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# Codex Alimentarius Commission

## Role of the United Nations in Implementing Food Safety and Ensuring Global Nutrition

### Food Safety and Quality Summit

8 May 2014

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates




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Director General, Food  
Directorate, Health Canada

Vice-Chair, Codex  
Alimentarius Commission

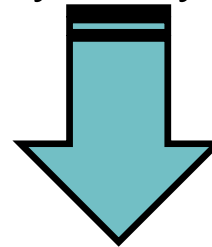
**Canada** 

- 
- ✓ Raison d'être / Rationale for an International Food Standard setter : Codex Alimentarius Commission
  - ✓ Achievements / Impact on food safety
  - ✓ Current trends driving food standard setting
  - ✓ Challenges, perspectives and Future areas of intervention
  - ✓ How Can Codex standards be leveraged domestically and regionally

## History and Rationale

### Foods without Borders:

- Food products are amongst the most traded commodities
- Foods are important contributors to Health of consumers internationally
- Information about risks and benefits associated with foods is provided by many sources



1963-2013

Need for a reference body to guide food standard development internationally



## Codex Alimentarius Commission : Raison d'être

- Established in 1963 by the United Nation's FAO and WHO: intergovernmental body that elaborates food standards under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme:
  - Develops harmonized international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice with the objective :
    - ✓ To protect consumers' health
    - ✓ To ensure fair practices in the food trade
  - Promotes coordination of all food standards work by international governmental and non-governmental organisations
- An international focal point for informed discussions on food related issues



## CAC : Modus Operandi

### ❑ The Codex Alimentarius Commission CAC aims to be:

The preeminent international food standards setting body to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade

### ❑ In Developing standards, Codex aims to promote

- Collaboration,
- Inclusiveness,
- Consensus building and transparency



### ❑ The CAC elaborates its standards via a set of subsidiary bodies:

- General subject committees (e.g. contaminants, additives, labelling etc..)
- Commodity committees (e.g. fish and fish products, fresh fruit and vegetables etc..)
- Ad hoc intergovernmental taskforces
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees







## Science-Based Standards : the Food Code

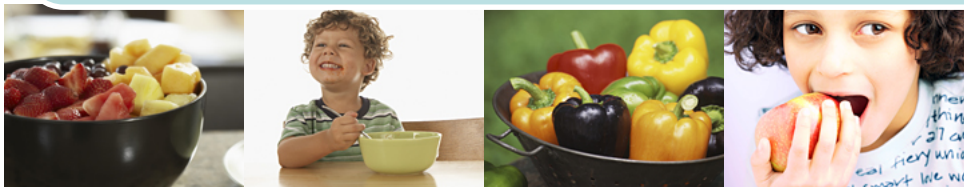
Codex develops:

