

**Overview of
National Codex Committees
in the Member States of
the WHO South-East Asia Region**



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for South-East Asia

SEA-NUT-188
Distribution: General

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Printed in India

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Acronyms

ACFS	Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards
BSN	National Standardization Agency of Indonesia
BSTI	Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCASIA	Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCFICS	Codex Committee on Food Export and Import Inspection and Certification System
CCPFV	Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables
CGTF	Consultative Group for the Trust Fund
CNFSDU	Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
CTF	Codex Trust Fund
DFTQC	Department of Food Technology and Quality Control
eWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
GFN	Global Foodborne Infections Network
GI	Geographical Indications
INMU	Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University
NCC	National Codex Committees
NCCP	National Codex Contact Point
SPS	sanitary and phytosanitary
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Background

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is a joint body of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It was established in 1963 to develop international food standards, a code of practices, and guidelines and other recommendations to protect the health of consumers, and ensure fair practices in the food trade. At present, the CAC consists of 185 members (184 Member States and a member organization, the European Union). The executive committee of the CAC is composed of a chairperson, three vice-chairpersons, six regional coordinators and six members from the regions.

A national Codex contact point (NCCP) is designated when a country becomes a member of the CAC. The NCCP coordinates all relevant Codex activities within the country; receives invitations to Codex sessions; informs the relevant chairpersons and the Codex secretariat of the names of the participants from the country; receives all Codex final texts and working documents of Codex sessions, and ensures that they are circulated within the country; sends comments on Codex documents or proposals; works in close coordination with the national Codex committee; acts as a liaison point with the food industry, consumers, traders and other parties concerned; acts as a channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex members; maintains a library of Codex final texts; and promotes Codex activities throughout the country. The success of a country's Codex activities depends on the effective functioning of the Codex contact point, which serves as the link with the Codex secretariat and Member States.

National Codex committees (NCCs) are established in many countries to supplement the work of the Codex contact points and facilitate communication among all stakeholders. Countries may or may not have an NCC, depending on the national mechanism to ensure an adequately coordinated and all-inclusive national Codex programme.

The most recent meeting of the CAC, its 34th session, was held in July 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. Representatives of 145 Member States, nine international governmental organizations and 28 international nongovernmental organizations attended the meeting. Seven representative members from the South-East Asia Region (Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) participated in this meeting.

For many years, WHO and FAO have been providing assistance to the developing countries to enable them to take full advantage of the Commission's work. This effort has been enhanced to a considerable extent by the financial and technical support extended by industrialized countries. To enhance the participation of Member States in Codex activities, the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) was launched in 2003. WHO administers the CTF under the direction of the Consultative Group for the Trust Fund (CGTF), comprising senior WHO and FAO staff. With the support of WHO/FAO, the CTF organized six Codex training sessions in the four regions in 2010. The WHO/FAO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) organized a regional workshop on the "Use of science throughout the food chain for safe foods" in November 2010 in Indonesia.

Regional coordinating committees play a crucial role in ensuring that the work of the Commission is responsive to regional interests and to the concerns of developing countries. There are six coordinating committees: (i) Africa, (ii) Asia, (iii) Europe, (iv) Latin America and the Caribbean, (v) Near East, and (vi) North America and the Southwest Pacific. Membership of the coordinating committee is open to all Member States and associate members of the FAO and/or WHO which are members of the CAC. The committees normally meet at two-year intervals and the countries of their respective regions are usually well represented. The country that chairs the coordinating committee is also the regional coordinator for the region concerned. These committees have no standing host countries and their meetings are hosted by the Member States of a region on an *ad hoc* basis and in agreement with the CAC.

2. Codex activities in the South-East Asia Region

The importance of this Region in the international food trade has long been recognized since over 25% of the world's population resides here. There has been a significant increase in the production of food in this Region over the years. There has been a growing realization in countries of the Region of the importance of Codex in protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. The participation of countries from the Region in the Codex forum has also increased considerably. However, the effectiveness of their participation can be improved further.

Through joint efforts, WHO and FAO have provided technical support in the Region to enhance food safety and strengthen national food control systems. The components of this support include: the provision of technical inputs to enhance food safety policy; development of a management and regulatory framework; strengthening of NCCs; strengthening of surveillance/monitoring of foodborne disease and food contamination; provision of training to food inspectors; development of a regional food policy; provision of advisory technical assistance; and formulation of project proposals on food quality control.

