

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) - [www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org)

REP19/FL

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Forty-Second Session*

*Geneva, Switzerland*

*8 - 12 July 2019*

## REPORT OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE

### CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

*Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

*13 - 17 May 2019*

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## SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WORK

Responsible Party	Purpose	Text/Topic	Code	Step	Para.
Members CCEXEC77 CAC42	Adoption	Proposed draft guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers		5	64
Members CCEXEC77 CAC42	Approval	Proposed draft guidance on internet sales/e-commerce		1	91 (a)
		Revision to the <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> : allergen labelling and guidance on precautionary allergen or advisory labelling		1	98 (a)
All commodity committees	Information	Provisions for date marking			6
		Progress on guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers	-	-	66 (c)
CCNFSDU	Information	Biofortification	-	-	11
CCCPL, CCSCH, CCNFSDU, CCFH	Information	Endorsement decisions / advice	-		18, 23, 28, 100 & 101
FAO/WHO	Scientific advice	food allergens	-	-	98 (c)
EWG/PWG (Costa Rica and New Zealand) and CCFL46	Drafting	Proposed Draft Guidelines on the front of pack nutrition labelling	-	2/3	86
EWG (UK, Chile, India, Japan, Ghana) and CCFL46	Drafting	Proposed draft guidance on internet sales/e-commerce	-	2/3	91(b)
EWG (Australia, UK, USA) CCFL46	Drafting	Revision of the <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> : allergen labelling and the Proposed draft guidance on precautionary allergen or advisory labelling	-	2/3	98 (b)
Canada CCFL46	Drafting	Discussion paper on innovation – use of technology in food labelling	-	-	105
Russian Federation, EU, and India CCFL46	Drafting	Discussion paper on labelling of alcoholic beverages	-	-	117 (b)
Colombia CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on labelling of foods in joint presentation and multipack formats (update)	-	-	125 (a)
UK CCFL46	Drafting	Discussion paper on future work and direction of CCFL (update) and inclusion of “high-in”	-	-	132 (a) and (c)
Members CCFL46	Comments / discussion	Criteria for the evaluation and prioritization of work of CCFL	-	-	132 (e)

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCFH	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCFL	Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCMMP	Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
CCNE	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCNFSDU	Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
CCPFV	Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables
CCPR	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
CCSCH	Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs
CL	Circular Letter
CRD	Conference Room Document
CXG	Codex Guideline
CXS	Codex Standard
EU	European Union
EWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIVS	Fédération internationale des vins et spiritueux
FOPNL	Front of pack nutrition labelling
GSLPF	General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985)
INFOODS	International Network of Food Data Systems
JEMNU	The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
NRC	Non-Retail Container
NUGAG	WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group
OIV	Organisation internationale de la vigne et du vin
PWG	Physical Working Group
TBT	Technical Barrier to Trade
TFA	Trans-Fatty Acids
TRIPS	Trade Related Agreement Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) held its Forty-fifth Session in Ottawa, Canada from 13 – 17 May 2019, at the kind invitation of the Government of Canada. The Session was chaired by Ms Kathy Twardek, Director of the Consumer Protection and Market Fairness Division, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The Session was attended by delegates from 55 member countries and one member organisation and 26 observer organisations. A list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

### OPENING

2. Mr Simon Kennedy, Deputy Minister of Health Canada opened the session, welcomed delegates and underscored the contribution of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling towards addressing the challenge of non-communicable diseases linked to nutrition, through provision of clear nutritional information to consumers. The Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Mr Steve Wearne (United Kingdom), on behalf of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission<sup>1</sup>, and Mr Tom Heilandt, Codex Secretary also addressed the meeting.

### Division of Competence<sup>2</sup>

3. The Committee noted the division of competence between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)<sup>3</sup>

4. The Committee adopted the Agenda.

### MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE (Agenda item 2)<sup>4</sup>

#### Matters referred by CAC and other Subsidiary Bodies

5. The Committee noted the matters for information, and that matters related to the request from CCFH would be discussed under Agenda Item 8.

#### Revision of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*: date marking

6. The Committee noted the continued use of the term “date of minimum durability” throughout several Codex texts which was inconsistent with the revised section on date marking in the *General Standard for Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (GSLPF) and therefore alignment of these texts with the GSLPF was necessary. The Committee agreed to inform commodity committees to ensure alignment of terminology with the newly revised GSLPF and noted that the Secretariat would also undertake a search for the texts where such alignment was needed and could make proposals for amendments to relevant Codex texts for approval by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

#### CCNFSDU: Definition for Biofortification

7. The Chair proposed to focus discussion on the intended use of the definition and where it would be best placed before discussing whether the proposed definition met the needs of CCFL. She recalled that the request for CCNFSDU to consider a definition had come from CCFL41, and reminded that at the time of discussion in CCFL41, the Committee had generally agreed that existing Codex guidelines provided adequate guidance for claims for products with higher micronutrient content, but had recognized that challenges for labelling may arise in expressing the true nature of a food or ingredient if a processed product is biofortified or is based on a biofortified ingredient since no definition for biofortification exists.<sup>5</sup>
8. Delegations who spoke generally appreciated the work of CCNFSDU to develop the proposed definition, and expressed the following views:
  - The definition was too broad and thus of limited value in terms of labelling harmonization, not clear enough, did not facilitate clear understanding of which products would be considered as biofortified, and therefore did not address the initial intent of identifying the true nature of the products obtained through biofortification for the purposes of section 4.1.1 of the GSLPF. It allowed member governments to use equivalent terms that were not identified in the proposal and that the processes covered by the definition have to be determined by competent national/regional authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> CRD18 (Opening remarks on behalf of CAC Chair and Vice-Chairs to CCFL45)

<sup>2</sup> CRD1 (Annotated Agenda – Division of competence between the EU and its Member States)

<sup>3</sup> CX/FL 19/45/1

<sup>4</sup> CX/FL 19/45/2; CRD03 (Dominican Republic, European Union, India, Nigeria, Panama, Thailand, FoodDrinkEurope); CRD 14 (Indonesia); CRD15 (Kenya); CRD17 (South Africa)

<sup>5</sup> REP13/FL, para. 123

- The need for a definition of the term “biofortification” in the context of CCFL had not been clearly identified. The term was currently not used in any of the Codex adopted texts, or texts in the step process that are under the remit of CCFL.
  - Existing texts, in particular the GSLPF, the *Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims* (CXG 23-1997) and the *General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods* (CXG 9-1987) were sufficient to address the appropriate labelling of food with a modified nutrient content; and
  - The definition only addressed the process by which nutrients could be obtained, and not nutrient bioavailability. Should the definition be finalised it should be included in the *Guidelines for Nutrition and Health Claims*.
9. Concerns were also expressed by some observers about a single nutrient approach as addressed through biofortification rather than the promotion of diversified diets to address malnutrition. They pointed out that, in their view, the original intent was to limit the scope to conventional breeding, but that the current definition allowed for use of genetic modification and that CCNFSDU should be requested to reconsider this aspect. One observer expressed the view that the probability that GMOs would be part of the method of production, which is not required on labels would be deceptive to consumers.
10. Another observer noted that lots of work had gone into the development of the definition by CCNFSDU and that many aspects raised in the discussion had been taken into consideration in the development of the definition. She noted that careful examination of existing texts could be considered by CCNFSDU together with gaps identified in the discussion and emphasised that guidance on biofortification was needed and Codex was in the position to provide such guidance.

### Conclusion

11. The Committee acknowledged the tremendous work done by CCNFSDU, but agreed that current labelling texts were adequate for CCFL purposes and there was no need for a definition on biofortification in the context of food labelling.

### MATTERS OF INTEREST FROM FAO AND WHO (Agenda item 3)<sup>6</sup>

12. The Representative of FAO drew the attention of the Committee to various activities of FAO as well as to the joint activities of FAO and WHO of interest to the CCFL: (i) The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU) to provide scientific advice for the establishment of nitrogen to protein conversion factors for soy-based and milk-based ingredients used in infant formula and follow-up formula, noting that a meeting of JEMNU is planned for July 2019; (ii) the FAO website on Food labelling that provides information on food labelling standards and guidelines and FAO activities and projects on food labelling ; (iii) FAO’s work on providing up-to-date food composition data, through the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS); (iv) the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition for 2016 – 2025, referring to the establishment of a Nutrition Labelling Action Network that is co-convened by Australia and France; and (v) the FAO Symposium on the Future of Food to be held in Rome on 10-11 June 2019.
13. The Representative of WHO highlighted the activities of relevance to the on-going work of the Committee. With reference to the UN Third High-level meeting on NCDs, the Representative informed the Committee of the efforts being made by WHO in setting up an accountability framework to monitor the private sector’s actions in meeting the targets sets by WHO in achieving the reduction of salt/sodium, sugars and fat intake, including the elimination of industrially produced *trans*-fatty acids (TFA) and the accelerated actions being made by WHO in elimination of industrially produced TFA. The Representative further highlighted all the relevant guideline development work including the release of the draft guidelines on saturated and *trans*-fatty acids intake in May/June 2018 for public consultation, various other guidelines under finalization including the guideline on non-sugar sweeteners, and the launching of the new guideline development process addressing priority policy actions (such as nutrition labelling policies, policies to restrict food marketing to children and fiscal policies) to promote healthy diets.
14. She also informed the Committee of the publication of the report of the Second Global Nutrition Policy Review (2016 – 2017) which includes the data on country progress in implementing nutrition labelling. Furthermore, the Representative provided the link to the pre-formatted final draft version of the WHO guiding principle manual on front-of-pack labelling (<https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/policies/guidingprinciples-labelling-promoting-healthydiet/en/>) and reminded the Committee of the background information of the work which the Committee was informed of in 2016.

<sup>6</sup> CX/FL 17/45/3; CRD13 (WHO)

15. The Representative also provided a brief update on WHO activities on harmful use of alcohol reflected in CRD13, including the WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018 highlighting 3 million deaths attributable to harmful use of alcohol in 2016. The Representative underlined that worldwide alcoholic beverages have relatively little consumer information on the label. The Representative further noted the launching of a new WHO-led SAFER initiative which outlines five high-impact strategies with proven effectiveness and cost-effectiveness that can help governments reduce alcohol-related harm which imply good consumer information on how much and what they consumer with alcoholic beverages.

### **Conclusion**

16. The Committee noted the information provided.

### **CONSIDERATION OF LABELLING PROVISIONS IN CODEX STANDARDS (ENDORSEMENT) (Agenda item 4)<sup>7</sup>**

17. The Committee considered the labelling provisions for endorsement, noted that the provisions in the proposed draft Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators from CCFH would be considered under agenda item 8, and made the following comments and decisions:

#### **Proposed draft Standard for Quinoa**

18. The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions with amendments to section 8.1 Name of the product to ensure that the name of the product was consistent with the descriptions in section 2 of the Standard; and section 8.2 Non retail containers for consistency with the wording in the Procedural Manual as follows:

#### 8.1 Name of the Product

“The product name appearing on the label shall be “quinoa” or “processed quinoa”, **consistent with the descriptions in section 2 of this Standard.** Optional information, such as product origin, quality, colour, may be included.”

#### 8.2 Non-retail containers

“Information for **non-retail containers** shall be given on the containers.....”

#### **Proposed draft standards for spices and culinary herbs**

19. The Committee considered the labelling provisions for the following six (6) proposed draft standards (i.e. dried or dehydrated garlic; dried oregano; for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs – dried or dehydrated ginger; dried basil; dried floral parts – dried cloves; and saffron); agreed that all the provisions were consistent with the requirements of GSLPF, and also noted the following concerns on the labelling provisions 8.3 and 8.3.1 (“Country of Origin/Country of Harvest”) and 8.5 (Inspection mark (optional)).

#### *Section 8.3 and 8.3.1 “Country of Origin/Country of Harvest”*

20. The Committee noted that for the phrase “Country of Origin/Country of Harvest” it was not clear whether both the country of origin and country of harvest should be declared or only one was required. It was further noted that GSLPF provided for mandatory declaration of the country of origin if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer. The GSLPF also sets clear criteria on what should be considered as the country of origin which could be different from the country of harvest.

21. The Committee noted that it was important for CCSCCH to clarify whether the declaration of the country of harvest was intended to be mandatory if the country of origin and the country of harvest differed; or if the country of harvest could be an additional optional requirement in this case.

#### *Section 8.5 – Inspection mark (optional)*

22. The Committee also agreed to request more information on the intention of this mark.

### **Conclusion**

23. The Committee agreed to endorse all the labelling provisions in the six (6) proposed draft standards except for sections 8.3, 8.3.1 and 8.5, which were referred to CCSCCH for further consideration.

#### **Standard for Follow-up Formula: Section A: follow-up formula for older infants**

24. The Committee noted the following:

<sup>7</sup> CX/FL 19/45/4; CRD04 (Dominican Republic, European Union, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Vietnam, EFLA); CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD15 (Kenya )

- The second sentence of section 9.2.2 should be revised by deletion of “these ingredients and” as functional classes were applicable food additives and not ingredients and as required by section 4.2.3.3 of GSLPF;
  - The units in section 9.3 should be in the abbreviated form (e.g. ml) as more appropriate for labelling purposes and in line with the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985).
  - To assure the consistency of datemarking and to allow for the use of “expiration date” or “use by date”, the Committee agreed to replace section 9.4.1 (i) and (ii) and 9.4.2 except for the last sentence with a reference to section 4.7.1 of the GSLPF to allow countries to have a choice on using the appropriate date marking to be declared on the label.
  - The proposals to revise sections 9.5.1 to include more detailed preparation instructions for powdered products; and 9.6.1 c) to emphasize that health workers should be independent were not agreed to as CCNFSDU had already considered these proposals and the provisions were a result of extensive discussion and compromise in CCNFSDU.
25. The Committee noted that the last sentence in section 9.6.4 had received very little discussion in CCNFSDU and the lack of a definition for “cross promotion” had raised concerns for members in that Committee.
26. With respect to 9.6.4, there were discussions on whether to delete or retain cross-promotion and the following perspectives were raised in this discussion:
- It was important to protect and support breastfeeding and that labelling should be distinct on follow-up formula for older infants and should avoid confusion with other products such as infant formula and formula for special medical purposes.
  - Without a definition for “cross-promotion” and understanding of the intent of the provision, it would be difficult to consider endorsement of the provision. Such lack of definition could lead to different interpretations of the provision and to unnecessary trade barriers.
  - Restricting cross-promotion might go beyond the mandate of Codex and could result in legal uncertainties and trade impediments and infringe on intellectual property rights and trade marks as recognized in international agreements such as WTO TBT and TRIPS. It was necessary to determine if restrictions on cross promotion were compatible with the established rules for international trade by the WTO and WIPO.
  - There were views that exceptions that allow countries to implement measures to pursue legitimate health objectives.
  - A proposal for a footnote was made to clarify that for 9.6.4 it was without prejudice to international framework on trademarks conferred registered trademarks to their owners.
  - The term “cross promotion” should not be used but if the concept were needed, alternative wording was required.
  - The intention of the statement was not clear. If the intent of cross-promotion is to avoid messages that a follow-up formula for older infants is also suitable for another age group, then the issue was sufficiently covered by the first sentence in 9.6.4 and would therefore be appropriate to delete the last sentence to avoid duplication.
  - Even if cross-promotion were defined, it would be difficult to implement and enforce.
  - The statement on cross-promotion should be retained, as it was important to guard against confusion to consumers when products are not readily distinguishable in order to protect public health. It was critical to protect consumers and such guidance would help countries to limit or prohibit types of promotion.
  - Cross-promotion was defined and used by WHO and could be used within Codex. It was important to ensure conformity of WHA resolutions and Codex.
  - The issue of cross-promotion was important and consideration should be given to expanding the first sentence in 9.6.4 to address the intent of limiting or prohibiting cross-promotion.
27. The Representative of WHO explained that WHO had two technical guidance documents which provided definitions on cross promotion. These definitions encompassed broader aspects of advertising and marketing promotion which include packaging, branding and labelling of a product to closely resemble that of another, such as brand extension. In response to the comments by delegations, she noted that one of the terms of reference of CCFL is to address “problems associated with the advertisement of food with particular reference to claims and misleading descriptions” and, therefore, it was within the scope of the work of CCFL;.



if it was not clear what cross promotion meant, it seemed contradictory to say that something which is not clear on what it was would create a trade or IP related problem. Therefore, the Representative proposed to retain the sentence on cross promotion, especially given the fact that not much discussion took place at CCNFSDU and return it to CCNFSDU for further discussion.

### Conclusion

28. The Committee agreed to inform CCNFSDU that it had endorsed the sections 9.1 to 9.6.3 with amendments to 9.2.2, 9.3 and 9.4.1 (i) and (ii) and 9.4.2. With regard to 9.6.4, the Committee endorsed the first sentence and agreed to return the last sentence on cross promotion for further consideration by CCNFSDU.

### PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR THE LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS (Agenda item 5)<sup>1</sup>

29. India, as Chair of the EWG and PWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs Costa Rica and the United States of America, introduced the item and highlighted the progress made by the PWG on each of the draft sections and recommendations as contained in CRD2. He also drew the attention of the Committee to other matters where broad Committee decisions would be required i.e. whether the proposed draft would be a guideline or a standard; whether an amendment to the Procedural Manual was needed; and how to deal with the need to revise commodity standards making reference to labelling of non-retail containers (NRCs).
30. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the set timeline for completion of the work was 2019, and called for compromise on the outstanding issues in order to progress it.
31. The Committee noted the recommendations in CRD2, agreed to discuss the proposed draft guidance section by section, made appropriate editorial changes and clarified various sections as follows:

### Discussion

#### *Purpose and Scope*

32. The Committee agreed to the purpose (Section 1) and scope (Section 2) of the proposed draft guidance of non-retail containers.

#### *Section 3 Definition of terms*

##### *Food Business*

33. The Committee agreed to further simplify the definition for “Food Business” by deleting repeated text.
34. On a proposal to use the term “food business operator” as defined in CCFICS and CCFH texts, the Codex Secretariat explained that Codex terms could be defined by a committee according to a particular context, for use in a particular text.
35. The Chairperson clarified that the term should be defined in the context of the document to be broad enough to address all the required elements. It was also noted that the term “food business operator” had not been used in the proposed draft text and there was no need to define it.
36. The Committee agreed with the revised definition.

##### *Non-Retail Container*

37. The Committee considered the two options for the definition for the Non-Retail Containers (NRC) and agreed to the following definition:

**“Non-retail container”** means any container<sup>1</sup> that is not intended to be offered for direct sale to the consumer<sup>1</sup>. The food<sup>1</sup> in the non-retail containers is for further food business activities before being offered to the consumer<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>As defined in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

38. In the course of the discussion the Committee decided to:
- Delete the terms sale, distribution and catering from the definition.
  - Delete the provision on examples following the definition as well as the associated Annex, as it was explained that these had been used for purposes of drafting and were no longer relevant.
  - Retain footnotes to the definition as these were intended to create clarity as to the source of

<sup>1</sup> CL 2019/13-FL; CX/FL 19/45/5; CX/FL 19/45/5-Add.1 (Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras India, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uruguay, USA, CEFS, FoodDrink Europe, ICBA, IDF/FIL, IFU, IUFOST, World processing Tomato Council); CX/FL 19/45/5-Add.2 (European Union, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria), CRD02 (PWG Report); CRD5 (Canada, Dominican Republic, FoodDrinkEurope), CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD15 (Kenya), CRD17 (South Africa)

particular terms (i.e. GSLPF) as used in the definition.

