

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 - www.codexalimentarius.org

REP18/FL

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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REPORT OF THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Asuncion, Paraguay

16 - 20 October 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary and Status of Work.....	page ii
List of Abbreviations	page iii
Report of the Forty-fourth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling	page 1
	<u>Paragraphs</u>
Introduction	1
Opening of the Session	2 - 3
Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda item 1)	4
Matters referred to the Committee by the CAC and other Subsidiary Bodies (Agenda item 2a)	5 - 8
Matters outstanding from CCFL43: use of the terms flavour and flavourings in labelling (Agenda item 2b).....	9
Matters of interest from FAO and WHO (Agenda item 3).....	10 - 13
Consideration of labelling provisions in draft Codex standards (endorsement) (Agenda item 4)	14 - 20
Draft Revision of the <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> : date marking (Agenda item 5)	21 - 33
Proposed Draft Guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers (Agenda item 6)	34 - 41
Front of pack labelling (discussion paper) (Agenda item 7)	42 - 50
Consumer preference claims (discussion paper) (Agenda item 8)	51 - 52
Future work (discussion paper) (Agenda item 9)	53 - 63
Other business (Agenda item 10)	64
Date and place of next session (Agenda item 11)	65
 Appendices	
Appendix I - List of Participants	page 10
Appendix II – Draft revision of the <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> : date marking	page 26
Appendix III – Project document: guidance on front of pack nutrition labelling.....	page 28

SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WORK

Responsible Party	Purpose	Text/Topic	Code	Step	Para.
Members CCEXEC75 CAC41	Adoption	Draft Revision of the <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> : date marking	CXS 1-1985	8	32
EWG/PWG (India, United States of America, Costa Rica) CCFL45	Redrafting	Proposed draft guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers	-	2/3	41
CCEXEC75 CAC41 EWG (Costa Rica, New Zealand) CCFL45	Approval Drafting	Proposed draft guidelines on front of pack nutrition labelling	-	2/3	48
CCFO	Action / information	Criteria for high / mid oleic in vegetable oils	-	-	6
CAC/CCNE	Information	Terms in Codex texts	-	-	17
All commodity committees	Information	Ongoing work on guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers	-	-	20
CCNFSDU	Information/ consideration	CCFL work on front of pack nutrition labelling	-	-	50
UK, Chile, India, Japan, Ghana CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on internet sales / e-commerce	-	-	58 (a)
Australia, UK, USA CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on allergen labelling	-	-	58 (b)
Canada CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on innovation – use of technology in food labelling	-	-	58 (c)
Russian Federation, EU, Ghana, India, Senegal CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on labelling of alcoholic beverages	-	-	58 (d)
Canada, India CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on criteria for the definition of “high in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium	-	-	58 (e)
Colombia CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on labelling of foods in joint presentation and multipack formats	-	-	58 (f)
India CCFL45	Drafting	Discussion paper on future work and direction of CCFL (update)	-	-	63

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCAFRICA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee Africa
CCASIA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCFH	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCFL	Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCFO	Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
CL	Circular Letter
CCLAC	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
CCMMP	Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
CCNE	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCPFV	Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables
CCPR	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
CCSCH	Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs
CRD	Conference Room Document
EU	European Union
EWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIVS	Fédération internationale des vins et spiritueux
FOPL	Front of pack nutrition labelling
GSLPF	General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985)
INFOODS	International Network of Food Data Systems
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
NUGAG	WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group
OIV	Organisation internationale de la vigne et du vin
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PWG	Physical Working Group
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) held its Forty-fourth Session in Asuncion, Paraguay from 16 – 20 October 2017, at the kind invitation of the Governments of Canada and Paraguay. The Session was chaired by Ms Lyzette Lamondin, Executive Director, Food Import Export and Consumer Protection Directorate, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and co-chaired by Dr. Laura Mendoza, of the National Institute of Food and Nutrition, Paraguay. The Session was attended by delegates from 46 member countries and one member organisation and 16 observer organisations. A list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

OPENING

2. Mrs. María Teresa Barán the Vice-Minister of Health and Mr. Oscar Stark, the Vice-Minister of Commerce of Paraguay opened the session, and addressed the meeting where they underscored the important role of Codex in supporting global efforts towards food safety and promoting fair practices in food trade. The meeting was also addressed by the Country Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)/ Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in Paraguay, the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretary.

Division of Competence¹

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)²

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda with the following addition under item 7, (Front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPL)):
 - General Guidelines to Establish Nutritional Profiles (Costa Rica and Paraguay)³.

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE (Agenda items 2a and b)⁴

Matters referred by CAC and other Subsidiary Bodies

5. The Committee noted the matters for information and that some matters would be discussed under other relevant agenda items.

CCFO: definition / criteria for determining high/mid oleic acid in vegetable oils

6. The Committee agreed to inform the Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) that:
 - i. the primary role of CCFL is to ensure labels are not false or misleading to consumers;
 - ii. the issue of oleic acid in vegetable oils was of a compositional or technical nature and should be best dealt with in CCFO; and
 - iii. the principle of consistency of labelling designations when addressing different vegetable oils should be applied based on the compositional characteristics of the oils as agreed by CCFO.
7. The Committee further agreed that consistency in the use of labelling terms could be considered as part of future work.

Biopesticides, biostimulants and biofertilizers

8. The Committee noted that:
 - a. this was a very technical issue; and

¹ CRD1 (Annotated Agenda – Division of competence between the EU and its Member States)

² CX/FL 17/44/1

³ CRD 12 (Costa Rica and Paraguay)

⁴ CX/FL 17/44/2; CX/FL 17/44/2 Add.1; CX/FL 17/44/2 Add.2; CRD2 (IOFI); CRD3 (Codex Secretariat); CRD9 (India, El Salvador, EU, Thailand, AU, IDF); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD13 (Russian Federation); CRD23 (South Africa).

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- b. a paper would also be presented to the Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), and CCFL would wait to see if there were any labelling issues to address.

Revision of Section 4.2.3.4 of CXS 1-1985

9. The Committee:
 - a. agreed not to make any revisions to the class titles “flavours” and “flavourings” in section 4.2.3.4 as these terms were already included in various national legislations in a number of countries; and
 - b. noted that there might be a need to revise the qualifiers “natural”, “nature identical”, “artificial” as well other related sections in the Standard, i.e. section 5, and agreed that this could be addressed as part of overall improvements of CXS 1-1985 under item 9 (Future Work).

MATTERS OF INTEREST FROM FAO AND WHO (Agenda item 3)⁵

10. The Representative of FAO drew the attention of the Committee to various activities of FAO of interest to CCFL: (i) the declaration of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition for 2016 – 2025, and the development of a work programme to achieve the Decade’s aims; (ii) the joint FAO/WHO Regional Symposia on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition scheduled for 2017; (iii) the development of a number of FAO publications on food labelling to build the capacity in member countries to implement food labelling policies and programmes; (iv) a survey carried out by FAO food safety and quality unit in order to determine the current status of food date marking legislation and food waste related issues in Codex member countries; (v) FAO’s work on providing up-to-date food composition data, through the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS).
11. The Representative of WHO highlighted some of the activities relevant to the on-going work of the Committee. In particular, she called attention to: (i) the four World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions and decisions adopted in 2016 – 2017, i.e. on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016 – 2025); (ii) WHO Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children; (iii) updated best buys and other recommended interventions to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which include actions to reduce unhealthy diets (Appendix 3); and (iv) the implementation plan to guide actions to end childhood obesity. The Representative also highlighted WHO’s other specific work which related to nutrition labelling, including: the technical meeting on nutrition labelling; launching of the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions which will be developing policy guidelines related to nutrition labelling among several other priority policy actions (i.e. fiscal policies, trade and investment policies); the 2nd Global Nutrition Policy Review which included detailed analysis of country implementation on nutrition labelling; and development and implementation of nutrient profile models in five of six WHO regions.
12. The Representative of WHO also introduced the discussion paper on alcoholic beverage labelling and highlighted, in their view, the unique potential of labelling to provide accurate information to consumers to protect their health at the points of sale and consumption, including information on alcohol content, caloric value, ingredients and health risks associated with alcohol consumption. He stated that according to WHO estimates, around two billion people used alcoholic beverages during the past 12 months, and around three million deaths annually are attributed to alcohol consumption. Therefore, it was timely for Codex to initiate the process of developing, in a phased manner, guidance on alcoholic beverage labelling.

Conclusion

13. The Committee noted the information provided and agreed to discuss the proposal on the labelling of alcoholic beverages under item 9 (Future Work).

CONSIDERATION OF LABELLING PROVISIONS IN CODEX STANDARDS (ENDORSEMENT) (Agenda item 4)⁶

14. The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions in: regional standards for laver products (FAO/WHO

⁵ CX/FL 17/44/3; CX/FL 17/44/3-Add.1; CRD4 (India, Norway, Kazakstan); CRD16 (USA); CRD17 (FIVS); CRD20 (Nicaragua).

⁶ CX/FL 17/44/4 Rev.; CRD8 (India, Thailand, AU, IDF); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD14 (Paraguay).