The strategic plan for the CCASIA 2009–2014 was developed as a result of the 15th session of the committee in 2006. The draft strategic plan was circulated to all Member States for their comments in January 2007. At the 16th session of the committee in Indonesia in 2008, it was agreed to establish an electronic working group of the CCASIA to gather information on developments at the national level in various countries of the Region, with a view to provide a systematic framework for monitoring and implementation of the regional strategic plan for the CCASIA (2009–2014). The goal of this plan was to strengthen the food safety infrastructure of all Member States in the Region and its contribution to the work of the Codex.

Indonesia was appointed the regional coordinator for Asia in 2007–2009 and 2009–2011. It was also appointed the representative of the Asian countries in the Executive Committee in 2007–2009 and 2009–2011. The CCASIA secretariat acts as the regional coordinator, performing activities such as organizing an informal meeting of the Asian Member States prior to the Codex session, participating in Executive Committee meetings and developing a CCASIA website to promote regional coordination, including

the exchange of information between Asian Member States. The CCASIA members normally meet every two years, with representations sent from the countries of the respective region. The host country is chosen by rotation among the committee members and can remain the host for a maximum term of two sessions.

The most recent session of the CCASIA, its 17th, was jointly organized by FAO and WHO in November 2010 in Bali, Indonesia. The meeting was chaired by the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia. More than 130 participants from 20 Member States, in addition to representatives from several international organizations, attended the session. The committee reached certain conclusions regarding matters to be referred for consideration to the CAC during its 34th session. The CCASIA session enabled the participants to understand the functioning of CAC and the processes employed for the establishment of international food standards. In addition, there were discussions on a wide range of topics, including the WHO and FAO activities complementary to Codex; draft standards on various food products (processed cheese, edible sago flour, non-fermented soybean products, etc.); the strategic plan for the CCASIA, 2009–2014; and future work. The committee identified a number of issues relevant to Asian economies, as well as new areas of work. The last session of the CCASIA was held from 23–26 August 2012, in Tokyo, Japan.

To understand the working of the NCCs of the Member States of the South-East Asia Region, an assessment was undertaken by the Nutrition and Food Safety unit of the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. Information was obtained from the documents available, through telephone interviews with the NCCPs, and where possible, through direct interactions with relevant national officers. A significant amount of the information contained in this report was made available by the focal points for food safety at the WHO country offices. Current information has been collected from the Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of National Codex Committees in Member States of South-East Asia held in New Delhi, India from 23 to 25 October 2013.

The current status of the Codex activities, as well as the contact details of the NCCPs in the Member States, are summarized in Annex 2.

3. Country activities

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 Hortex Foundation.

The main objectives of BNCC are: (1) to oversee the Technical Committee for the adoption of Codex Standards as National Standards, (2) to ensure safe food for the consumer, (3) to accelerate the export and help remove trade barriers from 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 in developing the food industry in the country and to help the government in taking necessary decisions regarding this purpose.

Progress regarding Codex-related activities in Bangladesh includes formation of the National Codex Committee and formulation of 630 National Standards of various products of which 152 are harmonized with the Codex Standards and 117 are ISO Standards. Future Codex activities planned among others include establishment of an exclusive Codex desk at BSTI; capacity development of the National Codex Contact Points and BNCC through training in-country and abroad; organizing seminar and workshops on Codex Standards; and establishing linkages with national and international Codex committees.

3.2 Bhutan

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) under the Ministry of Agriculture has been designated as the Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Bhutan, and a focal person was identified from the food unit of BAFRA. 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. NCC consists of appointed members representing relevant departments, ministries, and other stakeholders. In promoting Codex, relevant Codex guidelines and standards have been discussed with relevant stakeholders. With support from the ongoing FAO/TCP project, a mechanism for the development of national food standards was put in place with the purpose of providing a systematic process for food standards development in Bhutan. Four sets of draft national food standards based on international standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission have been adapted, taking into account national food safety priorities and interests. The following four sets of food standards were drafted: (1) Draft standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods, (2) Draft standard for food hygiene, (3) Draft standard for street vended foods, and (4) Draft standard for natural mineral waters. One of the standard/test parameters referred in the laboratory is from Codex. In strengthening the NCC and CCP it was identified that training and capacity building programmes are needed, such as in the area of foodborne disease outbreak investigation and food testing laboratory.