#### *4. General Principles*

39. The Committee endorsed the seven proposed principles and further amended principle 4.7 to take into account the notion of traceability of the documents to the food in the NRC.

#### *5. Mandatory Information Requirements*

40. The Chairperson of the Committee explained that Section 5 (mandatory information requirements) provided the minimum information that would be expected on the label of a NRC, however other mandatory information would be declared in the accompanying documents or by other means as described under section 6.

##### *Name of food*

41. The Committee considered whether to consolidate the provisions related to “multiple foods” contained in section 5.1.1.5 with those in section 5.9. It was noted that whereas both sections dealt with multiple foods, Section 5.1.1.5 focused on how names of multiple foods in a NRC should be given; while Section 5.9 was intended to describe how information on multiple foods should be given. Based on this explanation the two sections were not merged.
42. The Committee agreed the sections on the name of the food were mandatory information and required on the label.

##### *Net Contents*

43. The Committee agreed to transfer the provision for net contents to section 6, noting that Section 6 covered all mandatory information irrespective of whether it was declared on the label or not.

##### *Lot Identification*

44. The Committee noted the following comments on some of the aspects of lot identification:
- Lot identification should be indelible on the NRC.
  - Permanently embossed lot identification on an NRC may not be achievable as some retail containers could be reused.
  - Lot identification was important for the identification of the product and could function as a link between the container and the information documents, and therefore it should be kept under mandatory requirements for the label.
45. The Committee agreed to the provision for lot identification for mandatory inclusion on a label.

##### *Date Marking*

46. The Committee noted the following views expressed by some delegations on date marking of NRC:
- Date marking and storage were only required on the label of an NRC where the absence of special storage conditions would compromise the safety of the product. If no special storage instructions were required, a date mark could appear on accompanying documents to an NRC.
  - Date marking was always required irrespective of storage conditions.
47. The Committee agreed that date marking and storage instructions were mandatory on the label when they are related to the safety and integrity of the product.

##### *Identification of a Non-Retail Container*

48. The Committee amended the provision to: provide for flexibility and broad application throughout the envisaged “food business” value chain; and deleted the following statement “not for consumer sale” and “not for direct sale to consumer” as they could be misleading in situations where an NRC was used for sale of food.
49. The Committee agreed to delete the provision related to the identification mark as essential information should not be replaced by an identification mark. The Committee noted that the deletion of this provision would require an amendment to the Procedural Manual: Format for Codex Commodity Standards, section on labelling.

##### *Name and address*

50. The Committee agreed with the provision to remain mandatory on the label.

##### *Bulk transport containers*

51. The Committee agreed to transfer the provisions for bulk transport containers to a separate section, as it had special requirements that went beyond information on a label.  
*Non-Retail Container with multiple types of food*
52. The Committee agreed with the provision.  
*Section 6 – Sharing of Information*
53. The Committee noted the clarification that Section 6 was intended to bring together all mandatory information including: mandatory information requirements on the label provided under section 5; and information shared by other means; in order to facilitate the use of such information in subsequent products constituted from food derived from an NRC and, such as with net contents, transfer information to the buyer. It was further noted that some of the information transferred from section 5 (Mandatory Information on a Label) to Section 6 would need to be incorporated into this section.
54. The Committee further exchanged views on whether to create an exhaustive list of mandatory information to be shared based on GSLPF; or to develop a broader framework allowing flexibility in the provision of information.
55. Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to redraft the section to make it broader, more flexible and to capture the concept that mandatory information could be provided: on labels; through documents or other means; and that the provided mandatory information should be sufficient to enable the preparation and labelling of pre-packaged foods from the food in the non-retail container. It was also recognised that the information on net content of an NRC should be provided, and the new section should reference the GSLPF in a footnote.
56. An observer expressed the view that it was necessary to provide more detailed information, such as on country of origin, whether the food had been irradiated, or were derived from GMOs as essential information for consumers to make an informed choice. Additional comments were made that the provisions for NRC should not introduce new requirements that were not mandatory in the GSLPF.
57. It was further agreed that information provided in the accompanying document, or through other appropriate means, shall be effectively traceable to the food in non-retail containers.
58. In line with the above changes, the title of the section was also amended to read “mandatory information requirements by means other than label”.  
*Section 7 – Bulk transport containers*
59. The Committee agreed to introduce a new Section 7 (Bulk Containers) (see para. 43) and a new section 8 was to cover cases where those non-retail containers which are exempted from mandatory requirements under section 5 because the information can be seen through the clear non-retail container. The titles were kept in square brackets for further consideration.  
*Section 8 – Presentation of information*
60. The Committee agreed to remove the requirement for information being stored in one place, noting that the objective should be accessibility and discernibility of information rather than where it was stored.  
Other Matters
61. The Committee noted the information provided by the Codex Secretariat that there was no clear guidance in Codex as to when a document should become a guideline or standard but that the present text had been drafted more in line with the practice used for standards so it could be called General Standard on the Labelling of Non Retail Containers. The Secretariat further noted that the naming of the text would entail no difference as to the significance and implications of a Codex standard or a Codex guideline.
62. The Committee noted that whether the text was a standard or guideline could be decided at a later stage.
63. A delegation noted there could be a need for consequential amendments to the GSLPF to remove reference to food for catering purposes in the scope and definition.
- Conclusion**
64. The Committee noted that there had been a lot of progress on the work and therefore agreed to:
- Forward the proposed draft standard to CAC42 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix II).
  - Extend completion of the work to CCFL46 and to inform the CCEXEC accordingly.
  - Inform the relevant Commodity Committees on the progress of the work on NRC.

65. The Committee noted that once the document is finalised there could be the need for consequential amendments to the Procedural Manual, the GSLPF and relevant Commodity standards.

**PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE FRONT-OF-PACK NUTRITION LABELLING (Agenda item 6)<sup>9</sup>**

66. Costa Rica, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and summarized the work process in the EWG, highlighted the key points of discussion, conclusions and recommendations. She noted that from the written comments received that there were concerns on section 5 and its appropriateness for inclusion in a Codex guideline and proposed that the Committee focus discussion on sections 1 – 4 and to decide later whether section 5 should be maintained in the guidelines.
67. New Zealand, co-chair of the EWG, noted that there was a lot of interest in the work as the subject of FOPNL was currently very topical, and the guideline should remain at a high level to cater to a wide variety of needs.

**Discussion**

General comments

68. The Committee noted the general support for the work and its purpose, and the following views were expressed by delegations:
- FOPNL was an important tool to support strategies for control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
  - It was important that the work should remain in line with the mandate agreed at CCFL44, the objective of the guidelines being to provide additional guidance to the requirements for supplementary nutrition information covered in Section 5 of the *Guidelines for nutrition labelling* (CXG 2-1985) and in accordance with this section, the use of supplementary nutrition information should be optional and should only be provided in addition to a nutrient declaration.
  - The mandate for the work did not include aspects related to the implementation of FOPNL schemes and section 5 should therefore be deleted. Consideration should be given to transferring some text from this section, to section General Principles, as appropriate.
  - The guideline might also contribute to guiding the purchase of non-packaged foods through food services, and that this concept should be included in the guidelines.

Sections 1 – 4

**Section 1: Purpose**

69. The Committee amended the purpose to clarify that FOPNL was a form of supplementary nutrition information; and a tool to facilitate the consumer understanding of the nutritional value of the food and their choice of food consistent with national dietary guidance or health and nutrition policy of the country or region of implementation, to read as follows: *“Provide general guidance to assist in the development of front-of-pack nutrition labelling, a form of supplementary nutrition information, as a tool to facilitate the consumer’s understanding of the nutritional value of the food and their choice of food, consistent with the national dietary guidance or health and nutrition policy of the country or region of implementation.”*

**Section 2: Scope**

70. The Committee noted that section 2 of the scope was not consistent with section 5 of the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (i.e. supplementary information should be optional and only given in addition to the nutrient declaration except for target populations who have a high illiteracy rate and/or comparatively little knowledge of nutrition) and agreed to amend section 2.1 by inserting a reference to Section 5 of the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* also consistent with the amendment made to the “Purpose”.
71. The Committee had considerable discussion on the exclusions in section 2.2 and exemptions in section 2.3 and noted the following views expressed:
- A reference to exclusions could be maintained, but there was no need to name specific products in 2.2.

<sup>9</sup> CL 2019/14-FL; CX/FL 19/45/6; CX/FL 19/45/6-Add.1 (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Iran, Iran, Jamaica, Kuwait, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, USA, BEUC CEFS, Consumers International, ESSNA, Food Industry Asia; FoodDrink Europe, ICBA, ICGMA, IDF/FIL, IFU, International Association of Consumer Food organisations; IUFOST, World Federation of Public Health associations); CX/FL 19/45/6-Add.2 (European Union, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, ICGA); CRD6 (Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama, Thailand, FIVS, OIV); CRD12 (FoodDrinkEurope, ISDI, WFPFA); CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD17 (South Africa).

- For exclusions, reference could be made to foods for special dietary uses and for infants and young children as defined in Codex rather than listing products.
- Sports foods or drinks should not be excluded as these products were widely consumed by the general public.
- Sports drinks were not defined in Codex and should be excluded as it could cause confusion to consumers
- There was concern on the exclusion for alcoholic beverages. It was stated that consumers would like to see more information on more products rather than less.
- There was no need to specify exemptions indicated in 2.3 since these foods were already exempted from the mandatory nutrient declaration.
- Bottled water should also be included as an example in 2.3 (first bullet point) as a product with zero nutrient value.
- The surface area for small packages may be insufficient and suggestions were made that it could be increased.
- Foods exempted from nutrition labelling (back of pack) should also be exempted from FOPNL, and should therefore be included under section 2.3.
- Consideration should be given to establish criteria to consider the list of exemptions and exclusions which should be science-based and should be mindful of the risk of FOPNL giving nutritional halos to foods not recommended for good health. In all other cases, consumers need useful and interpretative guidance.
- Clarification was requested on footnote 3 to explain the difference between excluded foods and exempted foods
- Some foods have special compositional requirements but not all foods have defined limits in Codex documents

### **Section 3: Definition of front of pack nutrition labelling**

72. The Committee noted the following views:

- The definition should be kept broad to allow countries to decide on their own FOPNL schemes to address their specific situation and meet the needs of their consumers.
- The definition in 3.1 should be simplified by deleting the text after the word 'thereof' which was proposed to keep the guidelines at high level.
- The definition should be aligned with its earlier decision to indicate that FOPNL was a form of supplementary nutrition information.
- Consideration should be given to whether high in warnings should be included or excluded.
- Support for section 3.2 as proposed in the document.
- The whole or part of section 3.2 should be deleted.

73. The Committee noted that there were various views on the need to retain section 3.2 and agreed to further consider this question and the contents of the list.

74. The Committee agreed that there were various views on this section and that further work on the refinement of the definition should take into consideration the written comments.

### **Section 4: General Principles**

75. The Chair proposed to focus on the texts in square brackets that needed further consideration, and also suggested that additional comments to those in the written comments be raised. The Committee noted several proposals for amendments to the principles and there was some agreement for some of them however, the Committee took no firm decisions on their final wording.

#### **4.1**

76. Views were expressed that it might not always be possible to have only a single FOPNL scheme in a country or region, countries or regions should have the autonomy to develop FOPNL that suit their situation. It was also proposed that this principle should be amended to indicate that where multiple schemes coexist, they should be complementary, not contradictory to each other and that they should not restrict trade.

**4.2**

77. The Committee noted a wide range of views on the text in square brackets: that it was not necessary to refer to a wide range of consumers as this did not add clarity to the principle and that it was possible for governments to tailor FOPNL to the needs of specific populations; that the text should be retained as FOPNL was especially important to those consumers who are not using the nutrient declaration on back of pack, and may have lower nutrition literacy; that FOPNL should not mislead the consumer and that consumer research should include scientifically valid evidence of understanding.

**4.3**

78. The Committee noted that this principle should be subject to section 5 of the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling*.

**4.5**

79. The Committee noted views that the bracketed text in this principle was redundant or could be considered as unnecessarily restrictive and impractical.

**4.6**

80. The Committee noted the views to delete the square brackets and retain the text which was consistent with the earlier decision on the purpose of the guidelines.

**4.7**

81. There was support to replace “nutrients of global importance” with “nutrients of public health concern” as it was unclear how nutrients of global importance was defined. It was proposed to include that FOPNL should be non-discriminatory.

**4.8**

82. Views were expressed as to whether the primary use of FOPNL was to compare foods within or between categories and views were expressed on comparisons between foods without referring to the term categories.

**4.9**

83. Various views were expressed on this principle that FOPNL should be led by governments, but developed in collaboration with stakeholders. A view was also expressed that it was not the responsibility of Codex to get involved in the way in which with governments develop and implement policies, that distinction should be made between mandatory and voluntary FOPNL which would determine who should lead FOPNL and with whom to collaborate in FOPNL development, and that consideration should be given moving this text to section 5.

**4.12**

84. The Committee noted a proposal to retain “as consumed” and to delete the rest or to replace “as sold with minimal exceptions” with “as packaged”, as more appropriate.

**Other aspects to consider in the development of FOPNL systems**

85. The Committee did not discuss this section. The chair, however, noted the earlier comments that the section on implementation of the FOPNL System might be outside the scope of the guidelines, and that further consideration was needed on its retention, or whether some aspects could be taken up in the Principles.

**Conclusion**

86. The Committee agreed:
- a) to re-establish the EWG, chaired by Costa Rica and co-chaired by New Zealand, working in English and Spanish to further develop the guidelines taking into account the written comments submitted and the comments and decision made at this session to Section 1, for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration by CCFL46.
  - b) to establish a PWG, chaired by Costa Rica and co-chaired by New Zealand, working in English, French and Spanish, to meet immediately prior to the next session, to consider comments submitted at Step 3 and to prepare a revised proposal for consideration by CCFL46.
87. The EWG report shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON INTERNET SALES/E-COMMERCE (Agenda item 7)<sup>10</sup>**

88. The United Kingdom introduced the item, also on behalf of the co-drafters: Chile, Ghana, India, and Japan; and recalled that CCFL44 had identified internet sales/e-commerce as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. He summarized the findings and recommendations arising out of the information gathering exercise; noted the possible areas for action by CCFL (e.g. establishing definitions for “label” and “labelling”; establishing information to be provided at point of sale). He finally drew the attention of the Committee to the recommendation for CCFL to initiate new work on internet sales/e-commerce addressing the areas identified in the discussion paper.
89. The Committee expressed broad support for starting new work on internet sales/e-commerce and noted the following views:
- In light of the global growth and ever-increasing diversification of e-commerce, it was imperative for Codex to develop international guidance including definitions that would assist governments to monitor this important area, in order to ensure food safety as well as protect consumers from food fraud.
  - While undertaking this new work, Codex should coordinate with related work in other international/regional fora on the subject to ensure harmonisation.
90. Given the support for starting new work, the Committee considered the project document in detail, noted comments and took the following decisions pursuant to the discussion:
- Amended the purpose and scope to ensure that the review and revision would not only cover GSLPF but would include all CCFL texts related to food labelling;
  - Consequentially amended the main aspects to be covered in line with the changes made in the scope; and
  - Amended the section on “need for technical inputs from external bodies” to clarify that the work would take into account related work in other international fora

**Conclusion**

91. The Committee agreed:
- a) To start new work on internet sales/e-commerce and to submit the project document (Appendix III) for approval by CAC42.
  - b) To establish an EWG chaired by UK, co-chaired by Chile, Ghana, India and Japan, working in English and Spanish, to prepare a proposed draft text for circulation at Step 3 and consideration by CCFL46.  
and
  - c) To keep open the possibility of a PWG, chaired by UK, and co-chaired by Chile, Ghana, India and Japan, to meet immediately prior to the next session of CCFL, to consider written comments submitted and prepare a revised proposal for consideration by CCFL46.
92. The EWG report shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON ALLERGEN LABELLING (Agenda item 8)<sup>11</sup>**

93. Australia introduced the item, also on behalf of the co-drafters: United Kingdom and United States of America and recalled that CCFL44 had identified allergen labelling as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. She explained that the findings demonstrated support for work on reviewing and revising the GSLPF to amongst others: clarify the listed food and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity, and potentially to update the current list to include new foods and ingredients, possible deletions or provide exemptions; need for further information on how allergens should be presented on food labels to ensure consumer protection and to provide more technical specifications for industry. She also noted that there was an increase in the use of “precautionary labelling” or “advisory labelling” and “free from” claims. All of this has

<sup>10</sup> CX/FL 19/45/7; CRD07 (Dominican Republic, European Union, El Salvador, Thailand, FoodDrinkEurope); CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD15 (Kenya); CRD 17 (South Africa)

<sup>11</sup> CX/FL 19/45/8; CRD8 (comments of Argentina, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, European Union, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Panama, Republic of Korea, Thailand, FoodDRinkEurope, FIVS, and OIV); CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD15 (Kenya) and CRD17 (South Africa).

led to allergen labelling that is not always clear or understood by consumers. In view of the current work in CCFH on the Code of practice on food allergen management and their proposal to FAO/WHO to provide scientific advice regarding threshold levels, it was timely for CCFL to also consider guidance for precautionary allergen or advisory labelling.

94. In view of the findings, she recommended that the Committee consider initiating new work as described in the project document; and to request scientific advice from FAO/WHO relating to the list of foods and ingredients in section 4.2.1.4 of GSLPF.

### **Discussion**

95. There was general support to start new work and to request scientific advice from FAO/WHO.
96. Delegations also pointed out:
- The need to consider advice from social science experts on how consumers understand allergen labelling and advisory statements.
  - The need to ensure that the work on precautionary allergen labelling is consistent with the ongoing work of CCFH on the Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators.
  - That any change to the list of 4.2.1.4 of GSLPF should be based on the scientific advice from FAO/WHO.
97. An observer referring to their comments in CRD8, drew the attention of the Committee to its allergen management guidance for food business operators (2013) and its non-paper on precautionary allergen labelling which could be useful for the new work.

