for Information Technology (AFIT); ISO Information Network (ISONET); Standing Group for Standardization, Metrology, Testing and Quality; South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO); and WTO/TBT focal point.
3.2 Bhutan

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) under the Ministry of Agriculture was established on 5 August 2000 and designated as the National Food Inspectorate in 2003. BAFRA has also been designated as the Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Bhutan, and a focal person was identified from the Food Unit of BAFRA. To support inspection activities, the National Food Testing Laboratory was established in 2005 and Food Rules and Regulations were issued in 2007.

As provisioned in the Food Act of Bhutan 2005, the National Food Quality and Safety Commission (NFQSC) and the National Codex Committee (NCC) have been established. NFQSC is chaired by the Minister of MoAF and the CCP serves as the Secretary. Members of NFQSC are the Director General, Executive Director or Director of BAFRA (MoAF), Department of Agriculture (MoAF), Department of Livestock (MoAF), Department of Public Health in the Ministry of Health (MoH), Department responsible for trade and industry, Office of Legal Affairs (OAG), the Secretary General of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and one high-level representative from the National Environment Commission.

The NFQSC meets at least once a year and as and when required. The Commission may form temporary committees or working groups to analyse and report on related technical issues as it may assign to them. If needed by the Commission, representatives of government organizations and agencies as well as industry and consumer groups may attend meetings of the Commission without any right to vote.

Mandate has been given to the Commission, which include permission to formulate policy to maximize industry development, foster trade, and protect consumers. On its own initiative, the Commission may discuss any matter connected with the enhancement of food control in the Kingdom, with regard to production for the national market, import and export; to identify the borderlines of responsibility among the Commission and the Committee; to make recommendations to the Minister on the activities relevant to regulatory bodies or stakeholders to ensure there are no overlapping responsibilities or gaps in food control activities. In the case of a food emergency, the Commission may identify the organizations or units responsible for taking action, specify the actions to be taken, and coordinate a national response.
It is also the responsibility of the Commission to review and approve the work of the National Codex Committee regarding the development and acceptance of national standards regarding food quality, food safety, ingredients, additives, adulterated food, weights and measures, laboratories and other technical issues, and the preparation of standards, rules and regulations, orders, and notices as well as amendments. The Commission make recommendations to the Minister on the level of any fees and penalties. Finally, it recommends educational activities on the importance of food safety and coordinates responses to the media, appointing a media spokesperason as necessary, with regard to all food control issues in Bhutan.

The NCC established under the Food Act of Bhutan 2005 is chaired by the Secretary of the MoAF with the CCP serves as the Secretariat The members of NCC are representatives of BAFRA, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Livestock, the Ministry responsible for public health, Ministry responsible for trade and industry, and responsible for urban affairs, and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI). The NCC meets at least two times per year and as and when required. The Committee may form temporary subcommittees to provide advice of a technical nature to the NCC, the Commission, and/or the Minister. Any member who cannot attend the meeting of the NCC may designate an alternate. If needed by the NCC, representatives of governmental organizations and agencies, as well as industry and consumer groups, may attend meetings of the Committee without any right to vote.

Mandate has been given to the NCC which includes to serve as the main contact point for Codex and other food control matters within the Kingdom, studying Codex documents and collecting and analysing all relevant information in order to formulate advice to the government; act as liaison with relevant stakeholders; distribute information received from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) Secretariat and facilitate wide consultation in order to ensure that the Government is provided with an appropriate balance of policy and technical advice on which to base decisions relating to the acceptance of Codex standards; coordinate responses to Codex questionnaires and other requests for information; cooperate with the CAC Secretariat in nominating delegates to attend regional or international meetings; draft standards, rules, and regulations, orders, and notices and also make proposals to the Commission regarding
any necessary legislative changes; review international and regional food standards; collect and analyse data for elaborating national food standards and to establish standards for food; and cooperate with other local and foreign organizations whose tasks concern food standards.

3.3 India

India became a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in 1964. Now, the FSSAI is the National Codex Contact Point (NCCP). In strengthening the NCCP, competent qualified persons with technical and innovative skills were hired and linkages with experts and research institutions were built. Likewise, the NCCP closely interacts with those ministries and departments concerned with a holistic viewpoint on agenda points being discussed in various Codex Committees.

FSSAI has established a NCC and various Shadow Committees of the NCC for reviewing the agenda of the Codex Alimentarius. For each Codex Committee, a parallel Shadow Committee constituted by FSSAI reviews the agenda of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and its subsidiary Committees and finalize India’s comments on various agenda items. Members of Shadow Committees are drawn from government, industry associations, consumer organizations, research institutes, and food testing laboratories. A list of various Shadow Committees and the ministry in charge is shown in Table 3.1 and a list of related stakeholders in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: List of various Shadow Committee and the Ministry in charge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shadow Committee</th>
<th>Ministry in Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Core Issues</td>
<td>FSSAI, MoHFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Processed Fruits Products, Food</td>
<td>FSSAI, MoHFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additives &amp; Contaminants in foods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Food Hygiene</td>
<td>FSSAI, MoHFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Fats &amp; Oils, Sugar and Cereals,</td>
<td>FSSAI, MoHFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses &amp; Legumes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection</td>
<td>Ministry of Commerce (MoC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Certification Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee</td>
<td>Ministry in Charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling</td>
<td>FSSAI, MoHFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Uses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Residues of Pesticides &amp; Veterinary Drugs in Foods</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Plant Protection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Fish and Fishery Products</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs</td>
<td>Composition is under review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.2: List of related stakeholders**

- Representatives from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- Representatives from the Ministry of Human Resources, Department of Women and Child Development
- Representatives from the Ministry of Food Processing
- Representatives from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture
- Representatives from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
- Representatives from educational institutions
- Representatives from Industry Associations
- Experts and scientists from concerned areas
- National Dairy Development Board, Spices Board, Coffee Board, Tea Board, National Horticulture Board, Department of Biotechnology, Quality Council of India, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, and Marine Products Export Development Authority
There is a step-by-step procedure in formulating India’s viewpoints on various concerned Codex agenda items and for finalizing the Indian Delegation to the Codex meetings, which is as follows:

(1) NCCP India receives the provisional agenda and the invitation from the Codex Secretariat.

(2) The invitation is circulated to all the Shadow Committee members.

(3) The NCCP India receives the detailed agenda items from the Codex Secretariat.

(4) The detailed agenda items are circulated to all the Shadow Committee members.

(5) Members review the agenda items.

(6) A meeting notice is prepared and circulated to all the Shadow Committee members.

(7) The first Shadow Committee Meeting is conducted to brief the members on the agenda.

(8) Minutes of the meeting are prepared and circulated to all the members.

(9) Follow-up meetings are conducted to formulate India’s viewpoints on various concerned agenda items and to finalize the Indian Delegation.

(10) Final country comments are prepared.

(11) The comments and the composition of Indian Delegation are forwarded to Codex Secretariat/Host Country by the NCCP, India.

There is also a procedure for reporting and debriefing, which is as follows:

(1) The leader of the delegation submits a report of participation to the NCCP within a period of 30 working days.

(2) The report should contain the following: a copy of the draft/final report as adopted in the meeting; additional agenda items or notes that were tabled in the meeting; conference room
documents or discussion papers circulated by other Member Countries; and the reports of the in-session Working Groups.

(3) The delegation report should include possible strategies for the next session.

The follow-up actions from the meeting may include the following:

(1) The NCCP/Shadow Committee may arrange a meeting of the concerned Shadow Committee after the receipt of the report of the Indian delegation.

(2) The final report may be reviewed by the Shadow Committee and issues of significance to the country or the committee identified, as well as those that have implications for work done by other committees.

(3) The Shadow Committee may identify a pertinent Circular Letter (if any) resulting from the meeting which should be circulated for comments.

(4) A response to this Circular Letter should be prepared in cases where such a response advances the country’s position.

(5) The NCCP may also approach the concerned industry, scientific institutions, experts, or consumer organizations for data and subsequent follow-up action, if required.