3.3 Democratic People's Republic of Korea

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Academy of Health and Food Science, Ministry of Public Health, is the Codex contact point. The country has received funds from the CTF and the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia to participate in various Codex meetings. The national food safety system has been amended so that it harmonizes with the activities of Codex. The country is also taking measures to strengthen the national food control system and to formulate/update food laws. The Regional Office has provided extensive technical and financial support to strengthen the national food analysis laboratory and improve the technical capacity of the national food safety staff. The national authorities have indicated that improving the functioning of the Codex committees and the overall food

safety programme in the country remain priority issues for the government. The country is facing problems accessing relevant Codex documents and publications that are not available regularly in the form of CDs or as hard copies.

3.4 India

India became a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1964. Now, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is the National Codex Contact Point (NCCP). To strengthen the NCCP, competent qualified people with technical and innovative skills were hired and linkages with the experts/research institutes were built. Likewise, NCCP closely interacts with the concerned ministries/departments to get a holistic viewpoint on agenda points being discussed in various Codex Committees.

FSSAI has established a National Codex Committee (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 the Food Authority reviews the agenda of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary committees and finalize India's comments on various agenda items. Members of shadow committees are drawn among others from government, industry associations, consumer organizations, research institutes, and food testing laboratories.

To create awareness among stakeholders and enhance their participation in the various Codex Committees, NCCP India conducts workshops on "Codex Alimentarius: Principles and Procedures" throughout the country on a regional basis. The NCCP also launched an electronic newsletter Connect@CodexIndia on FSSAI Website (www.fssai.gov.in) on 2 August, 2013, to disseminate information on Codex-related activities. This electronic newsletter will be released quarterly. This will ensure increased participation from the stakeholders particularly academia and the industry.

India actively participates in Codex activities such as evaluating data on pesticide residues of various food commodities (e.g residues of fenpropathrin in tea) and sending the data to "Joint FAO/WHO meetings on pesticide residues" (JMPR). India will be submitting the data for lead in various food products to GEMS by 2014. India also participates in organizing training related to work of the Codex for Member States in the

Region. FSSAI in cooperation with Maldives Government held a training programme in 2011 and with Bangladesh Government in 2012. NCCP India also conducted a one day workshop organized by FSSAI on “Codex Alimentarius: Principles and Procedures” for the stakeholders in Delhi and in Kochi, Kerala.

FSSAI is in the process of developing the Regulation on Nutraceuticals, Functional Foods and Dietary Supplements, which would highlight areas such as safety, quality, GMP, list of permitted ingredients, guidelines for permitting new ingredients either alone or in combination, label declaration and health claims, approval process etc. The Codex standards and related texts are very useful especially as a point of reference in developing national standards; therefore, those are taken into consideration before finalization of any National Standard, new or amended, with due attempt towards harmonization of national standards with that of Codex. Moreover, FSSAI has undertaken a harmonization exercise of Food Standards with Codex. India has identified bitter gourd and aubergine as food commodities for Codex standards.

The NCC still requires capacity building to increase the skills and competencies of the staff and the stakeholders involved in Codex-related matters, particularly related to functioning of Codex, procedures to be followed and how to enhance participation in various committees.

3.5 Indonesia

The National Codex Committee (NCC) is led by the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (NSAI) which is also the Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Indonesia. Members of the NCC are Director-generals from related ministries and agencies dealing with food safety standards and regulations, senior scientists, association of food industries, consumers’ associations and academia. The NCC is active in formulating national policy relating to the Codex activities in the country and important issues pertaining to food safety that are under discussion in Codex. To strengthen the NCC, various activities have been conducted by the committee which include holding regular meetings to discuss recent Codex issues as reference for national policy, providing capacity building support for the Mirror Committee Codex Secretariat, and inviting stakeholders to actively participate in the Codex meetings, e-WG discussion and in the

development of the national position. A Guideline for Handling Codex Activities in Indonesia has been published to enhance the effectiveness of participation in Codex activities. Likewise, a National Codex Website was developed in 2009 (<http://codexindonesia.bsn.go.id>).

In preparing national positions for Codex meetings, the NCC receives technical assistance from Mirror Codex Committees (MCCs). As many as seven MCCs have been established along the lines of the Codex subsidiary bodies and each MCC is coordinated by the institution concerned which includes the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade, National Standardization Agency, National Agency for Drug and Food Control, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Health. Each MCC coordinator is responsible for developing drafts of papers on the national position to be delivered at a specific Codex meeting. Each MMC also creates programmes or priority topics for discussion in the Committee meetings and disseminates 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 MCC. Papers prepared for the national position in Codex meetings require final approval from the NCC before they are submitted to the Codex secretariat and the appropriate Codex committee.