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Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA)), yacon (FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)), unrefined shea butter (FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CAFRICA)) and doogh (FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNE)); standards for cumin, dried thyme and black, white and green pepper (Committee for Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)); fish oils (Committee for Fats and Oils (CCFO)); dairy permeate powders (Committee for Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP)); and annexes for certain quick frozen vegetables of the *Standard for Quick Frozen Vegetables* (CXS 320-2015) (Committee for Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV)) and made the following amendments and comments:

Annex on French Fried Potatoes

15. The Committee amended the Spanish version of the annex to address other common names by which sweet potato is known in Spanish-speaking countries.

Standards for spices and culinary herbs

16. The Committee:
- a. agreed to refer to the “name” of the product in section 8.2.2 as the provision related to the name and not to the nature of the product in the Standard for Black, White and Green Pepper;
 - b. agreed to align the Spanish version of the standards for consistency with the Spanish terminology used in commodity standards (e.g. styles, labelling of non-retail containers, etc.);
 - c. noted that the Secretariat would undertake editorial corrections when finalizing the standards.

Regional Standard for Doogh

17. The Committee noted that this was a regional standard and that there was no Codex definition for the term “probiotics” and that ideally terms without Codex definitions should not be used in Codex standards. This matter should be brought to the attention of CAC and CCNE.
18. The Committee, however, recognized that this standard had been thoroughly discussed in CCNE and adopted by CAC40 and that removal of the term from the labelling section would impact on other sections of the standard which would then require further consideration by CCNE. On this basis, the Committee endorsed the labelling provisions as presented in the standard.
19. The Committee further noted that the standard applied regionally for a product named doogh provided it complies with the provisions of the standard.

Other considerations – labelling of non-retail containers

20. The Committee:
- a. noted that many commodity standards (including those submitted for endorsement) contained provisions for non-retail containers which referred to a standardized text applicable to this provision that had been endorsed by CCFL at past and present sessions;
 - b. agreed to inform commodity committees of CCFL’s ongoing work on guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers so that they were aware that the current standardized provisions might need to be adjusted or removed to reference the aforesaid guidance.

DATE MARKING (REVISION OF THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS) (Agenda item 5)⁷

21. The Committee recalled that the only outstanding issue that needed further consideration was the criteria for exemptions from date marking and agreed to focus its discussions on this section of the document. The Committee had discussions, both in plenary and through an in-session working group led by Canada, and made the following

⁷ CL 2016/34-FL; CX/FL 17/44/5 (Albania, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America, IDF); CRD5 (New Zealand); CRD6 (El Salvador, EU, Philippines, Thailand, AU); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD13 (Russian Federation); CRD14 (Paraguay); CRD15 (Senegal); CRD23 (South Africa).

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comments and/or decisions:

4.7 (vii)

22. The Committee noted that the wording of the chapeau implied that foods meant to be consumed before a certain date due to food safety reasons could inadvertently be exempted. There was therefore a need to amend this section to avoid such ambiguity and to ensure that foods were not exempted from a date mark if food safety would be compromised.
23. The Russian Federation expressed the view that only very limited number of foods could be exempted from any date marking, as there is no unlimited storage time, and all foods deteriorate over time. In this case, a statement that the food has no expiration date under specific/intended conditions should be preferred. At the same time the criteria and the list allowed for exemption of many food categories which pose a safety risk to consumers beyond the expiration date.

Conclusion

24. The Committee amended this section to clarify that exemptions would not apply if food safety is compromised, and to provide flexibility to Competent Authorities to apply the criteria depending on their needs. This would address concerns expressed that the exemptions might apply to foods for which such exemptions were not intended.

Criterion 1.1 and 1.2

25. The Committee considered the proposal of the Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) to combine (merge) the two criteria and had an exchange of views on the following points:
 - i. to refer to the “nature of the food”, or to “preserving nature” of the food as more appropriate;
 - ii. that examples, within the criterion, should not be included as these were subjective; and if included, they should be limited to the condition of the food or types of preservation (i.e. water activity and acidity);
 - iii. inclusion of examples would facilitate interpretation by competent authorities and businesses;
 - iv. to include a reference to “intended storage conditions” as not all storage conditions are stated;
 - v. that storage conditions should always be stated on the label.

Conclusion

26. The Committee agreed with the proposal of CCFH and to include reference to also “intended” storage conditions as not all storage conditions are always stated and deleted “preservative” to open up the criterion.

Criteria 2, 3, 4

27. The Committee had an exchange of views on the following points:
 - i. No additional criteria were needed in view of the decision on criterion 1 and therefore 2, 3 and 4 could be deleted.
 - ii. In relation to criterion 2:
 - the responsibility should not be on the consumer as some deterioration was not always evident to the consumer; it was not always possible to determine the state of the food because of the packaging;
 - this criterion was about food quality and not food safety as such consumers should be able to assess clearly evident deterioration;
 - the intent of the criterion was for non-processed fresh produce.
 - iii. in relation to criterion 4:
 - the intent of the criterion was for products such as bakers’ or pastry-cooks’ wares;
 - this criterion was not needed as foods with a short shelf life are not traded internationally;

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- retain the criterion as Codex texts provided guidance to governments also for foods produced and consumed locally.

Conclusion

28. The Committee agreed to:
- a. retain criteria 2, 3 and 4;
 - b. amend criteria 2 and 4 for clarification and to better illustrate the intent; and
 - c. recognize that all criteria should be read with the chapeau (4.7 vii), which makes it clear that exemptions do not apply in cases where food safety might be compromised.

List of examples

29. The Committee had an exchange of views on the following points:
- i. the list of examples was illustrative and the current list was sufficient;
 - ii. some foods should not be exempted such as chewing gum; certain alcoholic beverages; and any other foods to which additives and flavours were added, as they could lose their quality/ organoleptic characteristics over time.
 - iii. a footnote should be added to indicate that the list was illustrative and that it was up to competent authorities to decide on the foods to be exempted from date marking,
 - iv. reference to competent authorities was not necessary as they have the discretion whether to apply Codex texts / provisions.

Conclusion

30. The Committee agreed to retain the list without any amendments and inserted a footnote to indicate that the list was illustrative.

All other sections

31. The Committee:
- a. confirmed the decisions of CCFL43 with respect to definitions and other texts;
 - b. made corrections to the numbering in section 4.7 and editorial corrections to section 4.7(iv);
 - c. agreed to use both terms "*fecha de caducidad / fecha de vencimiento*" in the Spanish version of the text;
 - d. noted that there might be a need to standardise abbreviations for dating marking in the future.

Conclusion

32. The Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft revision to CAC41 for adoption at Step 8 (Appendix II).
33. The Russian Federation expressed their reservation to this decision for the reasons stated in paragraph 23.

PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR THE LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS (Agenda item 6)⁸

34. India, as Chair of the electronic working group (EWG), introduced the item and summarized the work process in the EWG, highlighted the key points of discussion, conclusions and recommendations. The Delegation indicated that for this session it was key to decide whether this guidance should be a stand-alone document or should be inserted in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985) (GSLPF)* in order to further proceed with work on the guidance.
35. The Committee focused its discussion on the best placement for the guidance and noted the following views:

⁸ CL 2017/71-FL; CX/FL 17/44/6; CX/FL 17/44/6-Add.1 (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, ICBA, ICGMA, IDF, IFU); CRD 7 (El Salvador, EU, Philippines, Thailand, Uruguay, AU); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD13 (Russian Federation); CRD15 (Senegal), CRD20 (Nicaragua); CRD21 (India, Costa Rica, USA).

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36. A delegation was of the view that this document should be incorporated into the GSLPF as a single document, which would: improve consistency in the text and minimize the need for cross-referencing another document; remove confusion in definitions; improve distinctions between retail containers and non-retail containers; reduce redundancies; and could better assist commodity committees in developing labelling requirements by only referencing a single document. Incorporating a text on non-retail labelling into the GSLPF would require minor amendments to the title and scope of the GSLPF and could be done in a manner that would not open any other parts of the general standard.
37. Most delegations were in favour of having the guidance as a stand-alone document noted that the GSLPF and the proposed guidance addressed two different sets of labelling requirements (i.e. retail and non-retail containers respectively); and these two documents were aimed at different stakeholders (i.e. consumers and trade operators respectively). The insertion of the guidance in the GSLPF would cause confusion and imply additional work on adjusting the scope and other relevant sections to accommodate provisions for non-retail containers that might delay work in the finalization of the guidance and produce a more complex document difficult to use as compared with the current GSLPF.
38. A view was expressed that some of the proposed provisions in the guidance added unnecessary burden to national governments and the industry because much of the required information was already included in the electronic or paper documents accompanying the shipment. The Committee should focus on provisions that were supplementary to those already available or required at export / import control stages and should not duplicate the provisions in the GSLPF for retail containers.
39. An observer indicated that CCFL should refrain, where possible, from referring to competent authorities in order to produce an internationally harmonized guidance document.
40. At the request of India, an informal discussion was held with member delegations.