### **Conclusion**

98. The Committee agreed to:
- a. Start new work to review and clarify the provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the GSLPF and develop guidance on precautionary allergen or advisory labelling, and to submit the project document (Appendix IV) for approval by CAC42.
  - b. Establish an EWG chaired by Australia, and co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the United States of America, working in English to:
    - Prepare proposed draft revisions and guidelines for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration by CCFL46; and
    - Take into account the scientific advice from FAO/WHO and evidence based consumer understanding of allergen labelling and advisory statements.
  - c. Request scientific advice relating to the list of foods and ingredients in section 4.2.1.4 from FAO/WHO on:
    - i. Whether the published criteria<sup>12</sup> for assessing additions and exclusions to the list is still current and appropriate.
    - ii. Subject to the advice on the criteria above:
      - whether there are foods and ingredients that should be added to or deleted from the list.
      - clarification of the groupings of foods and ingredients in the list.
      - whether certain foods and ingredients, such as highly refined foods and ingredients, that are derived from the list of foods known to cause hypersensitivity can be exempted from mandatory declaration.
99. The EWG report shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

### **MATTERS REFERRED FROM CCFH (Agenda Item 2)**

100. The Committee agreed to inform CCFH:
- a) That it was not in a position to provide a reply on the appropriateness of the use of a precautionary allergen labelling statement and definition at this time, and that CCFL had agreed to start new work

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<sup>12</sup> WHO Technical Report Series 896 (2000). Report of an ad hoc Panel on Food Allergens. Annex 4 of Evaluation of certain food additives and contaminants. Fifty-third report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. <https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/jecfa-reports/en/>.



on allergen labelling including guidance on precautionary labelling and the review of the list of allergens in the GSLPF. CCFL would keep CCFH updated on progress of this work.

- b) That CCFL might be updating the list of foods and ingredients in 4.2.1.4 of GSLPF based on scientific advice from FAO/WHO and in the meantime CCFH should use the list in 4.2.1.4 of GSLPF.

#### **ENDORSEMENT OF LABELLING PROVISIONS (Agenda Item 4)**

101. The Committee agreed to endorse the labelling provisions in paragraphs 158 and 159 of the Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators.

#### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON INNOVATION – USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD LABELLING (Agenda item 9)<sup>13</sup>**

102. Canada introduced the item, and recalled that CCFL44 had identified innovation - use of technology in food labelling as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. It was highlighted that from the responses received to the CL, three key areas were identified for possible new work on this topic: development of a criteria for labelling to be made available at the point of sale; revision of the definition for “label” and “labelling” in GSLPF; and review of other Codex texts developed by CCFL. The delegation pointed out a project document had not been put forward at this stage as there was need for clarification on the scope of this work and how it related to the work on internet sales/e-commerce.
103. The Committee held a general discussion on the subject of innovation and use of technology in food labelling and noted the following views expressed by delegations:
- The topic was an acknowledgement of the development and evolution the way food information could be provided to consumers, industry and competent authorities i.e. websites; QR codes; text messaging; mobile phone applications. Consequently the definition of a label and labelling in GSLPF would need further consideration in order to allow that some information could be provided by use of innovative technologies.
  - Innovation and use of technologies should assist consumers to compare food products and make an informed choice when buying, however care should be taken not to mislead the consumers.
  - Consumer familiarity with, and access to, technology should be taken into account.
  - The area of innovation and use technology in food labelling overlaps with the proposed new work on internet sales/e-commerce; and work on these topics should progress in parallel but each at its own pace.
  - It would be important not to merge innovation and use of technology with the work on internet sales / e-commerce as these two subjects were distinct. However, consideration should be given to the broad application of innovation and technology in food technology space; and it would be important to get clear understanding of how information in virtual space was used by consumers while at the same time meeting the objective of consumer protection and fair trade.
104. There was general interest in the topic and the Committee agreed to undertake further work at the discussion stage level to further clarify and delineate the scope of innovation and technology in food labelling from e-commerce/internet sales of food.

#### **Conclusion**

105. The Committee agreed:
- a) That Canada would prepare the discussion paper to further clarify the scope of innovation and technology in food labelling, taking into account the discussions above and to consider preparing a project document for consideration by CCFL46.
- b) That information would be sought through a CL to provide information to help in the development of the discussion paper.
106. The discussion paper shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

#### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (Agenda item 10)<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> CX/FL 19/45/9; CRD9 (Dominican Republic, European Union, Thailand, FoodDrink Europe, FIVS, OIV), CRD14 (Indonesia).

107. The Russian Federation introduced the item, on behalf of the co-drafters: European Union, Ghana, India and Senegal and recalled that CCFL44 had identified labelling of alcoholic beverages as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. She summarized some of the responses received to the CL which amongst others, indicated: that there was a lack of harmonization for alcoholic beverage labelling, alcohol content should be addressed; energy requirements on labels were scarce, there were varying views on whether addressing alcoholic beverage labelling was within the mandate of CCFL, lack on agreement whether the current guidance was sufficient for the purposes of alcohol beverage labelling and that due to the wide varieties of alcoholic beverages and their composition and varying consumption patterns it would be difficult to harmonise labelling of these products. Five recommendations reflecting the proposals made by respondents to the CL were put forward for consideration by the Committee. She indicated that the numbering of the recommendations was neither indicative of the preference of the drafters of the discussion paper nor of the level of support by respondents.

### Discussion

108. From the delegations that spoke there was varying support for either recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 or working only on labelling of alcohol content. A request was also made to clarify whether alcohol fell within the Codex definition for food and whether work on the labelling of alcoholic beverages would be within the mandate of CCFL.
109. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the definition for food in the Procedural Manual also covered alcoholic beverages and that several Codex texts relating to food safety already specifically addressed alcoholic beverages.
110. The Codex Secretariat further clarified that as the GSLPF and related guidelines on nutrition labelling and claims were applicable to all foods they also applied to alcoholic beverages. The Codex Secretariat further noted that even though this was the case, there seemed to be a low level of harmonization of national regulations with the Codex standards for these products thus the question that could be addressed was whether there were gaps in GSLPF and other related labelling texts to sufficiently address the labelling of alcoholic beverages to assist members to be better able to develop their regulatory requirements.
111. Delegations supporting not to initiate new work (recommendation 5) expressed the views that:
- The existing texts sufficiently applied to alcoholic beverages and that due to the different varieties of alcoholic beverages and social values around use of these products, it was best dealt with at national level rather than in Codex.
  - It would be difficult to establish energy values for alcoholic beverages due to the wide range of products and the varying consumption habits.
  - There was already considerable work on alcoholic beverages labelling being undertaken in other international fora, and Codex work was therefore not necessary at this time.
112. Amongst delegations supporting recommendations 1, 2, 4, or working only on the labelling of alcohol content the following views were expressed:
- There might be a need for additional guidance specific to alcohol labelling in the GSLPF to address amongst others alcohol content and minimum age to help consumers make more informed choices.
  - Alcoholic beverages were not ordinary food commodities and it was important to inform consumers about the health risks associated with the harmful use of alcohol, which could be addressed through reliable information on the label.
  - In some cases, there was wide abuse or misuse of alcoholic beverages in their countries and specific and relevant information on the label was necessary to assist consumers to make informed choices.
113. An observer noted that according to WHO statistics, 3 million deaths per year have been caused by harmful use of alcohol worldwide.
114. The Representative of WHO highlighted the public health importance of alcohol beverage labelling and explained that alcoholic beverages were very special food commodities containing ethanol which had dependence producing and intoxicating properties and therefore the need to protect the health of consumers of which there was an estimated 2.3 billion worldwide. He stated that consumers had the right to make informed choices of what they consume and in what quantities and while there were attempts at national

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<sup>14</sup> CX/FL 19/45/10; CRD10 (Argentina, Dominican Republic, European Union, FoodDrinkEurope, FIVS, OIV); CRD17 (South Africa).

level to provide information on labels, up to 25% of middle income countries do not have requirements to disclose the information on alcohol content and only a minority of countries requires basic consumer information on labels such as calories and ingredients. He further explained that while alcohol content could differ in the various alcoholic beverage products, what was essential was the amount of ethanol in grams in the container or serving portion which was important for health protection of consumers. Therefore the aforementioned information on the label should be delivered in a way that is easily understood and useful for consumers, including the health risks involved.

115. The observer from OIV drew the attention of the Committee to the complexity of labelling of alcoholic beverages, but pointed out that if the Committee agreed to start new work, it would be necessary to define the minimum alcohol content for alcoholic beverages and to clarify the definition of the products for which the standard would apply in order to take into account the specificity of certain products. He noted that there was already considerable work on labelling in wines and wine spirits being undertaken at the OIV in particular, and Codex work should take into consideration the OIV work. OIV was willing to provide scientific expertise and additional information if necessary as part of the cooperation framework between Codex and international intergovernmental organisations.
116. Comments were also made that due to the late availability of the discussion paper, it was difficult to consult at national level therefore further time was needed to consider the paper; and the respondents to the CL were mainly from those countries already having legislation, and more time should be given for members to respond to the document so that the drafters could prepare a revised paper for consideration at the next session.

### **Conclusion**

117. The Committee agreed:
- a) To issue a CL requesting comments on the discussion paper (CX/FL 19/45/10); and
  - b) The Russian Federation, European Union and India would prepare a further discussion paper based on the comments received to the CL, comments made at this session, written comments in CRDs submitted to this session and the clarification made by the Codex Secretariat in paragraphs 98 - 99, for consideration by CCFL46.
118. The discussion paper shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON A CRITERIA FOR THE DEFINITION OF “HIGH IN” NUTRITIONAL DESCRIPTORS FOR FATS, SUGARS AND SODIUM (Agenda item 11)<sup>15</sup>**

119. Canada introduced the item, on behalf of the co-drafter: India and recalled that CCFL44 had identified criteria for the definition of “high in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. She summarized the responses received and highlighted the recommendations for consideration by CCFL to clarify the scope and intended applications of “high in” nutritional descriptors and explained that if new work was supported, it would entail development of principles/guidelines for the elaboration of criteria and review the evidence on the impact, including consumer understanding and use of “high in” labelling and for other uses, as appropriate. She explained that Canada had prepared a project document (CRD16) for consideration by the Committee.

### **Discussion**

120. The Committee noted the importance of the issue, but that it was premature to consider new work at this time. Delegations provided the following comments:
- It was premature to proceed with new work in light of the ongoing discussions in CCNFSDU on possible work on nutrient profiling and that Costa Rica and Paraguay are currently undertaking a stock take of existing nutrient profile models for consideration by CCNFSDU; a decision could be taken once CCNFSDU had finalised its discussions on nutrient profiles.
  - The descriptors for “high in” should be considered in the context of the work on FOPNL and could be taken up at a later time after FOPNL work has further progressed.
  - The topic should be referred to CCNFSDU, as CCNFSDU has established NRV-NCDs for saturated fatty acids and sodium, amongst others.

<sup>15</sup> CX/FL 19/45/11; CRD11 (Dominican Republic, El Salvador, European Union, Nicaragua, Panama, Republic of Korea, Thailand, FoodDrinkEurope); CRD14 (Indonesia); CRD16 (Canada, Malaysia); CRD17 (South Africa).

- The descriptor for “high in” is normally associated with positive labelling used to promote consumption of nutrients, such as “high in fibre”. To use this descriptor with nutrients that cause adverse effects to consumers’ health, might cause false perception to consumers and increase the consumption of fats, sugars and sodium instead.

### **Conclusion**

121. The Committee agreed that while the work was valuable, it was premature to consider it at this time and it should await the progress of the work on FOPNL and the discussions in CCNFSDU on nutrient profiling. This topic would be retained in the paper on future work and direction for CCFL (see agenda item 13) in order to keep track of the possible need for work at a later stage.

### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON LABELLING OF FOODS IN JOINT PRESENTATION AND MULTIPACK FORMATS (Agenda item 12)<sup>16</sup>**

122. Colombia introduced the item, and recalled that CCFL44 had identified labelling of foods in joint presentation and multipack formats as a subject of possible new work, and had agreed to issue a CL to collect information on the current practices, issues and any potential role for CCFL in this area. She summarized the findings that demonstrated: the absence of international guidelines; lack of harmonised definitions of multipack and joint presentation formats; and existence of diverse regulatory requirements amongst others. The existing gaps warranted undertaking new work on labelling of foods in joint presentation and multipack formats. She proposed to the Committee to postpone the discussion of the paper to its next session, to enable delegates to carefully reflect on the issues highlighted in the paper.
123. Delegations agreed with the proposal by Colombia to postpone consideration of the item, noting that the paper had been issued late and there had not been adequate time to consult with stakeholders.
124. One delegation noted that in order to better clarify future work, the discussion paper should be updated by identifying gaps in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985); and should take into account some of the related aspects in the proposed draft standard for non-retail containers.

### **Conclusion**

125. The Committee agreed:
- a) to request Colombia to:
    - update the discussion paper taking into account the comments made at the session;
    - identify gaps in the GSLPF for consideration at CCFL46; and
    - consider the need for amendments to the GSLPF as opposed to a stand alone standard;
  - b) that the discussion paper shall be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months in advance of CCFL46.

### **FUTURE WORK PAPER AND DIRECTION OF CCFL (Agenda item 13)<sup>17</sup>**

126. The Committee recalled that CCFL43 (2016) agreed to investigate the future direction and work of CCFL and agreed that Canada would prepare a paper summarising some of the previously identified work that had not gone forward in the Committee, as well as current and future work. CCFL also agreed that the paper would be kept current at each session with a different delegation taking responsibility each time. CCFL44 agreed that India would assist in updating the paper, and also draft prioritization criteria.
127. India introduced the item and highlighted that the paper had been updated and prioritization criteria had been drafted and that it could be implemented on an experimental basis.

### **Future work / emerging issues**

128. An observer noted that climate change was an important topic globally, and noted the opportunity for Codex to consider discussions regarding labels describing environmental impact.
129. The Chair noted that new ideas would be collected through a Cand that members and observers could make proposals for consideration and inclusion in the paper on future work / emerging issues developed by Canada for CCFL44 and India for CCFL45. She further pointed out that the question of criteria for the definition of “high-in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium should also be included in this paper.

### **Prioritisation criteria**

<sup>16</sup> CX/FL 19/45/12; CRD12 (FoodDrinkEurope, ISDI and WFPHA )

<sup>17</sup> CX/FL 19/45/13; CRD12 (FoodDrinkEurope, ISDI, WFPHA).

130. The Committee discussed the broad concept of the criteria, and the following views were noted:
- Objectively quantifying the risk was important and this could help with better prioritisation;
  - It was not clear how the rating scale had been developed; and it would be useful to circulate the criteria for comments and to consider the approach and criteria at the next session;
  - CCFL needed to explore if there was a need for the criteria; and how best to adapt the criteria to the needs of the Committee and encouraged further work around it.
131. India explained that the criteria had been developed following an approach in both CCFH and CCFICS.

### **Conclusion**

132. The Committee agreed:
- a) That the United Kingdom would update the paper (on the inventory of future work and emerging issues) for CCFL46 based on CX/FL 17/44/8 and CX/FL 19/45/13;
  - b) The Codex Secretariat would issue a CL requesting members and observers to provide information on issues for inclusion in the paper;
  - c) That the matter on criteria for the definition of “high in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium (see Agenda item 11) would be part of the future paper;
  - d) The paper would be kept current at each session with a different delegation taking on responsibility each time; and
  - e) To request comments on the proposed draft approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritization of the work of CCFL (Appendix V) through a CL for further consideration at CCFL46.

### **OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 14)**

133. The Committee noted that there was no other business to discuss.

### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 15)**

134. The Committee was informed that its 46<sup>th</sup> Session would be held in October 2020 with the location to be confirmed. The final arrangements being subject to confirmation by the Host Country and the Codex Secretariat.
135. Interest in having annual sessions due to the increase in the agenda was raised. The host country and the Codex Secretariat would give consideration to this matter.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS  
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

**CHAIRPERSON  
PRÉSIDENTE  
PRESIDENTA**

Ms Kathy Twardek  
Director  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road, Tower 2, Floor 6  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-773-5489  
Email: [Kathy.Twardek@canada.ca](mailto:Kathy.Twardek@canada.ca)

**MEMBERS NATIONS AND MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS  
ÉTATS MEMBRES ET ORGANISATIONS MEMBRES  
ESTADOS MIEMBROS Y ORGANIZACIONES MIEMBROS**

**ARGENTINA - ARGENTINE**

Dr Andrea Nilda Calzetta Resio  
Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad  
Agroalimentaria  
Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad  
Agroalimentaria  
Azopardo 1020 2nd. Floor (1107)  
Ciudad de Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
Tel: +54-11-5222-5975  
Email: [acalzet@senasa.gov.ar](mailto:acalzet@senasa.gov.ar)

Eng Emilce Analía Castellani  
Presidente  
Departamento Técnico  
Centro de la Industria Lechera  
Medrano 281  
Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
Email: [cilctec@cil.org.ar](mailto:cilctec@cil.org.ar)

Ms Gabriela Alejandra Catalani  
Punto Focal del Codex  
Punto Focal del Codex  
Secretaria de gobierno de Agroindustria  
Paseo Colon 982, CABA  
Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
Tel: +54 11 43636265  
Email: [gcatal@magyp.gob.ar](mailto:gcatal@magyp.gob.ar)

Mr Eugenio Curia  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Argentina  
81 Metcalfe Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
Tel: 613-852-1164  
Email: [ecana@cancilleria.gob.ar](mailto:ecana@cancilleria.gob.ar)

Dr Pablo Moron  
Director Nacional  
Alimentos y bebidas  
Secretaria de Gobierno de agroindustria  
Av. Paseo Colón 922  
Ciudad Autonoma de Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
Tel: +54 11 4349-2253  
Email: [pmoron@magyp.gob.ar](mailto:pmoron@magyp.gob.ar)

Mr Franco Senilliani  
Diplomat  
Embassy of Argentina  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
Tel: 613-852-1164  
Email: [franco.seni@gmail.com](mailto:franco.seni@gmail.com)

**ARMENIA - ARMÉNIE**

Mr H E Zohrab V. Malek  
Ambassador to FAO/WFP/IFAD  
Permanent Representation of the Republic of  
Armenia to the United Nations in Rome 151 Bay  
Street, Apt. 1004  
Ontario  
Canada  
Tel: 613-291-8500  
Email: [zohrab.malek@gmail.com](mailto:zohrab.malek@gmail.com)

**AUSTRALIA - AUSTRALIE**

Ms Jenny Hazelton  
Manager, Labelling and Information Standards  
Food Standards Australia New Zealand  
PO Box 5423  
Kingston ACT  
Australia  
Tel: +61262712623  
Email: [jenny.hazelton@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:jenny.hazelton@foodstandards.gov.au)

Ms Coral Colyer  
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Manager  
Coca-Cola South Pacific  
Level 9, 40 Mount Street  
North Sydney  
Australia  
Email: [ccolyer@coca-cola.com](mailto:ccolyer@coca-cola.com)

Ms Usha Sriram-prasad  
Director, Codex Contact Point  
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources  
GPO Box 858  
Canberra, ACT  
Australia  
Email: [Usha.SP@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:Usha.SP@agriculture.gov.au)

**AUSTRIA - AUTRICHE**

Dr Amire Mahmood  
Head of the Subunit Food law and Food labelling  
Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health  
and Consumer Protection  
Radetzkystrasse 2  
Vienna  
Austria  
Tel: +43/1-71100-644741  
Email: [amire.mahmood@sozialministerium.at](mailto:amire.mahmood@sozialministerium.at)