In relation to participation in Codex activities, Indonesia has submitted data on beta-cyfluthrin in cabbage collected in Indonesia to JMPR and data on arsenic in rice to GEMS. Inadequate budget limits scientific data collection activities, therefore funding to support expert participation in these Codex activities is needed. Since 2011, Indonesia has “graduated” from Codex Trust Fund, therefore, participation in all Codex activities is funded by the Government of Indonesia.

Indonesia actively participated in several Codex workshops, such as the CCASIA SPS workshops held in Bangkok, Thailand and Tokyo, Japan in 2012, and the Inception Workshop on Principles and Further Activities for Codex Implementation held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2012.

Indonesia indicated that it will continue to require the assistance of the CTF to support the development of scientific data necessary for the

preparation of the country's position in Codex forums. Indonesia intends to increase its participation in the development of Codex standards, increase the generation of scientific data to support the preparation of the country's position on various Codex issues, and actively disseminate the results of the Codex forum's activities to stakeholders in the country.

3.6 Maldives

Maldives became a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) on March 11, 2008 and held the first National Codex Committee (NCC) meeting in September 2008. The NCC for Maldives was reformulated in 2011 with eight members consisting of the Director-General of Health Services, 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 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 are: (1) facilitating National Codex activities and functioning of the Codex Contact Point (CCP), (2) communicating among relevant stakeholders, and (3) providing a forum for discussions and for the formulation of the national position(s) and of responses to Codex proposals or policy issues.

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

There are five TWGs appointed by NCC to assist it in the study or consideration of Codex-specific technical matters, as follows: (1) TWG on Core Issues, (2) TWG on Import and Export Certification System, (3) TWG on Fish and Fishery Products, (4) TWG on Food Hygiene, and (5) TWG on Pesticides.

The functions of the TWG 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 the decision in their meetings, formulate the Government of Maldives position based on comments.

In 2010, the NCC made efforts to strengthen the stakeholders' awareness of Codex. The private sector's awareness and understanding of Codex and its contribution are still limited in Maldives. Technical expertise is also lacking. Another constraint is the shortage of government funding to strengthen the national Codex activities. Capacity building programmes particularly in human resource development, and funding are needed to strengthen the CCP and NCC. Dried fish has been identified as a food commodity of interest for Codex standard development.

3.7 Myanmar

The National Codex Committee (NCC) has not been fully functional in Myanmar. Recently, the Myanmar Food and Drug Board Authority (MFDDBA), the highest authority on food and drug safety in Myanmar, was used to form the NCC 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 of FDA is now taking the role of new CCP for Myanmar and the Food Division of FDA is doing the office-work of 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.

In particular, Codex General Standards for Food Additives (GSFA) and all other Codex standards and texts are applied in food safety regulatory work/action. CCP encourages, organizes and manages stakeholders to participate in Codex activities, supported by the Codex Trust Fund. However, financial support to participate in Codex activities is the major barrier. Funding, training and capacity building programmes are needed to strengthen the CCP and/or NCC in order to be able to actively participate in

various Codex activities. Myanmar is interested to develop a Codex standard on pickled tea leaves.

3.8 Nepal

The Codex Contact Point (CCP) for Nepal was established in 1974. The Director-General, 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 CCP has not been set up. The National Codex Committee was established in 2004 and is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Development. Members of the NCC are Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice; Joint Secretary, WTO Focal Point, Agri-business Promotion and Statistics Division, MoAD; Director-General, DoH; Director-General, DoA; Director-General, DoLS, Director-General, DoCS, Director-General, NBSM; representatives from FNCCI, Food Safety experts (3 members, nominated by GoN), from Consumer Forum (2 members, nominated by GoN); and Member Secretary who 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 by 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 Codex Alimentarius Commission, Codex Committees or Codex Secretariat, (5) acting as the channel for 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 in Codex Committee meetings with the support from the Codex Trust Fund and the WHO Country Office, Nepal.