Conclusion

41. The Committee agreed:
 - a. to keep the guidance as a stand-alone document;
 - b. to use cross-references to relevant Codex texts in the final document to ensure consistency;
 - c. to re-establish an EWG, chaired by India and co-chaired by Costa Rica and USA, working in English and Spanish to continue developing the guidance for consideration at the next session while taking into account comments submitted at this session and the views expressed in plenary;
 - d. that consideration would be given to convening a physical Working Group (PWG) prior to the next session, chaired by India and co-chaired by Costa Rica and USA, working in English and Spanish to consider comments, and to prepare a revised proposal for consideration by CCFL45.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON FRONT-OF-PACK LABELLING (Agenda item 7)⁹

42. Costa Rica, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and recalled that the mandate of the EWG focused on three broad aspects i.e. stock-taking on the existing systems of FOPL; the need for development of principles for FOPL; and preparation of a discussion paper on FOPL, in case there was a demonstrated need.
43. Costa Rica further outlined the outcome for each of the three areas and highlighted the recommendation of the EWG to start new work to develop harmonised guidelines on FOPL.
44. The Chair of the Committee drew the attention of CCFL to the workshop to raise awareness around FOPL held in the margins of the session and noted that the large number that attended the event had demonstrated that there was a lot of interest on the subject. She invited comments on the discussion paper to determine whether there was support for starting new work.
45. The Committee expressed broad support for developing guidance on use of simplified nutrition information on the

⁹ CX/FL 17/44/7; CRD9 (India, El Salvador, EU, Thailand, AU, IDF); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD13 (Russian Federation); CRD15 (Senegal); CRD18 (FoodDrinkEurope); CRD19 (Republic of Korea); CRD20 (Nicaragua); CRD22 (Paraguay); CRD23 (South Africa); CRD24 (revised project document on FOPL).

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front of pack.

46. The Committee had an exchange of views on the following points:
- i. Currently there are no international guidelines on best practices for FOPL and a multiplicity of FOPL systems can lead to technical barriers to trade. New work on FOPL systems would provide clear and transparent scientific guidance to governments wishing to implement this type of labelling; and would help in harmonization of FOPL systems and thus facilitate international trade.
 - ii. The new work should include a definition for FOPL, and aspects to be considered in FOPL systems. Interest was also expressed to work on fundamental principles for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of such systems.
 - iii. FOPL systems should be scientifically substantiated; and should apply exclusively to prepackaged foods and possibly with a number of exceptions.
 - iv. FOPL should provide consumers with accurate and transparent nutrition information, and in a format that helps them to easily understand the essential nutrition information to make informed decisions.
 - v. There was limited published evidence on FOPL and some countries were in the process of publishing such information. However, emerging evidence will be taken into account;
 - vi. Complementary consumer awareness, communication, education, and monitoring and evaluation strategies were essential factors in assuring the success of any FOPL system.
 - vii. FOPL should not replace nutrient declaration.
 - viii. Consideration should be given to inclusion of positive elements such as fibre, fruits and vegetables.
 - ix. Account of other texts should be taken into account, in particular texts on nutrition guidelines and claims.

Project document for new work

47. Given the support for starting new work, the Committee considered the revised project document, clarified the scope; identified the main aspects to be covered; and agreed that the placement of the document would be decided at a later stage. The Committee further agreed that the main aspects to be covered should be broad and flexible enough to allow further discussion to take place in the EWG. The Committee also noted that WHO evidence reviews on nutrition labelling as well as any relevant Codex texts, including the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985), would be considered in the development of the guidance.

Conclusion

48. The Committee agreed to:
- a. start new work to develop guidelines on FOPL systems, and to submit the project document (Appendix III) for approval to CAC41.
 - b. establish an EWG, chaired by Costa Rica and co-chaired by New Zealand, working in English and Spanish, and subject to approval of the new work by CAC41, with the following terms of reference:
 - to consider the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) and any other relevant Codex guidelines;
 - based on the four (4) key aspects: (i) purpose and scope; (ii) definition of FOPL; (iii) general principles for FOPL; and (iv) aspects to consider in the development of FOPL systems, identified under section 3 ("Main Aspects to be Covered") of the project document, prepare proposed draft guidelines for circulation for comments and for consideration at CCFL45;
 - make recommendations on the placement of the guidelines.

General Guidelines to Establish Nutritional Profiles

49. Costa Rica drew the attention of the Committee to potential new work to develop general guidelines to establish nutrient profiles. The potential new work would supplement the work on FOPL and could be undertaken by CCNFSDU.
50. The Committee agreed to inform CCNFSDU of the new work on FOPL and to request CCNFSDU to consider how Please note all working documents, including the report of the session are available on the Codex website at [CCFL44](#)

it could contribute towards this work.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE CLAIMS (Agenda item 8)¹⁰

51. Turkey introduced the item and summarized the main findings of the discussion paper and drew the attention of the Committee to the conclusions and recommendations in the paper.

Conclusion

52. The Committee agreed that:
- a. the information provided in the discussion paper was useful;
 - b. there was no need to start new work at this stage; and
 - c. this matter could be addressed as part of the discussion on future work (item 9).

FUTURE WORK AND DIRECTION FOR CCFL (Agenda item 9)¹¹

53. Canada introduced the item and noted that the discussion paper covered previous, current and potential work of the Committee. The Delegation proposed that the Committee give consideration to the items presented, in particular to the potential work.
54. The Committee considered the items identified as potential work and noted broad support for them, and in particular for the following: internet sales/e-commerce; allergen labelling; innovation – use of technology in food labelling; alcoholic beverages labelling; criteria for the definition of “high in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium; and labelling of foods in multipack format.
55. While there was broad support for work on these items, some concerns were raised on the proposed work on alcoholic beverages labelling, namely that some of the points raised in the WHO discussion paper were outside the mandate of CCFL, (e.g. health warnings on labels). These issues should be dealt with by national governments and should not be the subject of any future work. There was already considerable work on alcoholic beverages labelling being undertaken in other international fora such as the Organisation internationale de la vigne et du vin (OIV) and the Fédération internationale des vins et spiritueux (FIVS), and Codex work was therefore not necessary at this time; and a comprehensive review of national legislation and work in international fora was needed.
56. Some countries from the African region highlighted the need for work on alcoholic beverages labelling due to increased availability and consumption of alcoholic beverages in their countries. The existing labelling regimes in such countries did not provide sufficient information, such as alcohol content; and that in some instances alcohol was being offered in quantities as little as 100 ml without any labelling.
57. The Committee noted that any work to be undertaken should be within the purview of CCFL and that information on the existing state of play would be needed to further develop any new work.

Conclusion

58. The Committee agreed to develop the following discussion papers:
- a. Internet sales/e-commerce prepared by UK with assistance of Chile, India, Japan, Ghana;
 - b. Allergen labelling prepared by Australia with assistance of UK and USA;
 - c. Innovation – use of technology in food labelling prepared by Canada;
 - d. Alcoholic beverages labelling prepared by the Russian Federation with assistance of EU, Ghana, India and Senegal;
 - e. Criteria for the definition of “high in” nutritional descriptors for fats, sugars and sodium prepared by Canada and India; and

¹⁰ CX/FL 17/44/8; CRD9 (India, AU, El Salvador, EU, Thailand, IDF); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD13 (Russian Federation); CRD15 (Senegal).

¹¹ CL 2016/31-FL; CX/FL 17/44/9; CRD9 (India, AU, El Salvador, EU, Thailand, IDF); CRD10 (Indonesia); CRD11 (Dominican Republic); CRD14 (Paraguay); CRD15 (Senegal).

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- f. Labelling of foods in joint presentation and multipack formats prepared by Colombia.
59. The Committee further agreed that information would be sought through a Circular Letter (CL) on current practices, issues and any potential role in the areas identified above or in the case of alcoholic beverages labelling and allergen labelling where some Codex provisions already exist, any potential further role for CCFL.
60. The Chairperson clarified the possible new work identified did not preclude submission of other proposals for new work should the need arise.

Future work paper and prioritisation process

61. The Committee recalled the decision of CCFL43 that the future work paper would be kept current at each session with a different delegation taking on responsibility each time; and that a prioritization approach could be considered¹².
62. An observer expressed the view that, when setting work priorities, CCFL should consider quantifying the risks to health and the risks of misleading consumers when setting work priorities, similar to a process established by CCFH.

Conclusion

63. The Committee agreed:
- a. that India would update the paper and develop a prioritization approach;
 - b. the Secretariat would issue a CL requesting members and observers to provide information on issues for inclusion in the paper;
 - c. that matters raised earlier in the Committee, e.g. consumer preference claims (item 8) and flavours/flavourings (item 2), could be part of the future paper; and
 - d. the paper will be kept current at each session with a different delegation taking on responsibility each time.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 10)

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

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 11)

65. The Committee was informed that its 45th Session would be held in approximately 18 months' time. The final arrangements being subject to confirmation by the Host Country and the Codex Secretariat.