**BELGIUM - BELGIQUE - BÉLGICA**

Mr Jean Pottier  
Regulatory Expert Food Labelling, Nutrition and  
Health Claims  
Food, Feed and other consumption product  
FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment  
Animal, Plant and Food Directorate  
Eurostation | Place Victor Horta, 40/10  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 524 73 62  
Email: [Jean.Pottier@health.belgium.be](mailto:Jean.Pottier@health.belgium.be)

Mr Luc Ogiers  
 Director  
 General directorate international economy  
 FPS Economy, SME  
 Rue du Progrès, 50  
 Bruxelles  
 Belgium  
 Tel: +3222777481  
 Email: [luc.ogiers@economie.fgov.be](mailto:luc.ogiers@economie.fgov.be)

#### **BRAZIL - BRÉSIL - BRASIL**

Mr Rodrigo Martins De Vargas  
 Specialist on Regulation and Health Surveillance  
 Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (ANVISA)  
 SIA, Trecho 5, Área Especial 57, Brasília-DF  
 Brasília  
 Brazil  
 Tel: +55 (61) 3462-6514  
 Email: [rodrigo.vargas@anvisa.gov.br](mailto:rodrigo.vargas@anvisa.gov.br)

Ms Larissa Alves Da Silva More  
 Director of Legal and Cooperative Affairs  
 Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Alimentos  
 para Fins Especiais e Congêneres (ABIAD)  
 Av. Presidente Juscelino Kubitschek, 1909 – Vila  
 Nova Conceição, São Paulo - SP  
 São Paulo  
 Brazil  
 Email: [larissa.more@rb.com](mailto:larissa.more@rb.com)

Mr Cesar Augusto Vandesteen Junior  
 Official Veterinary Inspector  
 Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply -  
 MAPA  
 Brasília  
 Brazil  
 Email: [cesar.vandesteen@agricultura.gov.br](mailto:cesar.vandesteen@agricultura.gov.br)

Ms Ana Paula Bortoletto Martins  
 Leader of the Program of Healthy Diets  
 Instituto Brasileiro de Defesa do Consumidor  
 (IDEC)  
 Rua Desembargador Guimarães, 21  
 São Paulo  
 Brazil  
 Email: [anapaula@idec.org.br](mailto:anapaula@idec.org.br)

Mrs Elizabeth Cristina Vargas  
 ABIA's Technical Consultant  
 Brazilian Association of Food Industries (ABIA)  
 Rua Butantã, 336 – 3º andar - São Paulo  
 Brasília  
 Brazil  
 Email: [elizabeth.vargas@unilever.com](mailto:elizabeth.vargas@unilever.com)

#### **CAMBODIA - CAMBODGE - CAMBOYA**

Mr Oun Phan  
 Deputy Director General  
 Cambodia Import Export Inspection and Fraud  
 Repression Directorate General  
 Ministry Of Commerce  
 National Road No 1/ Str 18, Phum Kdey Takoy,  
 Sangkat Vielsbov, Khan Chbar Ampoeu  
 Phnom Penh  
 Cambodia  
 Tel: +855-12568356  
 Email: [oun.phan@yahoo.com](mailto:oun.phan@yahoo.com)

#### **CAMEROON - CAMEROUN - CAMERÚN**

Mr Nya Edouard  
 Inspecteur phytosanitaire  
 Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement  
 Rural  
 Cameroon  
 Tel: 237 696189973  
 Email: [nyaedouard@yahoo.fr](mailto:nyaedouard@yahoo.fr)

Mr Medi MOUNGUI  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Email: [medimoungui@yahoo.fr](mailto:medimoungui@yahoo.fr)

#### **CANADA - CANADÁ**

Ms Jodi White  
 National Manager  
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
 1400 Merivale Road, Tower 2 Ottawa, Ontario  
 Canada K1A 0Y9  
 Tel: 613-773-5507  
 Email: [jodi.white@canada.ca](mailto:jodi.white@canada.ca)

Mr Michael Abbott  
 Section Head  
 Health Canada  
 Food Allergy and Intolerance Assessment Section  
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway C127  
 PL#2201C  
 Ottawa  
 Canada  
 Tel: 343-542-4471  
 Email: [michael.abbott@canada.ca](mailto:michael.abbott@canada.ca)

Ms Dianne DelZotto  
 Senior Program Officer, Labelling, Organic and  
 Packaging  
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
 174 STONE ROAD WEST  
 Guelph  
 Canada  
 Tel: (226) 217-8330  
 Email: [dianne.delzotto@canada.ca](mailto:dianne.delzotto@canada.ca)

Prof Samuel Godefroy  
 Full Professor  
 Université Laval  
 Pavillon Comtois-bureau 1309 2425 rue de  
 l'agriculture  
 Québec, QC  
 Canada  
 Tel: 418-656-2131, ext. 7562  
 Email: [samuel.godefroy@fsaa.ulaval.ca](mailto:samuel.godefroy@fsaa.ulaval.ca)

Ms Charmaine Kuran  
 Section Head  
 Health Canada  
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway AL 2203E  
 Ottawa  
 Canada  
 Tel: 613-617-2603  
 Email: [charmaine.kuran@canada.ca](mailto:charmaine.kuran@canada.ca)



Mrs Nancy Lemieux-Almeida  
Acting Senior Program Officer  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road, Tower 2  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: 613-773-5134  
Email: [nancy.lemieux-almeida@canada.ca](mailto:nancy.lemieux-almeida@canada.ca)

Mrs Beatrice Povolo  
Director, Advocacy & Media Relations  
Food Allergy Canada  
505 Consumers Road, Suite 507  
Toronto  
Canada  
Tel: 416-707-4737  
Email: [bpovolo@foodallergy.ca](mailto:bpovolo@foodallergy.ca)

Mrs Christine St-Onge  
Senior Trade Policy Analyst  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
1341 Baseline T5-5-345  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: 613-773-2440  
Email: [christine.st-onge@canada.ca](mailto:christine.st-onge@canada.ca)

Ms Maya Villeneuve  
Associate Director  
Health Canada  
Bureau of Nutritional Sciences  
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway, A.L.: 2203E,  
room E346  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: 613-960-4740  
Email: [maya.villeneuve@canada.ca](mailto:maya.villeneuve@canada.ca)

#### CHILE - CHILI

Mrs Karla Carmona Araya  
Asesor  
Agencia Chilena para la Inocuidad y Calidad  
Alimentaria, ACHIPIA  
Ministerio de Agricultura  
Nueva York 17, piso 4  
Santiago  
Chile  
Tel: +56 2 27979900  
Email: [karla.carmona@achipia.gob.cl](mailto:karla.carmona@achipia.gob.cl)

Mr Fernando Acuña  
Director  
Oficina comercial de Chile en Canadá  
2 Bloor Street West, Suite 1801  
Toronto  
Canada  
Tel: +1 416 924 0176  
Email: [facuna@prochile.gob.cl](mailto:facuna@prochile.gob.cl)

Mrs Francisca Aguirre Boza  
Jefa Departamento de Nutrición y Alimentos  
Departamento de Nutrición y Alimentos, DIPOL  
Ministerio de Salud  
Monjitas 565, piso 10  
Santiago  
Chile  
Email: [francisca.aguirre@minsal.cl](mailto:francisca.aguirre@minsal.cl)

Mrs Marisol Figueroa Barrientos  
Gerente General y Gerente Técnico de Alimentos y  
Bebidas de Chile A.G. (AB Chile)  
Alimentos y Bebidas de Chile A.G. - AB Chile  
Los Militares 6191, oficina 71, piso 7, Las Condes.  
Santiago  
Chile  
Email: [mfigueroa@abchile.com](mailto:mfigueroa@abchile.com)

Mrs Gisela Rodríguez Rideau  
Gerente Asuntos Científicos y Regulatorios  
Coca-Cola  
Avenida Kennedy 5757, piso 12. Las Condes  
Santiago  
Chile  
Tel: +56 2 233834209  
Email: [gisrodriguez@coca-cola.com](mailto:gisrodriguez@coca-cola.com)

#### CHINA - CHINE

Mr Yongxiang Fan  
Researcher  
China National Center for Food Safety Risk  
Assessment  
Building 2, No.37 Guangqu Road, Chaoyang  
District  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: 0086+52165410  
Email: [fanyongxiang@cfsa.net.cn](mailto:fanyongxiang@cfsa.net.cn)

Dr Yeuk Hang Henry Mou  
Medical Officer (Emergency Response)2  
Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department, HKSAR Government  
43/F,Queensway Government Offices,66  
Queensway Road, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852)60761415  
Email: [hyhmou@fehd.gov.hk](mailto:hyhmou@fehd.gov.hk)

Mr Yongxi A  
Deputy Secretary General  
China Association for the Promotion of International  
Agriculture Cooperation  
Room 412, N0.30, Chinese Academy of  
Agricultural Sciences, No.12, Zhongguancun South  
Street, Haidian District,  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: 0086+13911983890  
Email: [ayxicaw@163.com](mailto:ayxicaw@163.com)

Dr Fu Po Violette Lin  
Scientific Officer(Medical)  
Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department, HKSAR Government  
43/F,Queensway Government Offices,66  
Queensway Road, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852)63115587  
Email: [vfplin@fehd.gov.hk](mailto:vfplin@fehd.gov.hk)

Ms Yan Wen  
Regulatory Affairs Director  
Chinese Institute of Food Science and Technology  
18/F, Tower A, Gemdale Plaza, No.91 Jianguo Rd,  
Chaoyang District,Beijing, China  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: +8613901230707  
Email: [yan.wen@dupont.com](mailto:yan.wen@dupont.com)

Mrs Yunyan Yang  
Senior staff member  
Center for Agro-Food Quality & Safety, Ministry of  
Agriculture and Rural Affairs, P.R.China  
No.223 Chaowaidajie Street Chaoyang 100020,  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: 0086+01059198501  
Email: [yangyunyan@agri.gov.cn](mailto:yangyunyan@agri.gov.cn)

Prof Weirong Yao  
professor  
Jiangnan University  
No.1800, Lihu Avenue, Binhu District, Wuxi City,  
Jiangsu Province,  
R.P. China  
Tel: 0086+13951574700  
Email: [yaoweirongcn@jiangnan.edu.cn](mailto:yaoweirongcn@jiangnan.edu.cn)

Mrs Wenying Yao  
Senior Agronomist/ Director  
Center for Agro-Food Quality & Safety, Ministry of  
Agriculture and Rural Affairs, P.R.China  
No.223 Chaowaidajie Street Chaoyang Dist.  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: 0086+13701288159  
Email: [13701288159@163.com](mailto:13701288159@163.com)

Mr Hangyu Yu  
research assistant  
China National Center for Food Safety Risk  
Assessment  
Building 2, No.37, Guangqu Road, Chaoyang  
District  
Beijing  
China  
Tel: 0086+18601140731  
Email: [yuhangyu@cfsa.net.cn](mailto:yuhangyu@cfsa.net.cn)

Mr Zhenhuan Zhang  
Deputy Director  
Import and Export Food Safety Division, Shenzhen  
Customs District  
Rm2120, No1011 Fuqiang Road, Futian District,  
Shenzhen  
China  
Tel: 0086+13688812916  
Email: [zhangzh@customs.gov.cn](mailto:zhangzh@customs.gov.cn)

#### COLOMBIA - COLOMBIE

Mrs Zonia Caro  
Asesora  
Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Comercio  
Calle 28 no. 13 A - 15  
Bogotá  
Colombia  
Tel: 3165084187  
Email: [zcaro@mincitur.gov.co](mailto:zcaro@mincitur.gov.co)

Dr Juan Camilo Montes  
Director de la Cámara de la Industria de Alimentos -  
ANDI  
Calle 73 No. 8 – 13 piso 6  
Bogotá D.C  
Colombia  
Tel: 57 + 1 3268540  
Email: [cmontes@andi.com.co](mailto:cmontes@andi.com.co)

Ms Laura Otalora  
Pharmacist  
ANDI  
Carrera 83 N°71-81 piso 3  
Bogota  
Colombia  
Tel: 57 3164702781  
Email: [lauraotalora52@hotmail.com](mailto:lauraotalora52@hotmail.com)

Mrs Diana Carolina Rojas Gonzalez  
Representante ANDI  
ANDI  
Dirección: Carrera 55ª NO. 134ª – 85.  
Colombia  
Tel: +573158341492  
Email: [dianacaror@gmail.com](mailto:dianacaror@gmail.com)

Dr Juan Camilo Vargas Vásquez  
Ministro Consejero  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
360 Albert Street, suite 1002,  
Ottawa – Ontario  
Tel: (1) 613-230-3760 ext 229  
Email: [juan.vargas@cancilleria.gov.co](mailto:juan.vargas@cancilleria.gov.co)

#### CONGO

Mr Patrice Milambo Ngoie  
Coordonnateur national  
Union des Consommateurs  
2-82 Boulevard du 30 juin Immeuble Nathalie  
Gombe,  
Kinshasa  
Congo  
Email: [uniondesconsom@gmail.com](mailto:uniondesconsom@gmail.com)

Mr Carrel Nianga Mandendi  
Directeur exécutif  
Union des Consommateurs  
2-82 Boulevard du 30 juin Immeuble Nathalie  
Gombe,  
Kinshasa  
Congo  
Email: [uniondesconsom@gmail.com](mailto:uniondesconsom@gmail.com)

#### COSTA RICA

Mrs Melina Flores Rodríguez  
Asesor Codex  
Codex Costa Rica  
Ministerio de Economía Industria y Comercio  
400 m al Este del Periódico La Nación, Oficentro  
ASEBANACIO Llorente de Tibás,  
Tibás  
Costa Rica  
Tel: 506-25491494  
Email: [mflores@meic.go.cr](mailto:mflores@meic.go.cr)

Mrs Mónica Elizondo Andrade  
Directora Asuntos Científicos y Regulatorios  
Cámara Costarricense de la Industria Alimentaria  
(CACIA)  
Sabana Sur, 75 sur de la Contraloría, Oficentro la  
Sabana,  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel: (506) 2220 3031  
Email: [melizondo@cacia.org](mailto:melizondo@cacia.org)

**CUBA**

Mr Angel Manuel Casamayor León  
Especialista en Regulaciones Técnicas y Calidad  
Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y la Inversión  
Extranjera  
Dirección Regulaciones Técnicas y Calidad  
Cuba  
Tel: +53 78380454; +53 52797397  
Email: [angel.casamayor@mincex.gob.ca](mailto:angel.casamayor@mincex.gob.ca)

Ms Olga María Valdes Almaral  
Jefe de Sección  
Ministerio de Salud Pública  
Grupo de alimentos del Registro Sanitario  
Cuba  
Tel: +53 53454389  
Email: [olga@inhem.sld.cu](mailto:olga@inhem.sld.cu)

**DENMARK - DANEMARK - DINAMARCA**

Mrs Pernille Lundquist Madsen  
Deputy Head, Chemicals and Food Quality Division  
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration  
Stationsparken 31  
Glostrup  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 7227 6662  
Email: [plum@fvst.dk](mailto:plum@fvst.dk)

Mrs Linda Jensen  
Chief Adviser  
Danish Agriculture and Food Council  
Axeltorv 3  
Copenhagen V  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 33394350  
Email: [lmj@lf.dk](mailto:lmj@lf.dk)

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC –  
DOMINICAINE, RÉPUBLIQUE –  
DOMINICANA, REPÚBLICA**

Mr Modesto Buenaventura Perez Blanco  
Coordinador Normas Alimenticias  
Dirección General Medicamentos, Alimentos y  
Productos Sanitarios  
Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social  
Ave H Hernández esq Ave Tiradentes Ens La Fe  
Santo Domingo  
Dominican Republic  
Tel: 8095413121  
Email: [codex.pccdor@ministeriodesalud.gob.do](mailto:codex.pccdor@ministeriodesalud.gob.do)

**ECUADOR - ÉQUATEUR**

Ms Elizabeth Moreano Cruz  
Ministra  
Embajada del Ecuador en Canadá  
230-99 Bank St.  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: +1 613 2610759  
Email: [emoreano@cancilleria.gob.ec](mailto:emoreano@cancilleria.gob.ec)

**ESTONIA - ESTONIE**

Ms Külli Johanson  
Chief Specialist  
Food Safety Department  
Ministry of Rural Affairs  
Lai tn 39 // Lai tn 41  
Tallinn  
Estonia  
Tel: (+372) 6256508  
Email: [kylli.johanson@agri.ee](mailto:kylli.johanson@agri.ee)

**EUROPEAN UNION - UNION EUROPÉENNE -  
UNIÓN EUROPEA**

Mr Sebastien Goux  
Deputy Head of Unit  
DG SANTE  
European Commission  
Rue Froissart 101  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +32 229-21555  
Email: [sebastien.goux@ec.europa.eu](mailto:sebastien.goux@ec.europa.eu)

Ms Heidi Moens  
Administrator  
DG SANTE  
European Commission  
Rue Belliard 232  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +32 229-98021  
Email: [heidi.moens@ec.europa.eu](mailto:heidi.moens@ec.europa.eu)

Mrs Ersilia Moliterno  
Administrator  
Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural  
Development  
European Commission  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +322 296 13 49  
Email: [Consiglia.Moliterno@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Consiglia.Moliterno@ec.europa.eu)

Ms Sabine Pelsser  
Deputy Head of Unit  
DG SANTE  
European Commission  
RUE FROISSART 101  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +32 229 84746  
Email: [Sabine.PELSSER@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sabine.PELSSER@ec.europa.eu)

**FIJI - FIDJI**

Mrs Deepika Darshani  
Microbiologist  
Biosecurity Authority of Fiji  
Biosecurity Authority of Fiji  
Level 3, Provident Plaza I, Ellery Street, Suva, Fiji  
Fiji  
Tel: (679) 3312 512  
Email: [dlata@baf.com.fj](mailto:dlata@baf.com.fj)

**FINLAND - FINLANDE - FINLANDIA**

Ms Anne Haikonen  
 Legislative Counsellor  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
 P.O.Box 30 FI-00023 Government  
 Helsinki  
 Finland  
 Tel: +358-50-3697618  
 Email: [anne.haikonen@mmm.fi](mailto:anne.haikonen@mmm.fi)

**FRANCE - FRANCIA**

Mrs Sophie Dussours  
 Chargée de Mission  
 Bureau 4D  
 DGCCRF  
 France  
 Email: [sophie.dussours@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr](mailto:sophie.dussours@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr)

**GERMANY - ALLEMAGNE - ALEMANIA**

Mrs Olivia Bömeke  
 Unit 215  
 Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture  
 Wilhelmstr. 54  
 Berlin  
 Germany  
 Tel: 0049 18 529 4237  
 Email: [Olivia.Boemeke@bmel.bund.de](mailto:Olivia.Boemeke@bmel.bund.de)

