



## Report of the 45th Meeting of the Codex Contact Points of the Arab and Near East Countries— Chaired by the CCNE Coordinator

In the context of preparations for the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29), scheduled to be held from 9 to 13 February 2026 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a coordination meeting was held on Wednesday, 4 February 2026, for the contact points of the Arab countries and the Near East region. The meeting, chaired by the Regional Coordinator, was conducted virtually and attended by representatives from the following countries:

1. Arab Republic of Egypt
2. Kingdom of Bahrain
3. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
4. Islamic Republic of Iran
5. Kingdom of Morocco
6. Lebanese Republic
7. State of Libya
8. Republic of Iraq
9. Republic of Sudan
10. Republic of Tunisia
11. State of Qatar
12. Sultanate of Oman
13. Syrian Arab Republic
14. United Arab Emirates
15. Republic of Yemen

**In addition to representatives of the following organizations:**

- **The Arab Codex Initiative – Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)**
- **The Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)**
- **The Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO)**

Dr. Intissar Al-Gharibi, the Regional Coordinator for the Near East, opened the meeting with a welcoming address to the participants, explaining that the meeting is held within the framework of effective participation in the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils, as a continuation of the discussions held during the previous meeting, and with the aim of unifying the regional position in a manner that reflects the interests of the region and contributes to enhancing effective participation in the work of the Committee. She emphasized the importance of reaching shared and clear views in order to achieve collective and effective action, and expressed her appreciation to the technical expert team and the Member Countries for their efforts in analyzing the priority items for the region. She also noted that the agenda items of the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils would be reviewed during the meeting.

This was followed by an opening statement delivered by the Coordinator of the Arab Codex Initiative, Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer, in which he expressed his pleasure at attending the meeting and extended his thanks to Dr. Intissar Al-Gharibi, the Regional Coordinator for the Near East, for her continued efforts in serving the interests of the countries of the region and enhancing effective participation in Codex work. He also expressed his appreciation to the Global Food Regulatory Science Society for the technical and scientific support provided to the work of the Arab Codex Initiative and extended special thanks to the Gulf Standardization Organization for its efforts in supporting and ensuring the success of the Initiative's activities. He further thanked the team of experts from the Member Countries who would present the agenda items during the meeting. He emphasized the importance of the forty-fifth meeting, held within the framework of the work of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29), for the countries of the region, expressing his hope that the meeting would result in outcomes and recommendations that serve the interests of the Arab countries and the region.

This was followed by a statement delivered by Eng. Ahmed Al-Basha, Head of the Standards Department at the Gulf Standardization Organization, in which he thanked all participants and highlighted the importance of countries' participation through various initiatives and proposals, commending the countries for their preparation of presentations related to the agenda items. He emphasized the importance of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils for the region and noted that it had been proposed to include this Committee among the priority committees for the region, pointing out that olive oil falls within the scope of the Committee's work. He concluded his remarks by wishing the meeting a productive and successful outcome, and by thanking all attendees for their active participation.

Eng. Asma Al-Hashimi, Facilitator of the work of the Expert Group concerned with the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29), delivered a statement in which she thanked everyone for giving her the opportunity to participate with them in the preparations for

the Committee's work, and expressed her appreciation to the Expert Group on Fats and Oils for their efforts. She explained that the establishment of the Group came within the framework of the Arab Codex Initiative and in implementation of the work plan adopted by the Near East Coordinating Committee at its twelfth meeting, with the aim of activating the region's priorities within Codex committees and supporting and coordinating regional positions.

She noted that the Group comprises 21 experts representing 10 countries and has worked under the joint supervision of the Global Food Regulatory Science Society and the Secretariat of the Near East Coordinating Committee, emphasizing that the work was carried out in a spirit of teamwork, with tasks distributed, technical analyses and presentations prepared, and expertise exchanged. She concluded her statement by thanking all members of the Group for their efforts and contributions.

Dr. Ruba Goussous Facilitator of the Working Group and Operations Manager at the Global Food Regulatory Science Society, then delivered a welcoming address to the participants, highlighting the importance of cooperation and technical support from the supporting entities, and thanking the Expert Group for their commitment and active participation. She provided an overview of the work of the Working Group concerned with the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils, which was established based on nominations from the contact points of the Member Countries, with tasks allocated according to the priority items identified by the Member Countries.