The NCC of Nepal was established with the main objective of providing appropriate comments and suggestions to the Government of

Nepal on the following issues: protection of consumers' health in Nepal, promotion of fair practice in national and international food trade, formulation of policy and programmes on promotion of food trade, enhancement of harmonization of food standards with international and regional food standards, update and amend food safety and quality control related guidelines, code of practice, methods of analysis, relevant laws and regulations etc. Activities of the NCC are: to address the issues concerning food safety and quality control in coordination with WTO, WHO, FAO, Codex Alimentarius Commission, OIE, IPPC, and other international organizations; to recommend for 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 nongovernmental agencies in food safety programme; to help in the establishment and functioning of necessary technical subcommittees; to make comments on Codex documents or proposals to CAC, Codex Committees or Codex Secretariat; to support participation in international and regional Codex sessions/ meetings; and to establish a Codex Documentation Centre.

Nepal has initiated harmonization of national standards with Codex, such as standard of skimmed milk powders. Some food standards of national priority exportable food commodities like honey, tea, ginger, and noodles are under harmonization process. All stakeholders including related agencies, private sector associations, and consumer forums take part in the food standardization committee meetings during the setting of food standards.

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 Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee, in networking among regional Codex committees, in promoting harmonization of standards, guidelines and recommendations in compliance with Codex, and in risk analysis including Minimal Risk Levels for Hazardous Substances (MRLs) setting. Since tea, coffee and honey are exportable food commodities of national interest, a capacity building programme is also needed in developing Codex standards for these commodities.

3.9 Sri Lanka

The National Codex Committee (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). Since 2013, the NCC is chaired by the Director-General of Health Services, MOH, and the Director, DEOHFS, MOH is the secretary of the NCC. There are 30 members of the NCC which include one chairperson, one secretary, 26 members representing related government agencies, universities, research institutes, seafood exporters association, and chamber of commerce, and two invitee members each representing WHO and FAO. The important roles of the NCC related to food safety issues among others are: formulating national standards and regulations, formulating standards or a regulation related to export items, formulating standards or a regulation related to import items, and to rectify the trade barriers.

To support the NCC activities as many as 14 Codex sub-committees have been formed dealing with various food commodities which include: 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 sub-committees help formulate regulations in cooperation with stakeholders including consumer affairs authority and relevant associations. Most of the Codex sub-committee activities and discussions are conducted through electronic media.

Sri Lanka has been successful in increasing the participation of NCCP members in international meetings with support from CTF. It aims to receive more assistance for capacity-building programmes to train personnel and also looks forward to receiving funding to carry out Codex activities. There are plans to develop a proper food control system in the country, which intends to contribute actively to global food safety issues. Lack of funds and manpower, as well as inadequate institutional capacity, are the major constraints hampering Codex activity in Sri Lanka.

3.10 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 by the National Bureau of Agriculture Commodity and Food Standard (ACFS) under the Agricultural Standards Act, 2008. Controlling the 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 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the Food Act, 1979.

The Office of Commodity and System Standards, National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, has been designated as the National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) for Thailand. The main responsibilities of the NCCP are: (1) collaborating and consulting with relevant stakeholders to comment on and develop national positions for the Codex meetings; (2) supporting harmonization of Codex standards into national standards; and (3) developing action plans in relation to Codex activities and participating in Codex Committee and CAC meetings. There are 17 sub-committees established under the NCCP to carry out Codex work in the country. Each sub-committee consists of experts, academic institutes, industries, and relevant government agencies. These sub-committees often have national meetings prior to, and after the Codex meetings. ACFS has developed the website of Codex, Thailand (<http://www.acfs.go.th/eng/index.php>) in order to promote activities and the work of Codex committees.

Thailand has successfully adopted the Codex standards which were originally proposed and/or drafted by Thailand, i.e. standards for fish sauce and chilli sauce, the maximum residue limit for pesticides in tropical fruits and vegetables, and the method of analysis of the fat content in coconut cream. Agreements have also been reached on new standards proposed by Thailand with respect to durian and rice bran oil. In general, the Codex standards are adopted or adapted into national food regulations before public hearing and enforcement. These international standards and guidelines are shared with all relevant stakeholders including consumers as references. Examples of Codex standards modified or/and adopted into national food laws are Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GFSA, STAN 192-1995) as in online database, General Principle of Food Hygiene

(CAC/RCP 1-1969), Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Foods (Codex STAN 193-1995, Rev.3-2007), and Guidelines for Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements (CAC/GL 550-2005).

In developing food regulations or any measure regarding food safety issues, the related NCCP sub-committee will take responsibility in risk assessment. NCCP representatives will work with the National Codex Committee and Thai FDA to consider scientific evidence and propose options for further risk management. Currently, on-going activities related to Codex are total diet study on pesticide residues and risk assessment of certain food additives. Capacity building in terms of enhancing capacities on risk assessment and risk-benefit analysis for further risk management are needed.

