



THE SECOND ARAB CODEX COLLOQUIUM

Crowne Plaza Muscat
Muscat - Sultanate of Oman

يونيو 10-11 June

2023

كراون بلازا مسقط
مسقط - سلطنة عمان

الندوة العربية الثانية للدستور الغذائي

SECOND ARAB CODEX COLLOQUIUM

Report and Recommendations



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Executive Summary

The Arab Codex Initiative held its second colloquium in Muscat, Oman on the 10th and 11th of June 2023, on the margin of the International Conference on Food Safety and Quality, in cooperation with regional standardization organizations and other entities supporting the event. Fifty-two (52) participants representing seventeen (17) Arab countries were represented (please refer to [Annex 1: List of Participants](#)).

The colloquium witnessed active and productive participation from attendees, clearly reflecting the growing interest with respect to the topics discussed and milestones achieved through the Arab Codex Initiative.

The Colloquium identified several key recommendations to support leveraging the Arab Codex Initiative as a decisive means to strengthen Arab Codex capacity:

1. Harmonize national legislation to be in-line with Codex standards and guidelines.
2. Identify and define priorities for the Arab region when participating in Codex activities.
3. Encourage and support Arab States to host Codex Committees concerned with sectors of interest to the Arab region.
4. Review the Codex Procedural Manual vis-à-vis the Arab Food Safety Initiative in the Arab region and ensure alignment with requirements of Arab countries.
5. Convene standing virtual coordination meetings, planned in advance, and focus on regional / national topics of interest to Arab countries.
6. Launch the Arab Food Standards Academy initiative to build and develop Codex capacities and competencies.
7. Encourage bilateral support among Arab countries through "Twinning", especially in establishing national regulatory procedures for active participation in Codex deliberations.
8. Hold coordination meetings before submitting responses to circular letters.

9. Train the Arab Codex Contact Points (CCPs) on the application of the Codex Procedural Manual to express reservations and objections, including how to adapt Codex texts to satisfy the needs of the Arab region, and the operational model governing interactions between the various Codex Committees, Electronic Working Groups and Task Forces.
10. Create an electronic working group to study Codex projects related to novel food sources and new production systems, such as insect proteins.
11. Support the 2024 candidacy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, represented by Dr. Ruba Goussous, for the position of Vice Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
12. Support the participation of Arab delegations in electronic working groups established by Codex technical committees.
13. Organize periodic / recurring meetings (e.g. monthly), scheduled in advance, with the aim to coordinate Arab positions and discuss documents circulated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission or its sub-committees.
14. Prepare a matrix / repository of information for Arab CCPs to enhance regional communication and coordination.
15. Encourage and support every Arab country wishing to take the initiative and assume the responsibility to follow up and prepare for Codex Committee meetings of their choice, through the analysis of agenda items and accompanying documents, in addition to, presenting their results at coordination meetings.
16. Convene coordination meetings prior to submission of responses to communications circulated by the Codex Secretariat.
17. Identify and secure the means to sustain and grow the Arab Codex Initiative.
18. Provide appropriate mechanisms to ensure access to international and regional standards.

19. Assist Arab countries in providing and sharing data from the region with the Codex Alimentarius Commission to ensure such data is taken into account when preparing standards and setting maximum limits.
20. Support the candidacy of Arab countries in/for leadership positions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission and highlighting their role in decision-making.
21. Enhance the participation of Arab countries in the activities of the CCEXEC to help coordinate Arab positions, gain valuable experience (e.g. in decision-making) and to strengthen Arab positions overall.
22. Review the agenda items in advance of meetings of the Codex Executive Committee (CCEXEC) to consolidate positions of the Arab CCPs, in coordination with the Regional Coordinator.
23. Coordinate with Arab CCPs to appoint advisors to attend the meetings of the Executive Committee and the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East with the Regional Coordinator.
24. Establish an effective and sustainable database for Arab countries to collect information/data related to food contaminants and food consumption using IT applications (e.g., electronic platforms)
25. Develop and strengthen risk assessment capacity for contaminants in food, including the identification of a common list of priority risks, and collaboration with accredited laboratories in the Arab region.
26. Develop and review regional standards, such as those associated with honey, raisins and rice.
27. Prepare an Arab regional standard for camel milk.