India’s participation in the various electronic Working Groups (eWGs) is shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: India’s participation in the various eWGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Working Groups</th>
<th>Codex Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment of the food additive provisions of the commodity standards and relevant provisions of the General Standards for Food Additives</td>
<td>CCFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Standards for Food Additives</td>
<td>CCFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing of criteria for the entry of substances into the database of the processing aid</td>
<td>CCFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of ethylene in ripening of organically produced fruits</td>
<td>CCFL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Electronic Working Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Working Groups</th>
<th>Codex Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines on the establishment of MRLs or other limits in honey</td>
<td>CCRVDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise the draft report on performance criteria for multi-residue analytical methods</td>
<td>CCRVDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a generic validation protocol for these methods</td>
<td>CCRVDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Hygienic Practice for spices and dried aromatic herbs (co-chair with the United States)</td>
<td>CCFH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the Codex Standard for follow-up formula</td>
<td>CCNFSDU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion of the Regional Standard for Ginseng Products</td>
<td>CCPFV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Strategic Plan for CCASIA 2015-2020</td>
<td>CCAIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for guidance documents</td>
<td>CCGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for certain canned fruits</td>
<td>CCPFV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for certain quick frozen vegetables</td>
<td>CCPFV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Practice for Processing of Fish Sauce</td>
<td>CCFFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites</td>
<td>CCFH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various eWG’s are led by India, including:

1. Proposed Draft on the Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children to include a new Part B for underweight children – Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU).
2. Establishing the ML for Aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts – Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF).

The followings are India’s new work proposals currently under process: proposed standard for ware potato (CCFFV) – 17th session; developing a general standard for labelling of wholesale packages of food (CCFL) – 41st session;
It was concluded that there is still a need for increased participation by the developing countries. National responses are to be prepared based on data and scientific evidence. There is a need also to increase coordination between the countries of the region on agenda items of mutual significance and interest and to propose new work proposals at the regional as well as international level.

3.4 Indonesia

Three references have been used in operating Codex in Indonesia, namely: Procedural Manual Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC); Guidelines for Handling Codex in Indonesia; and Strategic Plan Codex Indonesia 2013-2018. In Indonesia, the NCC is led by the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (NSAI); NSAI is the Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Indonesia. The Secretariat of the CCP is located at NSAI office and may be contacted at codex_indonesia@bsn.go.id or through the website: http://codexindonesia.bsn.go.id.

The NCC of Indonesia is supported by Codex Working Group of Indonesia which consists of seven Mirror Committees (MCs), hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture the Ministry of Trade), the Ministry of Trade), the NSAI), (5) the National Agency for Drug and Food Control the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries), and the Ministry of Health).

In preparing national positions for Codex meetings, the NCC receives technical assistance from the MCs. Each MC is coordinated by the host institution. Each MC coordinator is responsible for developing drafts of papers on the national position to be delivered at a specific Codex meeting. Each MC also creates programmes or priority topics for the discussion in the Committee meetings and disseminate the results of the meeting. Research and regulatory agencies as well as food industries are involved in the development of the draft papers. The working group, which consists of representatives from government institutions, experts, representatives from food industries, and consumer organizations is responsible for verifying the drafts prepared by the MC. Papers prepared for Indonesia’s national position in Codex meetings require final approval from the NCC before they are submitted to the Codex Secretariat and the appropriate Codex committee.
The process in developing Indonesia’s positions related to Codex activities includes the following steps: receiving information on Codex activities; distributing documents on Codex activities; holding Mirror Committee meetings; holding Working Group meetings to verify the proposed Indonesian position; receiving approval for the Indonesian position; and submission of the Indonesian position. Any data collected from assessment or research activities is discussed under the coordination of a MC and validated in a MC meeting.

3.5 Maldives

Maldives became a member of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) on 11 March 2008 and held the first NCC meeting in September 2008. The NCC for Maldives was reformulated in 2011 with eight members consisting of: Director General of Health Service, Ministry of Health; Director General of Maldives Food and Drug Authority (MFDA); Head of Food Control Division, MFDA; Director from the Ministry of Economic Development; Deputy Director General of the Fisheries Sector, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture; representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fisherman’s Association, Maldives National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Maldives Seafood Exporters and Processors Association.

The functions of the NCC for Maldives are: facilitating the function of National Codex activities and the Codex Contact Point (CCP); communicating among relevant stakeholders; and providing a forum for discussions and for the formulation of national position(s) and responses to Codex proposals or policy.

The first NCC consisted of 10 members, namely: Dr Abdul Azeez Yoosuf (MoH/State Minister); Dr Sheena Moosa (MoH/Director General); Shazla Mohamed (MFDA/Head of Food Control Division); Solih Hussain (Ministry of Economic Development); Adam Manik (Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Head of Fisheries Department); Ibrahim Shabau (Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Head of Agricultural Department); Dhunya Maumoon (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Saeedha Mohamed (Ministry of Housing Transport and Environment/Deputy Director General); Aminath Salah (Marketing Manager, Seagull group/representing the Agricultural Association); and Omar Manik (Fisherman’s Association (Private Fishing/Chamber).
Currently, the revised list of the NCC are as follows: Dr Sheeza Ali (MoH/Director General of Health Service); Shareefa Adam Manik (MFDA/Director General of MFDA); Shabeena Ahmed (MFDA/Head of Food Control Division); Riyaz Mansoor (Ministry of Economic Development/Director); Adam Manik (Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture/Deputy Director General Fisheries Sector); Khadheeja Najeeha (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Omar Manik (Fisherman’s Association, Private Fishing/Chamber), Arham Hussain (Maldives National Chamber of Commerce and Industries); Ahmed Bunyamin (Maldives Seafood Exporters and Processors Association).

The Food Control Division under the MFDA was assigned as the CCP for Maldives. The functions of the CCP include: receiving circular letters, reports and other documents from the Codex Secretariat/CAC; distributing information received to relevant Technical Working Groups (TWGs); communicating with the Codex Secretariat regarding Maldives’ National Position on specific Codex issues; and consulting specific issues with the NCC.

There are five TWGs appointed by the NCC to assist them in the study or consideration of Codex-specific technical matters, as follows: (1) Core Issues (CAC, Executive Committee for the CAC, regional Coordinating Committees including the Coordinating Committee for Asia, Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), and Codex Committee on Food Labelling); (2) Import and Export Certification System (Codex Committee on Meat & Poultry Hygiene, and Methods of Analysis and Sampling); (3) Fish and Fishery Products; (4) Food Hygiene; and (5) Pesticide. Members of TWG1, TWG2, TWG3, TWG4, and TWG5 are chosen from the following Ministries: Ministry of Food and Drug AdministrationMFDA, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA, Ministry of Economic Development (MoED), and MNCC. TWG2 includes a member from Customs. TWGs 3 and 4 include a member from the Male’ City Council.

The functions of the TWGs include: establish communication with other ministries, industries, consumers, academia, research institutions, and public health professionals; circulate relevant documents and encourage participation from both the scientific and trade communities and other relevant stakeholders; and, based on decisions in their meetings, formulate
the Government of Maldives position comments. The preparation of response to Codex matters starts from the NCC, goes to NCCP, and then to a TWG. The final comments will go back to the NCCP, then to the NCC. National responses are scientifically justified based on the available valid data and strong rationale behind opinion. Capacity-building programmes, particularly in human resources development, and funding are needed to strengthen the NCCP and NCC.

3.6 Myanmar

The NCC has not yet been formed in Myanmar, although there is a long history of correspondence with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). Recently, the Myanmar Food and Drug Board of Authority (MFDBA), the highest authority of food and drug safety in the country, has been advocated to form an NCC for Myanmar in an effort to strengthen Codex activities among the related stakeholders. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of Myanmar was established under the Department of Health in 1995 and upgraded to a directorate level department directly under the Ministry of Health in August 2013. The Director of Food Safety at the FDA is now taking on the role of the new Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Myanmar and the Food Division of FDA is providing administrative services to the CCP. CCP distributes Codex materials, sent by CAC, to all relevant stakeholders in the country and notifies the stakeholders that Codex standards are the reference standards for food safety and quality. The CCP organizes and manages stakeholders to participate in Codex activities, supported by the CTF.

