

World Food Safety Day: The role of government in ensuring food safety in South Africa



Coordination of South Africa's participation in the activities of Codex Alimentarius Commission



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APPROACH



- What is Codex?
- Policy guidance
- Aim and objectives of SA participation
- SA participation including coordination and what constitute SA delegation
- Preparations for Codex Sessions (Prep and feed-back meetings)
- Opportunities for South Africa as a member of Codex
- Challenges faced by South Africa in its participation in Codex
(How can we improve?)

WHAT IS CODEX?



- Common name for the **Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission**
- An **intergovernmental body** established to implement the **Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme** established in 1963
- **Codex@60** - is to mark the achievements of **60 years of standard setting**
- Dual mandate **(i) To protect the health of consumers** and **(ii) To facilitate fair practices in international food trade**
- Codex texts are **voluntary** and **non-binding**. However, recognised by the WTO - SPS Agreement as the organisation to develop international food standards aimed at protecting human health
- In international trade disputes, Codex standards and guidelines may be cited as reference texts at the World Trade Organization (WTO).



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

COMPOSITION OF CODEX



- **As of June 2023 Codex consists of 189 members:** - 189 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (EU)
 - 235 Codex Observers - 60 IGOs, 159 NGOs, 16 UN
- **Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) - 49** Member countries belong to the Africa region
- Coordination also done at **Africa Union Commission (AUC)** through technical office - African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
- **Includes all members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**
 - Angola, Botswana, Comoros, DRC, eSwatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa,, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe



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CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES



- **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) - Decisions to adopt text**
- **Executive Codex Committee (CCEXEC) –**
- **General Subject Committees (10)**
 - ✓ CCCF, CCFA, CCFICS, CCFH, CCFL, CCGP, CCMAS, CCNFSDU, CCPR, CCRVDF
- **Commodity Committees (4)**
 - ✓ CCFFP, CCFFV, CCFO, CCSCH
- **FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (6)**
 - ✓ CCAFRICA, CCASIA, CCEURO, CCLAC, CCNASWP, CCNE

POLICY GUIDANCE



- The participation of South Africa in the international for a, notably the United Nations (UN) system and its agencies, is in response to the challenges that are central to the future of all humanity and that pose a threat to global political and economic stability and security.
- South Africa's participation in guided by its Foreign Policy and international relations programmes, which further recognizes that in order to achieve a better life for all, development, must be pursued from a global perspective.



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AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF SA's PARTICIPATION



- South Africa's participation in the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is driven by the vision to contribute and influence Codex Standards, Codes of Practice and guidelines in order to protect the health of its people and promote fair practices in international food trade to the benefit of its food industry in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.



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Coordination of RSA participation in Codex



- A member of the CAC since 1994
- Established the National Codex Contact Point within the Department of Health, Directorate: Food Control
- South Africa participate in Codex through 3 Competent Authorities:
 - Department of Health (DOH)
 - Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)
 - National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS)
- Currently actively participates in **15** Codex subsidiary bodies, each with a Coordinator.
- SA coordinate participation through the Codex Contact Point (NCCP) and National Codex Coordinators Forum (NCCF)



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Coordination of RSA participation in Codex ..continued



- Coordinators are officials with subject expertise on activities of specific Codex Committees. Nominated by Competent Authorities
- Coordinators are usually the chosen to be heads of delegations
- We also for Guidelines from DIRCO, wherein participation will always be led by senior official/representative
- Participation is also in liaison with our Foreign representations abroad.



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List of committees and national coordinators



CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES	NATIONAL COORDINATORS
1. COMMISSION	Mr. Malose Matlala (National Codex Contact Point)
2. Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)	Mr. Malose Matlala (National Codex Contact Point)
3. Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU)	Ms Nolene Naicker Department of Health Secunder: Ms. Zandile Kubeka (DoH)
4. Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS)	Mr. E Morkue, (DALRRD) Secunder: Ms Anele Bougart, (National Health Laboratory Services)
5. Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)	Ms S. Parring, Department of Health Secunder: Mr Deon JAcobs (NRCS)
6. Codex Committee on Residues for Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRDVF)	Dr Alice Sigobodhla (SAHPRA) Secunder: Dr. Mphane Molefe (DALRRD)
7. Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)	Ms A Madzivhandila (DoH) Secunder: Ms. Precious Mkula (DALRRD)
8. Codex Committee on Food Labelling	Ms. A Godzwana, Department of Health Secunder: Ms. N Hoosen (DoH)



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national regulator for
compulsory specifications



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List of Committees and National Coordinators....



CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES	NATIONAL COORDINATORS
9. Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS)	Mr Deon Jacobs, NRCS Seconder: Mr Gilbert Mediroe (DALRRD)
10. Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO)	Mr Simphiwe Mathenjwa, DALRRD Seconder: Ms. Purity Mkhize (DALRRD)
11. Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)	Ms Yvonne Tsiane, DoH Seconder: Ms Julia Masuku, DoH
12. Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF)	Ms Julia Masuku, DoH Seconder: Ms Yvonne Tsiane, DoH
13. Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV)	Ms Caroline Makobe Seconder: Ms. Tebogo Chipane (DALRRD)
14. Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP)	Mr Deon Jacobs, NRCS Seconder: Mr John Foord (DFFE)
15. Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa	Mr. MD Matlala (National Codex Contact Point)

Guidance for Coordinators and Seconders



- Competent Authorities (DOH, DALRRD, NRCS) responsible for food safety and food control have improved i.t.o communication, coordination, and preparation for Codex meetings with the stakeholders.
- The roles of the Coordinators/Seconders have been maximized to ensure that inputs and country positions are made through effective engagement and participation of various stakeholders. This has led to increased contribution of inputs and comments from stakeholders (mostly industry organizations).
- Participation of Coordinators/Seconders in seminars/workshops of stakeholders (industry to consumer organisations, as well as academic programmes) on the relevance of Codex and to encourage stakeholder participation in these programmes. This has led to an understanding that.. **“Food Safety, everyone's business and everybody’s responsibility”**



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Preparations for Codex Sessions/EWG/OCS



- Preparations for Codex Sessions (**Preparatory meetings**)
- Solicit inputs and expert advice from stakeholders (incl. industry, research institutions, academia etc.)
- Provide rationale and justification (science or other factors)
- Consultations in preparing national positions (preparatory meetings)
 - **Physical vs Electronic**
- Reporting back: **Feed-back meetings (1 – 4 weeks from the meetings/sessions)**



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Opportunities for participation of South Africa in Codex



- South Africa considers Codex text (Standards) when developing Legislation
- Codex text has improved and lessened impediments to international trade by providing clear guidance, to ensure harmonisation in view of our obligations to WTO Agreements
- The justification from the 4 expert bodies (JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA and JEMNU) that provide scientific advice to Codex, FAO/WHO, which offer the sound scientific evidence and justification to defend legislation. Not every country has resources for scientific advise and risk assessments
- Virtual and Hybrid participation allowed Members which cannot travel and attend physical meetings
- The OCS and EWG which provide opportunity to participate of Standards development.



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Opportunities for participation of South Africa in Codexcontinued



- SA gained in the improved ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of its members, including emerging issues.
- Empowered Members in the role they play in the context of managing food safety particularly during a global pandemic. Codex standards and guidelines has assisted during the Covid-19 pandemic (clarifying confusions and misinformation)
- The work of Codex has also to enable the understanding of food safety by our policy makers. Ensuring that there is always support and sustainable resource allocation for the development, implementation and application of national legislation.



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Challenges faced by South Africa in its participation in Codex



- Consistency and continuity in attendance – resources e.g. Gov, etc.
- Effective preparation, including inputs in standards development from stakeholders due to limited access to stakeholders' participation (expert advice)
- Lack/ low level of participation from the industry or other relevant stakeholders (e.g. academia, research organizations) in EWG and OCS. In the case where there is, often the participants have limited/ no expertise in the subject matter.
- Lack of scientific data to support positions during the sessions



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Understanding Codex



- There is a number of publications which can be accessed on the Codex webpage. <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/en/>
- Specific publication called “Understanding Codex’ can be downloaded on the link <https://www.fao.org/3/CA1176EN/ca1176en.pdf>
- Further information can be obtained at the Codex Contact Office;

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Remember !!!.....“Food safety is everyone’s business”