In 2008, Thailand hosted and chaired the meeting of the *ad hoc* task force on processing and handling of quick frozen foods. The country has received support from WHO for capacity-building activities in the sphere of assessment of risks to food safety and for risk–benefit analysis. Codex Thailand expects to increase the involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders, and enhance the implementation of Codex standards throughout the food chain. Thailand also intends to improve the technical capacity of the staff involved and the quality of scientific data to play a more constructive role in Codex activities. Additional funding support would be necessary to ensure that the country’s participation in Codex meetings is more effective.

3.11 Timor-Leste

Currently, Timor-Leste is not a member of Codex 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 the NCC. Training on implementation of Codex is needed to strengthen the Codex Contact Point for Timor-Leste.

4. Conclusion

All Member States of WHO's South-East Asia Region, except Timor-Leste, are members of the CAC. NCCPs have been designated in these Member States, although the activities of the NCCPs vary considerably, depending on the level of technical capacity and the availability of human and financial resources. Resources and technical capacity are limited in many Member States. Communication between the stakeholders involved in various aspects of the food safety programmes in the Member States remains inadequate. Codex standards and protocols are not being implemented properly, and effective participation and involvement in Codex activities is lacking. The quality of the food control systems in the Member States is also variable.

The CCASIA is making efforts to improve the contributions of the Member States to the ongoing Codex activities. Annex 1 gives details of the activities organized by both WHO and FAO at the regional and national levels to strengthen the food safety programme in all Member States.

Annex 1

South-East Asia Regional/National Events (2010–2013)

Activity	Organizers	Date	Venue
Workshop on FAO/WHO Framework for Food Safety Emergency Response Planning	WHO/FAO and GFN	21–23 July 2010	Bangkok, Thailand
Regional workshop: SPS Measures and their Impact on Food Inspection and Certification including Managerial Aspects	FAO	25–26 August 2010	Bangkok, Thailand
FAO/WHO regional workshop on the Use of Science throughout the Food Chain for Safe Foods	WHO/FAO and CTF	18–20 November 2010	Bali, Indonesia
Regional consultation on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Countries in the Asia Region	WHO and FAO	6–9 December 2010	New Delhi, India
Workshop on strengthening safety and quality in the food retail chain	FAO and FSSAI	4th quarter, 2010	New Delhi, India
Training course on Risk-based Food Inspection for Domestic Food Control	FAO	16–18 March 2011	Yangon, Myanmar
Regional workshop to share experiences from implementing food and nutrition security projects	FAO	31 March–1 April 2011	Bangkok, Thailand

Regional consultation on safe street foods	WHO/FAO/INMU	20–23 June 2011	Bangkok, Thailand
CCASIA SPS Workshop (related to CCGP, CCCF, CCRDV)	US Codex and Thai Codex	31 January – 2 February 2012	Bangkok, Thailand
CCASIA SPS Workshop (related to CCFFP, CCNFSDU, CCFH)	US Codex and Japan Codex	23 – 26 August 2012	Tokyo, Japan
Regional Training Workshop on Food Recall and Traceability Application in National Food Safety Control	FAO	15 – 17 February 2013	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Strengthening Capacity of Data Collection and Generation for Food Safety Risk Analysis	FAO	10 – 13 June, 2013	Tokyo, Japan
Technical Training on Risk Analysis for the SAARC Countries	FAO, QCI, and FSSAI	17 – 21 June, 2013	New Delhi, India
Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of National Codex Committees in Member States of South-East Asia	WHO and FSSAI	23-25 October 2013	New Delhi, India

Annex 2

Current status of National Codex Committees in the South-East Asia Region

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
Bangladesh	<p>Mr A.K. Fazlul Ahmad, Director General, Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI), Maan Bhavan, 116/A Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh Tel: 880-2-8821462 Fax: 880-2-9131581 e-mail: bsti@bangla.net</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 Codex standards have been adopted as national standards. • Needs training for capacity-building and improvement of testing facilities. • Faces staff shortage, and weak coordination among organizations dealing with control, standards, enforcement and testing. • Plans to enhance the functioning of Codex in Bangladesh by increasing technical capacity, building infrastructure and passing legislation. • Progress regarding the Codex-related activities include: formation of 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 planned among others are: establishment of exclusive Codex desk at BSTI; capacity