It was proposed that the NCC members include representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, and Ministry of Science and Technology. As an NCC has not been established in Myanmar, the process for stakeholder consultation is informal and rarely respond as the national responses. Respective stakeholders may respond individually when needed. Conclusively: Myanmar urgently needs to establish a National Codex Committee.
3.7 Nepal

The report from Nepal was started by describing Nepal’s geopolitical and agricultural situations, as in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Geopolitical and agricultural situation, Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latitude</td>
<td>26°22’ to 30°27’ North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitude</td>
<td>80°04’ to 88°12’ East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>147,181 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>26.6 million, Growth rate 1.4% (Census 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density</td>
<td>181/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy</td>
<td>56.6% (Literacy rate: Male = 71.6% and Female = 44.5% )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altitude</td>
<td>90 to 8848 m (Highest peak of the world Mt Everest: 8848m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Divided into 3 regions (northern mountain, mid hill and southern terai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic groups</td>
<td>More than 60 castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP contribution by agriculture</td>
<td>36% to GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staple foods</td>
<td>Rice, maize, wheat, and millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority agri-produce</td>
<td>Tea, ginger, cardamom, lentil, honey, coffee, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Nepal has been established since 1974. The Director General of the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) under the Ministry of Agriculture Development is
the CCP for Nepal. However, a separate organizational structure for the CCP has not been set up. The NCC of Nepal was established in 2004 and is chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture Development. Members of the NCC are Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice; Joint Secretary, World Trade Organization Focal Point, Agri-business Promotion and Statistics Division, MoAD; Director General, Department of Health (DoH); Director General, Department of Agriculture (DoA); Director General, Department of Livestock Services (DoLS); Director General, Department of Civil Supplies (DoCS); Director General, Department of Nepal Bureau Standards & Metrology (NBSM); representatives from Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI), Food Safety Experts (3 members, nominated by GoN), and Consumer Forum (2 members, nominated by Government of Nepal (GoN); and Member Secretary, which is the Director General, DFTQC.

The DFTQC is the Secretariat office of the NCC and a senior food research officer has been appointed to conduct the secretarial work of NCC. As the Director General of DFTQC is the member secretary, the Committee meetings are conducted under the instruction of the chairperson. As CCP of Nepal, the DFTQC uses e-mails for communication on food safety issues with concerned member countries.

The CCP of Nepal has the following functions:

(1) coordinating all relevant Codex activities within the country;
(2) receiving invitations to various Codex session meetings;
(3) receiving all Codex final texts and working documents of Codex sessions;
(4) sending comments on Codex documents or proposals to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Codex Committees, or Codex Secretariat;
(5) acting as a channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex Members; and
(6) working in close cooperation with the NCC. The CCP of Nepal has participated Codex Committee Meetings under the support of the Codex Trust Fund and support from the WHO Country Office in Nepal.
The NCC of Nepal was established to provide appropriate comment and suggestions to the Government of Nepal on the following issues: protection of consumers health in Nepal; promotion of fair practices in national and international food trade; formulation of policies and programmes on the promotion of food trade; enhancement of harmonization of food standards with international and regional food standards; updates and amendments of food safety and quality control related guidelines; code of practice; methods of analysis; relevant laws and regulations, and so on.

Activities of the NCC of Nepal are to address the issues concerning food safety and quality control in coordination with WTO, WHO, FAO, CAC, OIE, IPPC, and other international organizations; to recommend policy formulation in food safety and food security; to communicate the Codex principles, guidelines, and other relevant documents to related stakeholders; to coordinate and cooperate with all the government and non-government agencies in food safety programmes; to formulate and function in necessary technical subcommittees; to make comments on Codex documents or proposals to CAC, Codex Committees, or the Codex Secretariat; to support participation in international and regional Codex sessions and meetings; and to establish a Codex Documentation Centre.

The NCC is also supported by technical subcommittees for various topics and food commodities, which include: General Principles; Food Additives and Contaminants; Methods of Analysis and Sampling; Meat, Fish and Poultry Products; Cereal and Cereal Products; Fresh and Semi Processed Foods (Fruits/Vegetables); Tea, Coffee and Spices; Fats and Oils; Milk & Milk Products; Genetically Modified Foods & Other Food Products; Pesticide Residues; Veterinary Drug Residues; Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification; Animal and Poultry Feeds and Feeding stuffs; Food Hygiene; and Food Labelling.

Currently activities of the DFTQC related to Codex are as follows: conducting National Codex Committee meetings with the annual national program of DFTQC; participating in Codex Committee meetings with the support of the CTF; harmonizing Food Standards with Codex, which was initiated with standards of Whole Milk Powder and Skimmed Milk Powder and under process with standards for National Trade Integration Strategy food products like tea, honey, ginger, lentil, noodles, etc.); developing
Horizontal Standards for food products; actively participating in South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC Workshop and follow-up Workshop on Harmonization of Standards; conducting case studies on risk assessment of food safety issues of consumers and studying pesticides and aflatoxin residues in the common foods of Nepal with the support of WHO.

In strengthening the CCP and NCC of Nepal, capacity-building programmes are needed, particularly in the form of training and sharing experience on functions of the CCP and the NCC, in networking among regional Codex committees, in risk analysis including MRLs setting, and in promoting harmonization of standards, guidelines, and recommendations in compliance with Codex.

3.8 Sri Lanka

The NCC in Sri Lanka was established in 2005. The Director of the Department of Environmental, Occupational Health and Food Safety (DEOHFS), Ministry of Health (MoH) is the designated Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Sri Lanka. Since 2013, the NCC of Sri Lanka is chaired by the Director General of Health Services, MoH, and the Director of DEOHFS, MoH is the secretary of the NCC. There are 30 members of the NCC, which includes 1 chairperson, 1 secretary, 26 members representing related government agencies, universities, research institutes, a seafood exporters association, and the Chamber of Commerce, and 2 invitee members each representing WHO and FAO. Among the important roles of NCC related to food safety issues are: formulating national standards and regulations; formulating a standard or a regulation related to export items; formulating a standard or a regulation related to import items; and to rectify trade barriers.

To support the NCC activities as many as 14 Codex subcommittees have been formed dealing with various food commodities, including: Additives and Contaminants, Labelling, Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, Milk and Milk Products, Fish and Fishery Products, Residues of Veterinary Drugs, Fats and Oils, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Processed Fruits and Vegetables, Analysis and Sampling, Pesticide Residues, Food Hygiene, Spices and Culinary Herbs, and Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems. These Codex subcommittees act as committees to formulate regulations for Sri Lanka in cooperation with
stakeholders, including consumer affairs authority and relevant associations. Most of the Codex subcommittee activities and discussions are conducted through electronic media.

In relation to food-related regulations, Sri Lanka is currently in the position of using existing regulations, while drafting and proposing new regulations. National Codex subcommittees act as regulation formulation committees in Sri Lanka. Before adopting a regulation, several steps of activity may be followed, which include: formulating National Standards and Regulations; following CAC standards and guidelines; discussing in a subcommittee meeting the formulated regulation to meet country requirements; drafting standards or regulations; forwarding the drafts to technical experts of subcommittees; publishing the drafts to gather comments from the public as well as trade; sending the drafts to every stakeholder; collecting comments from stakeholders; discussing all comments in the subcommittee meetings attended by various related experts; forwarding the revised drafts to the main committee with recommendations; amending the revised drafts accordingly; sending back the amended revised drafts for public comments; drafting the document; sending the document to CAC as well as to WTO; finalizing the documents with comments; preparing the final documents, and finally adopting the final documents.

Insufficient facilities, funds, and trainings as well as inadequate institutional capacity are the major constraints hampering Codex activity in Sri Lanka. Future activities have been planned which include generating standards or regulations for items not considered so far, increasing information sharing and awareness, considering traditional food commodities, and considering vulnerable groups when setting standards for residues.

