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Minor Use Foundation

Report on the African Regional Workshop on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) held on



16–17 September 2026
Emara Ole-Sereni Hotel
Nairobi, Kenya

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Executive Summary

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Minor Use Foundation (MUF), in partnership with CCAFRICA and the Codex Secretariat, convened a two-day preparatory workshop on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) in Nairobi, Kenya, ahead of CCCF19 in Cairo (19–23 October 2026). The workshop brought together delegates from Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, supported by facilitators and expert speakers from the Codex Secretariat, CCAFRICA, AU-IBAR, AOAC International, IITA, and national and international standards bodies. Its three objectives were to enhance delegates' technical understanding of Codex procedures and the scientific basis for contaminant standards, to strengthen regional coordination among national authorities on priority contaminants, and to prepare effective, procedurally confident delegations for CCCF19. The workshop's intended deliverable was build capacity for country-level and regional-level technical inputs — evidence and feasibility considerations — on contaminant themes like: aflatoxin B1 in feed materials and milk-producing animals, cadmium in cocoa and other foods, tropane alkaloids in cereal and feed systems, and lead in spices and blended foods, to feed into CCAFRICA's and AU-IBAR's ongoing coordination process.

Day 1 combined institutional grounding with a first technical theme. Following opening remarks from Anna Gore (MUF), Mamodou Bah (CCAFRICA) and the official opening by the Codex Chairperson, sessions from the Codex Secretariat (Gracia Brisco and Sarah Cahill) set out why CCCF participation matters within the wider Codex and WTO/SPS system and how the Codex step procedure, working groups and commenting tools operate in practice, while Mr. Bah presented CCAFRICA's strategy and process for building coordinated, evidence-based African positions ahead of Committee sessions. Mr Crossley presented on how to find Codex document, explained the role of JECFA risk assessments, and highlighted the process for data submission to FAO/WHO. Dr. Ortega-Beltran Alejandro of the IITA then presented the science and mitigation options for aflatoxin contamination in feed, linking these directly to the ongoing revision of relevant Codex Codes of Practice. The day also included a CCCF Chairperson-led Kenyan tea tasting connecting the country's tea varieties to the importance of contaminant compliance.

Day 2 deepened the technical and experience-sharing content. Doreen Koranteng of the Ghana Standards Authority presented the science, regulatory landscape and West African trade advantage around cadmium in cocoa; delegates from Egypt, Tanzania and Zambia shared their national processes for preparing CCCF positions and the common capacity and data constraints they face; Katerina Mastovska (AOAC International) set out recent developments in standardised analytical methods relevant to Africa's priority contaminants; and Hajj Aziz Kimera Mukota (Uganda National Bureau of Standards) and Naomi Kitur (Kenya Bureau of Standards) covered tropane alkaloids in cereals and lead

in spice mixtures respectively, both areas of active, unresolved Codex standard-setting in which African occurrence data remains limited. Each technical session was followed by national and plenary discussion, and where appropriate group exercises, structured to translate the day's technical and procedural grounding into draft country-level positions for CCCF19. The workshop closed with a CCAFRICA-led roadmap discussion in which delegates offered their own recommendations and feedback.

Key Overall Recommendations

- **Invest in national data generation and sharing** — prioritise occurrence, consumption and exposure data for high-risk commodities (e.g. maize, cocoa, spices), submit it to GEMS and JECFA calls for data, and work towards a regional data repository so that Codex maximum levels reflect African realities.
- **Build laboratory and analytical capacity** — invest in accredited testing capacity and validated methods, using lower-cost screening approaches where infrastructure is limited, provided these are validated against reference methods.
- **Strengthen sustained national coordination** — appoint and retain expert delegates rather than rotating new representatives, involve consumer associations, industry and academia in national position-setting, attend regional coordination meetings, and hold structured debriefs after Codex sessions.
- **Engage early and continuously in Codex processes** — join Electronic Working Groups from the outset, submit precise written comments through the Online Commenting System ahead of deadlines, and avoid over-reliance on Conference Room Documents.
- **Channel national positions into coordinated African positions** — route preparation through CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR, make full use of existing regional mechanisms such as the EAC Codex Forum.
- **Sustain capacity building and technical partnerships** — continue structured Codex training, particularly for new Codex Contact Points, and deepen collaboration with bodies such as AOAC International, IITA, CABI and academic and research institutions on standards and data generation.
- **Prioritize contaminant-specific activities.** Take a strategic approach by identifying and prioritizing those contaminants, and related activities, that are of regional importance. For example, integrate biocontrol into revised aflatoxin Codes of Practice, establish national cadmium and tropane-alkaloid monitoring, and contribute African occurrence data to the ongoing lead-in-spice-mixtures Electronic Working Group ahead of CCCF19 in Cairo.
- **Translate learning into action** — delegates were urged to implement what was learned, use the best available evidence and common sense where data remain incomplete, and act as champions for food contaminant management within their countries and institutions ahead of CCCF19.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ADI	Acceptable Daily Intake
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ARfD	Acute Reference Dose
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCCF	Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food
CCEXEC	Executive Committee (of the Codex Alimentarius Commission)
CCFA	Codex Committee on Food Additives
CCFH	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCPR	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
CCRVDF	Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods
CRDs	Conference Room Documents
EMRLs	Extraneous Maximum Residue Limits
EOS	Egyptian Organization for Standardization
EWG	Electronic Working Group
GEMS	Global Environment Monitoring System – Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
JECFA	Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives
MLs	Maximum Levels
NAMs	New Approach Methodologies
OCS	Online Commenting System
PTMI	Provisional Tolerable Monthly Intake
PTWI	Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Background

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Minor Use Foundation (MUF) convened a preparatory workshop on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) in Africa. The workshop was held at Emara Ole Sereni Hotel in Nairobi from 16-17th September 2026. It provided a platform to strengthen technical capacity, harmonize regional perspectives, and ensure Africa's voice is effectively represented in CCCF discussions. It fostered collaboration among regulators, laboratories, and stakeholders, enabling evidence-based contributions to Codex texts and risk assessments.

Objectives of the workshop

- Enhance technical understanding — build delegates' knowledge of Codex procedures, documentation, and the scientific basis for contaminant standards.
- Strengthen regional coordination — facilitate dialogue among national authorities to align positions on priority contaminants affecting African trade and food security.
- Prepare effective delegations — equip participants with advocacy, negotiation, and procedural skills to actively contribute at CCCF19.

Participating countries

Delegates were drawn from the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe; representing organizations with a direct mandate to CCCF.

Facilitators

Steve Crossley (Expert), Anna Gore (MUF), Katerina Mastovska (AOAC International), Mamadou Bah (CCAfrica), John Oppong (AU-IBAR), Gracia Briscoe (Codex Secretariat), Sarah Cahill (Codex Secretariat), Doreen Koranteng (Ghana Standards Authority), Aziz Mukota (Uganda National Bureau of Standards – UNBS), Naomi J. Kitur (Kenya Bureau of Standards – KEBS), Jane Kamau – International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Mellon Kabole (MUF).

Day 1 — Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Opening session

Anna Gore, Chief Executive Officer- Minor Use Foundation
Welcome Remarks



Ms. Gore opened the workshop with thanks to Dr. Allan Azegele, Chairperson of Codex, for presiding over the official opening, to Mr. Mamodou Bah and CCAFRICA and Mr. John Oppong-Otoo and AU-IBAR as co-convening partners, to the facilitators and expert speakers, including those joining virtually, and to the donors and delegates whose support and travel made the workshop possible. She introduced the Minor Use Foundation as a non-profit organisation focused on specialty crops, the fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, pulses and nuts that, despite their nutritional and economic importance, are often overlooked in international standard setting due to thin data and small budgets relative to major commodities. She explained that MUF pursues this mission in two ways: building regulatory capacity so that country representatives have the tools, confidence and networks to engage effectively in Codex, and filling data gaps so that decisions on food safety for specialty crops are grounded in evidence, including African evidence, offering MUF's support in addressing data gaps identified during the workshop.

She underlined why CCCF matters to the Foundation and to every delegation present, citing aflatoxin in groundnuts and maize, cadmium in cocoa, lead in spice mixtures, and tropane alkaloids in sorghum and millet as contaminant issues affecting African crops, farmers and consumers directly, and cautioned that without African data on the table, maximum levels for minor crops risk being set in ways that do not reflect regional interests. She framed the purpose of the two days as one of openness, encouraging delegates to ask questions and share their national context, with the goal that every delegation leave Nairobi with something concrete: a clearer position, a draft to build on, a contact to call, and a stronger voice at CCCF19.

> *"We build regulatory capacity, so that the people who represent their countries at Codex and at home have the tools, the confidence, and the networks to do it well." – Anna Gore- MUF*

Mr. Mamadou Bah, Director General, Food Safety and Quality Authority of the Gambia, and Coordinator, CCAFRICA

Welcome Remarks



The CCAFRICA Chairperson expressed his appreciation for the successful organization of the workshop. He recalled the recent CCPR symposium organized by the MUF in collaboration with other partners. He thanked the team for their well-coordinated effort in organizing the workshop, and commended the significant number of CCAFRICA countries represented.

He reiterated the wide-ranging challenges that contaminants pose to many aspects of life and observed that regulatory gaps and challenges across the continent include capacity limitations in contaminants management and expressed hope that the workshop would enable a collective examination of these challenges and the development of a work plan for addressing them. He noted that the capacity-building activity aligns with the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2026–2031, and thanked the organizers for the careful selection of facilitators.

He looked forward to a successful workshop.

John Oppong-Otoo, AU-IBAR
Welcome Remarks

Mr. Oppong-Otoo welcomed delegates on behalf of the AU-IBAR, thanking the Codex Secretariat, CCAFRICA and the MUF for their partnership in convening the workshop, and acknowledging the facilitators, donors and delegates whose support and travel made the two days possible. He situated the workshop within AU-IBAR's broader mandate to support Member States' animal resources and food safety systems across the continent, and welcomed it as a concrete expression of AU-IBAR's ongoing collaboration with CCAFRICA to strengthen Africa's technical and institutional readiness for Codex engagement. He noted that contaminants in food and feed sit squarely within AU-IBAR's areas of concern given their direct implications for animal health, trade in animal products, and the livelihoods of farmers across the region, and observed that Africa's growing participation in Codex work must be matched by the technical capacity to engage substantively rather than only procedurally. He expressed AU-IBAR's commitment to supporting the workshop's outputs beyond the two days, including through its ongoing coordination with CCAFRICA on expert nomination, position-building and delegate preparation ahead of CCCF sessions, and looked forward to the technical discussions ahead. He closed by wishing delegates a productive and engaging workshop.

Dr. Allan Azegele – Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Official Opening



Dr. Azegele officially opened the workshop on behalf of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, conveying the regards of Vice-Chairpersons Khalid Alzahrani, Jing Tian and Betul Vezgecer, and thanking AU-IBAR and the Minor Use Foundation, in partnership with CCAFRICA and the Codex Secretariat, for organising the workshop. He described it as an important platform for technical dialogue, regional collaboration and practical exchange on contaminants, an area of Codex work central to food safety, public health and market access. He reminded delegates that the Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by FAO and WHO, carries a dual mandate to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in food trade, and stressed that decisions on contaminants must be guided by sound science, transparency, proportionality and the realities of food and feed production in different regions. He explained that CCCF's work, in establishing maximum levels grounded in JECFA's risk assessments and applied using the ALARA principle, protects consumer health while reducing unnecessary trade rejections, and situated this as strategically significant for Africa given the continent's diversity of crops, production systems and dietary patterns, particularly for priority contaminants such as aflatoxin, cadmium, tropane alkaloids and lead.

He acknowledged CCCF's sustained contribution as the Codex committee with the highest level of participation since becoming a standalone body in 2007, and the many experts who support its work, noting that this requires both scientific excellence and sensitivity to the differing needs, capacities and priorities of different regions. He encouraged delegates to engage with openness, technical rigour and a shared sense of purpose, and to use the workshop to strengthen national and regional data generation and identify how African experience can meaningfully inform global Codex discussions ahead of CCCF19. He closed by expressing confidence that the workshop's outcomes would reinforce collaboration among regional and international partners and contribute to stronger, more harmonised food safety systems in Africa, thanking all organisers, speakers, moderators and participants, and wishing delegates productive and insightful deliberations.