She explained that Lebanon prepared agenda item 3, while a sub-group was formed for agenda item 5 comprising Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, and Sudan to review the analytical document and prepare the presentation. A sub-group was also formed for agenda item 8.1 comprising Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan to review the analytical document and add the technical items to the presentation, while Syria undertook the preparation of the presentation for agenda item 8.2 (discussion paper) and Lebanon the review of the required areas of support. As for the final agenda item, 9.3, a sub-group comprising Yemen and Syria was formed to prepare the presentation and discuss the priority issues.

She further noted that two coordination meetings were held to follow up on the progress of the work and concluded her statement by thanking all members of the Group for their efforts and effective contributions.

**Following that, the agenda of the meeting was reviewed and its items approved as follows:**

Fr	En	Ar	رقم البند
Remarques d'ouverture et adoption de l'ordre du jour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinateur du CCNE</li> <li>• Coordinateur de l'Initiative Arabe du Codex</li> <li>• Ing. Ahmed Al-Basha, (GSO)</li> </ul>	Opening Remarks and adoption of the Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCNE Coordinator</li> <li>• Arab Codex Initiative Coordinator</li> <li>• Eng. Ahmed Al-Basha (GSO)</li> </ul>	كلمات افتتاحية واعتماد جدول الأعمال <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• المنسق الإقليمي للشرق الأدنى</li> <li>• منسق المبادرة العربية للدستور الغذائي</li> <li>• المهندس احمد البشه هيئة التقييس لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجية</li> </ul>	البند الأول

Remarques de Dr Ruba Goussous et de l'Ingénieure Asma Alhashmi, coordinateurs du groupe de travail du Comité du Codex sur les graisses et les huiles (CCFO).	Remarks by Dr. Ruba Goussous and Eng. Asmaa Alhashmi, Coordinators of the Working Group of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO)	كلمة د. ربي القسوس و م. اسما الهاشمية منسقي مجموعة العمل الخاصة بلجنة الدستور الغذائي المعنية بالدهون والزيوت (CCFO)	البند الثاني
<p>Analyse des points de l'ordre du jour de la 29<sup>e</sup> session du Comité du Codex sur les graisses et les huiles (CCFO29):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Élément 3: (République libanaise)</li> <li>• Élément 5: (République arabe d'Égypte, République tunisienne, République arabe syrienne, République du Soudan)</li> <li>• Élément 8.1: (Royaume hachémite de Jordanie, République tunisienne, République libanaise)</li> <li>• Élément 8.2: (République arabe syrienne)</li> <li>• Élément 9.3: (République du Yémen, République arabe syrienne)</li> </ul>	<p>Analysis of the agenda items of the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 3: (Lebanese Republic)</li> <li>• Item 5: (Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Tunisia, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of the Sudan)</li> <li>• Item 8.1: (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of Tunisia, Lebanese Republic)</li> <li>• Item 8.2: (Syrian Arab Republic)</li> <li>• Item 9.3: (Republic of Yemen, Syrian Arab Republic)</li> </ul>	<p>تحليل بنود جدول اعمال الدورة 29 للجنة الدستور الغذائي المعنية بالدهون والزيوت (CCFO29) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• البند 3: (الجمهورية اللبنانية)</li> <li>• البند 5: (جمهورية مصر العربية، الجمهورية التونسية، الجمهورية العربية السورية، الجمهورية السودانية)</li> <li>• البند 8.1: (المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية، الجمهورية التونسية، الجمهورية اللبنانية)</li> <li>• البند 8.2: (الجمهورية العربية السورية)</li> <li>• البند 9.3: (الجمهورية اليمنية، الجمهورية العربية السورية)</li> </ul>	البند الثالث

### **Item 3: Analysis of the agenda items of the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29)**

#### **Agenda Item 3: (Lebanese Republic)**

A presentation was delivered on the activities of international organizations relevant to the work of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils, within the framework of preparations for the twenty-ninth session of the Committee (CCFO29). The presentation addressed key emerging issues issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization, including foresight on food safety, future food innovations, and food safety in the circular economy, in addition to updates on policies and guidelines related to

nutrition and public health. The importance of monitoring these developments and benefiting from them at both the national and regional levels was also highlighted, in support of the Committee's work and the strengthening of food safety systems.

**Agenda Item 5: (Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Tunisia, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Sudan)**

The proposed amendments to the draft Codex standard for fats and oils, aimed at reducing the consumption of trans fatty acids (TFAs), were discussed within the framework of Step 3 of the Codex procedures. The item reviewed the background of ongoing work to support the World Health Organization's REPLACE initiative to eliminate the consumption of industrially produced trans fatty acids, as well as the scope of work of the electronic working group tasked with reviewing a number of related fats and oils standards.

