45th Meeting of the Codex Contact Points in the Arab Region

PREPARATION FOR THE 29ᵀᴴ SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS (CCFO29)

Presented by Syria

Agenda Item 8.2

Development of a Structured Approach for Data Collection on the Applicability of Section 3.2.3 Footnote (c) of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils (CXS 33-1981)

(Prepared by the Syrian Arab Republic)

the Syrian Arab Republic is submitting this discussion paper with the aim to:

•Inform the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) of developments and actions undertaken by Syria and other members of CCNE since CAC47

•Provide technical considerations to support the development of a structured and inclusive framework for data collection on the applicability of Section 3.2.3 footnote (c) of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils.

•Seek continued guidance from CCFO on the alignment of the approach proposed with the data collection efforts underway to underpin updates of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils.

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Background

The Syrian Arab Republic indicated that the current provisions of Section 3.2.3 and its associated footnote (c) may not fully reflect the natural compositional characteristics of authentic olive oils produced in certain regions. In particular, data generated from Syrian olive cultivars indicate naturally higher levels of Δ7-stigmastenol and ΔECN42 than those specified in the decision tree, which may result in the misclassification of genuine virgin olive oils as non-authentic.

- **CAC47 further agreed to:**

•Initiate work on data collection to assess the applicability of footnote (c) to all authentic olive oils.

•Request the Codex Secretariat to develop a framework for data collection, including consultations and a Circular Letter

•Invite FAO, resources permitting, to convene an expert working group to analyze the collected data.

Considerations for a Data Collection Framework

❖ **Representativeness:**
Data should cover multiple cultivars, regions, and harvest seasons to capture natural variability..

❖ **Harmonized protocols:**
Sampling, extraction, and analysis should follow internationally recognized methods (e.g. IOC methods) to ensure comparability.

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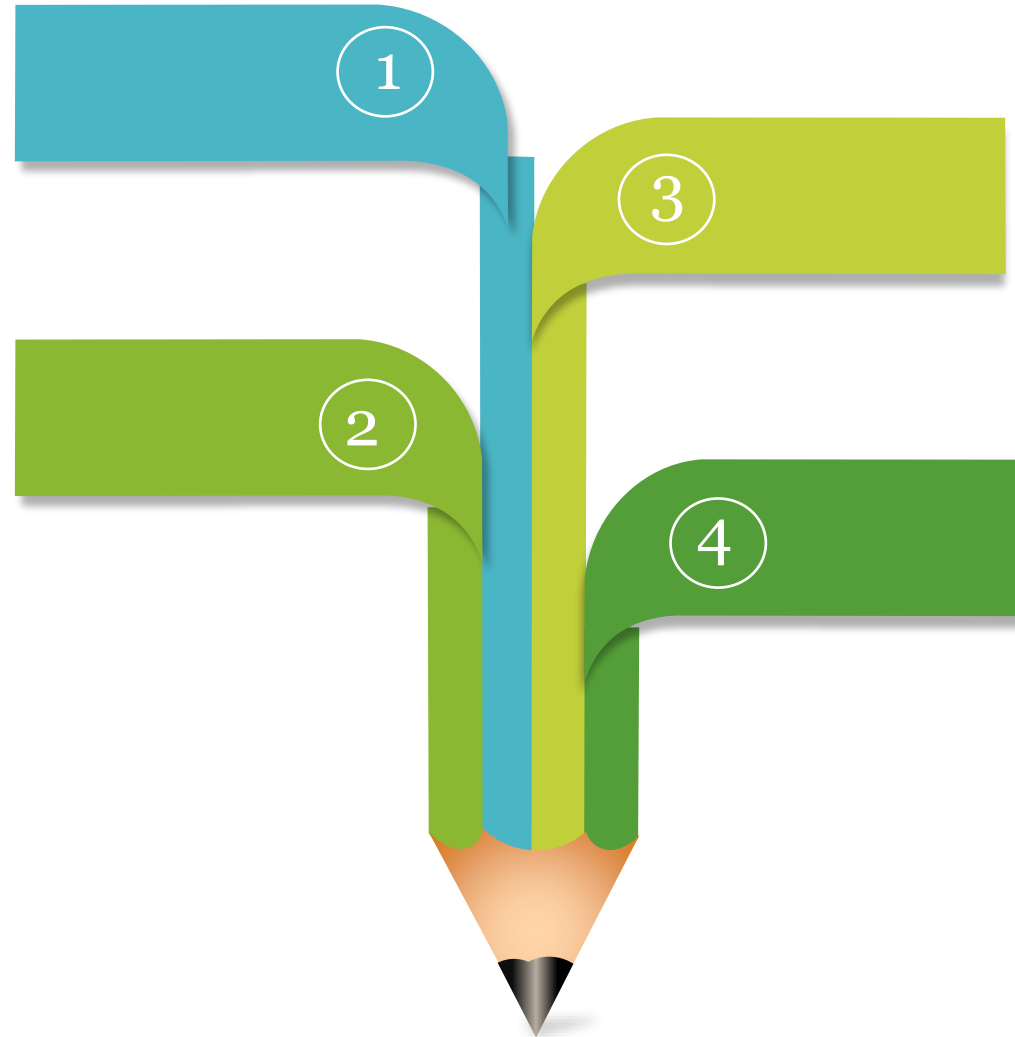
❖ **Inclusion of existing data:**
Where appropriate, historical datasets may complement newly generated data...