Preliminaries / Workshop Objectives - Presentation
John Oppong-Otoo, AU-IBAR

Presented by John Oppong-Otoo to open Day 1, this session framed the workshop's purpose and expected deliverable rather than covering technical content. He opened by situating CCCF within the continental policy agenda, arguing that the ambitions set out in the Kampala CAADP Targets (a 45% increase in agrifood output, a tripling of intra-African agrifood trade, a 50% reduction in post-harvest losses, 35% local processing, and $100 billion in investment mobilised by 2035), African Continental Free Trade Area`s

(AfCFTA`s) trade-integration agenda, and the Food Safety Strategy for Africa (2022–2036) all depend on the same underlying requirement: safe, trusted and tradeable agrifood systems, which in turn depend on Africa participating effectively in the Codex standards that govern food markets. He explained that the workshop was convened by AU-IBAR and MUF as a preparatory platform to strengthen technical readiness for CCCF engagement, with three objectives — building technical understanding of Codex procedures and the scientific basis for contaminant standards, aligning regional coordination among national authorities on priority contaminants, and preparing effective, procedurally confident delegations for CCCF19. He was explicit that the workshop's deliverable is not a final African Position, but draft country-level technical inputs — evidence, feasibility considerations and proposed messages — on four priority contaminant themes: aflatoxin B1 in feed materials and milk-producing animals, cadmium in cocoa and other foods, tropane alkaloids in cereal and feed systems, and lead in spices and blended foods; these inputs, he said, will feed into the African Union's coordination process and strengthen the eventual formal African Positions. He walked through the two-day agenda as a deliberate pathway from orientation to evidence to drafting to coordinated follow-up, and linked each priority contaminant to its trade and value-chain significance, from feed-to-milk safety and export-sensitive cocoa to smallholder cereal systems and buyer assurance in processed spice blends.

Key recommendations he put to participants include; -

- **Be evidence-based** — state clearly what is currently monitored, how it is measured, what data exist, and where the gaps are, for each priority contaminant.
- **Be precise** — convert general concerns into concrete proposed wording, technical comments, or specific intervention points rather than broad positions.
- **Be coordinated** — identify areas of convergence early, record legitimate differences transparently, and agree who is responsible for follow-up before CCCF19.
- **Define country-level clarity by the close of the workshop** on four points: what each country can support, what evidence still needs to be added, what capacity gaps exist, and who will follow up before CCCF19.
- Overall, he urged delegations to move from "participation by presence to participation by preparation and influence" — treating the workshop as disciplined preparation rather than a ceremonial exercise.

CCAFRICA Engagement in CCCF – An Overview – Presentation
Mamodou Bah, CCAfrica

Mr. Bah opened by underscoring the high disease burden and productivity losses that contaminated food imposes on the African region, alongside substantial trade losses arising from consignment rejections that in turn affect farmers' livelihoods. He attributed much of this exposure to weak infrastructure, citing poor hygiene practices, inadequate storage, weak regulatory frameworks, and unregulated food-handling practices, with particular emphasis on aflatoxin contamination given Africa's reliance on cereal- and groundnut-based staples, where consumption data show exposure levels reaching up to 80 percent across the region, affecting both human food and animal feed. He noted that Africa's growing participation in international food-standard setting is increasingly

important as agricultural production and food trade expand, and framed CCCF as a key forum given the influence of contaminant standards on food safety, agricultural practice, and market access. He explained that Codex Alimentarius is the international food-standard-setting framework established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade, and that CCCF is the committee responsible for developing and recommending maximum levels (MLs) for contaminant exposure in food and feed, operating downstream of the scientific and risk-assessment work of JECFA. His central message was that Africa must move from mere participation to coordinated, evidence-based influence within CCCF, underpinned by capacity building of African experts able to meaningfully contribute to and champion this work.

He outlined a set of structural challenges facing the region, including restricted market access due to non-compliance with MLs, high dietary exposure to chemical and biological contaminants, an absence of harmonised data and regulations, inadequate labelling requirements, limited analytical capacity to establish MLs for indigenous foods, a shortage of exposure-analysis experts, and weak food control and consumption-monitoring systems. He argued that CCCF matters to Africa because it sets the scientific boundaries that protect consumers from unacceptable contaminant exposure while supporting responsible production, prevents chronic illness and acute poisoning, safeguards household food supplies against international safety thresholds, and, under the AfCFTA, supports the predictable, science-based sanitary and phytosanitary requirements needed for expanding intra-African trade, while alignment with CCCF standards helps prevent rejection of African exports at international borders. He then set out CCAFRICA's strategy for enhanced CCCF engagement: advocacy, supporting members in generating data for JECFA, JMPR, JMRA and other scientific bodies to align with or help set Codex ML and MRL standards; active leadership, shifting regional engagement from attendance to strategic influence through member states assigned lead roles in CCCF Electronic Working Groups (EWGs); partnerships, leveraging public-private collaboration to generate the data needed to establish fair international standards for African crops and commodities; capacity building, through collaboration with the IAEA, FAO/WHO, USDA, AU-IBAR, CABI and the MUF, among others, to train regional scientists and build robust, trusted regulatory systems; and coaching, mentorship and resource mobilisation, whereby CCAFRICA, with AU-IBAR, supports member countries and solicits resources for delegate participation in Codex Committee sessions.

Mr Bah closed with a set of recommendations. He recommended that members be encouraged to adopt digital tools and platforms in transforming their national food control systems. He advised that members' analytical capacity be built to verify MLs across food commodities, supporting trade facilitation and consumer health protection. He further recommended that harmonization schemes be established leading to mutual recognition agreements and shared best practice, and urged CCAFRICA to engage industry and other observers during Codex Committee sessions for dialogue on shared interests. Finally, he requested that CCAFRICA delegates champion regionally informed positions at CCCF sessions, backed by data generated from within the region.

Tea Tasting event



The tea tasting event, led by the CAC Chairperson, Dr. Allan Azegele brought together participants to sample and appreciate the diversity of Kenyan tea, showcasing varieties drawn from the East of Rift (EOR) and West of Rift (WOR) growing regions alongside purple tea and green tea, each reflecting distinct growing conditions and processing methods that shape their character. Beyond the tasting experience itself, the event served a practical purpose: highlighting the importance of compliance requirements in the tea value chain, including adherence to quality and safety standards, so that participants could appreciate Kenyan tea's diversity while recognizing the regulatory and food-safety considerations that underpin its continued access to both domestic and export markets. This connects directly to the work of CCCF, since contaminant levels in tea, whether arising from environmental sources, agricultural inputs, or processing, are precisely the kind of issue that Codex maximum levels and codes of practice are designed to address, making national compliance with such standards essential to safeguarding both consumer health and Kenya's competitiveness in international tea trade. All members present had the opportunity to taste the different teas on offer.













Technical session

Foundations of Codex & CCCF / Importance of Delegate Participation – Presentation

Gracia Brisco, Codex Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO Liaison Office Geneva

Ms. Brisco opened by situating CCCF within the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the intergovernmental food-standards body jointly established by FAO and WHO in 1963, which now comprises 189 member countries and one-member organization (the European Union), alongside 246 observer organisations, including UN agencies, intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations. She explained that CAC's mandate is to develop and maintain the Codex Alimentarius in pursuit of a dual objective, protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in food trade, while facilitating international trade, and illustrated this with CCCF-related Codex texts such as the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CXS 193-1995), codes of practice to prevent and reduce contamination, and the sampling plans and analytical methods compiled under CXS 234-1999. She linked this directly to the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, noting that sanitary measures harmonized with Codex standards, including maximum levels for contaminants, are presumed consistent with the SPS Agreement, and that WTO members are expected to participate actively in Codex as a recognized international standard-setting body.

Turning to CCCF specifically, she described it as the risk-management committee within the wider Codex risk-analysis framework, sitting downstream of risk assessment conducted by FAO/WHO through the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) or ad hoc expert consultations, and upstream of risk communication by governments. She set out CCCF's five-part mandate: to establish, endorse or revise maximum levels (MLs) for contaminants in food and feed; to prepare priority lists of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants for JECFA risk assessment; to consider methods of analysis and sampling plans; to elaborate complementary texts such as codes of practice; and to address other contaminant-related matters assigned by the Commission. She offered a broad working definition of contaminants as any substance unintentionally present in food or feed as a result of production, processing or environmental contamination, encompassing biotoxins, mycotoxins, phytotoxins and

industrial or naturally occurring toxicants, while distinguishing CCCF's scope from related committees: obsolete pesticide residues are addressed by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) through extraneous maximum residue limits (EMRLs), and biological hazards fall under the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), whereas CCCF also covers contaminants in feed that may transfer to animal-derived foods. She noted that CCCF has maintained the highest participation of any Codex committee since becoming a standalone body in 2007, with representation from both developing and developed regions, and that active engagement matters because it allows countries to shape MLs, sampling plans and codes of practice, to supply national occurrence, consumption and monitoring data that inform JECFA assessments, to ensure standards reflect national diets, production systems and analytical capacity, and to build technical networks with other countries and observer organisations.



Ms. Brisco closed with a set of practical recommendations for delegations. She recommended that countries treat CCCF as a genuine risk-management opportunity rather than a procedural formality, by actively generating and submitting national occurrence, consumption and monitoring data to strengthen the evidence base underpinning JECFA risk assessments and subsequent Codex decisions. She urged delegates to understand the boundaries between CCCF, CCPR and CCFH, so that contaminant, pesticide-residue and hygiene-related issues are correctly routed to the committee with the relevant mandate. She encouraged national authorities to make full use of the Codex website, the CCCF overview and CCCF19 meeting documents, and the Codex Secretariat (codex@fao.org), as practical entry points for following and contributing to the standard-setting process between sessions. Finally, she recommended that countries recognize and leverage the trade value of participation, given that Codex standards are the benchmark for food safety under the WTO/SPS Agreement and that measures harmonized with Codex MLs are presumed compliant, meaning that active, well-prepared engagement in CCCF directly supports both public health protection and predictable market access for African exports.

Codex Procedural Manual and Codex Documentation– Presentation
Sarah Cahill, Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission

Following an earlier session on the foundations and purpose of CCCF, Ms. Cahill focused on how the Codex system works in practice: its governance structure, the step procedure for elaborating standards, the procedural tools available to delegates, and the points at which delegates can most usefully intervene. She set out a connected system of distinct responsibilities, in which the CAC takes final decisions and adopts texts, the Executive Committee (CCEXEC) provides critical review and strategic planning, CCCF develops contaminant texts and recommends risk management measures, FAO/WHO scientific bodies, principally JECFA, provide risk assessment and scientific evaluation, Members



submit national positions, comments and proposals, the Codex Secretariat manages documents, circulation and reporting, and Observers contribute expertise and comments without a vote. She underlined the governing principle that scientific advice informs risk management, but that it is Members who make Codex decisions. She then walked delegates through the eight-step procedure for elaborating Codex standards, explaining that new work begins with a project document setting out purpose, scope and scientific rationale, that a first draft is frequently developed through an electronic working group (EWG) which Members and Observers with a strong interest should join early, that a first comment round follows while options remain open, that the Committee then discusses and CAC may adopt the text as a draft after CCEXEC review, and that a second comment round and further committee review lead towards final consideration and adoption. She stressed that early EWG engagement offers the best opportunity to help shape a first draft, rather than reacting only once it has already been circulated.