In addition, representatives of Arab Codex programs recommended that members and their respective organizations:

28. Support Arab countries wishing to strengthen their national Codex programs.

29. Support participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.
30. Secure the means of identification and sustainability of the Arab initiative.
31. Coordinate work between the Arab Codex Initiative and the coordination efforts carried out work under the auspices of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee of the Near East (CCNE).

Day 1 Summary: June 10, 2023

Opening and Introductory Remarks

The Colloquium was opened by Prof. Samuel Godefroy – Professor, Food Risk Analysis and Regulatory Policies, President-elect, International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST); President of the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS) – who welcomed the attendees, the participating senior officials, and the participating parties to the Colloquium. Prof. Godefroy highlighted the importance of the milestones achieved to date as part of the Arab Codex Initiative and discussed future directions for the upcoming work, in conjunction with the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

A set of introductory speeches delivered by the senior officials present at the Colloquium followed:

- Dr. Steve Wearne, Chair, Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- Mr. Kenneth Lowery, Senior International Issues Analyst, United States Codex Office, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Dr. Moez Sanaa, Standards and Scientific Advice on Food and Nutrition, World Health Organization (WHO).
- Mr. Ahmed Eddouaicer, Coordinator, Arab Codex Initiative, Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)
- Eng. Ahmed Al Basha, Gulf Cooperation Council Standardization Organization (GSO)
- Dr. Tareq El Houby, Chairman of the Board, National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

- Eng. Ali AlGhafri, Chair, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Codex Working Group.
- Dr. Hussein Al Masroori, Director General, Centre of Food Safety and Quality, Oman.

Session 1: Review of the Accomplishments of the Arab Codex Initiative

The coordinator and secretariat of the Arab Codex Initiative presented key achievements and briefed participants on the outcomes of the Codex Coordination meetings of Arab National Contact Points that were held in preparation for the meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Committees. Fourteen of such meetings (including seven virtual meetings held in 2023) were convened since the launch of the initiative during the first Arab symposium (held in the United Arab Emirates at the beginning of 2022). This session also reviewed the training courses that were held in person in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Tunisia and the Kingdom of Morocco, with the participation of the Arab CCPs. The presentation concluded by proposing future activities for the Arab Codex Initiative, including:

- Continuing to prepare for the meetings of the priority Codex Committees in the Arab region.
- Supporting the work of the electronic Arab working groups that were formed to work on date-based products, harissa, and aflatoxins in peanuts.
- Sharing the outputs of their meetings with all Arab CCPs.

Session 2: Review of Outputs of Key Codex Committees Part I (CCFICS, CAC45, CCFH and CCCF)

Within the framework of exchange of experiences among Arab Codex Programs, the CCPs of Arab countries participating in the colloquium reviewed the outputs of the following priority technical committees for the region.

- CCFICS (Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems) and CAC45 (45th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission) presented by representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco

- CCFH (Codex Committee on Food Hygiene) presented by the Laval University /GFoRSS Team
- CCCF (Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods) presented by representatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The outputs of the Technical Committees of the Codex Alimentarius presented are an important basis for engaging the participation of Arab delegations and coordinating joint work during the coming sessions.

Session 2 Recommendations:

1. Adapt national legislation to be in-line with Codex Alimentarius standards and guidelines.
2. Identify and define priorities of the Arab region when participating in Codex activities.

Session 3: Engagement of the Arab Region in Codex Proceedings, Future Opportunities

Dr. Steve Wearne, Chairman of the Codex Commission, made introductory remarks and stressed the importance of active participation by Arab delegations and the need to develop aspirations for the region in this regard. The guidelines of the GCC Standardization Organization and their support for the work of the Arab Codex Initiative were also presented.