¹² REP16/FL, para. 71

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APPENDIX I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES****CHAIRPERSONS
PRÉSIDENTS
PRESIDENTES**

Ms Lyzette Lamondin
Executive Director
Food Import Export and Consumer Protection Directorate
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1400 Merivale Road
Ottawa
Canada
Email: Lyzette.Lamondin@inspection.gc.ca

Dr Laura Mendoza
Director General
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición (INAN)
Avenida Santísima Trinidad e Itapua
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: dralmendoza@gmail.com

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

ARGENTINA - ARGENTINE

Dr Andrea Nilda Calzetta Resio
Supervisor Técnico de Aprobación de Productos
Alimenticios
Coordinación General de Aprobación de Productos
Alimenticios
Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad
Agroalimentaria
Azopardo 1020 2nd. Floor (1107)
Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
Argentina
Email: acalzet@senasa.gov.ar

Ms Gabriela Catalani
Punto Focal Codex
Ministerio de Agroindustria
Azopardo 1025
CABA
Argentina
Email: martin_territorial@hotmail.com

Ms María Carla Cecchin
Directora de Asuntos Científicos y Regulatorios
para South Latin
Coca-Cola
CABA
Argentina
Email: carlcecchin@coca-cola.com

Ms Maria Celina Moreno
Dirección de Agroalimentos
Ministerio de Agroindustria
Argentina
Email: celmor@magyp.gob.ar

Ms Claudia Viano
Departamento de Legislación y Normatización
Dirección de Evaluación y Registro de Alimentos
Instituto Nacional de Alimentos
Estados Unidos 25
C1101AAA - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
Argentina
Email: claudia.viano@anmat.gov.ar

AUSTRALIA - AUSTRALIE

Ms Elizabeth Flynn
Assistant Secretary
Preventive Health Policy Branch
Commonwealth Department of Health
MDP 707 GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT
Australia
Email: elizabeth.flynn@health.gov.au

Ms Jenny Hazelton
Manager, Labelling and Information Standards
Food Standards Australia New Zealand
PO Box 5423
Kingston ACT
Australia
Email: jenny.hazelton@foodstandards.gov.au

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
Email: Jean.Pottier@health.belgium.be

Mr Luc Ogiers
Director
General Directorate international economy
FPS Economy, SME
Rue du Progrès, 50
Bruxelles
Belgium
Email: luc.ogiers@economie.fgov.be

BRAZIL - BRÉSIL - BRASIL

Dr Guilherme Antonio Costa Junior
Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
Secretariat of Agribusiness International Relations
(SRI)
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply
Esplanada dos Ministerios BI.D
Brasília
Brazil
Email: guilherme.costa@agricultura.gov.br

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

Mrs Renata De Araujo Ferreira
Specialist on Regulation and Health Surveillance
Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA)
SIA Trecho 5, sector especial 57, 2 andar, sala 2
Brasília
Brazil
Email: renata.ferreira@anvisa.gov.br

Ms Érika Nunes Sene
Regulatory Affairs Analyst
Associação Brasileira das Indústrias da
Alimentação (ABIA)
Av. Brigadeiro Faria Lima, 1478 - 11º andar
São Paulo
Brazil
Email: detec@abia.org.br

Mr Cesar Augusto Vandesteen Junior
 Official Veterinary Inspector
 Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply –
 MAPA
 Brasilia
 Brazil
 Email: cesar.vandesteen@agricultura.gov.br

Ms Juliana Yuki Yamamaru
 Regulatory Affairs Specialist
 Confederação Nacional da Indústria
 Rua Vergueiro, 1737 – Vila Mariana -
 São Paulo
 Brazil
 Email: juliana_yamamaru@br.ajinomoto.com

CANADA - CANADÁ

Ms Kathy Twardek
 Director
 Consumer Protection and Market Fairness Division
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 1400 Merivale Road T2-6-141
 Ottawa
 Canada
 Email: kathy.Twardek@Inspection.gc.ca

Mr Jonathan Clifford
 Country Regulatory Affairs Manager
 Unilever Canada Inc.
 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400
 Toronto
 Canada
 Tel: 1-416-518-1079
 Email: jonathan.clifford@unilever.com

Mr Nicholas Gauthier
 Senior Trade Policy Analyst
 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 1341 Basline rd T5-5-352, ON K1A 0C5
 Ottawa
 Canada
 Email: nicholas.gauthier@agr.gc.ca

Ms Charmaine Kuran
 Section Head, Nutrition Composition
 Health Canada
 Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2203E)
 Ottawa
 Canada
 Email: charmaine.kuran@canada.ca

CHILE - CHILI

Mr Emilio Matas
 Asesor
 Servicio Nacional del Consumidor, SERNAC
 Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo
 Santiago
 Chile
 Email: ematas@sernac.cl

Mrs Karla Carmona Araya
 Asesor
 Agencia Chilena para la Inocuidad y Calidad
 Alimentaria, ACHIPIA
 Ministerio de Agricultura
 Nueva York 17, piso 4
 Santiago
 Chile
 Email: karla.carmona@achipia.gob.cl

Ms Marisol Figueroa
 Gerente General
 AB Chile, Alimentos y Bebidas de Chile
 Santiago
 Chile
 Email: mfigueroa@abchile.com

Ms Gisela Rodríguez
 Gerente de Asuntos Científicos y Regulatorios.
 Coca-Cola de Chile
 Santiago
 Chile
 Email: gisrodriguez@coca-cola.com

COLOMBIA - COLOMBIE

Ms Paula Andrea Patiño Sandoval
 Chemical Engineer and Food Engineer
 Official Food Inspection Functionary
 INVIMA
 Carrera 10 64 28
 Bogotá
 Colombia
 Email: ppatinos@invima.gov.co

Ms Monica Cuellar Sánchez
 Innovation Director
 Acepalma S.A
 Calle 90 # 19-41 Oficina 303-304
 Bogotá
 Colombia
 Tel: 57 3171387
 Email: director.innovacion@gmail.com

Mr Igor Gutierrez
 Profesional
 Ministerio de Comercio
 Calle 28 # 13A 15
 Bogotá
 Colombia
 Email: igutierrez@mincit.gov.co

Ms Alexandra Mondragón
 Responsable Salud y Nutrición
 Cenipalma
 Cra 10 # 69A -44
 Bogotá
 Colombia
 Email: amondragon@cenipalma.org

COSTA RICA

Mrs Melina Flores Rodríguez
Asesor Codex
Codex Costa Rica
Ministerio de Economía Industria y Comercio
400 m al Oeste de la Contraloría General de la
República, Sabana Sur
San Jose
Costa Rica
Email: mflores@meic.go.cr

Mrs Mónica Elizondo Andrade
Asuntos Científicos y Regulatorios
Cámara Costarricense de Industria Alimentaria
(CACIA)
75 mts sur de la Contraloría
San Jose
Costa Rica
Email: melizondo@cacia.org

Mr Jorge Arturo Jara
I Vicepresidente de CACIA
Miembro Comité Nacional del Codex Costa Rica
Cámara Costarricense de la Industria Alimentaria
(CACIA)
San José
Costa Rica
Email: jajara@coca-cola.com

CUBA

Mrs Olga Maria Valdes Almaral
Especialista
Ministerio de la Industria Alimentaria
Avenida 41 entre 46y 48 Playa
La Habana
Cuba
Email: jfelix@cgdc.cu

Mr Jose Fu Wong
Especialista
Ministerio de la Industria Alimentaria
Avenida 41 entre 46y 48 Playa
La Habana
Cuba
Email: jfelix@cgdc.cu

DENMARK - DANEMARK - DINAMARCA

Mrs Pernille Lundquist Madsen
Deputy Head, Chemicals and Food Quality Division
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
Stationsparken 31
Glostrup
Denmark
Email: plum@fvst.dk

Mrs Linda Jensen
Chief Adviser
Danish Agriculture and Food Council
Axeltorv 3
Copenhagen V
Denmark
Email: lmj@lf.dk

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

Mr Modesto Buenaventura Pérez Blanco
Coordinador Normas Alimenticias
Dirección General Medicamentos, Alimentos y
Productos Sanitarios (DIGEMAPS)
Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
(MSP)
Av. Tiradentes Esq. Av. Héctor H. Hernández, Ens.
La Fé
Dominican Republic
Email: codex.pccdor@misp.gob.do

Eng Pedro De Padua
Supervisor Nacional Alimentos
Dirección General de Medicamentos, Alimentos y
Productos Sanitarios (DIGEMAPS)
Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
(MSP)
Av. H. Homero Hernández esq. Av. Tiradentes,
Ens. La Fé, D.N.
Santo Domingo, D. N.
Dominican Republic
Email: pedro.padua@ministeriodesalud.gob.do

Mrs Luisana Valdez
Encargada del Depto. de Calidad y Buenas
Prácticas Comerciales
Depto. de Calidad y Buenas Prácticas Comerciales
Instituto Nacional de Protección de los Derechos
del Consumidor, Pro Consumidor.
Av. Charles Summer No. 33, Los Prados.
Santo Domingo, D.N.
Dominican Republic
Email: luisana.valdez@proconsumidor.gob.do

ECUADOR - ÉQUATEUR

Ms Mónica Alexandra Quinatoa Osejos
Analista de Establecimientos
Dirección Nacional de Control Sanitario
Ministerio de Salud Pública
Av. República de El Salvador 36-64 Y Suecia
Quito
Ecuador
Email: monica.quinatoa@misp.gob.ec

EL SALVADOR

Mrs Mariana Gomez
Director
OSARTEC
1a. calle poniente, final 41, Av. Norte No. 18,
colonia Flor Blanca.
San Salvador
El Salvador
Email: mgomez@osartec.gob.sv

ESTONIA - ESTONIE

Mrs Reili Kivilo
Adviser
Food Safety Department
Ministry of Rural Affairs
Lai Street 39//41
Tallinn
Estonia
Email: reili.kivilo@agri.ee

Ms Külli Johanson
Chief Specialist
Food Safety Department
Ministry of Rural Affairs
Lai tn 39 // Lai tn 41
Tallinn
Estonia
Email: kylli.johanson@agri.ee

Mr Alexander Rogge
Policy Officer - Member of the Estonian delegation
General Secretariat
Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi, 175
Bruxelles
Belgium
Email: alexander.rogge@consilium.europa.eu