Mr Bernd Kurzai  
 Legal Counsel Food Law  
 Central Department Quality Affairs  
 Südzucker AG Mannheim/Ochsenfurt  
 Gottlieb-Daimler-Straße 13  
 Mannheim  
 Germany  
 Email: [bernd.kurzai@suedzucker.de](mailto:bernd.kurzai@suedzucker.de)

Ms Angelika Mrohs  
 Managing Director  
 German Federation for Food Law and Food  
 Science  
 Claire-Waldoff-Straße 7  
 Berlin  
 Germany  
 Tel: +49 30 206143 133  
 Email: [amrohs@bll.de](mailto:amrohs@bll.de)

Dr Jörg Rieke  
 Executive Director  
 Association of the German Dairy Industry (MIV)  
 Jägerstraße 51  
 Berlin  
 Germany  
 Tel: +49 30 403044523  
 Email: [rieke@milchindustrie.de](mailto:rieke@milchindustrie.de)

Mrs Sabine Schnadt  
 German Allergy- and Asthma-Association  
 An der Eickesmühle 15-19  
 Mönchengladbach  
 Germany  
 Tel: 0 21 66 - 64 788 20  
 Email: [schnadt@daab.de](mailto:schnadt@daab.de)

**GHANA**

Mr Percy Adomako Agyekum  
 Senior Regulator Officer  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P. O. BOX CT 2783 Cantonments  
 ACCRA  
 Ghana  
 Tel: +233 208 169407  
 Email: [adopee@yahoo.com](mailto:adopee@yahoo.com)

Mrs Isabella Mansa Agra  
 Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
 Food Inspection  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P. O. BOX CT 2783 Cantonments  
 Accra  
 Ghana  
 Tel: +233 244 337249  
 Email: [agra.isabella@fdaghana.gov.gh](mailto:agra.isabella@fdaghana.gov.gh)

Mrs Gifty Aidoo  
 Senior Regulatory Officer  
 Food Evaluation and Registration  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P. O. BOX CT 2783, Cantonments  
 Accra  
 Ghana  
 Tel: +233 207 741152  
 Email: [giftieonline@yahoo.com](mailto:giftieonline@yahoo.com)

Mrs Cynthia Dapaah Ntow  
 Corporate Attorney  
 Legal  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P. O. BOX CT 2783 Cantonments  
 Accra  
 Ghana  
 Tel: +233 244 212791  
 Email: [Cynthia.dapaah@fdaghana.gov.gh](mailto:Cynthia.dapaah@fdaghana.gov.gh)

Mrs Delese Afia Amoakoa Darko  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P.O.Box CT 2783 Cantonments Accra  
 Accra  
 Ghana  
 Tel: +233302233200  
 Email: [delese.darko@fdaghana.gov.gh](mailto:delese.darko@fdaghana.gov.gh)

**HUNGARY - HONGRIE - HUNGRÍA**

Ms Beatrix Kuti  
 Quality Expert  
 Department for Food Economy and Protection of  
 Origin  
 Ministry of Agriculture  
 Apáczai Csere János utca 9.  
 Budapest  
 Hungary  
 Tel: 00 36 1 795 3481  
 Email: [beatrix.kuti@am.gov.hu](mailto:beatrix.kuti@am.gov.hu)

**INDIA - INDE**

Mr Aditya Jain  
Senior Manager  
National Dairy Development Board  
Opposite Jagnath Mahadev Anand  
Anand, Gujarat  
India  
Tel: 91-2692-260148, 226235  
Email: [aditya@nddb.coop](mailto:aditya@nddb.coop)

Dr A. C. Mishra  
Joint Director, Standards Division  
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India  
FDA Bhawan, Near Bal Bhawan Kotla Road  
New Delhi  
India  
Tel: 01123219497  
Email: [acmishra@fssai.gov.in](mailto:acmishra@fssai.gov.in)

Ms Sakshee Pipliyal  
Technical Officer (Codex)  
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India  
FDA Bhawan Near Bal Bhawan Kotla Road  
New Delhi  
India  
Tel: 91-8802498553  
Email: [sakee25@gmail.com](mailto:sakee25@gmail.com)

Ms Mili Bhattacharya  
Representative  
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce  
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and  
Industry (FICCI)  
Delhi  
India  
Tel: +91 9899912250  
Email: [mbhattacharya@coca-cola.com](mailto:mbhattacharya@coca-cola.com)

**ITALY - ITALIE - ITALIA**

Mr Giovanni Umberto De Vito  
Italian Envoy for Food and Nutrition  
Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies /  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Via XX Settembre, 20  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: 0646653089 - 3191  
Email: [giovanni.devito@esteri.it](mailto:giovanni.devito@esteri.it)

Mr Antonello De Riu  
Head of Office II  
Directorate General for Cultural and Economic  
Promotion  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
1, Piazzale della Farnesina  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 36918290  
Email: [antonello.deriu@esteri.it](mailto:antonello.deriu@esteri.it)

Mrs Raffaella Fiora  
Director of Food Law  
Soremartec Italia S.r.l.  
Piazzale Pietro Ferrero, 1  
Alba  
Italy  
Tel: +39 0173 313065  
Email: [raffaella.fiora@ferrero.com](mailto:raffaella.fiora@ferrero.com)

Mr Ciro Impagnatiello  
Department of the European Union and  
International Policies and of the Rural Development  
Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies  
and of Tourism  
Via XX Settembre, 20  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: 0646654058  
Email: [c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.it](mailto:c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.it)

Mr Luca Ragaglini  
Vice Director  
Unione Italiana Food  
Viale del Poggio Fiorito, 61  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 80910720  
Email: [luca.ragaglini@unionfood.it](mailto:luca.ragaglini@unionfood.it)

Mr Benedetto Reitano  
Second Secretary  
Economic and Trade Section  
Embassy of Italy in Canada  
275, Slater Street, 21st Floor  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: +1 613 232 2401 ext. 234  
Email: [benedetto.reitano@esteri.it](mailto:benedetto.reitano@esteri.it)

**JAPAN - JAPON - JAPÓN**

Mr Takeshi Morita  
Director  
Office of Health and Nutrition Labelling, Food  
Labelling Division  
Consumer Affairs Agency  
3-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81-3-3507-8800  
Email: [g.codex-j@caa.go.jp](mailto:g.codex-j@caa.go.jp)

Ms Hiroko Hosaka  
Assistant manager  
Office of Health and Nutrition Labelling, Food  
Labelling Division  
Consumer Affairs Agency  
3-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81-3-3507-8800  
Email: [g.codex-j@caa.go.jp](mailto:g.codex-j@caa.go.jp)

Mr Goro Maruno  
Associate Director  
Food Safety Policy Division, Food Safety and  
Consumer Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81-3-3502-8732  
Email: [goro\\_maruno850@maff.go.jp](mailto:goro_maruno850@maff.go.jp)

Dr Yayoi Tsujiyama  
Acting Director for International Standards Office  
Food Safety Policy Division, Food Safety and Consumer  
Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81-3-3502-8732  
Email: [yayoi\\_tsujiyama170@maff.go.jp](mailto:yayoi_tsujiyama170@maff.go.jp)

**KENYA**

Mr Walter Otieno  
Principle Standard development officer  
Codex Contact Point-KE  
Kenya Bureau of Standards  
P.O.Box 54974, Popo Road Off Mombasa Road  
Nairobi  
Kenya  
Tel: +254 20 6948000  
Email: [otienow@kebs.org](mailto:otienow@kebs.org)

**MEXICO - MEXIQUE - MÉXICO**

Mr Cesar Osvaldo Orozco Arce  
Director de Normatividad Internacional  
Dirección General de Normas  
Secretaría de Economía  
Calle Pachuca No. 189 Col. Condesa, Cuauhtémoc C.P.  
06140, Ciudad de México  
Edo de México  
Mexico  
Email: [cesar.orozco@economia.gob.mx](mailto:cesar.orozco@economia.gob.mx)

Mrs Elvia De La Paz Aguilar Esperanza  
Suplente de la Representación de Enlace con el Comité  
Mexicano para la atención del Codex Alimentarius de  
CANACINTRA.  
Coca-Cola  
Ruben Darío 115, Col. Bosque de Chapultepec, 11580,  
Miguel Hidalgo, Ciudad de México  
CDMX  
Mexico  
Tel: 015555897771  
Email: [elaguilar@coca-cola.com](mailto:elaguilar@coca-cola.com)

Ms María De La Luz Arvizu Sanchez  
Directora de Asuntos Jurídicos y Enlace Institucional  
Asuntos Jurídicos  
CONMEXICO  
Ejército Nacional 904, Piso 10. Col. Palmas Polanco. CP.  
11560. Miguel Hidalgo  
CDMX  
Mexico  
Tel: 015555897771  
Email: [larvizu@conmexico.com.mx](mailto:larvizu@conmexico.com.mx)

Mrs Magda Cristina García Domínguez  
Representante  
Cámara Nacional de Industriales de la Leche  
CANILEC  
Benjamín Franklin NO.134 Col. Escandón, C.P. 11800  
Alc. Miguel Hidalgo, CDMX  
Mexico  
Tel: 7005 7394  
Email: [magdacristina.garciadominquez@rb.com](mailto:magdacrystina.garciadominquez@rb.com)

Mr Ernesto Octavio Salinas Gómezroel  
Gerente Asuntos Regulatorios y Científicos  
Asuntos Regulatorios y Científicos  
Nestlé México S. A. de C.V.  
B. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra 301B Granada CDMX  
11520  
Mexico  
Tel: 015555897771  
Email: [ernesto.salinas@mx.nestle.com](mailto:ernesto.salinas@mx.nestle.com)

Mrs Xochitl Morales Macedo  
Representante  
Cámara Nacional de Industriales de la Leche  
CANILEC  
Benjamín Franklin NO.134 Col. Escandón, C.P. 11800  
Alc. Miguel Hidalgo, CDMX  
Mexico  
Tel: 52 (55) (54520407)  
Email: [xochitl.moralesmacedo@rb.com](mailto:xochitl.moralesmacedo@rb.com)

Mrs Beatriz Haydeé Pelayo Consuegra  
Gerente Sr. Asuntos Públicos y Regulatorios  
Asociación Nacional de Productores de Refrescos y  
Aguas Carbonatadas (ANPRAC)  
Moliere 39 – Piso 3 Col. Polanco.  
México D.F. C.P. 11560  
CDMX, Mexico  
Email: [beatriz.pelayo@gepp.com](mailto:beatriz.pelayo@gepp.com)

Mrs Sandra Herrero Cagigas  
Vicepresidenta Comisión de Salud  
Confederación de Cámaras Industriales de México  
(CONCAMIN)  
Av. Paseo de la Reforma 42, Dep A Piso 1, Centro,  
Cuauhtémoc, CDMX, Mexico  
Email: [sandra.herrero@att.net.mx](mailto:sandra.herrero@att.net.mx)

**MOROCCO - MAROC - MARRUECOS**

Mr Oussama Nadifi  
Chef de Division de la Réglementation  
Agriculture  
Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits  
Alimentaires  
Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui, Agdal  
rabat  
Morocco  
Tel: +212673997816  
Email: [Oussama.Nadifi@onssa.gov.ma](mailto:Oussama.Nadifi@onssa.gov.ma)

Mr Ghazi Mustapha  
Chef de section pesticides  
Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche Maritime  
Laboratoire Officiel d'Analyses et de Recherches  
Chimiques  
25 RUE NICHAKRA RAHAL  
Casablanca  
Morocco  
Tel: +212 678803811  
Email: [mustghazi@gmail.com](mailto:mustghazi@gmail.com)

**NETHERLANDS - PAYS-BAS - PAÍSES BAJOS**

Ms Inge Stoelhorst  
Policy Coördinator  
Nutrition, Health Protection and Prevention Department  
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport  
Parnassusplein 5  
Den Haag  
Netherlands  
Tel: +31 6 31753465  
Email: [i.stoelhorst@minvws.nl](mailto:i.stoelhorst@minvws.nl)

**NEW ZEALAND - NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE - NUEVA ZELANDIA**

Ms Jenny Reid  
Manager  
Market Access  
Ministry for Primary Industries  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
Email: [jenny.reid@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:jenny.reid@mpi.govt.nz)



Ms Phillippa Hawthorne  
Senior Adviser  
Regulation & Assurance  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
Email: [Phillippa.hawthorne@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Phillippa.hawthorne@mpi.govt.nz)

Ms Fiona Hutchinson  
Senior Manager  
Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd  
157 Lambton Quay  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
Email: [Fiona.Hutchinson@fonterra.com](mailto:Fiona.Hutchinson@fonterra.com)

Ms Kati Laitinen  
Senior Adviser  
Ministry for Primary Industries  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
Email: [kati.laitinen@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:kati.laitinen@mpi.govt.nz)

#### **NIGERIA - NIGÉRIA**

Dr Yaya Olaitan Olaniran  
Nigeria Permanent Representative to FAO  
Office of Nigeria Permanent Representative to  
United Nation Agencies for Food and Agriculture  
Via Cassiodor 2/c  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 6875803  
Email: [nigeriapermrep@email.com](mailto:nigeriapermrep@email.com)

Mrs Eva Obiageli Edwards  
Deputy Director  
Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration  
Plot 1, Isolo Industrial Estate, Oshodi-Apapa  
Expressway, Isolo  
Lagos  
Nigeria  
Tel: + 234 80 23109251  
Email: [edwards.eo@nafdac.gov.ng](mailto:edwards.eo@nafdac.gov.ng)

Mrs Chinyere Innocencia Ikejiofor  
Chief Laboratory Technologist  
Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration  
445, Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba, Lagos  
Lagos  
Nigeria  
Tel: +2348033836173  
Email: [chinyere.ikejiofor@nafdac.gov.ng](mailto:chinyere.ikejiofor@nafdac.gov.ng)

Mr Fred Nduka Chiazor  
Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Director  
Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited/Association of Food  
Beverages and Tobacco Employees (AFBTE)  
16 Gerrard Road, Ikoyi  
Lagos  
Nigeria  
Tel: +2348035352226  
Email: [fchiazor@coca-cola.com](mailto:fchiazor@coca-cola.com)

#### **NORWAY - NORVÈGE - NORUEGA**

Mrs Nina Lødstrup  
Senior Adviser  
Norwegian Food Safety Authority  
N-2381 Brumunddal  
Norway  
Tel: +47 22778751  
Email: [nina.lodstrup@mattilsynet.no](mailto:nina.lodstrup@mattilsynet.no)

#### **PANAMA - PANAMÁ**

Mr Marco Pino  
Asesor y Asistente Ejecutivo del Despacho Superior  
Autoridad Panameña de Seguridad de Alimentos  
Ave. Ricardo J. Alfaro, Sun Tower Mall, Piso 2,  
local 70  
Panama  
Panama  
Tel: 5220005  
Email: [mpino@aupsa.gob.pa](mailto:mpino@aupsa.gob.pa)

#### **PARAGUAY**

Mrs Zuny Mabel Zarza De Riquelme  
Coordinadora del Subcomité del Codex sobre  
Etiquetado de los Alimentos  
Jefe de Unidad de Asuntos Regulatorios  
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición  
(INAN)  
Santísima Trinidad esq. Itapúa  
Asunción  
Paraguay  
Email: [zmzarza@hotmail.com](mailto:zmzarza@hotmail.com)

Ms María Eugenia Alvarenga Torres  
Coordinadora general de Subcomité del Codex del  
INAN  
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición  
(INAN)  
Avda. Santísima Trinidad esq. Itapúa  
Asunción  
Paraguay  
Tel: 595985719032  
Email: [marualto@hotmail.com](mailto:marualto@hotmail.com)

#### **PERU - PÉROU - PERÚ**

Mr Juan Pablo Guerrero Espinoza  
Ministro Consejero de la Embajada de Perú en  
Canadá  
Embajada de Perú en Canadá /ministerio de  
relaciones exteriores  
Dirección 130 Albert Street, Suite 1901. Ottawa, ON  
K1P 5G4.  
Lima  
Peru  
Tel: +51989807155  
Email: [jguerrero@rree.gob.pe](mailto:jguerrero@rree.gob.pe)

#### **PHILIPPINES - FILIPINAS**

Ms Amelita Natividad  
Supervising Research Specialist  
Department of Agriculture  
Food Development Center- National Food Authority  
B24 L15 Abel St. Annex 35, Betterliving subd.,  
Paranaque City  
Philippines  
Tel: ( 632) 8384478  
Email: [ac\\_natividad@yahoo.com](mailto:ac_natividad@yahoo.com)

Mr Jeffrey Salik  
 First Secretary  
 Philippine Embassy Ottawa  
 30 Mjurray Street  
 Ottawa, Ontario  
 Tel: (613) 233-1121  
 Email: [jeffrey.salik@dfa.gov.ph](mailto:jeffrey.salik@dfa.gov.ph)

**POLAND - POLOGNE - POLONIA**

Mr Tomasz Kijewski  
 Senior Economic Expert  
 Political and Economic Affairs  
 Embassy of Poland  
 443 Daly Avenue  
 Ottawa  
 Poland  
 Tel: +1 613 789-0468 ext. 440  
 Email: [Tomasz.Kijewski@msz.gov.pl](mailto:Tomasz.Kijewski@msz.gov.pl)

**PORTUGAL**

Eng Teresa Carrilho  
 Senior Regulatory Officer  
 Directorate for Nutrition, Food and Feed  
 Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary  
 (DGAV)  
 Campo Grande, 50  
 Lisbon  
 Portugal  
 Tel: +351213613254  
 Email: [teresa.carrilho@dgav.pt](mailto:teresa.carrilho@dgav.pt)

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA –  
 RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE –  
 REPÚBLICA DE COREA**

Mrs Yousoon You  
 Deputy Director  
 Food Safety Labelling and Certification division  
 Ministry of Food and Drug Safety  
 Email: [ocksan@korea.kr](mailto:ocksan@korea.kr)

Mr Byeong Jin Cho  
 officer  
 Agri-Food Certification&management  
 National Agricultural Products Quality Management  
 Service  
 141, Yongjeon-ro  
 Gimcheon-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do  
 Republic of Korea  
 Tel: +82)10-4141-5792  
 Email: [withwalker@korea.kr](mailto:withwalker@korea.kr)

Mrs Eunju Choi  
 Assistant director  
 Food Safety Labelling and Certification division  
 Ministry of Food and Drug Safety  
 Email: [choie5@korea.kr](mailto:choie5@korea.kr)

Mr Sungjun Park  
 National Agricultural Products Quality Management  
 Service  
 13, Duho-ro, Buk-gu, Pohang-si, Gyeongsangbuk-  
 do, Korea  
 Pohang  
 Republic of Korea  
 Tel: 82-10-5126-0385  
 Email: [sangjunpark89@gmail.com](mailto:sangjunpark89@gmail.com)

Mrs Yeajin Jeon  
 Researcher  
 Food Safety Labelling and Certification division  
 Ministry of Food and Drug Safety  
 Email: [imyeajin@naver.com](mailto:imyeajin@naver.com)