Session 3 Recommendations:

3. Encourage and support the Arab countries to co-host Codex Committees of priority to the region,
4. Convene standing virtual coordination meetings, planned in advance, and focus on regional / national topics of interest to Arab countries.
5. Launch the Arab Food Standards Academy initiative to build and develop Codex capacities and competencies.
6. Encourage bilateral support among Arab countries through "Twinning", especially in establishing national regulatory procedures for active participation in Codex deliberations.

Day Two Summary: June 11, 2023

On the margin of the colloquium, an informal meeting was held between the members of the GSO and the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Session 4: Review of Outputs of Key Codex Committees Part II (CCRVDF, CCFA, CCNFSDU, CCFL)

During this session, the CCPs continued to present the outputs of other technical committees where delegations of Arab countries participated, as follows:

- CCRVDF (Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food) discussed by representatives of the Sultanate of Oman.
- CCFA (Codex Committee on Food Additives) discussed by representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- CCNFSDU (Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses): discussed by representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- CCFL (Codex Committee on Food Labelling) reviewed by the Laval University / GForSS Team.

Session 4 Recommendations:

8. Hold coordination meetings before submitting responses to circular letters.
9. Train the Arab Codex Contact Points (CCPs) on the application of the Codex Procedural Manual to express reservations and objections, including how to adapt Codex texts to satisfy the needs of the Arab region.
10. Create an electronic working group to study Codex projects related to novel food sources and new production systems, such as insect proteins.
11. Support the 2024 candidacy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, represented by Dr. Ruba Goussous, for the position of Vice Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Session 5: Development of National Positions and Benefits of Regional Coordination

During this session, recommendations were made for the Arab region aimed at enhancing competencies and supporting participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.

Session 5 Recommendations:

12. Support the participation of Arab delegations in electronic working groups established by Codex technical committees.
13. Organize periodic / recurring meetings (e.g. monthly), scheduled in advance, with the aim to coordinate Arab positions and discuss documents circulated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission or its sub-committees.
14. Prepare a matrix / repository of information for Arab CCPs to enhance regional communication and coordination.
15. Encourage and support every Arab country wishing to take the initiative and assume the responsibility to follow up and prepare for Codex Committee meetings of their choice, through the analysis of agenda items and accompanying documents, in addition to, presenting their results at coordination meetings.
16. Convene preparatory meetings to coordinate responses to communications circulated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
17. Identify and secure the means to sustain and grow the Arab Codex Initiative.
18. Provide appropriate mechanisms to ensure access to international and regional standards.

Session 6: Aspirations for the Participation of the Arab Region in the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Dr. Steve Wearne presented the agenda for the 46th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. He also responded to queries from those in attendance and delivered a presentation on the general directives that the Commission follows in carrying out its work.

During this session, the Arab delegations to the Codex Alimentarius discussed the needs of the region in the areas of capacity building and enhancing competencies.

In addition, GForSS committed to funding the attendance of two countries, as advisors to the Executive Committee meetings, based on the demonstration of qualifications required for such participation.

Session 6 Recommendations:

19. Assist Arab countries in providing and sharing data from the region with the Codex Alimentarius Commission to ensure such data is taken into account when preparing standards and setting maximum limits.
20. Support the candidacy of Arab countries in/for leadership positions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission and highlighting their role in decision-making.
21. Enhance the participation of Arab countries in the activities of the CCEXEC to help coordinate Arab positions, gain valuable experience (e.g. in decision-making) and to strengthen Arab positions overall.
22. Review the agenda items in advance of meetings of the Codex Executive Committee (CCEXEC) to consolidate positions of the Arab CCPs, in coordination with the Regional Coordinator.
23. Coordinate with Arab CCPs to appoint advisors to attend the meetings of the Executive Committee and the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East with the Regional Coordinator.