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
		<p>development of the National Codex Contact Point and BNCC through training in-country and abroad; organizing seminars and workshops on Codex Standards; and establishing linkages with national and international Codex Committees.</p>
<p>Bhutan</p>	<p>Mr Karma Dorji Executive Director, BAFRA, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Thimphu, Bhutan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food legislation has been formulated on the basis of Codex. ▪ National Codex Committee established through legislation. ▪ Participated in various Codex committee meetings supported by Codex Trust Fund. ▪ Plans to develop and implement Food Safety Control system to avoid import of substandard food products. ▪ Government budget insufficient to fund participation in various technical committee meetings/training on food safety issues relevant to Bhutan. ▪ Technical and financial support required to strengthen the functioning of the Codex Secretariat and Codex activities in Bhutan. ▪ Training and technical support required in the area of Global Food Safety Issues. ▪ Four sets of draft national food standards based on

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
		<p>international standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission have been adapted, taking into account national food safety priorities and interests.</p>
DPR Korea	<p>Dr Kim Song Yong, Member of NCC of Codex, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Academy of Health and Food Science, Pyongyang, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Tel: 00850-2-18111-8011 Fax: 00850-2-3814605 e-mail: ahfs421@star-co.net.kp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amended the national food category system and modified the classification of agricultural products on the basis of Codex. ▪ Was a member of several Codex committees. ▪ Measures have been taken to strengthen the national food control system. ▪ Insufficient information and data. ▪ Needs further training and technical support in the area of food safety issues.
India	<p>Mr Anil Mehta, Deputy Director and Liaison Officer, National Codex Contact Point, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi-110002, India e-mail: codex-india@nic.in Tel: +91-11-23220997</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participated in various meetings and in Electronic Working Group and Physical Working Group activities of the Codex, and presented national views on matters of concern. ▪ Leads various eWGs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed draft on the Standard for Processed Cereal Based Foods for Infants and Young Children to include a new Part B for underweight children - Establishing the ML for Aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts (CCCF)

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Codex of Hygienic Practices for Street-vended foods (CCASIA) - Codex Standard for okra (CCFFV) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft amendments to the guidelines for the use of nutrition and health claims proposed to the Codex. ▪ Draft policies and guidelines for the national food control system under preparation. ▪ Provided training to national participants from Maldives and Bangladesh on Codex activities in NCCP. ▪ Proposing new work proposals at the regional as well as global level. ▪ Need for research-based national-level data to support proposals and amendments suggested to Codex Commission. ▪ NCCP electronic newsletter Connect@CodexIndia on FSSAI Website (www.fssai.gov.in)
Indonesia	Mr Suprpto, Gd. Manggala Wanabakti Blok IV Lt4 Jl, Gatot Subroto, Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia Tel: +62-21-574-7043/44 Fax: +62-21-574-7045 e-mail: suprpto@bsn.go.id	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Served as the regional coordinator for Asia (CCASIA) in 2007–2009 and 2009–2011, while also representing Asian countries on the Executive Committee in 2007–2009 and 2009–2011.

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hosted and chaired the 17th session of the CCASIA in November 2010. ▪ Co-hosted and co-chaired the 25th session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV) in October 2010. ▪ Hosted and chaired the 16th session of the CCASIA in November 2008. ▪ Insufficient scientific data to support Indonesia's proposals at various Codex meetings. ▪ Indonesia is advocating activities proposed by it, such as for the formulation of a standard for sago flour, and new work of a regional standard for Tempe. ▪ Submitted data on beta-cyfluthrin in cabbage collected to JMPR and data on arsenic in rice to GEMS. ▪ Since 2011, Indonesia has "graduated" from Codex Trust Fund. Participation in all Codex activities will be funded by the Government of Indonesia. ▪ Indonesia Codex Website (http://codexindonesia.bsn.go.id) has been developed since 2009.
Maldives	Ms Mariyam Shabeena Ahmed, Maldives Food and Drug Authority, Sosun Magu, Malé,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efforts made in 2010 to strengthen stakeholders'

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
	<p>Tel: +96003014303, +9603014208 e-mail: foodsafetydivision@health.gov.mv/ shabeena@health.gov.mv/ shabyna@gmail.com</p>	<p>awareness of Codex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has participated in various Codex committee meetings. ▪ NCC and technical working group have been set up and reformulated in 2011. ▪ A better understanding of Codex is necessary, local food standards need to be aligned with Codex standards, and technical knowledge of the various expert groups has to be enhanced. ▪ Government funds are insufficient to support national Codex activities.
Myanmar	<p>Dr Kyaw Lin, Director, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health, Ministry of Health, Office No. (47), Nay Pyi Taw Tel: +95-67-431134 Fax: +95-67-431134 e-mail: linkyawdr@gmail.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3–4 meetings organized per year to formulate the national food standards and guidelines. ▪ Increasing coordination and collaboration among food-related agencies. ▪ Capacity-building required for expansion of FDA at district level. ▪ Needs support to set up the NCC in accordance with the CAC procedural manual. ▪ The Director of Food Safety of FDA is functioning as new CCP for Myanmar. ▪ Funding needed for technical subcommittees.