The discussions also addressed technical and regulatory issues related to the definitions of trans fatty acids and partially hydrogenated oils (and/or), noting that the United Arab Emirates requested keeping "and" without "or," setting limits or prohibiting their use, and ensuring consistency with other Codex texts, while emphasizing flexibility in national-level implementation. The topic of blending non-hydrogenated oils was also discussed, in addition to the 2% limit set by the World Health Organization for countries that have not yet legislated for partially hydrogenated oils.

**Agenda Item 8.1: (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of Tunisia, Lebanese Republic)**

A presentation was delivered on the progress made in collecting and analyzing the scientific data necessary for the review of the Olive Oil and Olive-Pomace Oil Standard (CXS 33-1981), within the framework of the work of the electronic working group on scientific data. The presentation covered the scope and methodology of data collection, including key quality indicators such as free fatty acids, ethyl esters of fatty acids, acidity, peroxide values, and sensory defects, taking into account the effects of storage conditions and time. It was noted that a substantial amount of scientific data sufficient to conduct a preliminary analysis had been collected, particularly regarding the development of the PPP and 1,2-DAG indicators. Different opinions on the adequacy of the current data were also discussed, with a proposal to adopt a dual approach that continues data collection in parallel with initiating analysis within the framework of the electronic working group.

**Agenda Item 8.2: (Syrian Arab Republic)**

A discussion paper was submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the development of an organized approach for collecting data related to the applicability of Footnote (c) of paragraph 3.2.3 of the Codex Standard for Olive Oil and Olive-Pomace Oil (CXS 33-1981). The paper indicated that certain natural compositional characteristics of authentic olive oils produced in specific regions may not be adequately reflected in the current provisions of the standard, which could result in the inaccurate classification of some authentic oils.

The paper also reviewed the background related to Codex Alimentarius Commission decisions (CAC47), and proposed technical considerations for establishing a coordinated and comprehensive framework for data collection, emphasizing the importance of regional coordination, harmonization of analytical protocols, and ensuring data representativeness. It was noted that the concerned countries are committed to contributing to the data collection efforts and cooperating with relevant international and regional entities, in support of reviewing the standard on a sound scientific basis.

Additionally, Tunisia proposed that a request be made by the contact points of the regional countries and Arab countries to the member countries of the International Olive Council, so that the Council could supervise the process and ensure that the results are officially endorsed.

### **Agenda Item 9.3: (Republic of Yemen, Syrian Arab Republic)**

A presentation was delivered by both the Republic of Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic regarding a proposed amendment to the Codex Standard for Named Vegetable Oils (CXS 210-1999), aimed at revising the minimum stearic acid content in high-oleic sunflower oil from 2.9% to 2.1%, reflecting the natural variation in the fatty acid composition of modern cultivars.

The presentation addressed the nutritional and commercial importance of high-oleic sunflower oil, particularly its suitability for frying applications according to World Health Organization recommendations, as well as the increasing global demand for this oil. The potential impacts of the current standard requirements on international trade were also discussed, including technical barriers and the possible rejection of compliant shipments, with emphasis that the proposed amendment does not compromise food safety or product identity. The amendment is expected to facilitate trade, improve consumer protection, and enhance consistency among sunflower oil standards within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius.

### **Closing Remarks**

The meeting concluded with remarks from Dr. Intissar Al-Gharibi, Eng. Ahmed Al-Basha, and Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer , in which they expressed their gratitude to all participants and speakers at the meeting, as well as to the coordination team of the Expert Group, all countries that contributed to the presentations, and the experts of the Arab Codex Initiative, with their best wishes for achieving the desired objectives.

Dr. Al-Gharibi concluded by thanking all experts and participants, extending her full appreciation and gratitude for their attendance and active participation, expressing her anticipation for continued cooperation, and wishing everyone success.

Special thanks and appreciation were extended to the representatives of the Lebanese Republic, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Tunisia, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Sudan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Republic of Yemen for their valuable efforts and active contributions in ensuring the success of the meeting.

## Recommendations

- Support Iran’s new work regarding Agenda Item 9.3.
- Prepare a CRD regarding Agenda Item 8.2 to support the discussion paper submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic.
- Continue the work of the Expert Group of the regional and Arab countries following CCFO29.