❖ **Regional engagement:**
Coordination among interested Members, including through regional mechanisms such as the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE), could facilitate efficient data generation and capacity building.

Out come of CCNE12

- **CCNE12 agreed to invite Members to contribute relevant data in coordination with regional stakeholders**

- **Inform Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29) of this regional commitment.**

- **Encourage FAO and Codex partners to provide technical support for data generation and analysis.**

CCFO may wish to consider:

- How the CAC47 request on footnote (c) could be coordinated or sequenced with existing work streams.

- The implications for timelines, recognizing that robust data collection and analysis may require several years.

- How Members and Observers can be encouraged to contribute data in a coordinated and transparent manner.

- What mechanisms could best support analysis and interpretation of the collected data, including possible FAO expert involvement.

8. Concluding Remarks

- **The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its commitment to contributing data and to cooperating with other olive oil–producing countries and relevant international and regional organizations, including CCNE, the Arab Olive Office, FAO, the International Olive Council (IOC), and regional standardization bodies, with a view to ensuring that Codex provisions appropriately reflect the natural diversity of authentic olive oils across agro climatic regions.**

- **This collaborative effort is intended to support the work of the Codex Alimentarius by promoting scientific rigor, inclusiveness, and fair practices in international trade.**

- **In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic invites Codex Members and stakeholders to contribute to the data-generation efforts related to the applicability of Section 3.2.3 footnote (c) of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils, and to coordinate such activities, as appropriate, within the framework of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO).**

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Structured Plan for Data Collection:

The plan involves generating new data through a representative sampling strategy that captures the characteristics of Syrian olive cultivars at various maturity stages, with the possibility of including samples from neighboring countries and CCNE producing countries to reflect broader regional variability:

• Targeted cultivars and regions in Syria: Sampling from key cultivars such as Sorani (Idlib), Zeiti (Aleppo), Qaisi (Aleppo), Khodairi (Latakia), Daaibli (Tartous), and Nabali (Homs/Hama).

• Sampling method: Olive fruits will be collected over two seasons (2025 and 2026) from marked trees in three ripening stages (early, mid, late), based on the Jaén index. Extraction will be done using centrifuge systems under laboratory conditions.

• Analysis: Samples will be classified for quality and stored appropriately (3 × 500 mL) before being sent to accredited laboratories for analysis. Parameters tested include fatty acid profile, sterol composition (including Δ7-stigmastenol), ΔECN42, free acidity, peroxide value, and UV absorbance, using IOC-approved methods.

• Stakeholder inclusion: Large export companies can also be sampled, as commercial oils often represent blended varieties due to national production and marketing practices.

The same protocol can be extended to other CCNE member countries sharing similar pedological and climatic conditions (e.g. Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Türkiye), in a coordinated regional effort to build a representative and scientifically robust database on regional olive oil characteristics.