3.9 Thailand

There are two major competent agencies controlling food safety and quality along the food chain in Thailand. Farm to primary products, including exported foods, are controlled under the Agricultural Standards Act of 2008. The National Bureau of Agriculture Commodity and Food Standard is in charge of the Codex Contact Point (CCP) of Thailand. Controlling quality and safety of raw materials used for food production, transportation,
preparation, and selling to consumers as well as imported raw material and food products are the responsibility of the Thai FDA under the Food Act of 1979. According to the ACFS (Agriculture Commodity and Food Standard) action on the NCCP, main responsibilities are as follows:

1. Collaborate and consult with relevant stakeholders to comment and develop national positions for the Codex meetings by establishing 17 subcommittees. Each committee consists of experts, academic institutes, industries, and relevant government agencies. These subcommittees often have national meetings prior to and after the Codex meetings;

2. Support harmonized Codex standards into national standards; and

3. Develop an action plan corresponding to Codex standards and participate in Codex committee and CAC meetings.

The Thai FDA is responsible for mandatory and voluntary food regulations and enforcement. Major tasks are summarized below.

1. Regulate national laws and relevant measures such as the notifications of Ministry of Public Health.

2. Control quality and safety of food products before and after they are placed on the market.

3. Develop and implement an annual monitoring and surveillance plan.

4. Educate consumers’ about food safety and support the dissemination of technical information to relevant stakeholders.

5. Control and monitor imported food at the border inspections.

To adopt or adapt Codex standards into national regulations, the delegates from ACFS, Thai FDA, and relevant agencies usually participate in the Codex Committees or Working Groups to provide comments until the standards are endorsed by the CAC. Then, these Codex standards will be used as references together with other national factors and scientific data to develop voluntary or mandatory requirements. Apart from the Codex standards, other issues are also taken into account for developing national regulations such as current situations on food safety,. Results of research and monitoring and surveillance are also considered. This information will
be collected, analysed, and proposed when writing the notification draft. This draft will be revised by the subcommittees acting as the risk assessor based on the available scientific evidence. This revised draft will then be circulated to relevant stakeholders, both at the domestic level and to WTO members for public hearing.

Following feedback from the public hearing, the draft is revised and the final provision is submitted to the Food Committee to finalize and endorse before notification is given in the Government gazette for further implementation. Notifications from the Ministry of Public Health with regard to national regulations can be classified into two groups: vertical and horizontal regulation types for controlling food safety in order to protect consumers and facilitate trade. The vertical regulations include standards on fats and oils, cheeses, sauces, dietary supplements, ice-cream, and coffee (see Table 4.1). Examples of horizontal regulations are food additives, contaminants, veterinary drug residues, and labelling (see Table 4.2).

Finally, challenges and capacity-building needs in Thailand are proposed. The first challenge is to manage incident or emergency problems in relation to food safety that need rapid response communication among stakeholders. In addition, it is difficult to solve some cases due to the complexity of those agencies involved in the problem. The second obstacle results from participation in the Free Trade Area or free movement of goods, such as the ASEAN Economic Community, that increase a lot of food products sold on the Thai market. As a result, a more effective monitoring and surveillance program is highly required. More effective risk management is also needed to balance between consumer protection and trade facilitation. Moreover, enhancement of consumer education should be continuously encouraged.

### 3.10 Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste reported that existing legislation and laws applied to food are:

1. Decree-Law No. 21/2003, Quarantine and Sanitary Control on Goods Imported and Exported
2. Law No. 10/2004 of 24 November 2004 on the Health System of Timor-Leste
(3) Decree-Law No. 11/2004 of 19 May 2004 on Customs Code of Timor-Leste


In addition there are also three documents used in the implementation of Timor-Leste’s food safety program, namely: Food Safety Strategy; Five Keys Messages on Food Safety; and Food Safety Monitoring Guideline. Several ministries participate in activities related to food safety, including Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environmental, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Education, as well as international agencies such as WHO, FAO, and the World Food Programme (WFP). It is a challenge that although interministerial coordination exists it has not been effective yet. Other challenges are limitations in available human resources in terms of the number of qualified officers or focal points, and limitations in budgetary allocations for food safety activities. Training on the implementation of Codex is needed to strengthen the Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Timor-Leste.

Currently, Timor-Leste is not a member of Codex Alimentarius, but is planning to introduce the Codex system within two to three years and intends to conduct an assessment of the existing situation and the technical areas that will need to be addressed in order to establish a National Codex Contact. Several steps have been prepared which include: strengthening and advocating interministerial coordination for a higher level national body for food safety programmes; building capacity for implementation of a CCP; and implementing Codex in Timor-Leste.

4. Group Work and Plenary Discussion

4.1 Conducting Shadow Committee Meetings to prepare national responses to various agenda items

The first group work was conducted to simulate a Shadow Committee meeting as part of an exercise in preparing national responses to various agenda items. For exercise purposes, two Codex documents were used by
the group to identify concerns, develop comments, debate on developed comments, and refine and finalize comments. Example of comments previously submitted to real Shadow Committees were given to the group as comparison. The results of the group work were used in a committee meeting simulation conducted during the plenary.

Prior to the group work, Ms Vinod Kotwal (Director, Codex, FSSAI) introduced the importance of Shadow Committees in each member country as part of formulating and preparing a draft of national standards. In her presentation, she showed the Codex Alimentarius Network to indicate the important link between the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) with the NCCP in Member Countries (Figure 4.1). The figure also illustrates how the CAC is linked to various Codex Committees and how each member country’s NCCP is then linked to Shadow Committees of the corresponding Codex Committees.

Figure 4.1: Codex Alimentarius Network

Codex Alimentarius: Network

*CAC: Codex Alimentarius Commission

**NCCP: National Codex Contact Point of each member countries working individually

Source:???
Codex Alimentarius is a collection of standards, code of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations. Codex standards usually relate to product characteristics, e.g. commodity standards. There are Codex general standards such as those for food additives and contaminants and toxins in foods. Other examples are Codex General Standards for labelling prepackaged foods and Codex Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

Codex Codes of Practice includes a code of hygienic practice, which defines the production, processing, manufacturing, transport, and storage practices for individual foods or groups of foods. For food hygiene, this code of practice introduces the concept of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP).

Every Codex text has a specific identification. Codex standards are identified as CODEX STAN, e.g. CODEX STAN 107-1981 is the Codex General Standard for the labelling of food additives when sold as such. On the Internet, Codex standards are identified as CXS, therefore, the file of this standard appears as CXS_107eLABELLING_FA.pdf. Recommended codes of practice are identified as CAC/RCP, e.g. CAC/RCP 53-2003 is the Recommended Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and on the Internet appears as CXP_053e.pdf. Guidelines are identified as CAC/GL, e.g. CAC/GL 47-2003 is the Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems and on the Internet appears as CXG_047e.pdf. Once a text has been adopted by the CAC, it will be incorporated into the Codex Alimentarius.

An eight-step process has to be followed in the development of Codex standards. The development of a new standard or other text is started from an initial proposal. This initial proposal is further discussed at Committee level in order to advance and become a project proposal. The project proposal goes to Step 1 to be reviewed at the Executive Committee level by comparing it against the criteria and priorities established by the Commission. This project proposal may be revised or abandoned or may be cleared to proceed to Step 2 to be prepared as draft text. At Step 3, the draft text is then circulated to Member Countries and all interested parties for comments. The draft and the comments are reviewed at Committee level as Step 4 and, if necessary, a new draft is prepared.
At Step 5, the Commission reviews the progress and clears the draft for finalization with the endorsement by the relevant General Subject Committees so that it is consistent with Codex general standards. The approved draft is sent again to governments and interested parties for comments at Step 6. At Step 7, those comments that were received are incorporated into the draft document in consultation with the relevant Committee(s) and the draft is submitted to the Commission for adoption. At Step 8, following a final round of comments and incorporation of amendments into the draft, the Commission adopts the draft standard as a formal Codex standard. The standard is then published by the Codex Secretariat.

There are steps to be followed in preparing comments for a Codex meeting. They are as follows: obtaining documents, identifying concerns, developing comments, debating and refining, presentation of comments, and analysis of some past comments. Documents can be obtained from the Codex website at www.codexalimentarius.org. The NCCP may get documents from eWG-related circulars or from the Codex Secretariat. As members of a Working Group, documents may be obtained directly from the Working Group. It is important to reply to all active requests indicating comments, no comments, or acceptability as such. It is neither possible nor necessary for everybody to comment on everything.

