

COMMENTS FROM BRAZIL

Questions for the e-Forum

FAO/WHO encourage the Codex members to propose ways that relevant Codex Committees could support the promotion of healthy dietary habits within the Codex structure and mandate and, in turn, assist the implementation of the Global Strategy/DPAH.

The following set of questions are offered to guide this reflection. However, further input and suggestions outside the scope of the questions are also welcomed

1. Does the Codex Alimentarius Commission have a role in the implementation of the Global Strategy/DPAH?
 - If yes, please describe would that role should be? Please include in your consideration the topic areas that are relevant. Are the following areas pertinent: (i) food composition standards, and (ii) provision of nutrition and health information about foods to facilitate informed choice by consumers?

The Codex Alimentarius' objectives include the protection of consumers' health and the guarantee of fair practices in food trade. In order to fulfill its activities, the established principles refer to the function of science in the decision making process, as long as to other factors. According to the principles statement, approved by the 21th Section, the food guidelines and others recommendations are based in the principle of scientific analysis containing the exhaustive exam of the all information available to guarantee the food quality and security.

The WHO Technical Report Series 916 publication about Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases, gathers regional and global food consumption characteristics and trends and scientific evidence that strongly support the adoption of measures to promote healthier diets, culminated with the approval of the WHA 55.23 Resolution, in May 2004, that established the Global Strategy for Food, Physical Activity and Health.

The WHA 55.23 Resolution recommends specific actions related to national food directives for governments, correct and balanced information, food commerce, publicity, sponsorship and promotion, labeling, the statement of healthy proprieties and the promotion food products according to a healthy diet. It also assumes that WHO, in cooperation with other institutions, will assume the leadership in formulating scientific recommendations to promote an international action directed to improve feeding habits and will be in contact with international food industries. In this context, the Codex Alimentarius becomes a privileged environment to propose alimentary norms and to induce conduction practices in elaborating food and rules for labeling and advertising. It is also important that the WHA 56.23 Resolution, about the joint FAO/WHO evaluation of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, endorses the increasing direct involvement of WHO in the Commission, as well as strengthening the actions in the food and nutrition security field.

2. Are the following issues pertinent to Codex Committees' activities related to the implementation of the Global Strategy/DPAH?
- scientific advice about the nature of the evidence needed to support the use of health claims.
 - scientific advice concerning consumer use and understanding of labelling and/or labelling approaches and formats.
 - Are there other areas where scientific advice would be pertinent?
 - i. authoritative statements about the attributes of a diet in reducing risk of a diet-related disease, especially what impacts there would be on the health of consumers if the amount of energy/nutrients is increased or decreased.
 - ii. risk assessments for nutrients and related substances in relation to the Global Strategy/DPAH.

By understanding that the issues related to the Global Strategy are based in directives of deep scientific analysis, that take part in the exhausting examination of all relevant information attaining to nutrition and public health themes, all areas mentioned above (“a”, “b” and “c”) can be focused in order to include the principles of healthy dietary practices.

However, the group of principles that arise from the Global Strategy must give origin to a specific document of the Codex Alimentarius, intended: to guide the application of production and elaboration rules related to the nutritional quality and to the safety of products in terms of their macronutrient content; to produce labels that better inform the consumers about the composition of foods and their benefits; and to adopt measures to reduce the repercussions of commercializing unhealthy dietary habits to a minimal amount.

3. Given the importance of nutrition issues in general to the Global Strategy/DPAH and the cross-cutting nature of nutrition as a topic that cuts across the Codex system, what process could be used to manage and coordinate nutrition issues throughout the Codex system?
- Please respond within the context of the Terms of Reference of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.
 - What role can Codex Committees play in the overall management of nutrition issues within the Codex Alimentarius Commission?

The elaboration of a Book of Practices for applying the principles of healthy dietary habits as part of the Codex's work by an advisory committee or by an Ad Hoc working group, composed by experts and representatives of the national food and nutrition committees for special affairs and food labeling, could represent huge advance in including the issues related to the Global Strategy. The opening of space for establishing a Book of Practices would allow us to expand the dialogue with the productive sector, to

define goals in nutrient reduction for groups of prioritized products, to define specific allegations for foods that gather the attributes recommended by healthy dietary practices, to deal with issues related to labeling and advertising and to confirm the articulation of international organizations for the commitment in spreading the Global Strategy recommendations among all areas responsible for inducing the environmental transformations needed for preventing and reducing non-communicable chronic diseases.

Brasília,
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