Science-based standards, codes of practice guidelines and other requirements

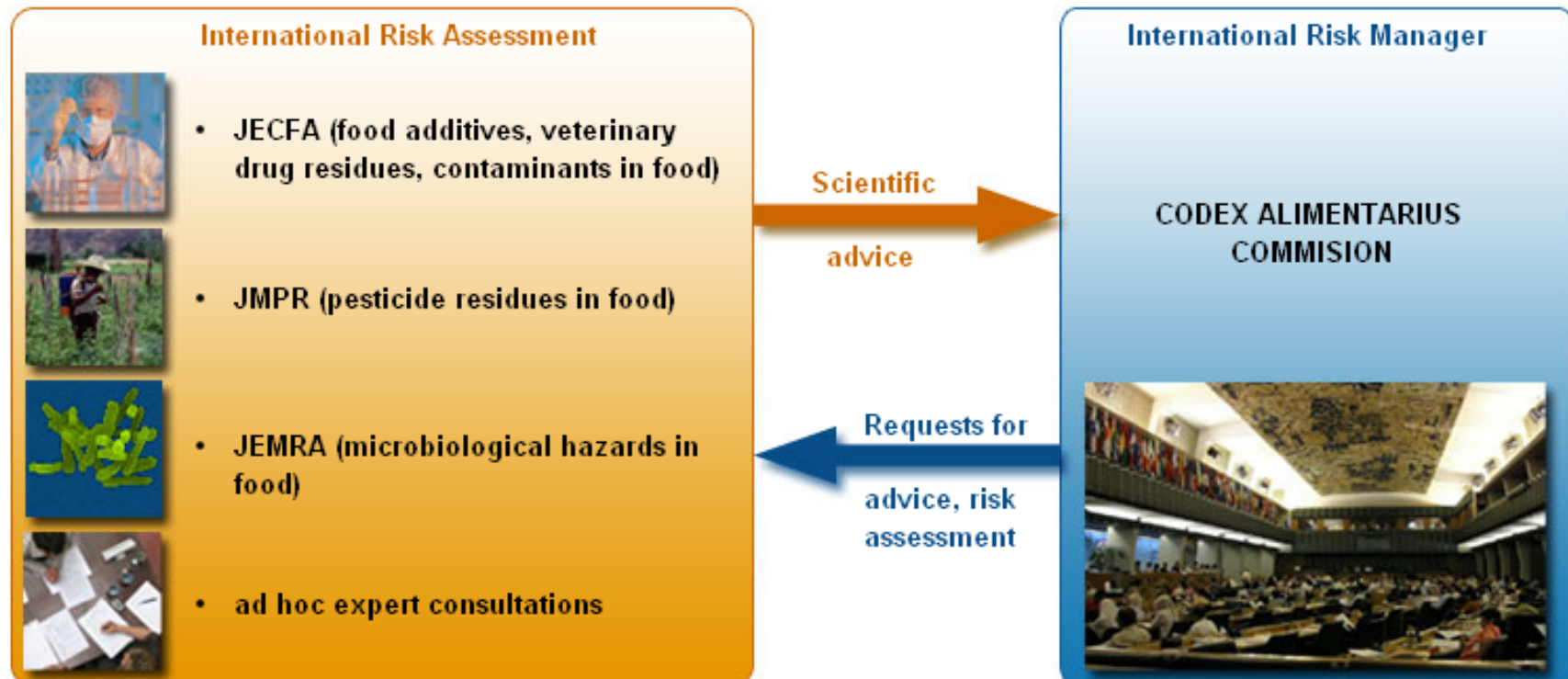
Guidance to apply these standards across the continuum of the food supply chain

**The CAC is the international food risk manager**

**Independent, impartial and credible scientific assessments provided by WHO and FAO constitute the backbone of Codex scientific standards**



# Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program



## Expected impacts of Codex Standards

- Greater global and national awareness of food safety and quality issues:
  - More available data and stimulated activities in food technology, food chemistry, microbiology, nutrition, pesticide and veterinary drug development and safe use.
- Aim to apply a consistent approach in assessing and managing food safety risks and food quality internationally
- Enhanced consumers' health protection globally
- Proactive mitigation of trade irritants related to food standards
- Leveraged international efforts to support domestic risk management decisions and regulations





# Codex addressed a number of emerging challenges

## Food Chemical Safety

- Management of Chloropropanols ( e.g. 3-MCPD) in processed sauces
- Management of acrylamide in processed foods
- Management of potential melamine contamination of foods
- Management of safe use of chemicals in conjunction with food production : e.g. Veterinary drugs, pesticides and additives