In identifying concerns, members are instructed to read the document carefully. Every word is important, therefore, clearly understanding the document is necessary and if it is not clear, it should be discussed. Documents should be correlated with the past versions that were read. New concerns arising due to changes should be located. Texts that are being referred to should be properly cited using a footnote or endnote. Review past comments, particularly from national representatives and other countries, and judge if the national comments were properly addressed.

In developing comments, the following questions may need to be asked and answered: What is desirable? Why is it desirable? How can it be justified? Answers should be based on science, data, previous decisions, consistency with or contradiction to existing texts, procedure, and editorial correctness. Comments should be refined and in the process of refinement attention should be paid to the following advice: information in a context only; never on sections that are not open for comments; never more than
necessary; level of stringency/rigidity/emphasis necessary; eliminate potentially self-defeating justifications; ‘complete’, ‘to the point’, ‘crisp’ and ‘not open to interpretation’; remove redundancies; eliminate duplications; and ensure editorial correctness. Not all of those involved in comments development will always attend the meetings. Often those developing comments and those tasked with presenting the same in the meeting might be different a person.

Presenting concerns needs careful preparation, such as to differentiate general comments from specific comments. For specific comments, there should be clear and accurate reference to the text being commented upon. For proposed amendments, use insertions in bold and underline; for deletions use strikethrough or bold; do not use the ‘track changes’ function; do not use colours; and do not reproduce excessive text. The rationale for the comment should be included and a note to the delegation should be written. Box 4.1 is an example of comment presentation.

**Box 4.1: Example for presenting comments in a draft document**

Proposed Draft Annex on Berries to the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003) at Step 4

India would like to thank the delegation of Australia for developing the improved draft of the Code and would like to make some comments for its further improvement and making the guidance more practical. Our specific comments are provided below:

Section 3: Primary Production, Subsection 3.2.1.1 Water For Primary Production

First paragraph, last sentence: Amend as follows:

‘Growers Operators in the food chain should periodically get the irrigation water analysed for microbiological quality in order to ….’

Rationale: Small growers may not understand the importance of and be able to afford microbiological analysis of water. However, other appropriate operator in food chain may be able to afford the same, and would be in a better position to understand its implications and get the corrective actions taken by the growers. Therefore, it would be appropriate if the annex referred to ‘operators in the food chain’ rather than ‘growers’ for this.
Another document commonly used in Codex meeting are Conference Room Documents (CRDs). CRDs are circulated at a Codex session, when the meeting is in session, and are not circulated more broadly to all Codex Members and Observers in advance. CRDs are numbered consecutively and normally have no other reference. They may be generated for various reasons and may originate from a number of sources, including country delegations or representatives of international organizations with observer status.

CRDs are used when a Codex member submits written comments past the deadline set by the Codex Secretariat and there is no time to distribute them as part of a working paper, although this practice is to be discouraged where possible. CRDs are also used when a Committee establishes a Working or Drafting Group that meets during the committee session. The report of the Working or Drafting Group to the Committee is then identified as a CRD.

Large amounts of documents are handled in any Codex activity. These may include the ALINORMs (i.e. a Codex Committee meeting report), circular letters, information documents, discussion papers, and numerous other working documents. It is recommended that electronic and paper files be organized based on Codex Committees. Each organization may identify Codex topics or Committees of higher relevance to them for which detailed files may be maintained. Keep Committee-wise and year-wise documentation. This can be easy to do, as documents are electronically shared.

### 4.2 Enhancing country capacities to generate, collect, and submit data

A discussion on how to enhance country capacities to generate, collect, and submit data was conducted in plenary. Ms Jarunee Intrasook (Thai FDA) introduced Thailand’s experiences in generating, collecting, and submitting data to Codex. Bhutan, India, Indonesia, and Maldives were requested to prepare comments.

The speaker stated that in most of the Codex’s work, data is a very important element and is one of key elements for decisionmaking. With good data, the current situation can be revealed and this is needed in
supporting Codex work. Therefore, data generated, collected, and submitted to Codex work should always be up-to-date, relevant, and complete. Data based on science will support standard development in Codex work.

Thailand shared experiences in generating, collecting, and submitting data to Codex as well as challenges it faced. Data commonly generated in adopted Codex new work may include: national policy on health and food safety; emergency problems in food safety; and results of monitoring and surveillance plans. Data can be collected from international resources such as Codex scientific bodies like JECFA, JMPR, and JEMRA, as well as Codex member countries. Data can be also collected from national resources such as an annual monitoring and surveillance plan, research activities, and stakeholders. By analysing data, options or advice can be given. Data which has been collected and analysed may be submitted to the NCC for developing comments or preparing national positions. Subcommittees and the Food Committees may use these data for preparing regulations.

Challenges in generating and collecting scientific data in Thailand include how to:

- improve the linkage among agencies or stakeholders in the food chain from farm to table;
- improve the connectivity between human diseases and foods;
- enhance comprehensive monitoring and surveillance plans;
- increase specific studies and research;
- strengthen laboratory and analytical methods; and
- develop IT-supported database.

A limited budget is still the main constraint in facing these challenges.

In the discussion, Bhutan reported that the National Food Testing Laboratory in Bhutan has been accredited according ISO 17025. Use of the Laboratory for testing food safety issues is still in the early stages of development. Some samples are sent to a reference laboratory in India. India stated that there are many food testing laboratories – both government and private – available for generating food safety data.
However, it was also noted that laboratories are independent with different technical capacities. The main constraint is lack of coordination or networking among laboratories, and there is no standardization in methods of testing.

Another constraint is a lack of connectivity between food and food associated with disease surveillance. In Indonesia, some of data for developing food standards are supplied by the university. These data will be assessed by expert groups or a peer reviewer in the Mirror Committee before being used to develop standards. In Maldives, data collection is still in an embrionic stage, and in particular only for fish and fishery products. A lack of technical groups is also a limitation in data collection activities.

In conclusion, there is a need to enhance capacity building in the South-East Asia Region to generate scientific data and a need to establish groups of experts for information sharing. In some conditions, there are enough data, but there is also a need for coordination among laboratories. In some cases, there is a need for help from the expert group. Other recommendations include: the need for interdisciplinary linkage, such as agricultural sector to hospital; establish a strategic plan to strengthen the network of laboratory experts; and mapping laboratories and experts.

### 4.3 Harmonizing national standards with Codex standards

A discussion about harmonizing national standards with Codex standards was conducted in plenary. Mr Sanjay Dave (Chairman, Codex Alimentarius Commission) introduced India’s experiences in harmonizing its food standards with Codex and other international best practices. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand were requested to prepare comments.

There are two important agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO) related to harmonizing documents: namely, the Agreement on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). These agreements both acknowledge the importance of harmonizing standards internationally so as to minimize or eliminate the risk of sanitary, phytosanitary, and other technical standards becoming barriers to trade.
The SPS Agreement has identified and chosen the standards, guidelines, and recommendations established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). This means Codex standards are considered scientifically justified and are accepted as the benchmarks against which national measures and regulations are evaluated. Therefore, Codex and WTO members should actively participate in the Codex process; revise national food standards based on Codex; strengthen National Food Control Systems; and ensure efficient import and export inspection and certification systems.

India’s vision toward Codex and other international best practices is to: harmonize India’s food standards; implement Food Safety Management System FSMS in 11 schemes; and upgrade their laboratory infrastructure through the following plans: modernizing State Government’s Laboratories, setting up a framework of national reference laboratories, and training laboratory analysts. In this context, harmonization means to bring into consonance or accord through the adjustment of differences and inconsistencies among different measurements, methods, procedures, schedules, specifications, or systems to make them uniform or mutually compatible.