**ROMANIA - ROUMANIE - RUMANIA**

Ms Laura Maria Radut  
 National Authority for Consumer Protection  
 Romania  
 Tel: +40 721 295 791  
 Email: [laura.radut@rpro.eu](mailto:laura.radut@rpro.eu)

Mr Alexander Rogge  
 Political Administrator  
 Directorate-General LIFE (Agriculture, Fisheries,  
 Social Affairs and Health) Directorate Fisheri  
 Council of the European Union  
 Belgium  
 Email: [alexander.rogge@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:alexander.rogge@consilium.europa.eu)

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION –  
 FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE –  
 FEDERACIÓN DE RUSIA**

Mrs Irina Igonina  
 Head of the Laboratory  
 Laboratory of Technical Regulations and  
 Standardization  
 All-Russian Research Institute of Fishery and  
 Oceanography  
 Moscow  
 Russian Federation  
 Email: [igoninain@mail.ru](mailto:igoninain@mail.ru)

Dr Julia Kalinova  
 Expert  
 Consumer Market Participants Union  
 1-y Schipkovsky per., 20, 403a  
 Moscow  
 Russian Federation  
 Tel: +7 (499) 235-74-81  
 Email: [yuliya.kalinova@yahoo.com](mailto:yuliya.kalinova@yahoo.com)

Ms Anna Koroleva  
 Consultant of the Division  
 Division of International integration and cooperation  
 with WTO and OECD  
 Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer  
 Rights Protection and Human Well-being  
 18/20, Vadkovskiy pereulok  
 Moscow  
 Russian Federation  
 Tel: +7 915 325 77 55  
 Email: [Korolyova\\_AP@gsen.ru](mailto:Korolyova_AP@gsen.ru)

**SINGAPORE - SINGAPOUR - SINGAPUR**

Ms Peik Ching Seah  
 Deputy Director  
 Regulatory Policy Department, Food Regulatory  
 Management Division  
 Singapore Food Agency  
 52, Jurong Gateway Road, #13-01 Singapore  
 608550  
 Singapore  
 Tel: +656805 2913  
 Email: [seah\\_peik\\_ching@sfa.gov.sg](mailto:seah_peik_ching@sfa.gov.sg)



Ms Mui Lee Neo  
 Assistant Director  
 Regulatory Policy Department, Food Regulatory  
 Management Division  
 Singapore Food Agency  
 52 Jurong Gateway Road #13-01 Singapore  
 608550  
 Singapore  
 Tel: +65 6805 2914  
 Email: [neo\\_mui\\_lee@sfa.gov.sg](mailto:neo_mui_lee@sfa.gov.sg)

#### **SPAIN - ESPAGNE - ESPAÑA**

Mr Agustin Palma Barriga  
 Jefe de Servicio de Gestión de Riesgos  
 Nutricionales  
 Subdirección General de Promoción de la  
 Seguridad Alimentaria  
 Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria y  
 Nutrición  
 C\ Alcalá, 56  
 Madrid  
 Spain  
 Tel: +34 91 3380735  
 Email: [apalma@mscbs.es](mailto:apalma@mscbs.es)

#### **SWEDEN - SUÈDE - SUECIA**

Mrs Kristina Lagestrand Sjölin  
 Principal Regulatory Officer  
 National Food Agency  
 Box 622  
 Uppsala  
 Sweden  
 Tel: +46 709245607  
 Email: [kristina.sjolin@slv.se](mailto:kristina.sjolin@slv.se)

#### **SWITZERLAND - SUISSE - SUIZA**

Ms Maria Rudel  
 Scientific Officer  
 Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO  
 Bern  
 Switzerland  
 Email: [maria.rudel@blv.admin.ch](mailto:maria.rudel@blv.admin.ch)

Mrs Anne Petersen  
 Regulatory & Scientific Affairs  
 Nestec SA  
 Avenue Nestlé 55 Post Box  
 Vevey  
 Switzerland  
 Email: [Anne.Petersen@nestle.com](mailto:Anne.Petersen@nestle.com)

#### **THAILAND - THAÏLANDE - TAILANDIA**

Ms Oratai Silapanaporn  
 Advisor  
 National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and  
 Food Standards  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives  
 50 Phaholyothin Road Ladyao Chatuchak  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +662 561 2277  
 Email: [oratai\\_si@hotmail.com](mailto:oratai_si@hotmail.com)

Dr Pichet Itkor  
 Vice Chairman  
 Food Processing Club  
 The Federation of Thai Industries  
 388 Exchange Tower 14th floor, Sukhumvit Road,  
 Klong Toey  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +668 9939 465  
 Email: [Pichet.itkor@rb.com](mailto:Pichet.itkor@rb.com)

Dr Panisuan Jamnarnwej  
 Honorary Advisor of TFFA  
 Thai Frozen Foods Association  
 92/6 6th Floor, Sathornthani Building 2 North  
 Sathorn Rd., Silom, Bangrak  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +6622355622  
 Email: [panisuan@yahoo.com](mailto:panisuan@yahoo.com)

Mr Anan Jumnansilp  
 Senior Expert - Regulatory Affairs  
 The Federation of Thai Industries  
 Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Zone C,  
 4th FL, 60 New Rachadapisek Rd., Klongteoy  
 Bangkok THAILAND  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +66 2725 1155  
 Email: [anan.jumnansilp@fonterra.com](mailto:anan.jumnansilp@fonterra.com)

Ms Monthicha Sanpa-asa  
 Standard Officer  
 National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and  
 Food Standards  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives  
 50 Phaholyothin Road Ladyao Chatuchak  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +6625612277  
 Email: [monthicha.sasa@gmail.com](mailto:monthicha.sasa@gmail.com)

Ms Ornsurang Teerawat  
 Food and Drug Technical Officer, Senior  
 Professional Level  
 Food and Drug Administration  
 Ministry of Public Health  
 Tiwanon Road, Talad Kwan sub-district, Muang  
 Nonthaburi  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +6625907408  
 Email: [ornsurang@fda.moph.go.th](mailto:ornsurang@fda.moph.go.th)

Mr Tust Thangsombat  
 Vice President and Chairman of Seafood  
 Processors Group  
 Thai Food Processors Association  
 170 / 21 -22 9th Floor Ocean Tower 1 Bldg., New  
 Ratchadapisek Rd., Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +662 261 2684-6  
 Email: [chanikan@thaifood.org](mailto:chanikan@thaifood.org)

Ms Chanikan Thanupitak  
 Trade and Technical Manager of Fisheries Products  
 Thai Food Processors' Association  
 170 / 21 -22 9th Floor Ocean Tower 1 Bldg., New  
 Ratchadapisek Rd., Klongtoey  
 Bangkok  
 Thailand  
 Tel: +662 261 2684-6  
 Email: [chanikan@thaifood.org](mailto:chanikan@thaifood.org)

#### **TUNISIA - TUNISIE - TÚNEZ**

Mr Marwa Jabou Ep Besadok  
 Ambassade de Tunisie à Ottawa  
 515 O'Connor Street  
 Ottawa, Ontario  
 Canada  
 Email: [marwa.jabouepbesdaok@gmail.com](mailto:marwa.jabouepbesdaok@gmail.com)

Mr Riadh Nouri  
 Chargé d'affaires  
 Ambassade de Tunisie à Ottawa  
 515 O'Connor Street  
 Ottawa  
 Canada  
 Tel: 819-576-1414  
 Email: [riadh.nouri.mse@gmail.com](mailto:riadh.nouri.mse@gmail.com)

#### **UGANDA - OUGANDA**

Ms Elizabeth Paula Napeyok  
 Ambassador/Permanent Representative  
 Embassy of the Republic of Uganda  
 Salita Del Poggio Laurentino 7 00144 Roma  
 Kampala  
 Uganda  
 Email: [epem2002@gmail.com](mailto:epem2002@gmail.com)

Mr Siragi Wakaabu  
 Agriculture Attache / Alternate Permanent  
 Representative To FAO, IFAD and WFP  
 Embassy of the Republic of Uganda  
 Salita Del Poggio Laurentino 7 00144 Rome  
 Kampala  
 Uganda  
 Tel: +39 351 225 9175  
 Email: [wakaabu@yahoo.com](mailto:wakaabu@yahoo.com)

#### **UNITED KINGDOM - ROYAUME-UNI – REINO UNIDO**

Mr Steve Wearne  
 Director of Science  
 Food Standards Agency  
 Floors 6 & 7, Clive House 70 Petty France  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 (0)20 7276 8400  
 Email: [Steve.Wearne@food.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Wearne@food.gov.uk)

Mr Robert Wells  
 Head of Food Labelling and Standards in Food  
 Policy  
 Department for Environment, Food and Rural  
 Affairs  
 2 Marsham Street Westminster  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 7919291144  
 Email: [robert.wells@defra.gov.uk](mailto:robert.wells@defra.gov.uk)

Dr Chun-Han Chan  
 Team Leader – Food Allergy & Intolerance Policy  
 Food Standards Agency  
 Floor 6 & 7 Clive House, 70 Petty France,  
 Westminster  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7276 8602  
 Email: [Chun-Han.Chan@food.gov.uk](mailto:Chun-Han.Chan@food.gov.uk)

Ms Kirsten Cole  
 Trade Policy Analyst  
 Trade Policy Team  
 British High Commission Ottawa  
 80 Elgin St,  
 Ottawa  
 Canada  
 Tel: (613) 364-6132  
 Email: [kirsten.cole@fco.gov.uk](mailto:kirsten.cole@fco.gov.uk)

Ms Melissa Craig  
 Policy Advisor - Food Labelling  
 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs  
 2 Marsham Street Westminster  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: 02080267413  
 Email: [melissa.craig@defra.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.craig@defra.gov.uk)

Ms Pendi Najran  
 Food Standards & Consumers,  
 Department for Environment, Food and Rural  
 Affairs  
 Floor 2 2 Marsham Street  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: + 44 (0) 2080263867  
 Email: [pendi.najran@defra.gov.uk](mailto:pendi.najran@defra.gov.uk)

Ms Michelle Patel  
 Head of Social Science  
 Food Standards Agency  
 Clive House, 70 Petty France,  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 7919 213655  
 Email: [Michelle.Patel@food.gov.uk](mailto:Michelle.Patel@food.gov.uk)

Mr Philipp Seising  
 Senior Trade Policy Advisor  
 Food Standards Agency  
 Clive House, 70 Petty France, Westminster,  
 London,  
 London  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 (0)7966 830965  
 Email: [Philipp.Seising@food.gov.uk](mailto:Philipp.Seising@food.gov.uk)

#### **UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA - RÉPUBLIQUE-UNIE DE TANZANIE - REPÚBLICA UNIDA DE TANZANÍA**

Ms Jaqueline Rwegarulila  
 Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority  
 P.O BOX 77150  
 Dar Es Salaam  
 United Republic of Tanzania  
 Email: [jacqueline.rwegarulira@tfda.go.tz](mailto:jacqueline.rwegarulira@tfda.go.tz)

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -  
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE -  
ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA**

Dr Douglas Balentine  
Director  
Office of Nutrition and Food Labeling  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5001 Campus Drive, HFS-800  
College Park, MD  
United States of America  
Tel: 240 402 2373  
Email: [douglas.balentine@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:douglas.balentine@fda.hhs.gov)

Mr Bryce Carson  
Program Analyst  
FSIS Import/Export Policy Development Staff  
USDA  
Denver Federal Center, Building 45  
Lakewood, Colorado  
United States of America  
Tel: +1 303-236-9819  
Email: [Bryce.Carson@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Bryce.Carson@fsis.usda.gov)

Mr Ray Devirgiliis  
Scientific and Nutrition Manager  
Infant Nutrition Council of America  
750 National Press Building 529 14th Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
Tel: +1 202 207 1104  
Email: [RDevirgiliis@kellencompany.com](mailto:RDevirgiliis@kellencompany.com)

Ms Marsha Echols  
Attorney/Professor of Law  
3286 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C  
United States of America  
Tel: +1-202-625-1451  
Email: [echols@marshaechols.com](mailto:echols@marshaechols.com)

Ms Audrae Erickson  
Vice President External and Public Affairs  
Mead Johnson Nutrition  
Mead Johnson Nutrition 601 13th Street, NW, Suite  
730 South  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
Tel: (202) 393-4741  
Email: [audre.erickson@mjn.com](mailto:audre.erickson@mjn.com)

Mr Nicholas Gardner  
Director, Codex and International Regulatory Affairs  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600  
Arlington, VA  
United States of America  
Tel: +1.703.469.2365  
Email: [ngardner@usdec.org](mailto:ngardner@usdec.org)

Ms Kristen Hendricks  
International Issues Analyst  
U.S. Codex Office  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 4861, South Building 1400 Independence  
Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
Tel: +1-202-720-2137  
Email: [kristen.hendricks@usda.gov](mailto:kristen.hendricks@usda.gov)

Ms Mari Kirrane  
Wine Trade and Technical Advisor  
International Affairs Division  
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau  
490 N. Wiget Lane  
Walnut Creek, California  
United States of America  
Tel: +1 513-684-3289  
Email: [Mari.Kirrane@ttb.gov](mailto:Mari.Kirrane@ttb.gov)

Dr Andrea Krause  
Food Technologist  
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5001 Campus Drive, HFS-820  
College Park, MD  
United States of America  
Tel: +1-240-402-3719  
Email: [Andrea.Krause@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Andrea.Krause@fda.hhs.gov)

Ms Whitney Laroche  
Food Technologist  
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5001 Campus Drive, HFS-820  
College Park, MD  
United States of America  
Tel: +1 301-796-7255  
Email: [Whitney.LaRoche@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Whitney.LaRoche@fda.hhs.gov)

Ms Mary Frances Lowe  
U.S. Manager for Codex Alimentarius  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Codex Office  
Room 4861 - South Building 1400 Independence  
Avenue  
Washington, D.C.  
United States of America  
Tel: 202 205 7760  
Email: [MaryFrances.Lowe@usda.gov](mailto:MaryFrances.Lowe@usda.gov)

Ms Farah Naim  
International Trade Specialist  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Foreign Agriculture Service/Office of Agreements  
and Scientific Affairs  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
Tel: +1-202-649-3859  
Email: [Farah.Naim@fas.usda.gov](mailto:Farah.Naim@fas.usda.gov)

Mr Daniel Reese  
International Policy Analyst  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
5001 Campus Drive, HFS-550  
College Park, MD  
United States of America  
Tel: +1-240-402-2126  
Email: [Daniel.reese@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Daniel.reese@fda.hhs.gov)

Mr Richard White  
Consultant  
5116 Overlook Avenue  
Bradenton, FL  
United States of America  
Tel: +1703 304 0424  
Email: [Richard.d.white@gmail.com](mailto:Richard.d.white@gmail.com)

**INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - ORGANISATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES - ORGANIZACIONES GUBERNAMENTALES INTERNACIONALES**

**ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA VIGNE ET DU VIN (OIV)**

Dr Jean-claude Ruf  
Scientific Coordinator  
OIV  
18, rue d'Aguesseau  
Paris  
France  
Tel: 0674663451  
Email: [jruf@oiv.int](mailto:jruf@oiv.int)

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS – ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES ORGANIZACIONES NO GUBERNAMENTALES**

**ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE POUR LE DROIT DE L'ALIMENTATION (AEDA/EFLA)**

Ms Emily Amat  
European Food Law Association (EFLA)  
Avenue de Tervueren 13A  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Email: [secretariat@efla-aeda.org](mailto:secretariat@efla-aeda.org)

**CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL (CI)**

Dr Marisa Macari  
Coordinator of Nutritional Health Research  
Miembro/Representative of Consumers International  
El Poder del Consumidor  
Juárez 67, no. #4 Colonia Santa Úrsula Coapa  
Mexico City CDMX  
Mexico  
Tel: 52 55 1864 4605  
Email: [saludpublica@elpoderdelconsumidor.org](mailto:saludpublica@elpoderdelconsumidor.org)

**EUROPEAN NETWORK OF CHILDBIRTH ASSOCIATIONS (ENCA)**

Mrs Patti Rundall  
ENCA delegate  
Baby Milk Action/IBFAN UK,  
ENCA  
United Kingdom  
Email: [prundall@babymilkaction.org](mailto:prundall@babymilkaction.org)

**FOOD INDUSTRY ASIA (FIA)**

Mr Zyon Toh  
Food Industry Asia (FIA)  
1 Scotts Road, #19-07/08, Shaw Centre  
Singapore  
Singapore  
Tel: (65) 6235 3854  
Email: [codex@foodindustry.asia](mailto:codex@foodindustry.asia)

**FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES VINS ET SPIRITUEUX (FIVS)**

Mr Timothy Ryan  
Senior Director  
Regulatory & Compliance  
FIVS  
18 RUE D AGUESSEAU  
PARIS  
France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 42 68 82 48  
Email: [Tim.Ryan@ejgallo.com](mailto:Tim.Ryan@ejgallo.com)

Dr Ignacio Sanchez Recarte  
Vice President  
FIVS  
18 rue d'Aguesseau  
PARIS  
France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 42 68 82 48  
Email: [isanchez@ceev.eu](mailto:isanchez@ceev.eu)

**FOODDRINKEUROPE**

Mr Dirk Jacobs  
Deputy Director General & Director Consumer Information, Nutrition and Health  
FoodDrinkEurope  
9-31 Avenue des Nerviens  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Email: [d.jacobs@fooddrinkeurope.eu](mailto:d.jacobs@fooddrinkeurope.eu)

Mr Jonathan Clifford  
FoodDrinkEurope  
9-31 Avenue des Nerviens  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Email: [Jonathan.Clifford@unilever.com](mailto:Jonathan.Clifford@unilever.com)

Mrs Annie Loc'h  
FoodDrinkEurope  
Avenue des Nerviens 9-31  
Bruxelles  
Belgium  
Email: [annie.loch@danone.com](mailto:annie.loch@danone.com)

Ms Aleksandra Wesolowska  
FoodDrinkEurope  
9-31 Av. des Nerviens  
Brussels  
Email: [awesolowska@coca-cola.com](mailto:awesolowska@coca-cola.com)

**GLOBAL ORGANIZATION FOR EPA AND DHA OMEGA-3S (GOED)**

Mr Paul Browner  
Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s (GOED)  
1075 Hollywood Avenue Salt Lake City, Utah 84105  
Salt Lake City  
United States of America  
Email: [paul.browner@dsm.com](mailto:paul.browner@dsm.com)

**HELEN KELLER INTERNATIONAL (HKI)**

Ms Jane Badham  
Consultant to Helen Keller International  
6 Avalon 20 B Norman Avenue, Mill Hill, 2191  
Johannesburg  
South Africa  
Tel: +27825627755  
Email: [jane@jbconsultancy.co.za](mailto:jane@jbconsultancy.co.za)

**INTERNATIONAL BABY FOOD ACTION  
NETWORK (IBFAN)**

Ms Elisabeth Sterken  
Director, INFACT Canada  
IBFAN  
63 Burtch's Lane  
Rockport, Ontario  
Canada  
Tel: 613-583-3047  
Email: [esterken@infactcanada.ca](mailto:esterken@infactcanada.ca)