She went on to describe the procedural tools that support this process, including the project document and discussion paper used to justify and scope new work, EWGs and physical working groups (PWGs) for developing or resolving text between sessions, circular letters and the Online Commenting System (OCS) for requesting formal comments and data, conference room documents (CRDs) for placing text before a session (used sparingly, since delegates may not have time to read them), and mechanisms to return, advance or hold a text according to its readiness, including adoption at Step 5/8 where there is agreement to omit Steps 6 and 7 and expedite adoption. She mapped delegate participation across three phases: before a session, coordinating nationally, reading agenda papers, submitting written comments and joining EWGs and data calls; during a session, delivering a clear position, offering evidence and wording, building bridges across views and tracking decisions; and after a session, reporting nationally, responding to circular letters, providing data and preparing the next intervention, summarizing this as national data, a clear mandate and timely engagement combining to produce greater influence. She illustrated the procedure with a worked scenario in which a proposed maximum level might affect a widely consumed African commodity where national occurrence data are limited and analytical capacity varies, showing how a delegation should identify the current step and decision sought, clarify available evidence and data gaps, prepare a preferred position with a workable alternative, and coordinate with allies nationally and regionally before speaking. She closed by linking this procedural detail to the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, whose four goals (responsive standards, better work management, stronger partnerships, and greater use and impact) are underpinned by a results chain of outcomes, indicators, verification and baselines, and to the recently upgraded Codex website (codex.fao.org), now available in all six UN languages on a modernized, more secure platform.

Ms. Cahill closed with practical recommendations for delegations. She recommended that Members engage in electronic working groups as early as possible, since this is where a first draft is actually shaped, rather than waiting to react once a text has already been

circulated for comment. She urged delegations to submit precise, evidence-based written comments through the Online Commenting System during first comment rounds, including proposed wording and workable alternatives rather than general objections. She recommended that countries coordinate nationally, and where possible regionally, before speaking at a session, so that interventions carry a clear, agreed mandate and identified allies rather than an individual position. She further advised delegations facing data or capacity gaps, such as limited national occurrence data on a proposed maximum level, to be explicit about those gaps and to propose a workable alternative rather than remaining silent. Finally, she encouraged continued use of the upgraded Codex website and Secretariat channels to track the step procedure, circular letters and Strategic Plan implementation, so that African engagement in CCCF is sustained between, and not only during, formal sessions.

Navigating Codex Documentation – Presentation
Steve Crossley

This session equipped delegates with practical, hands-on guidance for locating and interpreting Codex documentation relevant to the work of the CCCF, while also introducing the scientific outputs of the JECFA that underpin Codex contaminant standards. Mr. Crossley opened by situating CCCF within the broader Codex system, explaining that it is one of several subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and that all its working documents, reports, and standards — including papers for the upcoming CCCF19 session and past sessions such as CCCF18 (2025) — are hosted on the Codex website. He then walked delegates step by step through the new Codex website's structure which had only been launched two weeks prior. He showed where to find CCCF documents, related standards, eWG outputs, circular letters, and information documents, and highlighting how to track approaching submission deadlines. He explained that Codex uses a systematic document referencing and numbering convention across all these document types, which delegates should familiarize themselves with rather than searching ad hoc. On the subject of CRDs, he cautioned that these should not be overused or treated as a substitute for missed working-document deadlines, noting that late comments submitted as CRDs are usually

Mr. Crossley showed delegates that these documents can be accessed through the FAO Knowledge Repository (openknowledge.fao.org) by searching "JECFA," with full reports published in the WHO Food Additive Series. As a resource for continued learning after the workshop, he pointed delegates to the FAO's free eLearning series, "Effective Participation in Codex Work," which offers five courses covering an introduction to Codex, engaging in Codex processes, regional-level collaboration, and the science and risk-assessment framework underlying Codex decisions.

Overall, the session reinforced that effective participation in CCCF and CCCF19 depends on delegates being able to independently locate, interpret, and reference the working documents, circular letters, and JECFA scientific evaluations that inform Codex

contaminant standards — a practical skill set directly supporting Africa's capacity to engage substantively in future sessions.

Understanding JECFA's Risk Assessments – Presentation
S. Crossley

This session gave delegates a grounding in the scientific process behind Codex contaminant standards, focusing on the JECFA and the risk assessment methodology it applies. Mr. Crossley opened by situating JECFA within the wider FAO/WHO Scientific Advice Programme, explaining that Codex standards are risk-, science-, and evidence-based, and that the scientific advice underpinning them is produced independently of Codex itself through regular joint FAO/WHO expert meetings, together with ad hoc consultations on specific issues when required. He outlined the principles guiding this advisory process — soundness, responsibility, objectivity, fairness, transparency, and inclusiveness — and noted that JECFA experts are drawn from a periodically refreshed Expert Roster. Experts participate in a personal capacity rather than as representatives of their countries or agencies and are selected for scientific expertise while respecting regional representation and gender balance. He placed JECFA alongside the other international risk assessment bodies feeding into Codex — JMPR (pesticide residues), JEMRA (microbiological risk), and JEMNU (nutrition) — noting that JECFA, founded in 1956, is the body advising CCFA, CCCF, and CCRVDF.

Mr. Crossley traced JECFA's evolution through key milestones, from its first meeting in 1956 through its first dedicated treatment of contaminants in 1967 and of mycotoxins in 2001, and clarified the scope of JECFA's work: it assesses food additives, processing aids, flavouring agents, veterinary drug residues, contaminants, and natural toxins, but not pesticide residues, novel foods (including GM foods), or nutrients, which fall to other bodies. He explained that JECFA operates in two distinct configurations — one covering additives, contaminants, and naturally occurring toxicants, and another covering veterinary drug residues — each typically meeting annually. Turning to methodology, he described the four components of chemical risk assessment set out in the WHO's Environmental Health Criteria 240 (EHC240): hazard identification, hazard characterization (establishing Health-Based Guidance Values such as ADI, ARfD, or PTWI), dietary exposure assessment, and risk characterization, where exposure estimates are compared against the health-based guidance values to determine risk.

To ground the framework in a real example, Mr. Crossley presented a case study on inorganic arsenic, evaluated most recently at JECFA's 101st meeting in October 2025. He explained that because arsenic is carcinogenic with no identifiable safe threshold, JECFA used a Benchmark Dose Lower Confidence Limit ($BMDL_{0{\cdot}5}$) derived from human epidemiological data rather than a traditional intake guideline. Since the previous Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake (PTWI) overlapped with this BMDL range, JECFA concluded that no safe intake level could be identified and formally withdrew the PTWI —

a significant outcome given ongoing concerns about dietary exposure, particularly in areas with arsenic-contaminated water supplies. He flagged that occurrence data for the WHO African region remained limited, a notable data gap for the continent.

Mr. Crossley closed by reiterating that JECFA's risk assessment principles and methods are set out in EHC240, that the FAO/WHO scientific advice programme (though formally separate from Codex) underpins Codex standards, and that JECFA sits alongside JMPR, JEMNU, and JEMRA as one of the international bodies providing the scientific foundation for Codex decision-making.

The session intended to equip delegates to better interpret the scientific basis of proposed contaminant limits and to identify where the region needs to prioritize its own data generation to inform future JECFA assessments and CCCF decisions.

Data Submission to JECFA — Overview – Presentation
S. Crossley

This session focused on how countries generate and submit the data that feeds into JECFA's risk assessments, and on the specific challenges African and other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face in doing so. Mr. Crossley opened by illustrating the scale and significance of JECFA's work, noting that the Committee has evaluated over 660 food additives, 105 enzymes, 2,500 flavourings, 11 groups of natural toxicants, 12 metals, 25 groups of synthetic chemical contaminants, and residues of 115 veterinary drugs, marking its 100th meeting in 2025 as a major contribution to international food safety methodology. He linked this work directly to the Codex Strategic Plan's Strategic Goal 1, which commits Codex to developing science-based standards informed by globally representative data and appropriate international expertise, delivered through the FAO/WHO scientific advisory bodies.

He then walked delegates through the mechanics of a JECFA "Call for Data" — using the ongoing data call for JECFA101 (covering dioxins, dioxin-like PCBs, and inorganic and organic arsenic) as a live example — explaining that submissions can include toxicological data (metabolism, short- and long-term toxicity, genotoxicity, epidemiological studies), occurrence data (contaminant levels in raw commodities, finished foods, and animal feed, including carry-over and processing effects), and intake assessment data (consumption patterns across population groups and biomarkers of exposure). He highlighted the importance of occurrence data specifically for African countries, noting that submitting robust national data — complete with details such as LOQ/LOD, sampling dates, representativeness, and food mapping — ensures that Codex Maximum Levels (MLs) are set at levels that reflect the reality on the ground in those countries, rather than being derived without African representation. He introduced GEMS (the Global Environment Monitoring System – Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme) as WHO's long-standing data platform, searchable by region and exportable to Excel. He also noted the CCCF's harmonized guidance for eWGs on collecting, cleaning, analyzing, and interpreting occurrence data — including the statistical

approaches used to derive hypothetical MLs and assess their trade and health implications.

Mr. Crossley was candid about the structural challenges facing both sides of this process. For LMICs, he cited constrained laboratory infrastructure, limited trained personnel and instrumentation, a lack of national coordination for data submission, insufficient validated methods, limited geographic coverage, weak capacity for emerging contaminants such as PFAS, and gaps in national food consumption data needed for dietary exposure assessments. On JECFA's side, he noted that the Committee itself faces constrained resources following cuts to extra-budgetary funding, alongside a growing need for agility to keep pace with new food production systems, artificial intelligence, and evolving risk assessment methods such as New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) that reduce reliance on animal testing.

He closed by underscoring that while JECFA's role is to apply the best available science, Codex Committees remain the risk management bodies that decide on the level of protection — and that global food standards can only be as strong as the data underpinning them.

This session reinforced a recurring workshop theme — that Africa's influence over Codex contaminant standards depends on its ability to generate and submit high-quality national data. Without addressing the region's laboratory, coordination, and data gaps, African priorities and realities risk being underrepresented in the risk assessments that ultimately shape CCCF decisions.

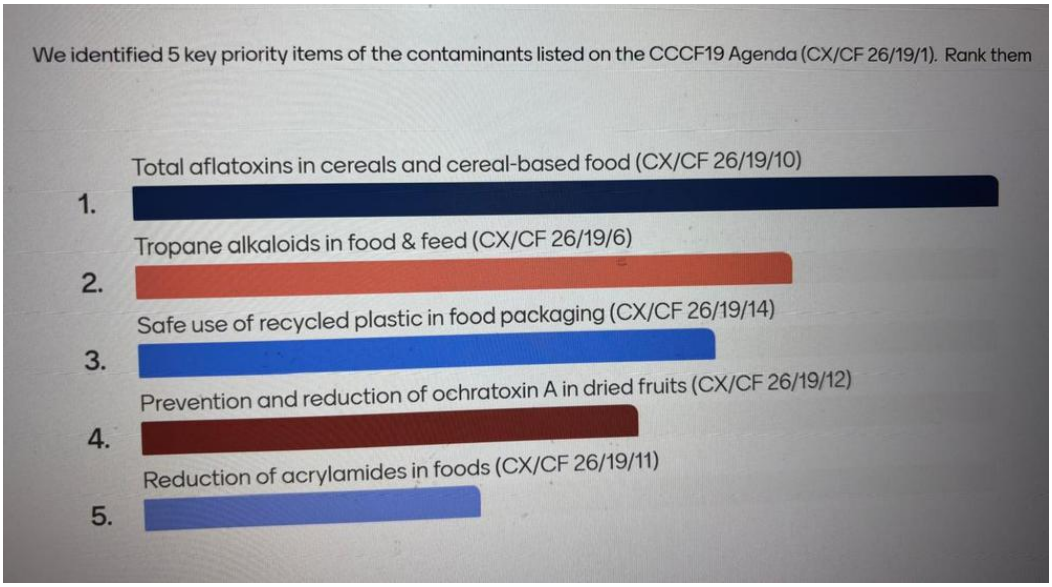
Key Takeaways / Recommendations from the presentation include; -

- African countries should be strategic, proactive, and collaborative in generating occurrence and exposure data to ensure Codex standards reflect regional realities.
- Regional data-generation priorities should be coordinated and based on clear criteria such as trade facilitation and consumer protection, rather than pursued ad hoc by individual countries.
- Delegates should familiarize themselves with the GEMS platform and JECFA Call for Data processes as concrete entry points for contributing national data.
- Investment in laboratory capacity, validated analytical methods, and national data coordination mechanisms is a prerequisite for African countries to meaningfully influence future JECFA assessments and CCCF decisions.