Before planning harmonization of food standards there is a need to consider the latest development in food science across the globe, food consumption patterns, new specifications, and the presence of new contaminants and toxins, as well as use of new food additives and ingredients required by the producers and manufacturers in the food business. The scope of harmonization work will include: identifying improvement areas; harmonization of national standards with Codex and other international best practices; creating an approach to undertake required changes for harmonization; and developing new standards and revising existing standards.

The first important step in harmonizing food standards in India is identifying approaches. The first approach is revision or formulation of Vertical Standards, and the second approach is revision or formulation of Horizontal Standards. Vertical standards are standards related to quality standards of food products – Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FFV), Milk and Milk Products (MMP), Fish and Fish Products (FFP), etc. (see Table 4.1). In this case there is a need to review category-specific and/or product-specific
food safety standards. Horizontal standards are standards which apply across all products categories such as food additives, contaminants, etc. (see Table 4.2) There is a need to support these standards with Codes of Practice.

In the case of harmonizing vertical standards, the first steps to be taken are: listing vertical standards not under Food Safety Standards Regulations FSSR but adopted by the CAC and listing vertical standards currently available under FSSR, but which may need harmonization. In formulating food standards, a new standards format should be followed which includes: Name of the Standard; Scope; Description; Composition and Quality Factors; Food Additives; Contaminants, Toxins and Residues; Hygiene; Packaging, Labelling and Claims; Methods of Analysis and Sampling; and Processing Aids.

Working groups need to be formed in formulating the standards; the following eligibility criteria should be fulfilled:

(1) Relevant experience in handling matters related to the Prevention of Food Adulteration PFA, FSSR, and similar food laws or orders, including those under the Essential Commodities Act, and have adequate exposure to food safety, quality, and standards issues.

(2) Should be willing as well as capable of working with FSSAI for at least 1 year for successful execution of the assigned work.

(3) Should be aware of the international food laws, rules and regulations, like CODEX, US FDA, Food Safety Australia and New Zealand FSANZ, EU, etc.

There is also the expectation that the Expert Group will prepare a complete draft standard for food products. The Expert Group can use an alternate template if this is more suitable, but the rationale will need to be recorded. If the Expert Group chooses to re-write a standard, this may be done provided the justification is available.

In formulating the draft standards, nominees are required follow these instructions:

(1) Study and identify changes required in FSSR.
(2) Use available facts, data, and information and draft new national standards, guidelines, or Codes of Practice for final consultation by stakeholders and scientific panels or FSSAI.

(3) Review the internationally followed best practices and standards.

(4) Work in collaboration with stakeholders.

(5) Draft the allotted vertical and horizontal standards, guidelines, or Code of Practice.

(6) Provide inputs in the given format on suggested changes for wider consultation by stakeholders.

There are totally 76 electronic Working Groups (eWGs) formed by FSSAI. Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 shows lists of vertical standards, horizontal standards, and Codes of Practice, respectively. The last date for submitting the draft vertical and horizontal standards was 31 July 2013. The last date for submitting the draft document on Codes of Practice was 31 August 2013. Table 4.4 provides a summary of the work done. Figure 4.2 provides a flow chart from nomination to adoption of standards by FSSAI.

Table 4.1: List of Vertical Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>No. of Working Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Alcoholic Beverages</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bakery Products</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Cereal and Cereal Products</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Egg and Egg Products</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fats and Oils</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Fish and Fish Products</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Fruits and Vegetable Products</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Foods for Infant Nutrition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vertical Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>No. of Working Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Milk and Milk Products</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Non-alcoholic beverages including water</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ready-to-eat products</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Salts, Spices and Condiments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Sweetening agents including honey</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Sweets and Confectionary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2: List of Horizontal Standards*

### Horizontal Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>No. of Working Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Contaminants and Toxins</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Food Additives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ingredients</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Method of Analysis and Sampling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Microbiological Contaminants</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pesticide Residues</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Processing Aids</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Veterinary Drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: List of Codes of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>No. of Working Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Food Hygiene</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Summary of the work done

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Working Group</th>
<th>Number of Working Groups and expected Standards</th>
<th>Working Groups that have responded with drafts</th>
<th>Remaining Working Groups and expected standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>49 (175)</td>
<td>37*(95) plus [49(FFV)+22 (Cereals)]= 166</td>
<td>12 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Codes of Practice</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 (10)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>175(V)+(COP) + (H)</td>
<td>166(V)+10 (COP)+(H)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*31 WGs have sent largely complete information.
Note: Figures in parenthesis indicates the number of products for which standards have been drafted.
In the discussion, Bangladesh reported that BSTI is responsible for the formulation of national standards. Currently, 152 standards are harmonized to Codex standards and 117 standards are harmonized to ISO standards. In formulating standards, the draft standards are prepared for stakeholders consultation. It will take around two months for consultation. Furthermore, the draft standards are reviewed by sectional committees, endorsed by the Director General. The standards are commonly reviewed after 5 years.

In Indonesia, vertical and horizontal standards, including harmonization of the standards, are reviewed by Mirror Committees. The procedure in harmonizing standards follows the Guideline for handling Codex in Indonesia.

In Nepal, there are mandatory and voluntary standards. Harmonization of standards is focused on products related to trade. The DFTQC collects issues and prepares a draft proposal. Technical Committees (TC) are then assigned, which include members of various stakeholders.
depending upon the type of products. The draft proposal from the TC will be reviewed by a committee chaired by the Minister of Agriculture Development to draft the mandatory standards. The draft standards are sent for notification to the WTO and sent to Minister of Law and Justice for review and publication in the Nepal Gazette for public comments. In general, parameters of Codex standards are utilized for standards formulation in Nepal. Codex is a reference point and considered as it pertains food imports and exports.

In Sri Lanka, the Food Advisory Committee (FAC) was established under the Food Act, which consists of members from different governmental departments and other relevant stakeholders. The duty of FAC is to advise the Minister on matters arising out of the administration of the Food Act or other function under the Food Act. In formulating food standards, FAC appoints subcommittees, which consist of stakeholders from different departments to prepare draft standards. The draft standards are usually uploaded into a Web for public consultation and also sent to relevant stakeholders for comments. Based on comments collected, the draft standards are further finalized and published in the Sri Lanka Gazette. There are two sets of standards available: voluntary and mandatory. Voluntary standards are mostly standards of neighbouring countries in the region because these facilitate trade in the region. Mandatory standards are formulated through several steps, as mentioned above.

Thailand presented the scheme from Codex standards to national regulations. The scheme shows that if there is a problem of food-related illness or public concern issues, data will be collected and analysed, then a notification is drafted. Data usually originated from research studies or monitoring and surveillance. A relevant subcommittee will carry out a risk assessment based on dietary consumption. The draft notification is then sent for public hearing and announcement to WTO. A relevant Food committee reviews the draft and finalizes it for Ministry endorsement. After the endorsement by the Ministry, the final draft is published in the government gazette.

In conclusion, most of the countries look at the Codex standards as a benchmark. It is suggested that each country carry out their own risk assessment and, in particular, perform a survey to collect consumption data.
4.4 Strengthening communication in Codex

A discussion on how to strengthen communication in Codex was conducted in the plenary. Ms Latifa Dinar (National Standardization Agency, Indonesia) introduced Indonesia’s experience in strengthening communication in Codex. Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, and Thailand were requested to prepare comments.

It was noted that in strengthening communication in Codex it is important to know the how to connect with Codex. The Codex website (http://www.codexalimentarius.org) and FTP server (ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/) are places for communication, because the Codex Secretariat maintains linkages with Member Countries through Codex Contact Points (CCP).

In the case of Indonesia, actions to strengthen communication in Codex include: strengthening the CCP of Indonesia; increasing the use of electronic communication systems; and enhancing Indonesia’s participation in Codex activities. The following are Indonesia’s experiences in strengthening communication in Codex.

First, Indonesia has established a guideline for handling Codex activities in their country in order to ensure the effectiveness of their participation in Codex works. Second, strengthening the NCC through the following approaches: (1) the NCC conducts regular meetings to consider recent Codex issues as a reference for national policy; (2) the NCC conducts capacity-building for Mirror Committees and the Codex Secretariat in Indonesia; and (3) the NCC invites stakeholders to actively participate in the Codex meetings, eWGs, discussions, and in the development of the national position. Electronic communication has been applied by Indonesia; for example, when it share its national position with other ASEAN countries through the ASEAN Task Force on Codex (ATFC). Indonesia established a website for its CCP at http://codexindonesia.bsn.go.id and maintains communication with NCCPs from other Member Countries.