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE  
(ICA)**

Mr Kazuo Onitake  
Head of Unit, Staff of Safety Policy Service  
Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union  
International Co-operative Alliance  
Coop Plaza, 3-29-8 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81 3 5778 8109  
Email: [kazuo.onitake@jccu.coop](mailto:kazuo.onitake@jccu.coop)

**INTERNATIONAL CONFECTIONERY  
ASSOCIATION (ICA/IOCCC)**

Ms Dorothy Lagg  
Director Scientific & Regulatory Affairs  
R&D  
Mars Wrigley Confectionery  
800 High Street Hackettstown, NJ 07840  
Hackettstown  
United States of America  
Tel: 908-887-0889  
Email: [dorothy.lagg@effem.com](mailto:dorothy.lagg@effem.com)

Dr Debra Miller  
SVP Scientific & Regulatory Affairs  
Pennsylvania  
International Confectioners Association  
132 Barnwell Lane  
Palmyra  
United States of America  
Tel: 7174391127  
Email: [debra.miller@candyusa.com](mailto:debra.miller@candyusa.com)

Dr. Martin Slayne  
CODEX Consultant  
President, Slayne Consulting  
NJ, United States of America  
Tel: +1-469-767-4031  
Email: [martin@slayneconsulting.com](mailto:martin@slayneconsulting.com)

Mr Richard Wood  
Global Regulatory Affairs Director  
Corporate Scientific and Regulatory Affairs  
Mars Incorporated  
Email: [richard.wood@effem.com](mailto:richard.wood@effem.com)

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON AMINO ACID  
SCIENCE (ICAAS)**

Dr Eyassu Abegaz  
Ajinomoto Health Nutrition North America Inc.,  
Ithasca, USA  
ICAAS  
International Council on Amino Acid Science  
Avenue de Tervueren, 188A, 4th Floor Postbox 4,  
1150  
Brussel  
Belgium  
Email: [ICAAS@kellencompany.com](mailto:ICAAS@kellencompany.com)

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF BEVERAGES  
ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA)**

Ms Joanna Skinner  
Manager, Regulatory Labeling & Nutrition  
Global Scientific & Regulatory Affairs  
The Coca-Cola Company  
One Coca-Cola Plaza  
Atlanta  
United States of America  
Tel: +14048592480  
Email: [joskinner@coca-cola.com](mailto:joskinner@coca-cola.com)

Dr Arti Arora  
VP, North America Scientific & Regulatory Affairs  
The Coca-Cola Company  
One Coca-Cola Plaza  
Atlanta  
United States of America  
Email: [artiarora@coca-cola.com](mailto:artiarora@coca-cola.com)

Ms Jacqueline Dillon  
Manager  
Global Regulatory Affairs  
PepsiCo  
555 West Monroe Street  
Chicago  
United States of America  
Tel: 312-821-1935  
Email: [Jacqueline.dillon@pepsico.com](mailto:Jacqueline.dillon@pepsico.com)

Ms Flavia Dolan  
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Manager  
Coca-Cola Ltd.  
335 King Street E.  
Toronto  
Canada  
Email: [madolan@coca-cola.com](mailto:madolan@coca-cola.com)

Mr Hidekazu Hosono  
General Manager  
Suntory Business Expert  
2-3-3 Daiba, Minato-ku, Tokyo 135-8631, Japan  
Japan  
Tel: +81-3-5579-1521  
Email: [Hidekazu\\_Hosono@suntory.co.jp](mailto:Hidekazu_Hosono@suntory.co.jp)

Ms Kelsie Milbury  
Manager  
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs  
PepsiCo Canada  
5550 Explorer Drive, 8th Floor Mississauga, ON  
L4W 0C3  
Mississauga  
Canada  
Email: [Kelsie.Milbury@pepsico.com](mailto:Kelsie.Milbury@pepsico.com)

Mr Anthony Van Heyningen  
Senior Director  
Research & Policy  
Canadian Beverage Association  
20 Bay Street WaterPark Place, 11th Floor  
Toronto  
Canada  
Email: [anthony@canadianbeverage.ca](mailto:anthony@canadianbeverage.ca)

**INTERNATIONAL CHEWING GUM ASSOCIATION (ICGA) (ICGA)**

Mr Christophe Leprêtre  
Executive Director - Regulatory and Scientific Affairs  
International Chewing Gum Association  
c/o Keller and Heckman LLP 1001 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
United States of America  
Tel: +32 (0) 2 645 5060  
Email: [lepretre@gumassociation.org](mailto:lepretre@gumassociation.org)

Mr Melvin Morales  
SRA Manager / Scientific and Regulatory Affairs  
Mars Wrigley Confectionary Central America and The Caribbean  
Santa Maria Business District, Torre Argos, Nivel 3  
Panama  
Panama  
Tel: +507 6206 1877  
Email: [melvin.morales@effem.com](mailto:melvin.morales@effem.com)

Mrs Luisa Marin Lopez  
Senior Specialist SRA CCA / Scientific and Regulatory Affairs  
Mars Wrigley Confectionary Central America and the Caribbean  
Santa Maria Business District, Torre Argos, Nivel 3  
Panama  
Panama  
Tel: +507 6205 9158  
Email: [Luisa.Marin@effem.com](mailto:Luisa.Marin@effem.com)

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATIONS (ICGMA)**

Ms Michi Furuya Chang  
Senior Vice President  
Public Policy & Regulatory Affairs  
Food & Consumer Products of Canada  
2700 Matheson Blvd. East, East Tower, Suite 602E  
Mississauga, ON L4W 4V9  
Mississauga  
Canada  
Tel: 416.510.1893  
Email: [michifc@fcpc.ca](mailto:michifc@fcpc.ca)

Mrs Loretta Difrancesco  
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Advisor  
ICA  
Email: [lorettad@fcpc.ca](mailto:lorettad@fcpc.ca)

Mrs Laurie Ricciuto  
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Advisor  
ICA  
Email: [laurier@fcpc.ca](mailto:laurier@fcpc.ca)

**INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION (IDF/FIL)**

Mr Olivier Beaulieu-charbonneau  
Email: [ocharbonneau@dpac-atlc.ca](mailto:ocharbonneau@dpac-atlc.ca)

Ms Chathurika Dayananda  
Dairy Sector Analyst  
DPAC  
220 Laurier Ave. West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
Tel: 613-232-7242, ext. 107  
Email: [cdayananda@dpac.ca](mailto:cdayananda@dpac.ca)

Ms Pamela Harrod  
General Counsel  
Dairy Farmers of Canada  
21, rue Florence Street  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Email: [pamela.harrod@dfc-plc.ca](mailto:pamela.harrod@dfc-plc.ca)

**INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS (IFT)**

Dr Rosetta Newsome  
Director, Science, Policy, and Scientific and Regulatory Affairs  
Science & Policy Initiatives  
Institute of Food Technologists  
525 West Van Buren Street  
Chicago, IL  
United States of America  
Tel: 312-369-0575  
Email: [rnewsome@ift.org](mailto:rnewsome@ift.org)

Mr Robert Conover  
Assistant General Counsel  
Institute of Food Technologists  
Kikkoman Foods, Inc. P.O. Box 69  
Walworth, Wisconsin  
United States of America  
Tel: 262-275-1651  
Email: [rconover@kikkoman.com](mailto:rconover@kikkoman.com)

**INTERNATIONAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE JUICE ASSOCIATION (IFU)**

Mr John Collins  
Executive Director  
International Fruit and Vegetable Juice Association  
23 Boulevard des Capucines  
Paris  
France  
Tel: +441934627984  
Email: [john@ifu-fruitjuice.com](mailto:john@ifu-fruitjuice.com)

**INTERNATIONAL GLUTAMATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (IGTC)**

Mr Satoru Kubo  
International Glutamate Technical Committee  
3-11-8 Hatchobori, Chuo-ku  
Tokyo  
Japan  
Tel: +81-80-7739-0663  
Email: [secretariat@e-igtc.org](mailto:secretariat@e-igtc.org)



**INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL DIETARY FOODS INDUSTRIES (ISDI)**

Ms Sandrine Alloncle  
Global Regulatory & Scientific Affairs Senior  
Manager  
Nestle Nutrition  
Email: [Sandrine.Alloncle@nestle.com](mailto:Sandrine.Alloncle@nestle.com)

Ms Cristine Bradley  
Head of IFCN Global Regulatory Policy  
Reckitt Benckiser Health  
Email: [cris.bradley@rb.com](mailto:cris.bradley@rb.com)

Mr Marian Brestovansky  
Regulatory Affairs Officer  
ISDI-International Special Dietary Foods Industries  
Email: [secretariat@isdi.org](mailto:secretariat@isdi.org)

Mr Kaushik Janakiraman  
Regulatory Affairs Officer  
RB - Reckitt Benckiser  
Email: [Kaushik.Janakiraman@rb.com](mailto:Kaushik.Janakiraman@rb.com)

Mr Jean Christophe Kremer  
Secretary General  
ISDI - International Special Dietary Foods Industries  
Email: [secretariat@isdi.org](mailto:secretariat@isdi.org)

Mr Xavier Lavigne  
Director, Regulatory Policy & Intelligence  
Abbott Nutrition  
Email: [xavier.lavigne@abbott.com](mailto:xavier.lavigne@abbott.com)

Ms Sabine Seggelke  
Director Global Public Affairs - Specialized Nutrition  
Danone  
Email: [Sabine.SEGGELKE@danone.com](mailto:Sabine.SEGGELKE@danone.com)

Ms Ziting Zhang  
Head of Government Affairs  
European Union Chamber of Commerce in China  
Email: [ztzhang@europeanunionchamber.com.cn](mailto:ztzhang@europeanunionchamber.com.cn)

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

Ms Sonia Gallego Castillo  
Research Assistant  
HarvestPlus  
Km 17, Recta Cali-Palmira, Colombia  
Cali  
Colombia  
Tel: 57 (2) 4450100 Ext. 3439  
Email: [s.gallego@cgiar.org](mailto:s.gallego@cgiar.org)

Ms Anne Mackenzie  
Standards & Regulatory Issues  
HarvestPlus  
32 Shepherds Landing, RR #2, Mahone Bay, Nova  
Scotia, B0J 2E0  
Mahone Bay  
Canada  
Tel: +19026272729  
Email: [a.mackenzie@cgiar.org](mailto:a.mackenzie@cgiar.org)

Ms Marilia Nuti  
Regional Director, Latin America & Caribbean  
HarvestPlus  
KM 17, Recta Cali-Palmira, Colombia  
Cali  
Colombia  
Tel: +55 21 36229755  
Email: [m.nuti@cgiar.org](mailto:m.nuti@cgiar.org)

**NATIONAL HEALTH FEDERATION (NHF)**

Mr Scott Tips  
President  
P.O. Box 688  
Monrovia  
United States of America  
Tel: 4152441813  
Email: [scott@rivieramail.com](mailto:scott@rivieramail.com)

Ms Katherine Carroll  
National Health Federation  
PO Box 688  
Monrovia  
United States of America  
Tel: 16263572181  
Email: [katacarroll@gmail.com](mailto:katacarroll@gmail.com)

**SSAFE**

Ms Witty Brathwaite  
Email: [Witty\\_Brathwaite@cargill.com](mailto:Witty_Brathwaite@cargill.com)

Ms Kimberly Wingfield  
SSAFE Member  
Email: [Kimberly.Wingfield@us.nestle.com](mailto:Kimberly.Wingfield@us.nestle.com)

**WORLD FEDERATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATIONS (WFPHA)**

Ms Alexandra Jones  
Research Fellow (Food Policy and Law)  
The George Institute for Global Health  
1 King St Newtown  
Sydney  
Australia  
Email: [ajones@georgeinstitute.org.au](mailto:ajones@georgeinstitute.org.au)

Dr Mary L'Abbe  
Professor  
Department of Nutritional Sciences, and  
Director WHO Collaborating Centre on Nutrition  
Policy for Chronic Disease Prevention Faculty of  
Medicine, University of Toronto Medical Sciences  
Building, Room 5368 1 King's College Circle  
Toronto, ON  
Canada  
Email: [mary.labbe@utoronto.ca](mailto:mary.labbe@utoronto.ca)

**WORLD OBESITY FEDERATION (WOF)**

Mr Bill Jeffery  
Executive Director  
c/o Centre for Health Science and Law  
World Obesity Federation (WOF)  
Ottawa  
Canada  
Tel: 1-613-565-2140  
Email: [billjeffery@healthscienceandlaw.ca](mailto:billjeffery@healthscienceandlaw.ca)

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS –  
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR  
L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE –  
ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS  
PARA LA ALIMENTACIÓN Y LA AGRICULTURA**

Ms Maria Xipsiti  
Nutrition Officer  
Nutrition and Food Systems Division  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United  
Nations (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Email: [maria.xipsiti@fao.org](mailto:maria.xipsiti@fao.org)

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION -  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ -  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LA SALUD**

Dr Fabio Da Silva Gomes  
Advisor, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Risk  
Factors and Nutrition Unit  
Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and  
Mental Health  
Pan American Health Organization / WHO Regional  
Office for the Americas  
525, 23rd Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC  
United States of America  
Tel: +1 202 974-3695  
Email: [gomesfabio@paho.org](mailto:gomesfabio@paho.org)

Dr Katrin Engelhardt  
Scientist (Health Diet Policies), Nutrition Policy &  
Scientific Advice Unit  
Department of Nutrition for Health & Development  
World Health Organization  
20, avenue Appia  
Geneva 27  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 791 3921  
Email: [engelhardtk@who.int](mailto:engelhardtk@who.int)

Dr Chizuru Nishida  
Coordinator, Nutrition Policy & Scientific Advice Unit  
Department of Nutrition for Health and Development  
World Health Organization  
20, avenue Appia  
Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 791 3317  
Email: [nishidac@who.int](mailto:nishidac@who.int)

Dr Vladimir Poznyak  
Coordinator, Management of Substance Abuse Unit  
Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse  
World Health Organization  
20, avenue Appia  
Geneva 27  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 791 4307  
Email: [poznyakv@who.int](mailto:poznyakv@who.int)

**CANADIAN SECRÉTARIAT -  
SECRÉTARIAT DU CANADA -  
SECRETARÍA DEL CANADÁ**

Ms Meghan Quinlan  
Manager, International Affairs Unit  
Health Canada  
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 343-542-3250  
Email: [meghan.quinlan@canada.ca](mailto:meghan.quinlan@canada.ca)

Ms Gargi Bose  
Manager, Codex Contact Point for Canada  
Health Canada  
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-408-6097  
Email: [gargi.bose@canada.ca](mailto:gargi.bose@canada.ca)

Ms Nancy Ing  
Regulatory Policy & Risk Management Specialist  
Health Canada  
51 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway, Tunney's  
Pasture  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-408-6042  
Email: [nancy.ing@canada.ca](mailto:nancy.ing@canada.ca)

Mrs Alison Wereley  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road, Tower 1, Floor 4  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-773-6450  
Email: [alison.wereley@Canada.ca](mailto:alison.wereley@Canada.ca)

Mrs Jennifer Fougere  
Policy Advisor  
Health Canada  
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway, Tunney's  
Pasture  
Ottawa, ON Canada  
Tel: 613-371-1183  
Email: [jennifer.fougere@canada.ca](mailto:jennifer.fougere@canada.ca)

Mrs Adriana Sorescu  
Trade Policy Analyst  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-773-6909  
Email: [adriana.sorescu@Canada.ca](mailto:adriana.sorescu@Canada.ca)

Mrs Diane Carmanico  
Assistant, Codex Program Services  
Health Canada  
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2204C)  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
Tel: 613-957-8894  
Email: [diane.carmanico@canada.ca](mailto:diane.carmanico@canada.ca)



**CODEX SECRETARIAT -  
SECRÉTARIAT DU CODEX -  
SECRETARÍA DEL CODEX**

Ms Verna Carolissen  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United  
Nations (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Email: [verna.carolissen@fao.org](mailto:verna.carolissen@fao.org)

Mr Patrick Sekitoleko  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United  
Nations (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Email: [patrick.sekitoleko@fao.org](mailto:patrick.sekitoleko@fao.org)

Mr Tom Heilandt  
Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United  
Nations (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 5705 4384  
Email: [tom.heilandt@fao.org](mailto:tom.heilandt@fao.org)

**PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR THE LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS OF FOODS****(at Step 5)****1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of [these Guidelines] / [this Standard] is to facilitate appropriate harmonized labelling of non-retail containers of food and to outline what information shall be presented on the label and what information, while not required on the label, must be provided with a non-retail container by other means.

**2. SCOPE**

[These Guidelines] / [This Standard][apply] /[applies] to the labelling of non-retail containers of food (excluding food additives and processing aids)<sup>1,2</sup> not intended to be offered directly to the consumer<sup>1</sup> including the information provided in the accompanying physical documents or by other means, and the presentation thereof.

**3. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of [these Guidelines] / [this Standard], the relevant definitions in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) apply. In addition, the following terms have the meaning as defined below:

“**Food Business**” means an entity or undertaking, carrying out one or more activity(ies) related to any stage(s) of production , processing, packaging, storage and distribution (including trade) of food<sup>1</sup>.

“**Non-retail container**” means any container<sup>1</sup> that is not intended to be offered for direct sale to the consumer<sup>1</sup>. The food<sup>1</sup> in the non-retail containers is for further food business activities before being offered to the consumer<sup>1</sup>.

**4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The following general principles apply to the labelling of non-retail containers:

- 4.1 The general principles established in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (GSLPF) apply equally, as appropriate, to the labelling of non-retail containers of foods.
- 4.2 The labelling requirements for non-retail containers of foods should be differentiated clearly from the labelling requirements for prepackaged<sup>1</sup> foods.
- 4.3 The non-retail containers should be clearly identifiable as such.
- 4.4 The non-retail status of a container shall be determined by the food business selling or distributing the container of food
- 4.5 The labelling requirements for non-retail containers should be established taking into account the information requirements and implementation capabilities of the relevant stakeholders (food business and competent authorities).
- 4.6 Subject to the requirements outlined in Section 5 , the information requirements in respect of non-retail containers of food may be met through means other than on a label as allowed by the competent authority in the country in which it is sold.
- 4.7 The label and information in the accompanying documents or information provided by other means shall be traceable to the food in the non-retail container and shall provide information to enable the labelling of food, intended for sale to the consumer.

**5. MANDATORY INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS ON LABEL:**

The following information shall appear on the label of non-retail containers of food,:

**5.1 The name of the food**

5.1.1 The name shall indicate the true nature of the food and normally be specific and not generic.

5.1.1.1 Where a name or names have been established for a food in a Codex standard, at least one of these

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985)

<sup>2</sup> This Guideline/Standard is not intended to apply to the labelling of food additives and processing aids for which the *General Standard for the Labelling of Food Additives When Sold as Such* (CXS 107-1981) applies.

names shall be used.