Days 3 and 4 Summary: 12, 13 June 2023

Additional meetings

Experts from the Arab Codex Alimentarius Initiative and food safety experts from Laval University in Canada presented the results of studies extrapolating the maximum residue of veterinary drugs used in aquaculture and camels.

In addition, Egypt's experience in setting limits for the residues of ractopamine in beef liver was presented through a risk assessment study, representative of the Egyptian consumption patterns.

A demonstration of the food contaminants database designed by the Global Food Regulatory Science Society was also conducted.

In the light of the discussions, it was recommended to:

24. Establish an effective and sustainable database for Arab countries to collect information/data related to food contaminants and food consumption using IT applications (e.g., electronic platforms).
25. Develop and strengthen risk assessment capacity for contaminants in food, including the identification of a common list of priority risks, and collaboration with accredited laboratories in the Arab region.
26. Develop and review regional standards, such as those associated with honey, raisins and rice.
27. Prepare an Arab regional standard for camel milk.

In addition, representatives of Arab Codex programs recommended that members and their respective organizations:

28. Support Arab countries wishing to strengthen their national Codex programs.
29. Support participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.
30. Secure the means of identification and sustainability of the Arab initiative.
31. Coordinate work between the Arab Codex Initiative and the coordination efforts carried out work under the auspices of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee of the Near East (CCNE).

Annex 1: List of Participants

Arab Countries – Codex Programs	
Participant Name	The State
Nessma Shannak	Jordan
Areej Qutishat	
Moza Suhail Al Muhairi	United Arab Emirates
Khadija Qalandari	
Faisal Alsari	Bahrain
Fatima Issa	
Abdallah Abdelhalim	Algeria
rebai mohamed lamine	
Khalid Alzahrani	Saudi Arabia
Khalil Alswellem	
Nahla Khogali	Sudan
Mohamed Aden Hersi	Somalia
Abdikadir Abdisalam Abdinour Ahmed	
Nagham Hameed Dahir	Iraq
Amjed Riyadh Jasim	
Ali Alghafri	Oman
Asma Musallam Hidaib AlHashmi	
Muhammad bin Zahir Al-Kindi	
Naima bint Khamis Al-Kharousiyah	
Naela Muhanna Saif Alhinai	
Haneen Shawahneh	Palestine
Saber M. T. Alamleh	
Yasmeen Almousa	Kuwait
Badriya Alshemmari	
Lena Dargham	Lebanon
Mariam Eid	
Sakina Elkhabuli	Libya
Esam Mansour Abdullah Abuglalya	
Hanan Fouad Hamid Ibrahim Hashem	Egypt
Noha Mohamed Attia Eliwa	
kadiri khadija	Morocco
Moujanni Abdelkarim	
Bollahi Mohamed Abdallahi	Mauritania
Moulaye Ely El Amma	
Akram Mohamed haidarah AL-japairai	Yemen
Fahd Gamil ali ghanem	

Organizations	
Participant Name	Organization
Samuel Godefroy	GForSS Université Laval
Hajar Tiglifet	
Elie Bou Yazbeck	
Wiem Guissouma	
Karima Zouine	
Ruba Goussous	
Montassar Guider	
Zainab al-Bushikhi	
Joyce Haddad	
Silvia Dominguez	
Jérémie Théolier	
Andrée Lagacé	
Ahmed eddoucaier	AIDSMO
Mohamed AlSherif	
Shadwa Saad	
Hajar Chaouir	
Kenneth Lowery	U.S. Codex Office
Moez Sanaa	WHO
Ali Badarneh	UNIDO
Tarek El Houby	National Food Safety Authority (NFSA), Egypt
Marwa Badr Mohamed Abdelwahab	
Steve Wearne	Codex Alimentarius Commission
Saud Al-Khusaibi	GCC Standardization Organization (GSO)
Zaki M. Al-Rubaei	
Ahmed Albashah	
Hussein Al Masroori	Food Safety and Quality Center, Sultanate of Oman