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

Mr Sebastien Goux
Deputy Head of Unit
Directorate General Health and Food Safety
European Commission
Rue Froissart 101 Office: 02/048
Brussels
Belgium
Email: sebastien.goux@ec.europa.eu

Mrs Ersilia Moliterno
Administrator
Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural
Development
European Commission
Brussels
Belgium
Email: Consiglia.Moliterno@ec.europa.eu

Ms Sabine Pelsser
Administrator
DG SANTE
European Commission
RUE FROISSART 101
Brussels
Belgium
Email: Sabine.PELSSER@ec.europa.eu

FIJI - FIDJI

Mrs Sanjeshni Sanjuka Devi
Assurance & Compliance Officer
Trades
Biosecurity of Fiji
Level 3, FNPF Plaza 1, Ellery Street
Suva
Fiji
Email: devis@baf.com.fj

Ms Deepika Darshani Lata
Microbiologist
Plants & Animals
Biosecurity Of Fiji
Level 3, Fnpf Plaza 1, Ellery Street
Suva
Fiji
Email: 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
Email: anne.haikonen@mmm.fi

FRANCE - FRANCIA

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

GERMANY - ALLEMAGNE - ALEMANIA

Dr Katrin Stolle
Deputy Head of Division
Food Labelling
Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
Wilhelmstraße 54
Berlin
Germany
Email: katrin.stolle@bmel.bund.de

Ms Angelika Mrohs
Managing Director
German Federation for Food Law and Food
Science (BLL e.V.)
Claire-Waldoff-Straße 7
Berlin
Germany
Email: amrohs@bll.de

GHANA

Mrs Isabella Mansa Agra
 Ag. Deputy Chief Executive (FID)
 Food Inspection (FID)
 Food and Drugs Authority
 P.O. Box CT 2783 Cantonments Accra
 Accra
 Ghana
 Email: isabella.agra@fdaghana.gov.gh

Mrs Faustina Adjoa Mansah Atupra
 Principal Regulatory Officer
 Food Evaluation and Registration
 Food and Drugs Authority
 P. O. Box CT 2783 Cantonments, Accra
 Accra
 Ghana
 Email: faustina.atupra@fdaghana.gov.gh

INDIA - INDE

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

Ms Sakshee Pipliyal
 Technical Officer
 Codex
 Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
 FDA Bhawan Near Bal Bhavan Kotla Road
 New Delhi
 India
 Email: sakee25@gmail.com

Ms Mili Bhattacharya
 Senior Manager
 Scientific, Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs
 Coca-Cola India Pvt Ltd
 Delhi
 India
 Email: mbhattacharya@coca-cola.com

INDONESIA - INDONÉSIE

Mrs Adrianti -
 Head of Subdirectorate of Processed Food
 Standardization
 Directorate of Food Product Standardization
 National Agency of Drug and Food Control
 Jl. Percetakan Negara No.23, Building F, 3rd Floor,
 Jakarta Pusat
 Jakarta
 Indonesia
 Email: codexbpom@yahoo.com

IRELAND - IRLANDE - IRLANDA

Dr David W Nolan
 Head of Division
 Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety Policy
 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
 Agriculture House Kildare Street Dublin 2
 Dublin
 Ireland
 Email: davidwnolan@agriculture.gov.ie

ITALY - ITALIE - ITALIA

Mr Ciro Impagnatiello
 Codex Contact Point
 Department of the European Union and
 International Policies and of the Rural Development
 Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies
 Via XX Settembre, 20
 Rome
 Italy
 Email: c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.it

JAPAN - JAPON - JAPÓN

Ms Mayu Nishikawa
 Deputy Director
 Food Labelling Division
 Consumer Affairs Agency
 3-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,
 Tokyo
 Japan
 Email: g.codex-j@caa.go.jp

Prof Satoshi Ishizuka
 Adviser
 Laboratory of Nutritional Biochemistry Research
 Faculty of Agriculture
 Hokkaido University
 Kita 9, Nishi 9, Kita-ku, Sapporo
 Hokkaido
 Japan
 Email: toshitaka.masuda@caa.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
 Email: yayoi_tsujiyama170@maff.go.jp

MEXICO - MEXIQUE - MÉXICO

Ms Tania Daniela Fosado Soriano
 Punto de Contacto Codex
 Dirección General de Normas
 Secretaría de Economía
 Convento de San Lorenzo No. 12 Jardines de
 Santa Mónica
 Mexico
 Email: tania.fosado@economia.gob.mx

MOROCCO - MAROC - MARRUECOS

Mr Oussama Nadifi
 Chef de division de la réglementation et
 normalisation
 Agriculture
 Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits

Alimentaires
Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui, Agdal
Rabat
Morocco
Tel: +212673997816
Email: Oussama.Nadifi@onssa.gov.ma

NETHERLANDS - PAYS-BAS - PAÍSES BAJOS

Ms Inge Stoelhorst
Policy Coordinator
Nutrition, Health Protection and Prevention
Department
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
Parnassusplein 5
Den Haag
Netherlands
Email: i.stoelhorst@minvws.nl

NEW ZEALAND - NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE - NUEVA ZELANDIA

Ms Jenny Reid
Manager
Regulation and Assurance
Ministry for Primary Industries
25 The Terrace
Wellington
New Zealand
Email: jenny.reid@mpi.govt.nz

Ms Phillippa Hawthorne
Senior Adviser
Regulation and Assurance
Ministry for Primary Industries
25 The Terrace
Wellington
New Zealand
Email: Phillippa.hawthorne@mpi.govt.nz

NICARAGUA

Ms Miriam Carolina Canda Toledo
Punto de Contacto del Codex
Dirección de Normalización y Metrología
Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio
Km 6, carretera a Masaya
Managua
Nicaragua
Email: codex@mific.gob.ni

Mr Joe Henry Thompson Argüello
Asesor
Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio
Km 6 carretera a Masaya
Managua
Nicaragua
Email: consultcustomjoe@gmail.com

NIGERIA - NIGÉRIA

Mr Godwin Etim Akwa
Deputy Director
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration
and Control
Plot 1 Isolo Industrial Estate, Isolo Oshodi Apapa
Express Way
Lagos
Nigeria
Email: g_akwa@yahoo.co.uk

Mr Fred Nduka Chiazor
Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Director
Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited
16 Gerrard Road, Ikoyi
Lagos
Nigeria
Email: fchiazor@coca-cola.com

Mrs Chinyere Innocencia Ikejiofor
Chief Laboratory Technologist
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration
and Control
Plot 1, Isolo Industrial Scheme, Oshodi-Apapa
Express Way, Isolo
Lagos
Nigeria
Email: chyikejiofor@gmail.com

Mrs Ogochukwu Nkolika Mainasara
Food Safety NAFDAC Technical Advisor
MONAI Multi Solutions LTD
29 Adediran Ajoa Road, Ajao Estate Anthony
Lagos
Nigeria
Email: manaogo2000@yahoo.com

PARAGUAY

Mrs Zuny Mabel Zarza De Riquelme
Coordinadora del Subcomité del Codex sobre
Etiquetado de los Alimentos
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición
(INAN)
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: zmzarza@hotmail.com

Mrs María Eugenia Alvarenga Torres
Coordinadora general de Subcomité del Codex del
INAN
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición
(INAN)
Email: marualto@hotmail.com

Mrs Patricia Echeverría
Directora de Registros y Habilitaciones Alimentarias
Instituto Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición
(INAN)
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: pecheverria640@gmail.com

Dr Lilian Martínez De Alonso
 Director General
 Instituto Nacional de Tecnología, Normalización y
 Metrología (INTN)
 Asunción
 Paraguay
 Email: idealonso@intn.gov.py

Mr Javier Romero
 Miembro Comité Nacional del Codex Alimentarius
 Capitulo Paraguay (CONACAP)
 CONACAP
 Asunción
 Paraguay
 Email: javier@chortitzer.com.py

Eng Fernando Ríos
 Director de Calidad e Inocuidad de Agricultura
 Orgánica
 Servicio Nacional de Calidad y Sanidad Vegetal y
 de Semillas (SENAVE)
 Asunción
 Paraguay
 Email: fernando.rios@senave.gov.py

Mrs Ana Sagalés
 Miembro Comité Nacional del Codex Alimentarius
 Capitulo Paraguay (CONACAP)
 CONACAP
 Email: ana.sagales@unilever.com

PERU - PÉROU - PERÚ

Mrs Claudia Rosa Alzamora Gutierrez
 Coordinadora de Comisión Técnica del Comité del
 Codex sobre Etiquetado de los Alimentos
 Comité Nacional del Codex Alimentarius Peru
 INACAL-Calle Las Camelias 817, San Isidro
 Lima
 Peru
 Email: calzamora@inacal.gob.pe

Mr Jorge Augusto Vigil Mattos
 Miembro de Comisión Técnica Nacional de Grasas
 y Aceites
 Comité Nacional del Codex Alimentarius Peru
 Tizon y Bueno n.º 709 - Jesús María
 Lima
 Peru
 Email: jvigil@snp.org.pe

REPUBLIC OF KOREA - RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE - REPÚBLICA DE COREA

Dr Siyoung Lee
 Scientific officer
 Food Safety Labelling and Certification
 Ministry of food and drug safety
 Osong Health Technology Administration complex
 187, Osongseangmyeong2-ro, Osong-
 eup, Heungdeok-gu, Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-
 do, 28159, Korea
 Cheong-Ju
 Republic of Korea
 Email: leesy0901@korea.kr