5.1.1.2 In other cases, the name prescribed by national legislation shall be used.

5.1.1.3 In the absence of any such established or prescribed name, either a common or usual name existing by common usage as an appropriate descriptive term which is not misleading or confusing to the food business or in the country in which the food is intended to be sold shall be used.

5.1.1.4 A “coined”, “fanciful”, “brand” name or “trade mark” may be used provided it accompanies one of the names provided in Subsections 5.1.1.1 to 5.1.1.3.

5.1.1.5 Where the non-retail container contains multiple types of food, the names of all the foods contained therein and/or a commonly understood descriptor that best explains the foods present together in the container shall be provided on the label, as allowed by the competent authority in the country in which the product is sold.

## 5.2 Lot identification

Each non-retail container shall be marked in code or in a manner to clearly identify the producing factory and the lot.

5.3 Date marking and storage instructions<sup>3</sup> only when they are related to the safety and integrity of the product.

## 5.4 Identification of a non-retail container

The non-retail containers of foods shall be clearly identifiable as such. If the container is not clearly identifiable as a non-retail container the container shall:

- bear a statement to indicate that the food is not intended to be sold directly to consumer<sup>2</sup> or to clearly identify it as a non-retail container. Some examples of such statements are:

“NON-RETAIL CONTAINER”

–“NON-RETAILCONTAINER - NOT FOR DIRECT SALE TO CONSUMER”

Or,

- carry any other mark that indicates that the container is not intended to be sold directly to a consumer

5.5 Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor of the food shall be declared.

5.6 Where a non-retail container contains multiple types of food, the information in respect of all the above provisions in Section 5 should be provided for all the foods contained therein.

## 6. MANDATORY INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS BY MEANS OTHER THAN LABEL

6.1 The information that shall be provided in the accompanying documents, or through other appropriate means, is the following:

- Information provided on the label as identified in Section 5;
- if not all on the label:
  - o information sufficient to enable the preparation and labelling of pre-packaged foods from the food in the non-retail container<sup>4</sup>;
  - o net content of the non-retail container.

6.2 The information provided in the accompanying documents, or through other appropriate means, shall be effectively traceable to the food in non-retail container.

## 7. [BULK TRANSPORT CONTAINERS]

7.1 In the case of bulk transport containers such as shipping containers, tankers, barges, drums etc., that are not amenable to possess a label, all the information stipulated in section 5 shall be provided in the accompanying documents or through appropriate other means (e.g. electronically between food businesses) and shall be effectively traceable to the food in such containers.

<sup>3</sup> Information to be provided as in the relevant section of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985)

<sup>4</sup> CXS1-1985 and other relevant Codex labelling text

**8. [EXEMPTION]**

In the case of non-retail container which provide visual and legible access to the information on the label of prepacked foods, inside such non-retail containers, the information stipulated in section 5 is not required.

**9. PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION****9.1 General**

9.1.1 Labels on non-retail containers of foods shall be applied in such a manner that they will not become separated from the container.

9.1.2 Information and the statements required to appear on the label by virtue of [these Guidelines] / [this Standard] or any other Codex Standards shall be clear, prominent, readily legible and applied in such a manner that any tampering with it will be evident.

9.1.3 The mandatory information requirements on label (Section 5) shall appear in a prominent position on the non-retail container and in the same field of vision.

9.1.4 Information that is provided by means other than the label shall be readily accessible, discernible and clearly displayed.

**9.2 Language**

9.2.1 If the language in the original labelling is not acceptable to the competent authority or the food business in the country in which the product is sold, a translation of the information in the labelling should be provided in the required language in the form of re-labelling, supplementary label and/or in the accompanying documents or other appropriate means to meet the requirements of the country in which the product is sold.

9.2.2 The information provided through translation in the required language shall fully and accurately reflect that in the original labelling.

**PROJECT DOCUMENT****PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON INTERNET SALES/E-COMMERCE****1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NEW WORK**

The scope and purpose of the work is to develop a supplementary text to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (GSLPF)<sup>1</sup> which provides for the labelling of food sold through internet sales/e-commerce. The work would also review and revise the current Codex provisions under the GSLPF and other text related to food labelling to ensure it provides for the selling of food in an internet sales/e-commerce environment.

**2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS**

This proposal relates to the development of a text which would provide Governments and other stakeholders with clear and transparent standards/guidance on the labelling of foods sold through the internet/e-commerce. According to the stock take undertaken by CCFL, a significant proportion of Codex members support such work.

Internet sales/e-commerce is a transboundary issue and therefore requires global standards to protect consumers and assure fair trading practices.

**3. MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED**

1) It is proposed that work to develop supplementary text should at least cover the following aspects:

- a. The applicability of the GSLPF and other Codex texts related to food labelling to food sold by internet sales/e-commerce.
- b. The development, if deemed appropriate and necessary, of a definition of internet sales/e-commerce for the purposes of this new work.
- c. Supplementary text should help to prevent obfuscation of Codex texts and, therefore, misleading of consumers and businesses in respect of the particularities of the internet.
- d. The mandatory labelling requirements which, because of practicalities, may be allowed to be provided after an online sale has concluded, though provided before or at the moment of delivery to the consumer. CCFL may need to define these points in an online sale (the "end/conclusion of an online sale" and the "moment of delivery") in order to clearly convey the latest point in the process of an online sale at which certain mandatory requirements need to be provided.

2) In addition, the following issues will be considered:

- a. How loose foods should be treated within the scope of future work on internet sales/e-commerce.
- b. Clarification of what GSLPF definitions of "label" and "labelling" mean for food sold online and other applicable definitions.
- c. If current text on language requirements in the GSLPF and other related text to food labelling is adequate, without some adjustment for food sold online.

Issues raised relating to accountability/responsibility and traceability may need to be referred to other Codex committees such as the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems.

**4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW WORK PRIORITIES****General criterion**

***Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.***

The internet/e-commerce is a new and emerging platform for selling food which is growing in use globally. The lack of standardised guidance for the labelling of food sold via internet sales/e-commerce

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<sup>1</sup> CXS 1-1985.

raises significant issues pertaining to health, food safety, and the protection of fair practices in the food trade.

#### **Criteria applicable to general matters**

##### **a) *Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade***

A number of countries have adopted regulations which specifically relate to e-commerce, often through references to distance/remote selling. These regulations are broadly similar in that they state that all practically feasible mandatory information needs to be provided before the end of an online sale. However, there are slight differentiations in terms of what information does not need to be provided until the point of delivery.

With the growth of e-commerce, it is important that some consistency is maintained at a global level to ensure that consumers are protected and impediments to trade that may arise from different approaches are minimised.

##### **b) *Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.***

It is proposed that a review of Codex texts related to food labelling, primarily the GSLPF, will focus on the GSLPF's applicability for food sold by internet sales/e-commerce in order to formulate a supplementary text to the GSLPF.

##### **c) *Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)***

There are no international regulations which specifically relate to internet sales/e-commerce. However, Article 14 of Regulation (European Union) 1169/2011 contains provisions on distance selling. There are also some instances of national regulations pertaining to internet sales/e-commerce, as highlighted in the discussion paper.

Codex is the relevant international organization responsible for developing international standards in the area of internet sales/e-commerce.

##### **d) *Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization***

The information to be provided to the consumer in an internet sales/e-commerce context should be comparable to that which is already outlined by the GSLPF. A supplementary text should make the GSLPF's applicability to internet sales/e-commerce clear. The purpose of the new work is to develop unambiguous labelling requirements for food sold to consumers through internet sales/e-commerce. Such labelling requirements can be effectively standardized with the involvement of and inputs from Codex Members.

##### **e) *Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue.***

E-commerce, and the sale of food via online platforms, is growing at an international level and is a transboundary issue. Business-to-consumer web platforms are being increasingly utilised by food business operators and these platforms offer significant convenience to the consumer. The rise in internet sales, while offering tangible benefits to consumers, also presents risks to consumer protection, consumer safety and public health. There may be a particular risk, in the absence of clear, internationally recognised guidelines, of deliberate and non-deliberate misleading practices leading to significant market failure and/or consumer detriment.

Mandatory regulations for the labelling of food sold via internet sales/e-commerce are in place in a number of countries. Further countries have regulations which outline consumer rights online.

## **5. 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 and ensuring fair practices in food trade. The new work proposal will contribute to advancing Strategic Goals 1 and 3 as described below.

### ***Strategic Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues***

Guidance for labelling food sold by internet sales/e-commerce is of significant interest and activity in a number of countries globally. Codex's FAO website reads: "Over the last century the amount of food traded internationally has grown exponentially, and a quantity and variety of food never before possible

*travels the globe today*"<sup>2</sup>. This is largely facilitated by e-commerce. A supplementary Codex text would facilitate the development of a more standardised approach to the topic at an international level.

**Strategic Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members**

Bringing this topic to CCFL will enable all members who have an interest in internet sales/e-commerce to participate in discussions. The work could also provide an opportunity to discuss, more broadly, remote/distance selling.

In relation to the new draft Strategic Plan/Goals (2020-2025) under development:

**Strategic Goal 1: Address current, emerging and critical issues**

This work offers CCFL to address one of the most topical developments in the food labelling space.

**Strategic Goal 3: Deliver impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards**

To the extent that internet sales/e-commerce is driven by an increasing number of players globally, the development and adoption of Codex standards in this area will deliver significant benefits to consumers and businesses. This, in turn, will deliver impact through recognition of a harmonised Codex approach which can be used universally for the benefit of all stakeholders.

**6. RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS**

The proposal is to review and then revise the GSLPF and other Codex text related to food labelling, and subsequently assess the need to amend any further Codex documents. It is noted that the provisions relevant to internet sales/e-commerce labelling in the GSLPF are applicable horizontally across all pre-packaged foods.

**7. REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

None identified at this stage. There will be opportunities to consult with relevant bodies if necessary throughout the process.

**8. NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES**

None identified at this stage. There will be opportunities to consult with relevant bodies if necessary throughout the process taking into account related work in other international fora.

**9. PROPOSED TIMELINE**

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 42<sup>nd</sup> session in 2019, it is expected that the work can be completed in three sessions.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/en/>

## PROJECT DOCUMENT

## PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON ALLERGEN LABELLING

**1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NEW WORK**

Declaration of foods or ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity (referred to as allergen labelling) is intended to provide consumers with access to clear and accurate information on the presence of allergens (or substances) in foods, so that they can make safe food choices. This is particularly significant given the potential life-threatening consequences for food allergic individuals, and that the prevalence of conditions is increasing in many parts of the world.

This new work proposes to review and clarify the provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the *General Standard for Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) (the *Standard*), and to develop guidance on precautionary allergen or advisory labelling, to provide clear and consistent allergen information for consumers, and increase harmonization to facilitate trade. This proposal does not seek to revise the whole of the *Standard*.

**2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS**

Globally the prevalence of food allergies is increasing, including in developing countries. Given the serious nature of food allergies and its health consequences, and the increasing complexity of the food supply chain, the current allergen labelling provisions in the *Standard* are considered to lack sufficient clarity and detail for industry in how allergens should be presented on food labels to ensure consumer protection. There is also global variation in national/regional standards for allergen labelling which impacts on harmonization and trade.

This work complements the recent work by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) on a draft *Code of Practice on Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators* at Step 5 (REP19/FH, paras 48 – 56 and Appendix III), and the proposal by CCFH to request FAO/WHO convene an expert consultation to provide scientific advice regarding allergen threshold levels (REP19/FH, para 56).

**3. MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED**

- 1) Review provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the *Standard* (and related texts as required) to consider:
  - a) Scope, definitions and clarity of the existing provisions.
  - b) Presentation, legibility and the terms to be used, including the suitability of ingredient labelling provisions when making declarations.
  - c) Subject to expert advice, the list of foods and ingredients in section 4.2.1.4 (i.e. additions, deletions or exemptions) and the clarity of the groupings in that list.
- 2) Develop guidance on the use of precautionary allergen or advisory labelling including:
  - a) Principles for the use of precautionary allergen or advisory labelling.
  - b) Labelling provisions, including definition(s) for precautionary allergen or advisory labelling.
  - c) The location and appropriate Codex text(s) for the guidance.
- 3) Request scientific advice relating to the list of foods and ingredients in section 4.2.1.4 from the FAO and WHO on:
  - a) Whether the published criteria<sup>1</sup> for assessing additions and exclusions to the list is still current and appropriate.
  - b) Subject to the advice on the criteria above:
    - i) whether there are foods and ingredients that should be added to or deleted from the list.
    - ii) clarification of the groupings of foods and ingredients in the list.
    - iii) whether certain foods and ingredients, such as highly refined foods and ingredients, that are derived from the list of foods known to cause hypersensitivity can be exempted from mandatory declaration.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Technical Report Series 896 (2000). Report of an ad hoc Panel on Food Allergens. Annex 4 of Evaluation of certain food additives and contaminants. Fifty-third report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. <https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/jecfa-reports/en/>.



#### 4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW WORK PRIORITIES

##### General criterion

***Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.***

This proposed new work will review the existing provisions for the declaration of foods and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity (allergen labelling) and develop new guidance for precautionary allergen or advisory labelling. This will provide clearer and more consistent allergen labelling information to ensure consumer protection particularly in developing countries that rely on Codex standards for their domestic situation.

##### Criteria applicable to general matters

**a) *Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade***

The proposed new work will provide greater harmonisation of allergen labelling standards at an international level. Currently there are differing national/regional standards for allergen labelling when compared to the Codex *Standard*, which is reported to impact on trade.

**b) *Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.***

It is proposed that a review of the *Standard* and related texts (as required) will focus on the provisions relevant to the declaration of foods and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity (allergen labelling) and developing new guidance for the use of precautionary allergen or advisory labelling.

**c) *Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)***

This proposed new work complements and builds on work already underway by CCFH.

**d) *Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization***

The purpose of this work is to review, update and clarify existing text and provide additional guidance to ensure a clear and contemporary set of international definitions and guidelines for allergen labelling is available for global application.

**e) *Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue.***

There is an increasing prevalence of food allergy occurring primarily in Western countries, such as the United Kingdom (and other countries across Europe), the United States and Australia. Elsewhere, although there is a lack of food allergy prevalence data, the data that exists indicates other countries are also experiencing an increase in the prevalence of food allergies and food allergy sensitisation. Most of these data have come from Asia (China) and Africa, although there are reports that the prevalence of food allergy is also increasing in Latin American nations.

#### 5. RELEVANCE TO CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The proposed new 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 and ensuring fair practices in food trade. The new work proposal will contribute to advancing Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3.

***Strategic Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues***

Provision of clear and consistent information is vital for food allergic consumers to make safe food choices. The review, clarification and scientific update of the existing Codex texts, in addition to developing new guidance on precautionary allergen or advisory labelling, will ensure consumer protection in the contemporary food environment.

***Strategic Goal 2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards***

The allergen labelling provisions in the *Standard*, including a list of foods and ingredients requiring declaration known to cause hypersensitivity, have not substantively changed since 1999. Therefore the proposed new work includes seeking scientific advice from FAO/WHO on the criteria for updating and clarifying this list.

***Strategic Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members***

Consideration by CCFL will allow all Codex members the opportunity to contribute to reviewing the existing *Standard* and developing new guidance on allergen labelling. This new work complements and builds on work already underway by CCFH and provides the opportunity for cross Committee collaboration.

**6. RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS**

The provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the *Standard* that are proposed for review are applicable horizontally across all prepackaged foods.

**7. REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

Scientific advice from FAO/WHO will be needed on the criteria for any additions to and/or deletions from the list of foods and ingredients that are known to cause hypersensitivity.

**8. NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES**

There will be opportunity to consult with relevant bodies if necessary throughout the process. Consideration of evidence based consumer understanding of allergen labelling and advisory statements.

**9. PROPOSED TIMELINE**

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 42<sup>nd</sup> session in 2019, it is expected that the work can be completed in three sessions

## Appendix V

### APPROACH AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF THE WORK OF CCFL (For comments)

- Purpose:** The following guidelines are established to assist the CCFL to identify, prioritize and efficiently carry out its work, and interact with [other Codex Committees, Task Forces, and] FAO/WHO and their scientific bodies as the need arises.
- Scope:** These guidelines apply to new work proposed to the CCFL and lays down criteria and procedures for considering the priorities for proposed work.
- The draft prioritization approach has been developed in recognition of the criteria for new work as outlined in the Procedural Manual<sup>1</sup>, along with existing and proposed guidance developed by other Codex Committees, in particular the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)<sup>2</sup> and the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS)<sup>3</sup>. Criteria relevant to the work of the CCFL and a rating scheme have been developed taking into account the mandate of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the general principles of food labelling included in the GSLPF and the approaches taken by CCFH and CCFICS.

#### Criteria for evaluating and prioritizing new work

- In addition to the priorities established by the Commission in the Strategic Plan, and the criteria applicable to general subjects, additional criteria are required for assessing the new work relevant to the CCFL. Following are the criteria against which the new work to be undertaken in CCFL may be assessed:

Criterion	Rating
Does the proposed new work fall under the mandate of CCFL	Yes/No
Risk* to health of the consumer in the absence of the proposed new work	High 20 Medium 14 Low 8
Potential to mislead consumer in the absence of the proposed new work	High 15 Medium 8 Low 5
Whether the proposed work once finished will assist the consumer in making an informed choice	High 12 Medium 6 Low 4
Impact (positive) on trade facilitation	High 10 Medium 5 Low 3

\*As defined in CCFH44 CRD2

#### Process for evaluating new work

- New Work Proposals should be presented to CCFL in the format of a project document addressing the criteria given under the "*Criteria for establishment of work priorities*" for general subjects in the Procedural Manual<sup>3</sup> and should preferably take into account the additional criteria outlined above.
- The new work proposal should also indicate that the work, if approved to commence further, would likely lead to preparation of a new standard/guideline or revision of an existing standard/guideline.
- CCFL will prioritize new work proposals including revision of existing texts, in order of merit based upon decisions made by CCFL after assessing the new work against the criteria (as defined above) for evaluating and prioritizing work.

<sup>1</sup> Procedural Manual (26<sup>th</sup> Edition)

<sup>2</sup> [CCFH Information document](#)

<sup>3</sup> CX/FICS 18/24/8

8. The Committee may reassess the priority of each item if new information becomes available relating to an item. Such data may be submitted for consideration and the priority for the new work proposal reconsidered.
9. The criteria will be applied in a stepwise manner, in order as mentioned. If the committee decides that a proposed work does not fall under the mandate of CCFL, then the remaining criteria do not need to be applied. Additional criteria, such as feasibility of the proposed new work, may be necessary and developed later for application while considering two or more items of similar priority.
10. The proposed work should be assessed against the criteria and evaluated as per the ratings given for each criterion. New work proposals will ultimately be prioritized as per the overall points received through this rating.
11. The CCFL will develop and maintain a work plan that will include all potential work items relevant to CCFL. The work plan will be revised by the CCFL at every session based on its decisions, new work proposals made and new information/data available. The CCFL will need to decide whether to update the work plan in the plenary or with the help of member countries volunteering on rotational basis. In this context, it may be informed that the CCFH establishes a PWG for this at its every session.