The following are examples of Indonesian participation in various Codex activities.

- Submitting data to expert bodies, including data on beta-cyfluthrin in cabbageto JMPR and on arsenic in rice to GEMS. Indonesia’s
limitations in these activities are inadequate support in collecting scientific data and an inadequate budget.


- In proposing Codex standards, in particular as the Lead drafter for: the Standard for Instant Noodle (CODEX STAN 249-2006); the Revision of Fermented Milk Drinks (CODEX STAN 243-2003); the Standard for Edible Sago Flour (CODEX STAN 301R-2011); and the Regional Standard for Tempe (CODEX STAN 313R-2013).

In the discussion, Bhutan reported that whatever information it received from Codex is transferred to food officials and communicated with relevant stakeholders. The BAFRA under the Ministry of Agriculture has been designated as the CCP for Bhutan. There is also a Bhutan Standard Bureau (BSB), however, there is no technical expertise to develop standards. Currently, there is no national standards; Bhutan receives its standards from Codex or is harmonized with Codex.

Maldives has been a member of Codex Alimentarius since 2008; however, the NCC is currently not functioning. At the moment, Maldives is in the process of building its capacity for the NCC. Among some of the Codex activities implemented in Maldives are distribution of information received from Codex to relevant stakeholders, promotion or advocacy of Codex activities to private sectors, and attending Codex meetings.

The CCP in Myanmar promotes stakeholders to utilize Codex standards, guidelines, and related documents, encourages stakeholders to participate in Codex activities supported by the CTF, and is willing to participate in generating scientific data to contribute to Codex works.
However, Myanmar’s infrastructure is limited and very few laboratories are accredited.

In Thailand, the National Bureau of Agriculture Commodity and Food Standard (ACFS) was designated as the NCCP. ACFS has developed the website for Codex Thailand (http://www.acfs.go.th/eng/index.php) in order to promote activities and the works of Codex Committees. Electronic working groups (eWGs) are also established so comments or updated standards can be submitted on time.

Comments from the Codex Secretariat: the CCP of a country should inform the Codex Secretariat through the Codex website regarding the formation of new contact point so the Secretariat can make a revision; each country has a responsibility to communicate with the Codex Secretariat; and the Codex Secretariat sends messages inviting Member Countries to participate in any of the eWGs posted online on the Codex website.

From the discussion, it was concluded that participation in any Codex activity is important in Codex and strong communication among NCCs is required. Communication tools, such as the Codex website, directory, or newsletter, are needed for effective communication among Member Countries.

4.5 Developing new work proposals

The second group work was conducted as an exercise to develop new work proposals. Prior to the group work exercise, Ms Vinod Kotwal (Director, Codex, FSSAI) stated that there are several considerations we think about in developing new work proposals. Those considerations are to identify: whether new work proposals fall under the mandate of Codex; whether these will protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade; and whether these are the needs of developing countries.

A project document for new work proposal should be prepared and cover the following points: purpose and scope; criteria for establishment of work priorities (download from the Web: Manual_21_CODEX PROCEDURAL.pdf and REP13_FLe.pdf); information on the relationship between the proposal and other existing Codex Documents; identification of the requirement of expert advice; identification of the need for technical
inputs to the standard from external bodies; and proposed timelines for completion of work.

There are criteria to be considered for developing Commodity standards, in particular standards for fresh fruits and vegetables (CCFFV), fish and fishery products (CCFFP), processed fruits and vegetables (CCPFV), and fats and oils (CCFO). These criteria are: volume of production, consumption, and pattern of trade; diversification of national legislation; regional or international market potential; amenability of the commodity to standardization; existing or proposed general standards; number of commodities covered; and work already taken by other international organizations.

Criteria for General Standards developed under CCNFSDU, CCFICS, CCMAS, CCFL, CCFH, CCFA, CCGP are: diversification of national legislation; scope of the work; work already undertaken by other international organizations; amenability of the subject; and global magnitude of the problem.

There is a procedure to be followed for the approval of new work. Each proposal for new work shall be accompanied by a project document, prepared by the Committee or Member proposing the new work. The decision to undertake new work shall be taken by the Commission, taking into account a critical review conducted by the Executive Committee. There are exceptions for maximum residue limits for pesticides and maximum residue limits for veterinary drugs. The decision to undertake new work of individual maximum residue limits for pesticides or veterinary drugs shall follow the procedures established by the Committees (CCPR or CCRVDF) concerned and endorsed by the Commission. The concern form of the new work covers administrative information, purpose, scope, rationale, available information, and timetable.

New Work Proposals submitted by India which have been approved are: (1) Inclusion for a New Part B for underweight Children in the Standard for Processed Cereal-Based foods for Infants and Young Children (CCNFSDU); (2) Proposed Standard for Okra (CCFFV); and (3) Proposed Code of Hygienic Practice for Street Vended Foods (CCASIA). In addition, India has several other New Work Proposals which are under process: (1) Proposed Standard for Ware Potato (CCFFV); (2) Establishment of
maximum level for total aflatoxin in ready-to-eat peanuts (CCCF); and (3) Discussion paper on the labelling of non-retail containers.

There are opportunities for other New Work under Codex, as follows: (1) Proposal for Standard for Aubergine (Eggplant) (CCFFV); (2) Proposal for establishment of MLs for Aflatoxin in Spices (CCCF); (3) Proposals for the development of commodities standards under the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs; and (4) Proposal for Code of Practice for hygienic and wholesome food for School Children (CCFH).

In the group work exercise, two new work proposals were discussed as follows: Project Document on Code of Practice for Serving Wholesome and Hygienic Food for School Children and New Work Proposal for a Standard for Dried Tuna. The following are the two discussion papers developed in the group exercise.

*Discussion Paper on Project Document on Code of Practice for Serving Wholesome and Hygienic Food for School Children*

**Purpose and scope**

School children comprise a majority of the population. Optimal nutrition for children is important since they are growing. However, under- and over-nutrition are an alarming public health problem around the world. Most countries have identified school feeding programs as one of the priority interventions for addressing malnutrition and non-health related impacts. However, hygienic practices in school catering services are essential for the safety of the food and health of the children. The scope of this proposal is to ensure wholesome and hygienic food for school children and to regulate quality and safety of food being served at schools. We proposed this document as an annex/part B of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Precooked and Cooked foods in Mass catering (CAC/RCP 39-1993).

**Relevance and timelines**

Most countries do not have a national guideline on the Code of Practice for serving wholesome and hygienic foods for school children.
The main aspects to be covered

The particular Codex guidelines to be addressed included the General Principle of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Precooked and Cooked foods in Mass catering (CAC/RCP 39-1993). This guideline will specify for good hygienic practice in school catering services, cooked or precooked. In addition, this guideline will cover nutrition, hygienic practice, and prevention of noncommunicable disease (NCD) in the long term by encouraging good food habits during a child’s school years.

Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

General criteria

➢ Consumer protection to food safety

Globally, nutrition is now addressed in the life cycle approach and school children are in a most critical period in the life cycle. Therefore, optimal nutrition and good food habits are a future investment. Due to a wide variation in socio-economic conditions, the majority of school children do not bring home-cooked food. Instead, they buy their food from the food outlet in their school. Because of this, there is a higher chance their food will be contaminated. Hygienic good practice is critical for safe food.

➢ Improving health

By introducing this Code of Practice, we can address issues of under- and over-nutrition, micronutrient deficiency, and long-term prevention of NCDs.

Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives

The proposed work is in line with the Commission’s mandate for the development of international standards, guidelines, and other recommendations for protecting the health of consumers. The new work will contribute to advancing Strategic Plan 2014, Goal 1 as described below:
Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.

Objective 1.2 proactively identifies emerging issues, member needs, and where appropriate, development of a relevant food standard.

1.2.1 Develop a systematic approach to promote the identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in food trade.