CCCF19 Agenda scoping for Africa
S. Crossley

Delegates took part in an interactive plenary session using Mentimeter, an online polling tool, to rank the topical areas covered during the workshop according to their level of interest and relevance as countries. Delegates cast their votes in real time on their phones or laptops, with results displayed live on screen, allowing the room to see at a glance which contaminant themes and technical areas carried the greatest priority across the different delegations present. The exercise was intended to give CCAFRICA, AU-IBAR and the workshop organisers a clear, evidence-based sense of where African

countries' interests converge and where they diverge, to help guide the focus of future capacity-building activities and the prioritisation of technical work ahead of CCCF19.



An analysis of the responses to three other questions is summarized below: -

The Mentimeter polling results point to a clear gap between where delegates' priorities lie and the depth of data currently available to support them. On the question of top country and regional priorities, aflatoxin emerged as the dominant concern, cited by delegates from Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, Ghana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, closely followed by recycled plastics as a widely shared secondary concern across several of the same countries, with tropane alkaloids (Kenya, Uganda), lead in spice mixtures (Kenya) and ochratoxin A in dried fruits appearing as more localised but still recurring themes. When asked what new data need to be generated, responses converged around the need for food consumption and dietary exposure data to complement existing occurrence data, country-specific occurrence and monitoring data in under-covered matrices such as milk, dairy, meat, fish and animal feed, and untargeted screening for emerging contaminants to feed national surveillance systems, alongside more specific requests such as mycotoxin data for Zambia and data on the risk of contaminated material being blended into feed. Set against this, responses on currently available supporting data were markedly thinner: the majority of delegates reported no national data, fragmented data with no central repository, or only academic and thesis-level studies, with a small number citing toxicological, occurrence or monitoring data already in hand, and only isolated examples of countries acting on external monitoring signals, such as Zambia's RASSF-flagged alert and reliance on EU data. Taken together, the results confirm aflatoxin as the region's shared top priority while exposing a significant and widely acknowledged national data deficit, reinforcing the workshop's recurring message that African countries must invest deliberately in generating their own occurrence, consumption and exposure data if regional priorities are to be reflected in future CCCF and JECFA decisions.

Aflatoxin prevalence in African feed crops (maize, groundnuts, sorghum) and in milk; health and trade implications; current CCCF/Codex standards and JECFA findings; regional mitigation efforts - Presentation
Dr. Ortega-Beltran Alejandro on behalf of the IITA Aflasafe Team

Dr. Alejandro presented on behalf of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), a CGIAR research centre established in 1967 and headquartered in Ibadan, Nigeria, which works across five hubs in Africa on food security, malnutrition, poverty and natural resource degradation. He introduced aflatoxin as a highly toxic metabolite of the ubiquitous Aspergillus flavus fungus, which infects crops such as maize, sorghum and groundnuts both in the field and in storage, is potent even at extremely low doses, and is associated with death, liver cancer, immune suppression and stunted growth in humans, as well as reduced productivity in livestock; she noted that climate change is increasing the incidence and severity of contamination, and that aflatoxin-related trade rejections cost African exporters up to US$670 million. He stressed that aflatoxin cannot be seen or tasted and can only be confirmed through laboratory testing, and traced how contamination in feed ingredients, particularly cereal- and oilseed-based components that make up 63 to 90 percent of typical dairy meal, transfers into milk as aflatoxin M1 (AFM1) and into other livestock products, reaching both adults through dairy and meat and children through weaning foods and breast milk; she cited published Kenyan and regional studies confirming aflatoxin and AFM1 contamination in feeds and marketed milk, and noted that toxin binders, while commonly used to manage the problem, can themselves affect animal growth and productivity.

He set out a range of mitigation practices spanning the value chain from planting through harvest to consumption, including drought-tolerant crop varieties, farmyard manure, liming, mulching and tied ridges at the field stage, proper drying, sorting, storage, roasting and ammoniation post-harvest, and clay-based binders, dietary diversity, and stronger awareness, standards and policy at the consumption end, describing biocontrol as a simple but highly effective field-level intervention. He presented IITA's Aflasafe products as the Institute's central contribution: formulations composed of superior, native atoxigenic *Aspergillus flavus* strains, which are highly competitive and carry defective aflatoxin biosynthesis genes, carried on heat-killed sorghum grains, which outcompete toxigenic strains in the field and are extensively field-tested across multiple agro-ecological zones and cropping systems, including maize, groundnut, sorghum and sesame. He reported that Aflasafe factories, licensed and technically backstopped by IITA, are now operating across several African countries, with new facilities under development in Uganda and Madagascar, and situated this within a broader Integrated Aflatoxin Management System that she described as the overall solution for preventing, rather than merely managing, contamination.

Dr. Alejandro closed by drawing out direct implications for the ongoing CCCF revision of Codex texts on aflatoxins, which he framed as her key recommendations. He recommended that the revision of the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Cereals (CXC 45-1997) and the related Code of Practice for Groundnuts (CXC 55-2004) and its counterpart (CXC 51-2003) take full account of the genesis of contamination and the mitigation measures demonstrated in her presentation. He specifically recommended that, since cereal crops such as maize, sorghum and rice make up 63 to 90 percent of raw materials used in animal feed, the Codes of Practice

governing their production integrate the use of biocontrol solutions alongside other mitigation practices for improved effectiveness. He further recommended that the Codes of Practice for oil-crop cakes and meals, including sunflower, cotton and soybean, which have also been found to carry significant aflatoxin levels, be revised to include biocontrol use, following the precedent already set for peanuts under CXC 55-2004. Finally, he urged CCCF and its Members to prioritize prevention of contamination at source, through the adoption of an Integrated Aflatoxin Management System, as the most effective overall approach to reducing aflatoxin exposure across African food and feed value chains.

National/regional discussion and recommendations for consideration during country position preparation

Following the technical presentation, delegates broke into group work sessions to discuss the priority contaminant theme covered during the presentation — Aflatoxin prevalence in feed crops — with a view to identifying points of national relevance, available evidence and data gaps, and areas of possible convergence or divergence across countries. The discussions were structured to translate the technical and procedural grounding provided earlier in the day into potential country-level outputs, with the aim of building participants' capacity to prepare effectively for CCCF. The areas of interest identified through these discussions were intended to be carried forward and utilised during subsequent national and regional preparatory sessions for CCCF19, with the aim that they contribute to the ongoing process of building harmonised African positions coordinated through CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR. The discussions also addressed the possible challenges countries may face in responding to these contaminants, highlighting the options available for countries to consider going forward.

The following was identified as the key take away: -

Delegates identified the prevalence of aflatoxin in African feed crops — maize, groundnuts and sorghum — and in milk as a shared regional challenge, given its significant health and trade implications, and underscored the need to develop stronger interventions for its management. Ahead of CCCF19, countries were encouraged to review the draft revised Code of Practice for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feeding Stuffs for Milk-Producing Animals (CXC 45-1997, at Step 4) and to submit comments accordingly.

Day 1 Q&A Session

1. How can we work address the challenges caused due the lack of data on the hazardous and occurrence of contaminants because they are naturally occurring?
2. In terms of resource mobilization, there’s a risk of low financing impeding codex activities such as risk assessment activities (data collection and analysis) that provide scientific data: How is Codex going to address/deal with this challenge at the moment and in the future?
3. In regards to the acceptability of data policy assessment, do the tests have to be clone a laboratory accredited or any official lab can carry out the tests?

4. CCCFI8 had a scenario where KY submitted data on aflatoxins, at GEMS but wasn't recognized. Please explain why that happened.
5. Uptake of Aflasafe is slow and accessibility is challenging contributing to slow adoption. What strategies are IITA employing to improve adoption (uptake and availability) of this per product such as farmer subsidies and the rest?
6. Under what category is Aflasafe going to be classified & in not terms of aflatoxin mitigation?

Day 2 — Thursday September 17, 2026

Recap of Day 1
Mellon Kabole - MUF

A recap of day 1 was given highlighting the opening session that framed the workshop around Africa's food-safety and trade ambitions – specifically pointing to the upcoming CCCF session. This was followed by sessions on the Codex and CCCF foundations, on Codex structure, governance and procedure, on CCAFRICA's coordination strategy for building harmonized African positions, on navigating Codex and JECFA documentation online, and a technical session on aflatoxin mitigation in animal feeds, each followed by plenary discussion and a question-and-answer session to deepen participants' understanding of the topic.

Technical session

Code of Practice for prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in cocoa beans and other commodities; current MLs and JECFA assessment; trade implications for African cocoa-producing countries.
Mrs Doreen Koranteng – Ghana Standards Authority

This session examined cadmium contamination in cocoa and other commodities, the science underpinning current regulatory limits, and the specific trade implications for African — and particularly West African — cocoa-producing countries. Mrs. Koranteng opened by explaining why cadmium is treated as a contaminant of major public health concern: it is a naturally occurring toxic heavy metal that enters agricultural systems through weathering, volcanic activity, mining, wastewater irrigation, and fertilizer use, and accumulates in the human body over 10–30 years, primarily in the kidneys and liver, with long-term exposure linked to kidney dysfunction, bone demineralization, and reproductive effects. She noted that the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies cadmium as a Group 1 human carcinogen, which is why JECFA and CCCF continue to treat it as a priority contaminant despite its low-level, cumulative nature.

She then walked delegates through cadmium's contamination pathways in cocoa, distinguishing natural sources — geogenic cadmium in parent rock and volcanic soils, which is particularly elevated in Latin American cocoa-growing regions such as Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia — from anthropogenic contributors such as phosphate fertilizers,

irrigation water, mining, and industrial emissions. She highlighted soil pH as one of the most important determinants of plant uptake, since acidic soils increase cadmium solubility and bioavailability, meaning liming can be an effective mitigation tool. Importantly, she presented evidence that West African cocoa-growing soils — in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Cameroon — generally carry much lower background cadmium levels than Latin American soils, with Ghanaian studies reporting cocoa bean concentrations of just 0.005–0.095 mg/kg, well below international concern levels. She also flagged agronomic and post-harvest risk factors, including fertilizer quality, contamination during drying and fermentation, and the risks that bulk blending practices pose to traceability and quality assurance.

On the regulatory landscape, she summarized JECFA's Provisional Tolerable Monthly Intake (PTMI) of 25 µg/kg body weight/month for cadmium, and noted that dietary exposure is the primary pathway for non-smokers, with children more vulnerable than adults, though cocoa is rarely the sole source of exposure. She compared the EU's tiered maximum levels under Regulation (EU) 2023/915 (ranging from 0.10 mg/kg for milk chocolate to 0.80 mg/kg for high-cocoa-solid chocolate) with the Codex MLs adopted under CXS 193-1995, which range from 0.3 mg/kg (chocolate <30% cocoa solids) up to 2.0 mg/kg for cocoa powder. She then turned to the Codex Code of Practice CXC 81-2022, which sets out mitigation measures across the value chain — from pre-planting soil testing and liming, to fertilizer screening, fermentation and drying practices, and clean transport and storage conditions — as the primary tool for reducing cadmium levels at each stage of production.

Mrs. Koranteng closed by framing West Africa's naturally low cadmium levels as a genuine competitive trade advantage, while cautioning that stringent, origin-blind cadmium limits could function as non-tariff barriers if they fail to account for the geogenic variability between regions. She recommended that countries like Ghana establish national cadmium monitoring plans covering farm gate, fermentation, buying centres, processing, and export points (using methods such as ICP-MS and AAS), strengthen traceability systems linking cocoa batches to production regions, and invest in farmer training on Good Agricultural Practices, soil management, and post-harvest handling.