## Food Microbial Safety:

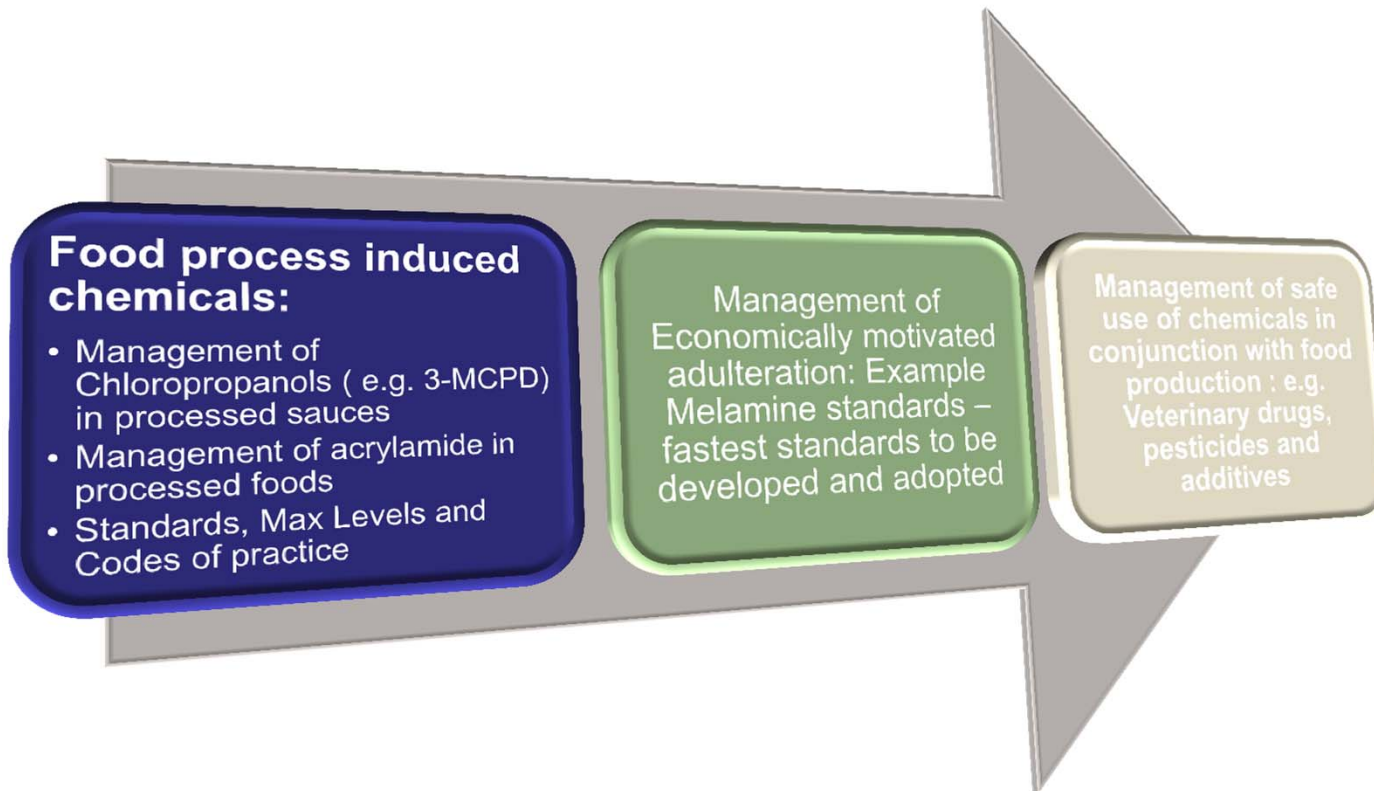
- Code of hygienic practice for powdered infant formulae for young children and infants
- Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food

## Labelling as a public health tool:

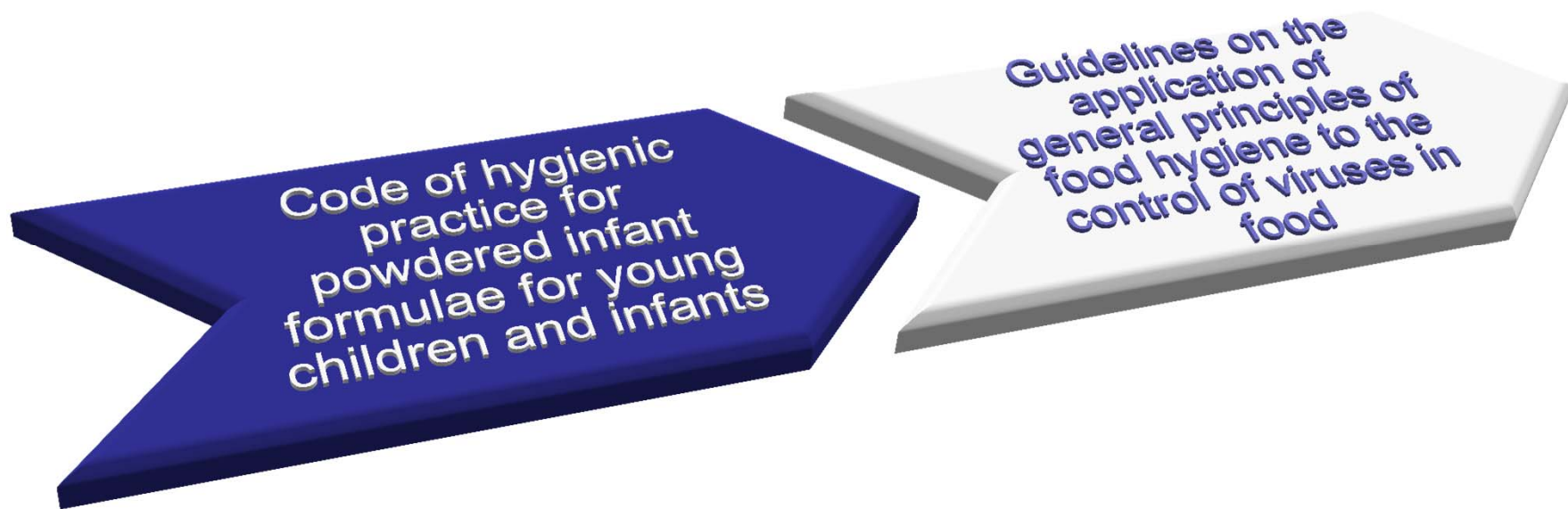
- Identification of a list of priority allergens subject to mandatory labelling
- Guidance on application of Gluten free labelling
- Mandatory nutrition labelling of foods