Dr Sangbeom Lee
 Scientific Officer
 National Institute of Agricultural Sciences
 Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
 166, Nongsaengmyeong-ro, Wanju-gun, Jellabuk-
 do
 Wanju-gun
 Republic of Korea
 Email: korealee@korea.kr

Ms Songyi Han
 CODEX researcher
 Food Safety Labelling and Certification
 Ministry of food and drug safety
 Osong Health Technology Administration Complex
 187, Osongseangmyeong2-ro, Osong-
 eup, Heungdeok-gu, Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-
 do, 28159, Korea
 Cheongju-si
 Republic of Korea
 Email: sy4513@korea.kr

Ms Jeonghae Rho
 Director
 Korea Culinary Science Institute
 Email: jeonghaerho@gmail.com

Mr Jinwoo Kim
 Researcher
 Korea food research institute
 Republic of Korea
 Email: Kim.Jin-woo@kfri.re.kr

RUSSIAN FEDERATION - FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE - FEDERACIÓN DE RUSIA

Dr Julia Kalinova
 Expert
 Consumer Market Participants Union
 1-y Schipkovsky per., 20, 403a
 Moscow
 Russian Federation
 Email: yuliya.kalinova@yahoo.com

Ms Anna Koroleva
 Chief Expert
 Division of organization of interaction with WTO and
 OECD
 Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer
 Rights Protection and Human Well-being
 18/20, Vadkovskiy pereulok
 Moscow
 Russian Federation
 Email: Korolyova_AP@gsen.ru

Dr Alexey Petrenko
 Advisor to Consumer Market Participants Union
 Consumer Market Participants Union
 Kotelnicheskaya nab.17
 Moscow
 Russian Federation
 Email: codex@ion.ru

SAUDI ARABIA - ARABIE SAOUDITE - ARABIA SAUDITA

Mr Meshari Alquwayzani
Senior Advanced Chemical Analysis Specialist
Executive Dept. of Technical Regulation & Standards
Saudi Food and Drug Authority
Saudi Arabia
Email: CODEX.CP@sfda.gov.sa

SENEGAL - SÉNÉGAL

Prof Mady Cisse
Directeur des Etudes
Ecole Supérieure Polytechnique
Université Cheikh Anta Diop
Dakar
Sénégal
Email: mady.cisse@ucad.edu.sn

SINGAPORE - SINGAPOUR - SINGAPUR

Ms Mui Lee Neo
Senior Manager
Regulatory Programmes Department, Regulatory Administration Group
Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore
52 Jurong Gateway Road #13-01 Singapore 608550
Singapore
Email: neo_mui_lee@ava.gov.sg

Mr Gerard Lim
Executive Manager
Surveillance & Compliance Department, Food Establishment Regulation Group
Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore
52 Jurong Gateway Road #13-01 Singapore 608550
Singapore
Email: Gerard_SW_Lim@ava.gov.sg

SOUTH AFRICA - AFRIQUE DU SUD - SUDÁFRICA

Mrs Antoinette Booyzen
Assistant Director: Food Control
Directorate: Food Control
Department of Health
Private Bag X828
Pretoria
South Africa
Email: Antoinette.Booyzen@health.gov.za

Ms Anna Godzwana
Senior Medical Biological Scientist
Directorate: Food Control
Department of Health
Private Bag X828
Pretoria
South Africa
Email: Anna.Godzwana@health.gov.za

SPAIN - ESPAGNE - ESPAÑA

Mrs Luz María Martínez Cuevas
Head Service
Subdirectorato-General for Coordination, Quality and Cooperation in Consumer Affairs
Spanish Agency for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Nutrition
Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality C/ Principe de Vergara, 54
Madrid
Spain
Email: lmartinezc@msssi.es

SWEDEN - SUÈDE - SUECIA

Mrs Kristina Lagestrand Sjölin
Principal Regulatory Officer
National Food Agency
Box 622
Uppsala
Sweden
Email: kristina.sjolin@slv.se

SWITZERLAND - SUISSE - SUIZA

Mrs Sandra Di Medio Steinmann
Scientific Officer
Food and Nutrition
Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO
Bern
Switzerland
Email: sandra.dimedio@blv.admin.ch

Mrs Marie-france Pagerey
CT-Regulatory and Scientific Affairs
Nestec SA
Avenue Nestlé 55 Post Box
Vevey
Switzerland
Email: MarieFrance.Pagerey@nestle.com

TURKEY - TURQUIE - TURQUÍA

Ms M. Emel Molla
Engineer
General Directorate of Food and Control
Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock
Eskisehir Yolu 9. Km Lodumlu
Ankara
Turkey
Email: emel.molla@tarim.gov.tr

Ms Burcu Sari
Engineer
General Directorate of Food and Control
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
Eskisehir Yolu 9. km Lodumlu
Ankara
Turkey
Email: burcu.sari@tarim.gov.tr

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

Ms Pendi Najran
Senior Scientific Officer
Department for Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs
Area 1A, Nobel House 17, Smith Square
London
United Kingdom
Email: pendi.najran@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Prof Gina Radford
Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England
Department of Health
Richmond House, 79 Whitehall,
London
United Kingdom
Email: Gina.Radford@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Robert Wells
Head of Food Labelling and Standards in Food
Policy
Department for Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs
Area 1A Nobel House 17 Smith Square
London
United Kingdom
Email: robert.wells@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Benjamin Hawksbee
Commercial and Prosperity Officer
British Embassy Asuncion
Edificio Citicenter | Avda. Mcal. López 3794 y Cruz
del Chaco
United Kingdom
Email: benjamin.hawksbee@fco.gov.uk

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

Mr Jasson Joel Kyaruzi
Principle Food Registration Officer
Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority
Box 77150
Dar-Es-Salaam
United Republic of Tanzania
Email: jmkyaruzi@hotmail.com

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

Ms Felicia B Billingslea
Director, Food Labeling and Standards D
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Parkway, HFS-820
College Park
United States of America
Email: Felicia.Billingslea@fda.hhs.gov

Ms Camille Brewer
Director, International Affairs Staff
Health and Human Services
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5001 Campus Drive
College Park, MD
United States of America
Email: Camille.brewer@fda.hhs.gov

Mr Jeff Canavan
Deputy Director, Labeling and Program Delivery
Division
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue., SW
Washington, DC
United States of America
Email: Jeff.canavan@usda.gov

Mr Tom Carrington
Food Safety Regulatory Manager
Food Safety
Amazon
410 Terry Avenue, N Seattle, Washington
Seattle
United States of America
Email: Tomcarr@amazon.com

Mr David Cottrell
Director, Processed Products and Technical
Regulations Division
Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C.
United States of America
Email: David.Cottrell@fas.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
Email: Mari.Kirrane@ttb.gov

Dr Andrea Krause
Food Technologist
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Parkway, HFS-820
College Park
United States of America
Email: Andrea.Krause@fda.hhs.gov

Mrs Sunney Mahalak
 Food Safety Regulatory Manager
 Food Safety
 Amazon
 410 Terry Avenue, N Seattle, Washington
 Seattle
 United States of America
 Email: Sunnem@amazon.com

Mrs Barbara McNiff
 Senior International Issues
 Food Safety and Inspection Service;
 Office of CODEX
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave, SW
 Washington, DC
 United States of America
 Email: Barbara.McNiff@fsis.usda.gov

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - ORGANISATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES - ORGANIZACIONES GUBERNAMENTALES INTERNACIONALES

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)

Ms Paula Ponzano
 Food Safety and Agricultural Health Specialist
 IICA
 Santiago
 Chile
 Email: paula.ponzano@iica.int

Dr Carlos Franco
 Especialista SAIA
 Sanidad Agropecuaria
 IICA
 Campus de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción - Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias - Calle Gral. Patricio Escobar casi Ruta Mcal. Estigarribia San Lorenzo, Paraguay
 Asunción
 Paraguay
 Email: carlos.franco@iica.int

Dr Ricardo Orellana
 Representante del IICA en Paraguay
 IICA
 Campus de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción - Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias - Calle Gral. Patricio Escobar casi Ruta Mcal. Estigarribia San Lorenzo, Paraguay
 Asunción
 Paraguay
 Email: ricardo.orellana@iica.int

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
 Email: Farah.Naim@fas.usda.gov

Mr Daniel Reese
 International Policy Analyst
 U.S. Food and Drug Administration
 Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, HFS-820
 College Park, MD
 United States of America
 Email: Daniel.reese@fda.hhs.gov

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS – ORGANISATIONS NO GOUVERNEMENTALES ORGANIZACIONES NO GUBERNAMENTALES

COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DES FABRICANTS DE SUCRE (CEFS)

Mr Bernd Kurzai
 CEFS - Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre
 Avenue de Tervuren 182
 Bruxelles
 Belgium
 Email: Bernd.Kurzai@suedzucker.de

FOOD INDUSTRY ASIA (FIA)

Ms Yifan Jiang
 Head of Science & Regulatory Affairs
 Food Industry Asia
 1 Scotts Road, Shaw Centre #19-07/08, Singapore
 228208
 Singapore
 Singapore
 Email: codex@foodindustry.asia

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES VINS ET SPIRITUEUX (FIVS)