Key takeaways / recommendations include:

- West African cocoa (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Cameroon) generally has significantly lower background cadmium levels than Latin American cocoa, due to soil geology rather than agricultural practice — a genuine market advantage that should be documented and defended.
- Countries should establish national cadmium monitoring plans spanning the full supply chain (farm gate through export), using validated analytical methods (ICP-MS, AAS).
- The Codex Code of Practice CXC 81-2022 provides concrete, actionable mitigation measures — soil liming, fertilizer screening, fermentation adjustments, and clean post-harvest handling — that countries should adopt and promote among farmers.
- Strong traceability systems are essential both for risk-based monitoring and for protecting low-cadmium cocoa from dilution or contamination through blending with higher-cadmium batches.

- Regulators should be alert to the trade-barrier risk of cadmium limits that do not account for geogenic (origin-based) variability, and should engage in international discussions to ensure Codex and export-market limits reflect realistic production conditions.

This session translated the CCCF's cadmium standard-setting work into concrete, commodity-specific terms for African delegates, demonstrating both the science behind current MLs and a clear strategic opportunity: West Africa's naturally low cadmium cocoa positions the region well competitively, provided monitoring, traceability, and Code of Practice implementation are strengthened to substantiate this advantage in ongoing Codex and trade discussions.

National/regional discussion and recommendations for consideration during country position preparation

Following the technical presentation, delegates broke into group work sessions to discuss the priority contaminant theme covered during the presentation — cadmium in cocoa and other foods — with a view to identifying points of national relevance, available evidence and data gaps, and areas of possible convergence or divergence across countries. The discussions were structured to translate the technical and procedural grounding provided earlier in the day into potential country-level outputs, with the aim of building participants' capacity to prepare effectively for CCCF. The areas of interest identified through these discussions were intended to be carried forward and utilised during subsequent national and regional preparatory sessions for CCCF19, with the aim that they contribute to the ongoing process of building harmonised African positions coordinated through CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR. The discussions also addressed the possible challenges countries may face in responding to these contaminants, highlighting the options available for countries to consider going forward.

The following was identified as the key take away: -

While cadmium contamination is not currently a significant concern for Ghana and other West African cocoa-producing countries, given their comparatively low background levels, delegates were advised that ongoing surveillance and monitoring remain necessary to safeguard this position and detect any future change in risk. Ahead of CCCF19, countries were encouraged to review the draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Cadmium Contamination in Foods (CX/CF 26/19/5, at Step 4) and to submit comments accordingly, and it was suggested that countries consider supporting its advancement to Step 5, while continuing to allow room for further data collection and review at subsequent steps as regional evidence develops.

The African Perspective: Engagement in CCCF – Plenary submission

This session presented live national experience, bringing together country examples of how African Member States organize themselves domestically to engage effectively in CCCF, and drawing out strategies for increasing African participation and impact in the Committee's work. Delegates from Egypt, Tanzania, Senegal and Zambia shared their

respective national processes for preparing positions ahead of CCCF sessions, illustrating the coordination structures, stakeholder consultation mechanisms and technical input pathways that underpin their engagement, before reflecting on the common challenges — including limited resources, constrained technical expertise, and gaps in national data — that continue to affect the region's ability to participate with full effect. The session was intended to allow countries to learn from one another's practical experience and to distil concrete strategies that could strengthen both national preparation and regional coordination ahead of CCCF19.

Dr. Sokhna Ndao – Senegal Delegate

Presented by Dr Sokhna Ndao Diao, the session shared Senegal's national experience in engaging with CCCF. She explained that food safety governance in Senegal follows a multi-sectoral approach coordinated by the National Codex Committee (CNC), under which each relevant ministry — including Health, Trade, Livestock, Fisheries, Agriculture and Industry — appoints a coordinator to represent it on the technical committees mirroring CCCF and related Codex bodies. She described the development of national positions as a two-stage multisectoral process: first, reviewing the CCCF agenda and circular letters, consulting stakeholders such as producers, economic operators, exporters and scientists, and conducting scientific, technical and socio-economic analysis (occurrence data, dietary exposure, trade impact of proposed maximum levels, and feasibility of implementing Codes of Practice) to identify Senegal's and Africa's points of interest; and second, building national consensus through technical workshops with committee members, specialists and stakeholders, validating Senegal's position, and generating supporting national data, illustrated by Senegal's own scientific contribution on aflatoxin maximum levels in peanuts, including field testing of mitigation practices (Codes of Practice, traditional methods, Aflasafe) across three agro-ecological zones and dietary consumption studies on rice, peanut and maize. She outlined Senegal's participation in CCCF sessions across three phases — developing and harmonising the national position with the African position and confirming delegate composition before the session, sharing the national position and intervening as needed in plenary during the session, and reporting back to stakeholders and advocating for the application of maximum levels and Codes of Practice afterwards — and closed by highlighting good coordination and communication with stakeholders, improved participation in CCCF sessions, mobilisation of permanent and specialised scientific experts, and better availability of scientific data as the key achievements of this approach.

Dr. Ahmed Eltoukhy – Egypt Delegate

Delegates were presented Egypt`s experience in preparing nationally for engagement in the CCCF, stressing that effective participation begins well before the Committee session itself, through strong national coordination and early preparation. Dr. Ahmed explained that Codex preparation in Egypt operated through a structured workflow managed by the Egyptian Codex Contact Point (CCP), which links the CAC to 18 national mirror committees, including one for CCCF, and coordinates input from relevant regulatory authorities, technical experts, laboratories, and scientific and academic institutions. He described the workflow in detail: documents received from the Commission are routed through the CCP to the relevant National Shadow Committee and the Egyptian Codex

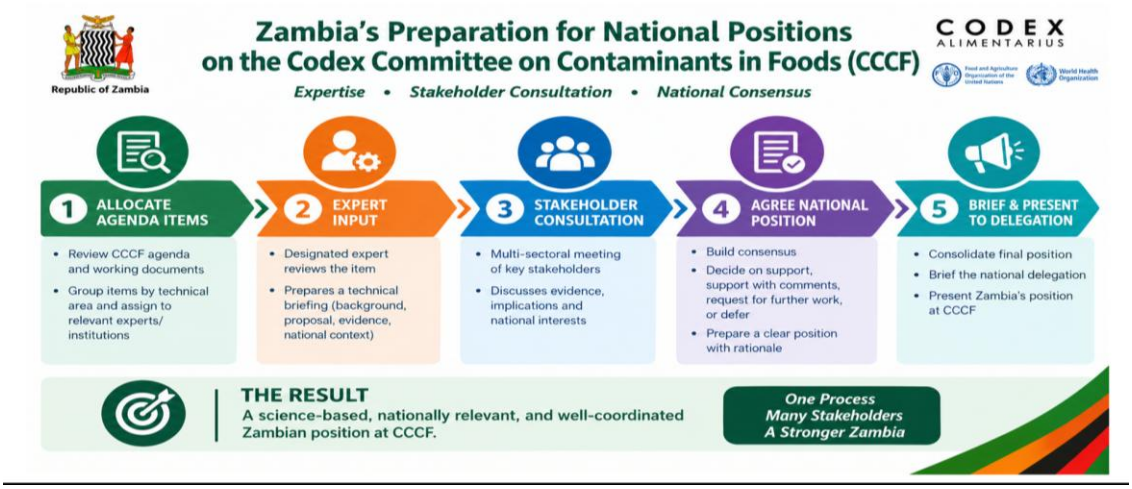
Committee; technical experts, led by the Food Administration, draft the national position on the basis of data, scientific evidence and practical experience; the draft is submitted for official approval by the Chairman of the Committee/Head of the Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS); and, once approved, the CCP transmits the authorised national position to the international Secretariat and briefs the Egyptian delegation accordingly. He noted that this structured process is particularly important for contaminants issues, given the direct implications of maximum levels, exposure assessment, analytical methods and risk management for both public health and trade. He further reported that Egypt starts its preparation as early as possible, reviewing working documents, identifying issues requiring a national position, and collecting stakeholder input, which he said allows Egypt to move from simply attending CCCF sessions to participating with clear, well-supported positions. Turning to regional cooperation, he observed that African countries faced similar challenges around contaminants, food safety, analytical capacity, data availability and risk management, and suggested that stronger regional communication before and during CCCF sessions would help ensure African perspectives are effectively reflected in Committee discussions. He concluded by noting that Egypt's forthcoming hosting of the CCCF meeting in October 2026 offers an opportunity to facilitate dialogue and encourage broader African participation in the Committee's scientific and regulatory work, and reiterated that, in his delegation's experience, effective engagement in CCCF rests on three elements: early preparation, strong national coordination, and active regional cooperation.

"Egypt is preparing to host the CCCF meeting in October 2026. We see this not only as an opportunity for Egypt, but also as an opportunity to strengthen the region engagement in the Committee." – Ahmed Eltouhky- Egypt

Dr. Doreen Sakala – Zambia Delegate

Dr. Sakala of Zambia's Ministry of Health presented Zambia's five-step process for preparing national positions on CCCF, framed around expertise, stakeholder consultation and national consensus. She explained that Zambia first reviews the CCCF agenda and working documents and groups items by technical area for assignment to relevant experts and institutions; second, the designated expert for each item prepares a technical briefing covering background, proposal, evidence and national context; third, a multi-sectoral stakeholder meeting discusses the evidence, its implications and Zambia's national interests; fourth, stakeholders build consensus and agree a national position — deciding whether to support, support with comments, request further work, or defer — together with a clear rationale; and fifth, the final position is consolidated, the national delegation is briefed, and Zambia's position is then presented at CCCF. She concluded that this process is designed to deliver a science-based, nationally relevant and well-coordinated Zambian position at CCCF, summarizing it as "one process, many stakeholders, a stronger Zambia."

Preparation process- Zambia



Mr. Ally Kingazi – Tanzania

Under Tanzania's submission, delegates were informed that effective participation began at national level well before the plenary session. He explained that the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) plays the central coordination role, constituting a National Consultative Committee ahead of each CCCF session — not a standing body, but one convened each time with membership drawn from food safety, contaminants, laboratory analysis, risk assessment, agriculture, public health, research and regulation, according to the specific agenda items involved — to review the working documents, examine the scientific and technical issues and their implications for Tanzania, and agree national positions that then feed into the East African Community (EAC) Codex coordination process ahead of CCCF itself. He went on to highlight four strategies drawn from this experience for increasing African participation and impact in CCCF: first, strong national coordination and preparation, so that delegates carry a clear mandate and common position into discussions; second, mobilising multidisciplinary technical expertise early, on the view that effective participation depends on connecting the right specialists to the process rather than on delegation size; third, linking national engagement to regional coordination through the EAC Codex Forum, so that strong national positions feed into and strengthen coordinated regional ones; and fourth, engaging continuously and early in the Codex process — following working documents, reviewing Circular Letters, contributing to electronic working groups and sharing national data — rather than only reacting once the plenary session begins. Mr. Kingazi acknowledged, however, that Tanzania continues to face challenges, including limited financial resources for participation, constrained availability of specialized expertise, difficulties generating and sharing national occurrence data, and the need for stronger engagement in electronic working groups, and suggested that these be addressed through stronger institutional coordination, better documentation and sharing of national data and expertise, continued capacity building, and greater use of regional mechanisms such as the EAC Codex Forum. He concluded that meaningful African engagement in CCCF must start nationally,

be strengthened regionally, and continue throughout the Codex process, with the objective not merely to attend CCCF but to contribute evidence-based national perspectives that ensure Codex discussions reflect the realities and interests of African countries.

CCCF/CCAFRICA Coordination and Communication - Presentation Mamodou Bah, CCAFRICA

"From Tanzania's experience, we have learned that effective engagement in CCCF starts at the national level and should begin well before the plenary session." – Ally Kingazi- Tanzania

Mr. Bah opened by explaining that CCAFRICA, the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa, coordinates African Member States' engagement across Codex Alimentarius committees, including CCCF, and that effective participation requires adequate preparation on prescribed agenda items and consultation with members on both expert opinion and regulatory application needs. He noted that coordination at regional level is essential to harmonise member positions, particularly on maximum levels, in line with the Guidelines for Developing Harmonized Food Safety Legislation for the CCAFRICA Region (CXG 98-2022), and set out the need for coordination in bringing together diverse national inputs into one coherent African position, making efficient use of the limited pool of technical experts across member countries, matching CCCF agenda items to the right expertise, and strengthening Africa's preparation and voice through joint work between AU-IBAR and the CCAFRICA Coordinator.