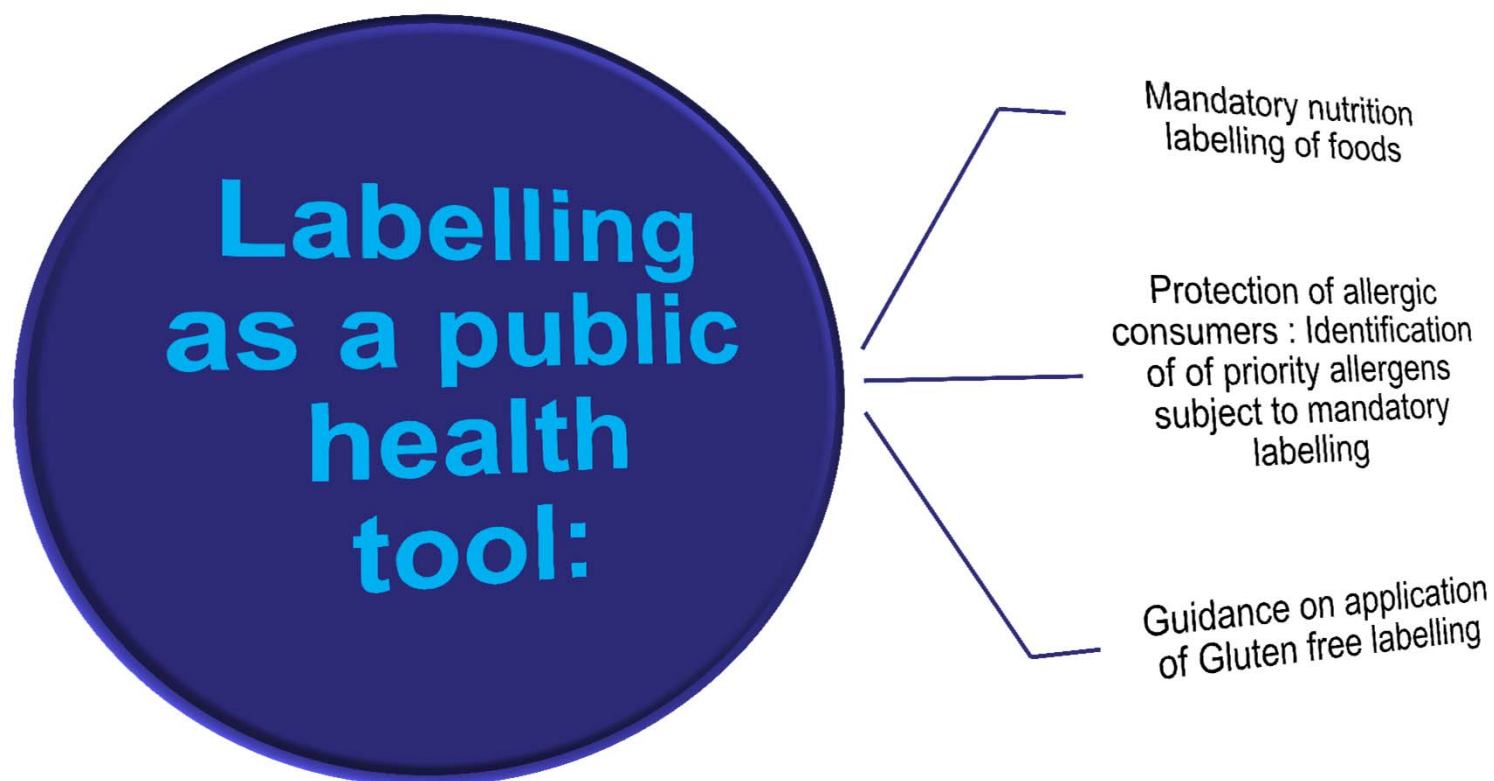
# Codex addressed Food Chemical Safety Issues