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
<p>Nepal</p>	<p>Ms Jiwan Prava Lama, Director General, Department of Food Technology and Quality Control, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4262369 Fax: +977-1-4262337 e-mail: jiwanlama@gmail.com; dgdfqc@mail.com.np</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has harmonized some food standards with those laid down by Codex, such as standard of skimmed milk powders which has been harmonized with Codex. ▪ Some food standards of national priority exportable food commodities like honey, tea, ginger, and noodles are under process of harmonization. ▪ Has developed certain food standards that have been notified to all Codex members/ WTO members. ▪ Participated in a Codex Committee meeting with the support of the CTF and UNIDO. ▪ Compilation of Codex documents initiated. ▪ Codex standards have been internalized as the benchmark standards. ▪ Low level of consumer awareness. ▪ Plans to build the capacity of the DFTQC to ensure a system of prompt communication that allows for networking among all stakeholders.

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
Sri Lanka	<p>Dr T.B. Ananda Jayalal, Director, Environmental, Occupational Health and Food Safety, Ministry of Health, "Suwasiripaya" "385", Rev. Baddegama Wimalawansa Thero Mawatha Colombo – 10, Sri Lanka Tel: +94-011-2672004 Fax: +94-011-2672004 e-mail: jayalal313@yahoo.co.uk codexcontact@gmail.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has participated in international meetings and NCC meetings. ▪ National Codex activities and Codex secretariat have to be strengthened. ▪ Plans to strengthen the national food safety control system by increasing participation in activities related to global food safety issues.
Thailand	<p>Mr Pisan Pongsapitch, Director of the Office of Commodity and System Standards, National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives 50 Phaholyothin Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok, Thailand 10900 Tel: +66-2561-2277 ext. 1401 Fax: +66-2561-3357 e-mail: codex@acfs.go.th</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing awareness of the importance of Codex and dissemination of information on the results of meetings, and of progress in the preparation of Codex standards, among all relevant stakeholders. ▪ Promotion of the consistent application of the risk analysis principle at the national level. ▪ A website on Codex activities has been established and is being maintained. ▪ National positions on issues of interest to the Region shared on a regular basis e.g. ASEAN. ▪ Codex standards proposed and/or drafted by Thailand have been adopted, i.e. standards on fish sauce, chili sauce, MRLs for pesticides in tropical fruits and vegetables,

Country	National Codex Focal-point	Current status
		<p>and method of analysis of fat content in coconut cream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thailand is advocating activities proposed by it, e.g. in relation to durian and rice bran oil. ▪ Currently, on-going activities related to Codex are: total diet study on pesticide residues and risk assessment of certain food additives. ▪ The website of Codex Thailand is (http://www.acfs.go.th/eng/index.php).
Timor-Leste	<p>Mr Joao Bosco da Costa, Dietetic Officer of Nutrition Department, Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Caixa Postal 3784, Caicoli Street, Dili, Timor-Leste Tel: +670-7260864 e-mail: joao.bosco74@hotmail.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not a member of CAC. ▪ A baseline assessment of the existing situation is proposed to determine the areas to be improved prior to the establishment of the NCC and NCCP. ▪ The government intends to apply for membership after 2–3 years, once the outcome of the assessment is known. ▪ Limited infrastructure and technical capacity.

The importance of this Region in the international food trade has long been recognized since over 25% of the world's population resides here. There has been a significant increase in the production of food in this Region over the years. There has been a growing realization in countries of the Region of the importance of Codex in protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. The participation of countries from the Region in the Codex forum has also increased considerably

This report contains information on the working of the National Codex Committees of the Member States of the World Health Organization's South-East Asia Region [WHO-SEARO] and is an update of 'Overview of national Codex Committees in the Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region' (SEA-NUT-183), published in 2012.



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SEA-Nut-188