He then described the four-step process through which CCAFRICA builds and delivers harmonised African positions ahead of CCCF sessions. Under the first step, experts are identified from the AU-IBAR pool against defined criteria, including sound knowledge of the field, relevant current and past work, and a record of data generation and publication, with member countries invited to nominate national experts through their national Codex Contact Points and the CCAFRICA Coordinator. Under the second step, CCCF agenda items are shared with nominated experts and assigned according to each expert's country strength and area of expertise, with AU-IBAR and the CCAFRICA Coordinator guiding the scope and structure of presentations. Under the third step, AU-IBAR, in consultation with the CCAFRICA Coordinator, convenes expert meetings of one to three days, at which experts present using a standard template covering introduction, objective, rationale, and position or recommendations, with presentations shared in advance to support alignment and discussions held to build harmonised African positions on CCCF agenda items. Under the fourth step, a report of the expert meeting is prepared, circulated to CCAFRICA members for comment, revised to incorporate their input, and finalised as the basis of the African position ahead of CCCF. He added that this preparatory work is carried through into the CCCF session itself via pre-briefings of CCAFRICA member delegations, consultations with other regional bodies to further align positions, and engagement with Codex Vice-Chairs and other stakeholders, and that lead member countries are subsequently assigned to deliver interventions on specific agenda items on the basis of demonstrated knowledge, output and participation record, grounded in the positions agreed during expert meetings and pre-briefings.

Mr Bah closed by recommending that member countries route expert nominations consistently through their national Codex Contact Points to keep the AU-IBAR expert pool current and representative of national capacity. He urged nominated experts to adhere to

the standard presentation template and to share draft positions in advance of expert meetings, so that discussion time is used to build genuine consensus rather than to establish basic alignment. He recommended that CCAFRICA members review and respond promptly to circulated expert meeting reports, since timely comments are what allow harmonised positions to be finalised ahead of CCCF sessions rather than negotiated on the floor of the Committee. Finally, he encouraged continued use of pre-briefings and consultation with other regional bodies before and during CCCF sessions, and reiterated that lead countries for interventions should continue to be selected on demonstrated expertise and participation record, to preserve the credibility and coherence of the African position at the Committee.

Standardization of Contaminant Methods — Recent Developments at AOAC International - Presentation
Dr Katerina Mastovska, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Science Officer, AOAC International

Dr. Mastovska introduced AOAC INTERNATIONAL as a global, independent, nonprofit membership association and voluntary consensus standards developing organization established in 1884, whose mission is to advance food safety and product integrity through standards, validated test methods, and laboratory quality programmes. She outlined AOAC's core scientific programmes, comprising standards development through Standard Method Performance Requirements (SMPR®) and standard guidelines, method conformity assessment through the Official Methods℠ and Performance Tested Methods℠ programmes, ISO/IEC 17043-accredited proficiency testing, and Quality Assurance and Educational Samples. She explained that AOAC's Official Methods of Analysis (OMA) comprise more than 3,000 chemical and microbiological methods that undergo rigorous scientific scrutiny, are referenced by regulators and government agencies, and are adopted as internationally harmonised reference methods by other standards bodies, including ISO and Codex Alimentarius under Codex Standard 234-1999. She described the SMPR pathway, whereby minimum performance requirements are first defined for method developers before candidate methods progress through collaborative study to First Action and, ultimately, Final Action official method status.

Turning to active initiatives, Dr. Mastovska set out AOAC's work across the main categories of chemical contaminants and residues relevant to Africa, including agrochemical (pesticide and veterinary drug) residues, toxic and trace elements, natural toxins such as mycotoxins and plant toxins, processing contaminants, packaging migrants, and environmental contaminants. She reported that a Standard Method Performance Requirement for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in produce, beverages, dairy products, eggs, seafood, meat and feed (SMPR® 2023.003) has already yielded four approved First Action Official Methods, with a fifth undergoing collaborative study, while a parallel SMPR for PFAS in food packaging materials (SMPR® 2025.001, covering 52 target and 13 optional analytes across paper, paperboard, molded fiber and flexible plastics) is being complemented by two further SMPRs on total and total organic fluorine in packaging. On trace elemental contaminants, she noted that SMPR® 2024.002, covering cadmium, arsenic, lead and mercury, has produced two approved First Action methods, with a further SMPR® 2025.003 extending coverage to fifteen additional elements, and a forthcoming initiative on trace elements in dietary ingredients

and supplements. On mycotoxins, she reported that a draft SMPR on mycotoxins in food and feed, with particular emphasis on novel foods and ingredients such as plant-based and insect-based products and alternative-protein feed, is currently open for public comment. She further flagged newly launched or emerging initiatives on pesticide residues in herbs and spices, developed in collaboration with the Minor Use Foundation for future capacity building, as well as work under consideration on mineral oil hydrocarbons and microplastics in food.

Dr Mastovska closed with a set of concrete recommendations for regional stakeholders. She encouraged national laboratories and regulators to make use of AOAC's Official Methods, which are already recognized by Codex Alimentarius, as a basis for method validation and mutual recognition in support of trade facilitation. She urged African experts to respond to AOAC's current open calls while they remain active, namely the public comment on PFAS-in-packaging SMPRs (closing 21 September 2026), the call for methods on PFAS in food packaging and on additional trace elements (both closing 30 September 2026), the call for experts on PFAS in packaging (closing 28 September 2026), and the public comment on the mycotoxins-in-novel-foods SMPR (closing 18 September 2026). She specifically recommended that African institutions join the newly launched Working Group on Pesticide Residues in Herbs and Spices, given its direct collaboration with the Minor Use Foundation on future regional capacity building, and more broadly invited participation in AOAC's advisory panels and technical working groups via scienceprograms@aoac.org or aoac.org/active-groups, and attendance at the forthcoming AOAC webinar on microplastics analysis in food on 22 September 2026, as practical entry points for African laboratories into AOAC's standard-setting processes.

Tropane alkaloids as food contaminants; contamination pathways via Datura and related Solanaceae weeds in cereal crops – Presentation.
Hajj Aziz Kimera Mukota - Manager, Testing Department, Uganda National Bureau of Standards

This session gave delegates a comprehensive grounding in tropane alkaloids (TAs) as an emerging food-safety concern, covering their toxicology, the pathways through which they contaminate cereal crops, detection methodologies suited to different resource settings, the current regulatory landscape, and practical field- and post-harvest-level management strategies. Mr. Mukota opened by explaining that tropane alkaloids are natural secondary metabolites — over 200 have been identified — produced by plants in the Solanaceae family, most notably *Datura stramonium*, as a defense mechanism against animals and insects. He grouped them into three major classes derived from a common tropane skeleton (hyoscyamine/scopolamine, cocaine, and calystegines), noting that while related compounds such as scopolamine and atropine have legitimate pharmacological uses, they are toxic at higher levels and can enter the food chain through contamination of herbs, herbal teas, spices, and cereal products, with effects ranging from anticholinergic symptoms to acute poisoning and death. He noted that Codex is actively developing a Code of Practice for the prevention and reduction of tropane alkaloids in food and feed, alongside an ongoing call for occurrence data to inform future standards.

He then walked through the contamination pathways in detail, beginning at the field level, where poor weed management allows toxic plants such as Datura, Hyoscyamus, and

Atropa to proliferate alongside cereals, oilseeds, and other mechanically harvested crops. He explained how co-harvesting and mechanical contamination occur when weed seeds resembling crop seeds are swept up during harvesting, and how this risk is compounded by mechanical threshing and transport. He described further contamination risks during post-harvest cleaning and processing (where incompletely removed weed seeds are ground into flour), cross-contamination from shared equipment between lots, and contamination during storage and distribution due to poor segregation. He also flagged that some food plants — potato, aubergine, bell pepper, and sweet potato — naturally contain calystegines, and that herbal teas and medicinal herbs face their own distinct contamination risk during harvesting and processing.

Turning to vulnerable commodities and populations, Mr. Mukota identified cereals and cereal grains (maize, millet, sorghum, buckwheat, soybean), oilseeds, and herbal teas as the commodities of greatest concern, with particular risk in processed foods for infants and young children — including fortified blended foods and cereal-based complementary foods. He noted that WHO/JECFA has specifically identified children aged 6–59 months as a nutritional risk group, alongside pregnant and lactating women, children and adolescents aged 5–15, populations dependent on food-aid commodities, and occupationally exposed workers such as farm workers and grain handlers. He referenced Uganda's own documented experience with tropane alkaloid contamination as a case study, drawing on the 2019 Jimsonweed poisoning outbreak linked to contaminated humanitarian relief food.

On detection and monitoring, he presented the analytical workflow from sampling through transportation, sample preparation, chromatographic separation, and detection, comparing methods including ELISA (high throughput, but prone to matrix effects and cross-reactivity), HPLC-UV/DAD, LC-MS/MS (offering ultra-trace, parts-per-billion detection with strong selectivity), GC-MS, and capillary electrophoresis. For lower-resource settings, he introduced more accessible screening approaches — preliminary phytochemical tests (Dragendorff's, Mayer's, Wagner's, and Hager's reagents), thin-layer chromatography, colorimetric/spectrophotometric methods, and portable or paper-based and lateral-flow immunoassays — while cautioning that these screening tools generally require validation against reference methods before regulatory use. He also stressed the importance of sound sampling protocol design given the potential heterogeneity of alkaloid distribution within a batch, recommending multiple increments across sampling units and thorough laboratory homogenization before analysis.

On the regulatory landscape, he noted that as of 2026 the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) has not yet established a Maximum Level for tropane alkaloids, though an Electronic Working Group established at CCCF16 (chaired by China, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia) and a CCCF18 discussion paper on a Code of Practice mark active progress toward one. He presented the EU's Regulation (EU) 2023/915 as a current reference point, which sets limits on atropine and scopolamine in food — for example, 1 µg/kg atropine plus 1 µg/kg scopolamine in cereal-based baby foods containing millet, sorghum, buckwheat, or maize.

Finally, Mr. Mukota outlined a multi-tiered management strategy. At the field level, he recommended integrated weed management combining preventive measures (certified

clean seed and equipment, controlling weeds before flowering), cultural measures (crop density, timely planting, rotation, mulching), mechanical and manual control (hand-pulling, targeted cultivation, careful disposal of removed plants), and, where appropriate, chemical and biological control. He emphasized seed certification and clean seed systems — including formal certification, seed-lot inspection, community-level cleaning services, and farmer training — as critical to preventing contaminating weed seeds from entering fields via planting seed. At the post-harvest level, he recommended inspection and sorting (sieving, aspiration, density separation, optical sorting), strict segregation of affected lots, representative sampling and testing before release, rigorous storage management and equipment hygiene between lots, clear protocols for handling non-compliant material, and end-to-end traceability linking each lot from farmer and field through to final disposition.

Key Takeaways / recommendations include: -

- No Codex Maximum Level currently exists for tropane alkaloids; delegates should track the ongoing CCCF Code of Practice development and contribute occurrence data where possible, given the EU's existing limits may become a reference point for future Codex standards.
- Vulnerable commodities (cereals, oilseeds, infant cereal-based foods) and vulnerable populations (young children, pregnant/lactating women, food-aid-dependent populations) warrant prioritized monitoring given the documented severity of past outbreaks, including Uganda's own 2019 experience.
- Countries with limited laboratory infrastructure can adopt lower-cost screening approaches (TLC, colorimetric assays, lateral-flow immunoassays) as a first line of defense, provided these are validated against reference methods before being used for regulatory decisions.
- Sound sampling protocols — accounting for the heterogeneous distribution of alkaloids within a batch — are essential to generating reliable occurrence data.
- Prevention should be prioritized across the value chain: clean/certified seed systems, integrated weed management in the field, and strict segregation, traceability, and equipment hygiene during post-harvest handling and processing.