Mr Timothy Ryan
 Senior Analyst
 International Compliance & Regulatory Affairs
 FIVS
 18 Rue D'Aguesseau
 Paris
 France
 Email: Tim.Ryan@ejgallo.com

FOODDRINKEUROPE

Mr Dirk Jacobs
 Deputy Director General
 Director Consumer Information Diet and Health
 FoodDrinkEurope
 Avenue des Nerviens 9-31
 Brussels
 Belgium
 Email: d.jacobs@fooddrinkurope.eu

Mrs Annie Loc'h
 FoodDrinkEurope
 Avenue des Nerviens 9-31
 Brussels

Belgium

Email: annie.loch@danone.com

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSUMER FOOD ORGANIZATIONS (IACFO)

Mr Bill Jeffery
c/o Centre for Health Science and Law
International Association of Consumer Food Organizations (IACFO)
700-1 Rideau Street
Ottawa
Canada
Email: billjeffery@healthscienceandlaw.ca

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE (ICA)

Mr Kazuo Onitake
Senior Scientist
Quality Assurance Division
Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union
CO-OP Plaza, Shibuya, Shibuya-Ku
Tokyo
Japan
Email: kazuo.onitake@jccu.coop

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON AMINO ACID SCIENCE (ICAAS)

Dr Eyassu Abegaz
ICAAS - International Council on Amino Acid Science
Email: ICAAS@kelleneurope.com

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF BEVERAGES ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA)

Ms Paivi Julkunen
Director, Regulatory
Global Scientific & Regulatory Affairs
The Coca-Cola Company
One Coca-Cola Plaza
Atlanta
United States of America
Email: pjulkunen@coca-cola.com

Mr Hidekazu Hosono
Technical Advisor
Japan Soft Drinks Association
2-9-2 Kanda-Sudacho Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo
Japan
Email: Hidekazu_Hosono@suntory.co.jp

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

INTERNATIONAL CHEWING GUM ASSOCIATION (ICGA)

Mrs Natalia Carvajal
Scientific Affairs Section Manager - LA
Mondelez International Costa Rica
Lindora Park Business Center 4th floor, Santa Ana.
San Jose
Costa Rica
Email: natalia.carvajal@mdlz.com

Mrs Maria Cordi

ARCOR
Gte. Corporativa de Legislación Alimentaria
Boulevard Chacabuco 1160 Córdoba - Argentina
Córdoba
Argentina
Email: mcordi@arcor.com

Mr Christophe Leprêtre
Executive Director Regulatory and Scientific Affairs
International Chewing Gum Association
Avenue Louise, 54 Stephanie Plaza
Brussels
Belgium
Email: lepretre@gumassociation.org

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATIONS (ICGMA)

Ms Kimberly Wingfield
Director, Science Policy
Labeling and Standards
The Grocery Manufacturers Association
1350 I St NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C.
United States of America
Email: kwingfield@gmaonline.org

Ms Edith Devita
Senior Director
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs, Americas
Mars Wrigley Confectionery
1132 W Blackhawk Street,
Chicago, IL
United States of America
Email: Edith.Devita@Wrigley.com

Ms Daniela Dos Reis Shimokomaki
Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Manager - South America
The Hershey Company
Eldorado Business Tower - Avenida das Nações Unidas, 8501, 31º andar Pinheiros
São Paulo
Brazil
Email: dreis@hersheys.com

Mr Nicholas Gardner
 Director
 Global Strategies
 The Grocery Manufacturers Association
 1350 I Street, N.W.
 Washington, D.C.
 United States of America
 Email: NGardner@gmaonline.org

Ms Phyllis Marquitz
 Director
 Global Regulatory Affairs
 Mars Inc
 Email: Phyllis.Marquitz@effem.com

Ms Luisa Marín
 Regulatory Affairs Specialist
 Mars Inc
 Wrigley Latin America S. de R.L., Torre de las
 Américas, Tower C, 18th floor
 Panama City
 Panama
 Email: Luisa.Marin@wrigley.com

Ms Nicole Podesta
 Manager
 Global Strategies
 The Grocery Manufacturers Association
 1350 I St NW, Suite 300
 Washington, D.C.
 United States of America
 Email: NPodesta@gmaonline.org

Ms Lorena Vannoni
 Regulatory Affairs Manager
 PepsiCo
 Cazadores de Coquimbo 2860 – Munro
 Buenos Aires
 Argentina
 Tel: +5411 55853548
 Email: lorena.vannoni@pepsico.com

Ms Kathy Wiemer
 Senior Fellow
 Bell Institute of Health & Nutrition
 General Mills
 9000 Plymouth Avenue North
 Minneapolis, MN
 United States of America
 Email: Kathy.Wiemer@genmills.com

INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION (IDF/FIL)

Ms Luisa Candido
 Nutrition and Technical Manager
 Dairy UK
 United Kingdom
 Email: lcandido@dairyUK.org

Mr Laurent Coutant
 Responsable du marketing nutritionnel
 Groupe LACTALIS
 64 rue des Ravennes 59
 BONDUES
 France
 Email: Laurent.coutant@lactalis.fr

Ms Cary Frye
 Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs
 International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)
 United States of America
 Email: cfrye@idfa.org

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

INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS (IFT)

Mr Robert Conover
 Assistant General Counsel, Kikkoman Foods, Inc.
 Institute of Food Technologists
 Kikkoman Foods, Inc. P.O. Box 69 Walworth, WI
 53184
 Walworth
 United States of America
 Email: rconover@kikkoman.com

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FLAVOR INDUSTRY (IOFI)

Dr Thierry Cachet
 Regulatory and Advocacy Director
 IOFI
 Avenue des Arts 6
 Brussels
 Belgium
 Email: tcachet@iofi.org

INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL DIETARY FOODS INDUSTRIES (ISDI)

Mr Kaushik Janakiraman
 Regulatory Affairs Officer
 ISDI-International Special Dietary Foods Industries
 Email: secretariat@isdi.org

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

INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr Anne Mackenzie
 HarvestPlus
 Email: a.mackenzie@cgjar.org

SAFE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE FOOD EVERYWHERE (SSAFE) (SSAFE)

Mr Mark Macdonald
 Member of SSAFE
 Email: Mark_Macdonald@cargill.com

**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 ALIMENTACION Y LA AGRICULTURA**

Mr Rolf Hackbart
Representante
Representación Nacional
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: rolf.hackbart@fao.org

Ms Benicia Almeida
Facilitadora Programas
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: benicia.almeidainsfran@fao.org

Ms Ana Louteiro
Facilitadora Programas
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: ana.louteiro@fao.org

Ms Aura Ramoa
Consultora Nutrición
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Tel: 0981563927
Email: auramo@ gmail.com

Ms Noelia Riquelme
Asistente de Programas
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: noelia.riquelmecabrera@fao.org

Ms Cynthia Zapattini
Comunicadora
Representación
FAO PARAGUAY
Avda. Mcal. López esq. Saravi
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: zapattini.cynthiamanuela@fao.org

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

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

Dr Patricia De Aquino
Nutrition Advisor
PAHO/WHO Representativa
PO Box Casilla de Correo 839
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: deaquipat@paho.org

Dr Luis Roberto Escoto
PAHO/WHO Representativa
PO Box Casilla de Correo 839
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: e-mailpar@par.ops-oms.org

Dr Fabio Gomes
Advisor, Nutrition and Physical Activity
Pan American Health Organization
WHO Regional Office for the Americas
525 23rd Street, NW Washington, DC 20037 USA
Email: gomesfabio@paho.org

Mrs Vanessa Martinez
Ad Hoc Consultant
Food Safety
PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO
Florida 978 Barrio Jara
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: vane_martinez_c@hotmail.com

Dr Chizuru Nishida
Coordinator
Department of Nutrition for Health and Development
(NHD)
World Health Organization (WHO)
20, avenue Appia
Geneva 27
Switzerland
Email: nishidac@who.int

Dr Vladimir Poznyak
Coordinator
Management of Substance Abuse
World Health Organization (WHO)
Apia 20
Geneva
Switzerland
Email: poznyakv@who.int

Eng Ricardo Torres
Asesor en Desarrollo Sostenible y Salud Ambiental
PAHO
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: rtorres@paho.org

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

Mrs Diane Carmanico
Assistant, Codex Program Services
International, Interagency and Intergovernmental
Affairs and Office of the Codex Contact Point for C
Bureau of Policy, Intergovernmental and
International Affairs (BPIIA)
Food Directorate, Health Canada
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2204C)
Ottawa
Canada
Email: diane.carmanico@canada.ca

Ms Karine Halpenny
Acting Manager, Codex, Office of the Codex
Contact Point for Canada
Health Canada
Bureau of Policy, Intergovernmental and
International Affairs
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2204C)
Ottawa
Canada
Email: karine.halpenny@canada.ca

Ms Jennifer Hughes Doucet
Manager, International Affairs
Health Canada
Bureau of Policy, Intergovernmental and
International Affairs
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (AL 2204D)
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
Email: jennifer.hughesdoucet@canada.ca

Ms Nancy Ing
Regulatory Policy & Risk Management Specialist
International and Interagency Affairs and Codex
Contact Point
Health Canada
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway, Tunneys
Pasture Mail Stop 2204C Floor 4
Ottawa
Canada
Email: nancy.ing@canada.ca