# Codex developed leading microbiological safety guidance



# Codex addressed public health issues through labelling





# Codex far-reaching impacts on food quality and food safety systems

Codex supported food quality, consumer protection and easier movement of food and agri-food products

- Quality standards : Chocolate, Halal foods, spices
- Supported safety conditions for foods amongst the most traded: fats, oils, mineral waters
- Guidance on inspection and certification requirements







## Trends influencing the future of the role of Codex

- Expanding international trade of food /ingredients
- Changing food production practices
- Scientific and technological innovation
- Climate change
- Changing Consumer concerns / interests
- Emergence of food safety risks associated with economic fraud



# Challenges for the Codex Alimentarius Commission

- Need for timely scientific assessments supporting the development of standards

- Ability to respond swiftly to emerging needs with a “commensurate” science advice capacity

- Proliferation of sources of scientific information

**Scientific Assessment Requirements**

**Proliferation of private standards**

- Development of a number of standards by private organisations, which may result in impeding trade

- Importance of contribution of developing countries – so that standards are globally representative



## Strategic Plan of the CAC 2014 - 2019

- The 36<sup>th</sup> Session (July 2013) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted its new Strategic Plan for the biennia 2014 – 2019
- Vision:
  - The Codex Alimentarius Commission strives to be the preeminent international food standard setting body to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade
  - Codex will strive to adapt to the evolving environment, be capable to proactively responding to emerging food safety and nutrition in a timely fashion, with the aim to protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in the food trade



## Strategic Plan of the CAC 2014 - 2019

Strategic goals for the Commission for the next biennia are:

- Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.
- Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards.
- Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members.
- Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices





# Canada and Codex



- ❖ Canada is one of the founding members of the CAC
- ❖ Canada continues to support and leverage the work of Codex
- ❖ Standards developed in Codex serve as a basis for Canadian food standards : adoption or adaptation to the Canadian context.
- ❖ Canada supports continued reliance of Codex on a solid, sustainable and reliable scientific advice:
  - Co-led the development of a WHA resolution on food safety advocating for sustainability of Codex
- ❖ Canada supports Codex efforts in maintaining its role as the preeminent food standard setting body internationally through :



## Opportunities for the Near East Region

- The Near East Region is an active contributor in Codex
- Codex has the potential to play the role of:
  - ❑ Driver of food standard development in the region
  - ❑ Catalyst to national and regional contribution in shaping an international food standard setting agenda



## Codex and the Near East Region

### □ Drivers / Opportunities to leverage Codex standards:

- ✓ While being diverse, the region enjoys similar dietary habits stemming from a rich common tradition and heritage in food preparation and consumption
- ✓ Similar dietary patterns
- ✓ Similar food production and food import patterns



## Codex and the Near East Region

- ❑ Common features create opportunities for coordination, cooperation and integration within the region to:
  - ✓ Leverage resources to contribute regional scientific input/data in the development of Codex food safety standards to ensure they **remain relevant for the region** :  
**Stronger leadership role at the international scene**
  - ✓ Formulate similar national food safety regulations that are based on Codex standards





- ✓ Codex : an inclusive, transparent, efficient, effective and proactive international food standard setter







고맙습니다 谢谢 תודה!  
*mahalo* *dėkuji*

**Thank You**

شكرا köszönöm gracias  
Ευχαριστώ merci  
どうもありがとう danke