The session equipped delegates — particularly those from countries with prior tropane alkaloid incidents or significant cereal and food-aid supply chains — to engage meaningfully with the CCCF's ongoing work on a Code of Practice and potential future Maximum Levels, and underscored the importance of African countries generating their own occurrence and contamination data to ensure future Codex standards reflect regional realities, including the lived experience of outbreaks such as Uganda's 2019 Jimsonweed poisoning event.

Plenary discussion

Following the technical presentation, delegates broke into group work sessions to discuss the priority contaminant theme covered during the presentation — tropane alkaloids in cereal and feed systems — with a view to identifying points of national relevance, available evidence and data gaps, and areas of possible convergence or divergence across countries. The discussions were structured to translate the technical and

procedural grounding provided earlier in the day into potential country-level outputs, with the aim of building participants' capacity to prepare effectively for CCCF. The areas of interest identified through these discussions were intended to be carried forward and utilized during subsequent national and regional preparatory sessions for CCCF19, with the aim that they contribute to the ongoing process of building harmonised African positions coordinated through CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR. The discussions also addressed the possible challenges countries may face in responding to these contaminants, highlighting the options available for countries to consider going forward.

The following was identified as the key take away: -

Uganda's experience as the first country to register severe tropane alkaloid poisoning incidents signalled that other countries could be similarly at risk, even where the issue has not yet been detected. Delegates therefore proposed capacity building in testing and surveillance for tropane alkaloids, to generate the data needed to inform ongoing discussions. Ahead of CCCF19, countries were encouraged to review the draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Tropane Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed (CX/CF 26/19/6, at Step 4) and to submit comments accordingly.

Lead contamination in spice mixtures — sources, health risks, trade implications; current CCCF/Codex MLs; global surveillance data and the African context – Presentation
Naomi J. Kitur – Kenya Bureau of Standards

This session examined lead contamination in spices and spice mixtures across the full source-to-standard chain — from contamination pathways and health risk to current Codex limits, the unresolved regulatory gap around blended products, and the specific trade implications for African spice-producing countries. Ms. Kitur opened by framing why lead in spices deserves particular attention despite relatively low consumption volumes: JECFA's screening of 14,805 lead records across 45 GEMS/Food categories found 5,250 records in generic spice-mixture categories, and because there is no safe threshold for lead exposure, even modest concentrations carry public health, food integrity, trade, and regulatory implications simultaneously.

She distinguished three contamination scenarios along the value chain: environmental sources (contaminated soil, irrigation water, or airborne dust near mining and industrial sites), processing sources (milling equipment abrasion, lead-solder machinery, dusty storage), and intentional adulteration (notably lead chromate added to brighten turmeric, discussed via the well-documented South Asian turmeric case study, where a multi-pronged Bangladesh intervention reduced market contamination from 47% to 0%). She stressed the important distinction that detecting lead does not by itself prove fraud, though unusually high concentrations — particularly with a 1:1 Pb:Cr molar ratio — warrant deeper investigation.

On health risk, Ms. Kitur summarized WHO and JECFA findings that lead is a cumulative toxicant with no safe exposure threshold, citing JECFA's points of departure of 0.6 µg/kg bw/day for children (associated with a 1-point IQ loss) and 1.3 µg/kg bw/day for adults

(associated with a 1 mmHg rise in systolic blood pressure), and reinforced that a Codex Maximum Level (ML) should never be characterized as a "safe level" — it is a risk-management standard grounded in occurrence data, the ALARA principle, and technical feasibility, not a toxicological safety threshold. She then reviewed current Codex MLs for lead in individual spices under CXS 193-1995, which range from 0.6 mg/kg (dried fruits/berries) up to 3.0 mg/kg (dried Sichuan pepper and star anise), noting that this variation reflects differing background occurrence and technical feasibility across botanicals.

The core regulatory gap she highlighted is that no Codex ML currently exists for finished spice mixtures, creating a risk that non-compliant single spices could be blended into compliant-looking mixtures. She presented three policy options under consideration — a proportional calculation from ingredient-specific MLs, a single universal mixture ML, or existing limits paired with practical calculation guidance for known and unknown compositions — noting that CCCF18 favored the third option and established an Electronic Working Group (chaired by Japan, co-chaired by India, Panama, and the United States) to develop this guidance ahead of CCCF19 in Cairo (19–23 October 2026). She illustrated the underlying trade-off using JECFA modeling: lowering a hypothetical mixture ML from 2.0 to 1.0 mg/kg would only reduce dietary exposure by an additional ~3%, but would more than double the projected trade rejection rate (from 1.9% to 5.1%).

Turning to global surveillance evidence, she cited JECFA's finding that generic/mixture spice categories show higher mean lead levels (0.60 mg/kg) than clearly identified single spices (0.24 mg/kg), while cautioning that GEMS/Food data are not a globally representative sample. She referenced the New York City Department of Health's decade-long surveillance of 1,496 international spice samples (over 50% with detectable lead, over 30% exceeding 2 ppm, with the highest concentrations linked to spices from Georgia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Morocco) to illustrate how contamination in one producing country can become a food-safety issue far downstream in the supply chain.

On the African context specifically, Ms. Kitur positioned Africa as an important spice producer, processor, and trader — citing Madagascar's clove exports (27.88M kg, worth US$163.0 million in 2024) and Tanzania's (2.84M kg, US$17.1 million) — while noting that trade volume is not itself a measure of contamination risk. She reviewed available African contamination evidence, including a Ghana market study (Osei-Safo et al., 2024) testing 90 spice samples across Accra markets, which found lead concentrations from non-detectable up to 3.58 mg/kg, with Hazard Index values remaining below 1 (indicating localized rather than systemic dietary risk), and Kenyan market-based studies pointing to background heavy-metal exposure in informal markets. Her key takeaway was that African contamination data is fragmented — not because contamination is necessarily widespread, but because systematic, harmonized regional surveillance remains limited. She identified production-level risks (mining-affected soils, contaminated irrigation, informal drying and storage) and processing-level risks (small-scale milling, weak equipment maintenance, limited traceability) as recurring vulnerabilities across African supply chains.

She closed by outlining both the export challenges African producers face (EU food safety and traceability requirements, contaminant testing, buyer-driven sustainability schemes) and the opportunities to strengthen competitiveness through Good Agricultural and Manufacturing Practices, HACCP implementation, heavy-metal monitoring, accredited laboratory testing, and digital traceability systems — framing a failed shipment as both a commercial and a regulatory event.

Key takeaways or recommendations include:

- No Codex ML currently exists for spice mixtures; delegates should track the EWG's guidance development (chaired by Japan) ahead of CCCF19 in Cairo, as the outcome will directly affect how blended spice products are regulated and traded.
- A Codex ML is a risk-management standard, not a safety threshold — this distinction matters for how African delegates communicate about compliance and consumer protection.
- African spice-producing countries should invest in harmonized, representative national occurrence data (sampling plans, commodity definitions, analytical methods) to close current surveillance gaps and ensure regional realities inform Codex guidance.
- A five-step integrated approach is recommended for producing countries: map high-risk commodities and supply chains; generate representative data; attribute contamination sources (environmental, processing, or adulteration) using indicators like Pb:Cr ratios; strengthen rapid screening (portable XRF) alongside confirmatory testing (ICP-MS); and embed supply-chain controls (GAP, GMP, traceability, documented blending controls).
- Strengthening traceability and monitoring systems is both a food-safety and a market-access strategy — critical to protecting African spice exports from border rejections, recalls, and reputational damage.

Plenary discussion

Following the technical presentation, delegates broke into group work sessions to discuss the priority contaminant theme covered during the presentation — lead in spices and blended foods — with a view to identifying points of national relevance, available evidence and data gaps, and areas of possible convergence or divergence across countries. The discussions were structured to translate the technical and procedural grounding provided earlier in the day into potential country-level outputs, with the aim of building participants' capacity to prepare effectively for CCCF. The areas of interest identified through these discussions were intended to be carried forward and utilised during subsequent national and regional preparatory sessions for CCCF19, with the aim that they contribute to the ongoing process of building harmonised African positions coordinated through CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR. The discussions also addressed the possible challenges countries may face in responding to these contaminants, highlighting the options available for countries to consider going forward.

This session directly prepared delegates for one of CCCF19's live agenda items — the unresolved question of how to apply lead MLs to spice mixtures — while underscoring

that Africa's ability to shape a workable outcome depends on generating better regional occurrence data and strengthening supply-chain traceability to substantiate its trade interests in the ongoing EWG discussions.

Roadmap for next steps and future engagements: – Plenary discussion
M. Bah (CCAFRICA)

As the workshop drew to a close, the floor was handed to the CCAFRICA Chairperson, in which delegates were invited to reflect on the two days of proceedings and offer their recommendations and feedback on the training received. The Chairperson invited participants to share their views on the areas of interest arising from the workshop, the extent to which their capacity to engage with CCCF had been strengthened, and any further action they considered necessary to sustain and build on the momentum generated over the two days. This open exchange was intended to capture delegates' collective reflections and proposed next steps, to help shape the workshop's outcomes and inform the ongoing work of CCAFRICA and AU-IBAR in support of African engagement in CCCF.

The following submissions were made; -

Importance of the session to the delegates role at the national institution and your daily work;

- There`s a lot of take home message that can be implemented at the national level.
- Sharing of experience and valuable exchanges. The workshop presented a useful opportunity to strengthen the collaboration to participate in CCCF 19. Looked forward to continue collaboration on Codex issues.
- The discussions were important to the industry to implement standards and Codex frameworks. The conversations around data needs and opportunities were timely.
- Workshop came at a time where Africa countries were preparing for CCCF19. A lots had been learnt regarding the technical knowledge on the agenda items. The workshop outputs will be taken for consideration by the national codex committees. The session has given an opportunity for networking and peer-peer learning.

Recommendations

1. Inclusion of every player during the setting up of national positions - including consumer associations
2. More of the gathering for the new CCPs so that they can understand preparation – sustained capacity development. Training for experts to improve engagement in CCCF sessions
3. Member states were encouraged to appoint experts on a recurring/permanent basis as compared to temporal basis for follow-up. New delegates always come to learn making it difficult to have firm expertise in countries.
4. Member states should share data for different contaminates that are priorities for the countries. So that member states can undertake caution on the contaminant. Every member coming to future workshops should provide a

particular available national data that can be included in the agenda for discussion.

5. Data for food consumption. Need to have our own data to help evaluate the Africa context. We don't have similar food consumption patterns. This will enable us to elaborate our position as the continent
6. Invest in exposure studies so as to complete the Africa data. There's a lot of data on occurrence of contaminates. Dietary, consumption data.
7. Come up with a solid way forward on data consolidation i.e. establish data repository. The need to involve academia and research centers to support data generation and have a data repository. Ambassadors attached to respective ministries of Foreign Affairs need to be engaged to understand the technical developments that will feed into the trade negotiations and decision making.
8. Prioritize the contaminants form the high risk commodities i.e. maize
9. Delegates were encouraged to join EWGs and Technical working groups to support the technical work
10. Knowledge exchange - better understand how to strengthen the regional contribution to Codex. Continuous engagement with all the experts within the expert working groups.
11. Knowledge sharing is the biggest challenge. Most of the data would come from industry, academia- will the delegates take the knowledge back to their countries. How do the countries collate, analyze and share the data – so that its of good quality for risk assessment and decision making. Critical stakeholders should be part of the data collation effort.
12. Continuous and early engagement in Codex work- gives a country the opportunity to contribute to the proposal when being developed rather than reacting during the session
13. Invest in lab capacities in the various countries. Sometimes we have contaminants that are difficult to analyses due to capacity.
14. All members – experts- were encouraged to attend the Africa consultative meeting proposing positions of the next CCCF19 meeting. The teams are enlightened and will enrich the positions.
15. Member states to prepare early before meetings- have dedicated teams that are following agenda of the meeting- debriefs after a codex meeting so as to articulate issues that were raised and how they were resolved.
16. Ghana sought support in developing standards for shea butter

Workshop Evaluation

Delegates were given a technical and logistical evaluation to complete, capturing feedback on how the workshop was organised. The exercise was intended to evaluate the delegates understanding of the technical aspects trained in the week and to inform improvements to the planning and delivery of future symposia.