Under this objective, it is clear that this proposal is focusing on emerging public health problem addressing food safety, wholesome nutrition, and prevention of long-term NCDs among school children.

Information on the relation between the proposal and other Codex documents

This Code of Practice is provided in the General Principle of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Precooked and Cooked foods in Mass catering (CAC/RCP 39-1993).

Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice.

At this particular moment, expert scientific advice is not available. Assistance from the CCNFSDU may be required.

Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for.

None identified at this stage.

Proposed timeline for completion of the new work including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should normally not exceed five years.
Proposed timeline

November 2013  -  Endorsement of new work by CCFH
July 2014      -  Approval of new work by CAC
November 2014  -  Establishment of an eWG to develop the
                 draft discussion document and draft revised
                 standard by CCFH
November 2015  -  Consideration of draft revised standard at
                 Step 2 by CCFH and advancement to Step 3
November 2016  -  Consideration at Step 3 and advancement to
                 Step 5
July 2017      -  Consideration of draft standard by CCFH
                 and adoption of draft standard by CAC at
                 Steps 5/8 (omitting Steps 6 and 7)

Discussion Paper New Work Proposal for Standard for Dried Tuna

Purpose and scope

Dried fish has been a staple food around the world and it is traded extensively. The information available regarding dried tuna is limited. Global statistics indicate a large amount of international trade of dried tuna around the world. The current codex guideline on Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-flavoured Fish and Smoke-dried Fish (CODEX STAN 189-1993) does not cover the scope of this standard. The scope of this proposal is to develop an international standard on dried sliced tuna.

Relevance and timelines

Tuna has been identified as a significant concern in a number of developing countries that are highly reliant on food trade.

The main aspects to be covered

This particular Codex Standard will cover the product description and the essential composition and quality factors, hygienic handling, labelling, storage, and sampling and analysis.
Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries.

Statistics indicate about 68% of tuna are from the Pacific Ocean, 22% from the Indian Ocean, and the remaining 10% from the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Skipjack makes up about 60% of all tuna varieties. In 2013, the International Fisheries Association stated that more than 100,000 to 200,000 tonnes per year are traded across the globe and is worth US$ 200 billion.

(b) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.

Across the globe processing, labelling, sampling, and storage varies widely from country to country. As there is extensive trade between countries and global consumption of tuna is higher, the need for an international standard is imperative.

(c) International or regional market potential

There are reports of tuna being rejected due to inferior quality of the product. This, in turn, leads to greater economic loss and food insecurity.

(d) Amenable of the commodity to standardization

Many countries depend on Codex for a clear understanding of and guidance on a standard for dry tuna.

(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.

The standard addresses food safety for consumer, facilitation of trade, and how to avoid rejection.

(f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi-processed or processed.

The standard covers a specific commodity: dry tuna.

(g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies).
Currently no work has been undertaken by the international intergovernmental bodies.

Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives

Goal 1: Promoting Sound Regulatory framework

The proposal enables countries to ensure the safety of food entering international trade and to ensure that imported foods conform to national requirements. This would promote a global approach to consumer health protection, including systems for the reduction of food-borne risks, and minimize the negative effects of technical regulations on international trade.

This standard would provide essential guidance for its members through the continued development of international standards and guidelines relating to food safety and hygiene, nutrition, labelling, import/export inspection and certification, and quality of dry tuna.

Information on the relation between the proposal and other Codex documents

The document is in conjunction with the Standard for Smoke Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish (CODEX STAN 189-1993) and other applicable codes such as Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CAC/RCP 52-2003)

Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Not identified at this stage, however later the specific advice could be obtained from JECFA.

Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

None identified at this stage, however could obtain input later.
Proposed timeline for completion of the new work including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should normally not exceed five years.

Proposed timeline

- February 2014: Endorsement of new work by the CCFFP
- July 2014: Approval of new work by CAC
- July 2014: Establishment of an eWG to develop draft document and draft revised standard
- February 2015: Consideration of draft revised standard by CCFFP and advancement to Step 3
- February 2016: Consideration of draft standard and further work with technical expert by CCFFP and eWG
- February 2016: Consideration of draft by CCFFP and advanced to Step 5
- July 2016: CAC adoption of draft standard at Step 5
- February 2017: Discussion of draft standard by CCFFP and advancement to Step 8
- July 2017: CAC adoption of draft standard at Step 9

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

(1) Participants agreed that the Codex Alimentarius standards ensure food safety for the populations while harmonizing trade and commerce in food and food products among the countries.

(2) Most countries participating in the workshop informed the Secretariat that Codex standards have been taken into consideration for their national use. Harmonization of national
standards with those of Codex has to take into account both vertical (commodities) and horizontal (additives, contaminants etc.) standards. However, the technical capacities of the national Codex Committees and the NCCPs in several Member States need to be enhanced to make better use of the Codex standards.

(3) The involvement of countries through the CCPs in the submission of proposals to the CTF for technical and financial support and in responding to various issues and agenda items related to Codex needs improvement. The level of communication between the NCCPs, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), and the partner UN agencies (WHO and FAO) has to be further strengthened.

(4) Documents published by the Codex, FAO, and WHO serve as useful references for effective functioning of the national Codex Committees. It is imperative that these documents and publications are read and referred to by the NCCs on a regular basis. The CAC website provides a wide range of ongoing information on Codex and related activities. The CTF website [www.codexalimentarius.org] provides information on the eligibility of Member States for receiving support.

(5) A ‘mock session of a Codex committee’ was conducted to strengthen the capacity of the Member States for active participation in the Codex Committee and CAC meetings.

(6) Due to budgetary or other constraints, participation by the Member States in all Codex sessions may be limited. Member States may need to identify appropriate networking mechanisms, such as regional coordinating committees, to ensure that national and regional interests, concerns, and priorities are communicated to the relevant Codex committees.

(7) Availability of relevant data for effective participation was recognized by the Member States. The need for capacity-building to generate, collect, and submit data for Codex activities was emphasized.

(8) For strengthening communication on Codex activities at the national, regional, and global levels, appropriate systems to promote good communication and strong links with the relevant
stakeholders are essential along with the formulation of relevant guidelines and periodic information updates on ongoing and forthcoming activities.

5.2 Recommendations

(1) Member States recommend that Codex standards be used as a basis for framing national standards to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

(2) Member States recommend further strengthening of technical collaboration and communication between the National Codex Committees, CCPs and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), FAO, WHO, and other international stakeholders.

(3) Member States recommend the establishment of mechanisms such as Shadow Committees, Mirror Committees, Subcommittees, and Technical Groups comprise of experts from different areas, including academia, consumers groups, private sector, etc. in order to frame national responses on various Codex agenda items.

(4) Member States emphasized the need for FAO and WHO to advocate at the highest levels to prioritize and support Codex-related activities in countries.

(5) A network mechanism between Member States has to be established to ensure that national and regional Codex-related concerns and priorities are communicated at all Codex meetings. Member States could learn and benefit from each other’s experiences in data collection, analysis, and sharing; effective participation at various Codex meetings; framing national responses to different agenda items; and harmonization of national standards with Codex.

(6) Member states recommend and support Timor-Leste becoming a member of the CAC.
Annex 1

Agenda

- Inauguration
- Principles and policies of Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Codex Trust Fund
- Reports from Member States on the status of activities of national Codex Committees
- Group work on developing a road-map for strengthening / promoting the activities of national Codex Committees including appropriate communication strategies
- Conclusions and recommendations
Annex 2

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Observers
The role of Asian countries in international food trade continues to grow. This has led to the realization among the Member States of the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for South-East Asia [WHO SEARO] of the importance of Codex practices and standards in protecting the health of the populations in the Member States while ensuring fair practices on the food trade. This report is from a regional workshop on capacity building of National Codex Committees in the Member States of South-East Asia, jointly organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the Codex Trust Fund and WHO-SEARO. The report provides information on the overall principles and practices of the Codex Alimentarius and their applications in the Member States; identifies the major determinants and successful applications of Codex standards and principles at the country level, effective utilization of the Codex Trust Fund and efficient communication strategies in Codex matters.