Mrs Alison Wereley
Senior Policy Analyst
International Affairs & Market Access Directorate
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1400 Merivale Road Tower 1, Floor 4, Room 326
Ottawa
Canada
Email: alison.wereley@inspection.gc.ca

**PARAGUAY SECRETARIAT -
SECRETARIAT DU PARAGUAY -
SECRETARÍA DE PARAGUAY**

Mrs Mariana Artaza De Cardozo
INTN
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: martaza@intn.gov.py

Ms Maria Ines Ibarra Colman
Codex Contact Point
Codex Alimentarius Paraguay
INTN Paraguay
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: codexparaguay@gmail.com

Mrs Alcira Orlandini
Technical Officer
Agroindustrias
INTN
Avenida Artigas Casi Gral Roa 3973
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: aorlandini@intn.gov.py

Mrs Laura Silva Jojot
INTN
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: lsilva@intn.gov.py

Ms Ivani Torales
Technical Officer
Codex Alimentarius Paraguay
INTN
Asunción
Paraguay
Email: itorales@intn.gov.py

**CODEX SECRETARIAT -
SECRÉTARIAT DU CODEX -
SECRETARIA 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

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

Ms Gracia Brisco
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: gracia.brisco@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

APPENDIX II

DRAFT REVISION TO THE *GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS*
(CODEX STAN 1-1985)

(For adoption at Step 8)

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

For use in **Date Marking** of prepackaged food:

“Date of Manufacture” means the date on which the food becomes the product as described. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Date of Packaging” means the date on which the food is placed in the immediate container in which it will be ultimately sold. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Best Before Date” or “Best Quality Before Date” means the date which signifies the end of the period, under any stated storage conditions, during which the unopened product will remain fully marketable and will retain any specific qualities for which implied or express claims have been made. However, beyond the date the food may still be acceptable for consumption.

“Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” means the date which signifies the end of the period under any stated storage conditions, after which the product should not be sold or consumed due to safety and quality reasons.

4.7 Date marking and storage instructions

4.7.1 If not otherwise determined in an individual Codex standard, the following date marking shall apply, unless clause 4.7.1(vii) applies:

- (i) When a food must be consumed before a certain date to ensure its safety and quality the “Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” shall be declared¹.
- (ii) Where a “Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” is not required, the “Best-Before Date” or “Best Quality-Before Date” shall be declared.
- (iii) The date marking should be as follows:
 - On products with a durability of not more than three months; the day and month shall be declared and in addition, the year when competent authorities consider consumers could be misled.
 - On products with a durability of more than three months at least the month and year shall be declared.
- (iv) The date shall be introduced by the words:
 - “Use-by <insert date>” or “Expiration Date <insert date>” or “Best before <insert date>” or “Best Quality Before <insert date>” as applicable where the day is indicated; or
 - “Use-by end <insert date>” or “expiration date end <insert date>” or “Best before end <insert date>”; or “Best Quality Before end <insert date>” as applicable in other cases.
- (v) The words referred to in paragraph (iv) shall be accompanied by:
 - either the date itself; or
 - a reference to where the date is given.
- (vi) The day and year shall be declared by uncoded numbers with the year to be denoted by 2 or 4 digits, and the month shall be declared by letters or characters or numbers. Where only numbers are used to declare the date or where the year is expressed as only two digits, the competent authority should determine whether to require the sequence of the day, month, year, be given by appropriate abbreviations accompanying the date mark (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY or YYYY/DD/MM).
- (vii) Provided that food safety is not compromised, the provision in 4.7.1 (i) or 4.7.1 (ii) is not required for a food if one or more of the following criteria apply:

¹ Consideration should be given to other Codex texts

1. Where safety is not compromised and quality does not deteriorate because the nature of the food is such that it cannot support microbial growth (e.g. alcohol, salt, acidity, low water activity under intended or stated storage conditions);
2. Where the deterioration is clearly evident by physical examination at the point of purchase, such as raw fresh produce that has not been subject to processing and presented in a manner that is visible to the consumer;
3. Where the key/organoleptic quality aspects of the food are not lost;
4. Where the food by its nature is normally consumed within 24 hours of its manufacture, such as some bakers' or pastry-cooks' wares.

For example, foods such as²:

- fresh fruits and vegetables, including tubers, which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated;
- wines, liqueur wines, sparkling wines, aromatized wines, fruit wines and sparkling fruit wines;
- alcoholic beverages containing at least 10% alcohol by volume;
- bakers' or pastry-cooks' wares which, given the nature of their content, are normally consumed within 24 hours of their manufacture;
- vinegar;
- non-iodized food grade salt;
- non-fortified solid sugars;
- confectionery products consisting of flavoured and/or coloured sugars;
- chewing gum.

In such cases, the "Date of Manufacture" or the "Date of Packaging" may be provided.

- (viii) A "Date of Manufacture" or a "Date of Packaging" may be used in combination with 4.7.1 (i) or (ii). It shall be introduced with the words "Date of Manufacture" or "Date of Packaging", as appropriate, and use the format provided in clause 4.7.1(vi).

- 4.7.2 Any special conditions for the storage of the food shall be declared on the label where they are required to support the integrity of the food and, where a date mark is used, the validity of the date depends thereon.

²This is an illustrative list.

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR NEW WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE ON USE OF SIMPLIFIED NUTRITION INFORMATION ON THE FRONT OF PACK

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NEW WORK

The scope and purpose of the work is to develop guidance on the use of simplified nutrition information on the front of pack. This guidance should be consistent with the requirements for supplementary nutrition information in the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985). The work will include defining front of pack nutrition labelling (FOPL).

A decision on whether this guidance should be placed within the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) or in a separate document will be made after they have been developed.

2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

This proposal relates to development of guidance to assist governments (or other stakeholders) in the development of simplified nutrition information (particularly on front of pack) which has been identified as a significant opportunity in a number of countries.

According to the stocktake undertaken by the eWG, there is an increasing number of Codex members where front of pack nutrition labelling systems is currently in use or being proposed for use.

The *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) allow for the use of supplementary nutrition information, however they do not provide the necessary guidance to ensure supplementary nutrition information such as front of pack labelling is applied in a way that ensures potential barriers to trade are minimized.

3. MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED

The *Guidelines for Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) in Section 5 allow for the use of supplementary nutrition information; however, further clarification is required and the present project document seeks to establish additional guidance which may include general principles for front of pack nutrition labeling systems.

The proposal is to develop specific guidelines that may or may not be included within the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985).

It is proposed that the guidance covers at least the following aspects:

- i. Purpose and Scope
- ii. Definition of FOPL
- iii. General principles for FOPL
- iv. Aspects to consider in the development of FOPL 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.

Simplified nutrition information may have a role to play in facilitating greater understanding of the nutrition content of foods by consumers. This may also help guide consumers to healthier choices. Simplified nutrition information, particularly on front of pack, may also encourage food manufacturers to reformulate their food products to gain a more positive nutrient profile, thus improving the nutritional quality of the food supply available to consumers. Improved nutrition via either a healthier food supply or consciously made healthier choices would improve the risk profile for a number of non-communicable diseases globally.

Criteria applicable to general subjects

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

A number of countries have adopted or are planning simplified nutrition labelling systems either on a voluntary or mandatory basis. It is important that with a growing number of systems globally some consistency is maintained at a global level to ensure that 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.*

Conduct a revision of Codex texts including the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985) is undertaken in order to formulate recommendations and guidance on the use of front of pack nutrition labelling.

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

In November 2015 WHO held a technical meeting on Nutrition Labelling for Promoting Healthy Diets. The objectives of this meeting included reviewing the types of FOPL being implemented at that time, reviewing the evidence for effectiveness of different types of FOPL and reviewing case studies of countries with experience in implementing FOPL.

Subsequently, WHO initiated work on the development of Guiding Principles on FOPL which will be taken into account as soon as they are available to complement the work being done in the CCFL.

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

Many countries are looking to Codex for clear and unambiguous guidance on areas such as nutrition labelling. The purpose of the new work proposal is the review and clarification of existing text to ensure it provides for the use of simplified nutrition labelling on the front of pack and the development of additional guidance to support its use, either in the current guidelines or in an independent document.

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

Simplified front of pack nutrition information is a topic of interest in a number of countries around the World. Voluntary and mandatory systems are in place in a number of countries and at a global level this is a topic of discussion at the WHO. It has also been raised at WTO where inconsistency in labelling requirements has the potential to be a barrier to trade. Promotion healthier diets for consumers and encouraging manufacturers to improve the healthiness of the food supply are areas where strong guidance could have a significant impact globally.

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

The use of simplified nutrition labelling on the front of pack is of increasing interest and activity in a number of countries globally. Currently there is no global guidance on best practice with regard to this form of labelling. Therefore, there is a risk that a proliferation of systems may result in confusion and barriers to trade.

Providing guidance for countries looking to implement front of pack nutrition labelling and principles that should be considered when implementing such a system would help ensure a degree of global harmonisation.

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 simplified nutrition labelling to participate in discussions.

6. RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS

The proposal is to consider the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CXG 2-1985)* and other relevant Codex guidelines.

7. REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

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

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

WHO work on guiding principles for front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems and evidence reviews on nutrition labelling being developed as part of the guideline development for promoting healthy diets will be considered in the development of guidance for Codex.

9. PROPOSED TIMELINE

If approved by the Commission in 2018, the work is expected to take the Committee at least two sessions to complete.