Closing Session

Mr. Bah, the CCAfrica Chair thanked the donors, organisers, experts and delegates for coordinating a very important session for the region to prepare for CCCF 19. He reiterated the importance of data and science in preparing positions. He urged all delegates to be the contaminant heroes for their respective countries. He extended an invitation for the regional discussion on Africa positions to be held virtually on Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th September 2026.

Ms. Anna Gore thanked the delegates for contributing in the session and hoped the capacity built will be used to prepare country positions. She thanked CAC, CCAFRICA, AU-IBAR and the donors for their support in making the vent a success.

The workshop was officially closed, with delegates, experts and all contributors being wished safe travels and engagement at the CCCF in October.

Annex 1: Workshop Agenda

AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

Minor Use Foundation

African Regional Workshop on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF)

16–17 September 2026 | Emara Ole-Sereni Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

BACKGROUND

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Minor Use Foundation (MUF) convene this preparatory workshop on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) in Africa. This workshop provides a platform to strengthen technical capacity, harmonize regional perspectives, and ensure Africa's voice is effectively represented in CCCF discussions. It will foster collaboration among regulators, laboratories, and stakeholders, enabling evidence-based contributions to Codex texts and risk assessments.

OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance technical understanding — build delegates' knowledge of Codex procedures, documentation, and the scientific basis for contaminant standards.
2. Strengthen regional coordination — facilitate dialogue among national authorities to align positions on priority contaminants affecting African trade and food security.
3. Prepare effective delegations — equip participants with advocacy, negotiation, and procedural skills to actively contribute at CCCF19.

FACILITATORS

Steve Crossley (Expert), Anna Gore (MUF), Katerina Mastovska (Association of Official Analytical Collaboration International – AOAC) Mamodou Bah (FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa -CCAFRICA), John Oppong (AU-IBAR), Gracia Briscoe (Codex Secretariat), Sarah Cahill (Codex Secretariat), Doreen Koranteng (Ghana Standards Authority - GSA), Aziz Mukota (Uganda National Bureau of Standards – UNBS), Naomi J. Kitur (Kenya Bureau of Standards – KEBS), Jane Kamau (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture- IITA), Mellon Kabole (MUF).

AGENDA

DAY 1 — Wednesday, September 16, 2026			
Time	**Activity**	**Facilitator**	**Description / Focus**
8:00–8:30	Registration	Mellon Kabole, MUF	
8:30–8:50	Welcome Remarks	Anna Gore, MUF Mamodou Bah – CCAfrica John Oppong – AU-IBAR	Welcoming remarks.
8:50–9:10	Official Opening	Allan Azegele – Codex Chairperson	Official opening.
9:10–9:30	Africa's Engagement in CCCF	Mamodou Bah – CCAfrica Chair	Discussion on the challenges in the region; benefits of Codex engagement and the connection to the Codex strategy.
9:30–10:30	**Group Photo Tea Tasting, Tea/Coffee & Networking**	**MUF**	Group Photo A group activity to taste a variety of teas from Kenya; socialize and get to know participants
10:30–10:45	Preliminaries / Workshop Objectives	Mamadou Bah-CCAfrica	Introduction of the workshop's key deliverable.
10:45–11:00	Foundations of Codex & CCCF / Importance of Delegate Participation	Gracia Briscoe-Codex Secretariat – Virtual	Role of Codex in global food safety and trade; mandate and scope of CCCF (chemical contaminants, natural toxins, environmental pollutants); relationship with other Codex committees and international bodies; role of delegates
11:00–11:40	Codex Procedural Manual and Codex Documentation	Sarah Cahill Codex Secretariat – Virtual	Codex structure & governance; decision making rules; participation and roles; the 8 step standard development process; procedural tools; highlights of the 2026-2031 Codex Strategic Plan.
11:40–11:50	Q&A Session		Questions on the morning presentations and initial

		Anna Gore	discussion of how national positions are developed and communicated.
11:50–12:10	Navigating Codex Documentation	Steve Crossley	Practical guidance on finding and using Codex documents on the Codex website — where to locate CCCF reports, working documents, circular letters, and JECFA reports.
12:10–12:50	Group Exercise: CCCF Overview & Document Navigation	S. Crossley & M. Kabole	Participants navigate the Codex website to locate CCCF19 working documents and identify key agenda items relevant to their country and potential national positions.
12:50–13:50	**Lunch**	**All**	
13:50–14:10	Introduction to the circular letter template	S. Crossley & M. Kabole	The facilitator introduces the circular letter template.
14:10–14:30	Understanding JECFA's Risk Assessment	S. Crossley	Overview of JECFA's work, including hazard identification, hazard characterization, exposure assessment, and risk characterization.
14:30–14:45	Data Submission to JECFA — Overview	S. Crossley	JECFA`s role in Codex risk assessment; types of data required (occurrence, consumption, toxicological); why African country data matters for global evaluations.
14:45–15:45	Aflatoxin Mitigation in Feed Crops	Jane Kamau - IITA	**Part 1** — Presentation (20 min): Aflatoxin prevalence in African feed crops (maize, groundnuts, sorghum) and in milk; health and trade implications; current CCCF/Codex standards and JECFA findings; regional mitigation efforts. **Part 2** — Q&A & Regional

		M.Bah &S. Crossley	Discussion (20 min): National challenges, detection capacity, alignment with Codex limits; African countries potential positions in view of CCCF19.
15:45–16:05	**Tea/Coffee Break & Networking**	All	
16:05–17:05	Cadmium Mitigation & the CCCF Code of Practice	Doreen Koranteng-GSA M.Bah &S. Crossley	**Part 1** — Presentation (20 min): Code of Practice for prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in cocoa beans and other commodities; current MLs and JECFA assessment; trade implications for African cocoa-producing countries. **Part 2** — Q&A & Regional Discussion (20 min): National monitoring data, mitigation strategies, and gaps; African countries potential positions in view of CCCF19.
17:05–17:15	Day 1 Synthesis & Preview of Day 2	M.Kabole	Reflection on key themes from the day; reminder to review draft positions overnight; preview of Day 2.
17:15	***End of Day 1***	All	
19.00	Networking group dinner	All	

DAY 2 — Thursday, September 17, 2026			
Time	**Activity**	**Facilitator**	**Description / Focus**
8:30–8:40	Recap of Day 1	M Kabole	Summary of Day 1 highlights; overview of Day 2 agenda.
8:40–9:00	Breakout Groups: Reflection & Challenges	S. Crossley & M. Kabole	Country groups review their day 1 draft positions and identify outstanding questions; short discussion on challenges in CCCF engagement.
9:00–9:10	Plenary: Group Findings	S. Crossley & M. Kabole	Groups share reflections.

9:10–9:30	The African Perspective: Engagement in CCCF	Sokhna Ndao – Senegal Ahmed Eltoukhy – Egypt Doreen Sakala – Zambia Ally Kingazi – Tanzania	Country examples of organizing nationally for CCCF engagement; strategies to increase participation and impact (4 countries, 5 minutes each).
9:30–9:40	Q&A Session	M. Kabole	Participants discuss and reflect on the session.
9:40–10:10	**Tea/Coffee Break**	**All**	
10:10–10:40	CCCF19 Agenda & 2025 JECFA Issues	M. Bah & S. Crossley	Continental perspective on key issues in the CCCF19 agenda — agenda items 18 and 19 (CX/CF 26/9/1): review of Codex standards for contaminants and the priority list of contaminants for JECFA evaluation.
10:40–11:25	Group work:2025 JECFA position preparation Presentation of group findings	M. Bah & S. Crossley	Delegates prepare preliminary positions developed so far; facilitator highlights areas of regional alignment or divergence; discussion of coordination strategy for CCCF19 and eWG engagement.
11:25–11:45	CCCF/ CCAFRICA Coordination and Communication	M. Bah	Expectations for CCCF19; coordination strategies; proposals to raise at the meeting; next steps for inter-session communication and strategic engagement in eWGs.
11:45–12:00	Plenary Discussion & Q&A	A. Gore	Open discussion on any outstanding issues from the morning sessions.
12:00–13:00	**Lunch Break**	**All**	
13:00–13:20	Standardization of Contaminant Methods — Recent Developments at AOAC International	Katerina Mastovska - AOAC International–Virtual	Recent advances in validated analytical methods and how they are harmonised with international standards to support regulatory enforcement and trade compliance.

13:40–14:40	Tropane Alkaloids	Aziz Mukota- UNBS-Virtual M.Bah & S. Crossley	**Part 1:** Presenattion (20min): Tropane alkaloids as food contaminants; contamination pathways via Datura and related Solanaceae weeds in cereal crops. *Part 2:* Q &A & Regional Discussion (20min): National monitoring capacity, relevant commodities (sorghum, millet, buckwheat), and Africa`s interest in the CCCF 19 discussion.
14:40–15:00	**Tea Break**	**All**	
15:00–16:00	Spice Mixtures & Lead Contamination	Naomi J. Kitur - KEBS S. Crossley & M. Kabole M.Bah & S. Crossley	**Part 1:** Presentation (20min): Lead contamination in spice mixtures — sources, health risks, trade implications; current CCCF/Codex MLs; global surveillance data and the African context. **Part 2:** Q &A & Regional Discussion (20min): National monitoring capacity, relevant commodities (sorghum, millet, buckwheat), and Africa`s interest in the CCCF 19 discussion.
16:00–16:30	Plenary: Sharing & Refining National Positions and Planned Interventions	M. Bah, A. Gore & M. Kabole	Group presentations across all four topics (cadmium, aflatoxins, tropane alkaloids, spices/lead); Plenary feedback to refine and align positions; facilitators highlights consensus and areas for further coordination.
16:30–16:45	Workshop Evaluation	M. Kabole	
16:45–17:00	Closing Session	A. Gore M. Bah J. Oppong	Formal closing; summary of discussions and next steps.
17:00	**End of Programme**		

Annex 2: List of participants

No.	Name	Organization/Institution	Country
1.	Allan Azegele	Codex Alimentarius Commission	Kenya
2.	Anna Gore	Minor Use Foundation	USA
3.	Nakia Smith	The Coca-Cola Company	USA
4.	Bah Mamodou	WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa	The Gambia
5.	John Oppong-Otoo	African Union–InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources	Kenya
6.	Steve Crossley	Consultant	Australia
7.	Alexis Ossiya	African Union–InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources	Kenya
8.	Teresia Waithaka	The Coca-Cola Company	Kenya
9.	Fredy Chinyavanhu	Ministry of Health and Child Care	Zimbabwe
10.	Naomi Kitur	Kenya Bureau of Standards	Kenya
11.	Sahara Ali	Ministry of Health	Kenya
12.	Koranteng Doreen Afi Gyau	Ghana Standards Authority	Ghana
13.	Aburu Awath	Uganda National Bureau of Standards	Uganda
14.	Kingazi Ally Hemedi	Tanzania Bureau of Standards	Tanzania
15.	Eltoukhy Ahmed Hamed Sayed	Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality	Egypt
16.	Jaiteh Lamin	Food Safety and Quality Authority	The Gambia
17.	Lawrence Aloo	National Public Health Laboratory	Kenya
18.	Ndao Sokhna	Codex Office	Senegal
19.	Karom Mohamed El Mehdi	National Office of Food Safety	Morocco
20.	Tsiane Yvonne	Department of Health	South Africa
21.	Sianjani Doreen Sakala	Ministry of Health	Zambia
22.	Haridi Nourreddine	Ministry of Internal Trade and Regulation of the National Market	Algeria
23.	Benoit Gnnonlonfin	Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International	Kenya
24.	Mellon Kabole	Minor Use Foundation	Kenya
25.	Mercy Kioko	Kenya Bureau of Standards	Kenya
26.	Beatrice Adhiambo	African Union–InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources	Kenya
27.	James Nduati	Kenya Bureau of Standards	Kenya