

Introduction

We are honored to stand before you today celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius as representatives of the youth humbly advocating for a future in which food safety, accessibility, and sustainability are not only priorities – but cornerstones of our community. The collective power of our vision and action holds the key to a world in which nourishment is a right for all, and where the integrity of our food systems is guaranteed for future generations. With that in mind, our recommendations are inspired by aspirations for resilient, inclusive food systems that foundationally serve societal well-being.

Technology and Efficiency

First and foremost, as we look to the future, blockchain technology can build trust and improve stakeholder efficiency through its multi-dimensional application in global food safety. Central to blockchain technology is the ability to create a digital, unified, and secure record of transactions – a singular source of truth. Blockchain can ensure product traceability, enabling rapid identification in the event of a food safety breach, assuring accuracy of food claims, and reducing food fraud. Each step of production up to the consumer can be recorded – including ingredients and external factors as well. Lastly, blockchain streamlines information channels, reducing errors and improving communication among key actors, ensuring global food safety.

Raising awareness on the Codex mission

Even with new technologies, raising awareness about the Codex’s mission remains crucial in ensuring a safer, healthier world. The Codex – with its commitment to international standards – fosters global cooperation, ensuring food safety and quality for all. In amplifying awareness, we empower people to understand the pivotal role the Codex plays in safeguarding our food supply. As highlighted in the 2022-member survey, enhancing awareness among national stakeholders is key. Collectively advocating for the use of the Codex is vital, as it unifies us in a shared vision promoting food safety and fair trade. Together, we can support the Codex’s mission – contributing to a sustainable future for all.

Labeling

Crucial to the Codex’s mission is putting consumers’ health first. We must ensure that everyone can make informed decisions about their products. Thus, it is vital to improve labeling systems, such as those that can inform about the risks linked to the excessive consumption of certain categories of food – such as ultra-processed ones. Given the necessity for a bottom-up approach in which the consumer’s choice is the key, labels could report the impact that the production process has had on the environment, with particular reference to the expiration date, to reduce food waste. Thus, smart labeling will ensure that labels become stronger drivers of informed decisions.

Sustainability and Governance

Shifting from bottom-up approaches to global challenges, we emphasise that climate change is introducing complex, emerging and unprecedented risks to food safety and quality along the food chain, from cultivation to consumption. We see a crucial role to be played by the Codex in ensuring the food system adapts such risks. The Codex must catalyze research and fast track necessary updates to its standards. This is imperative to ensure that Codex food standards remain applicable to rapidly changing climatic conditions, thereby protecting trade and consumer

health for the future. Specifically, we emphasize the value of the Codex Trust Fund and other complementary mechanisms in mobilizing national research and implementation capacity, recognizing the need for stronger infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries which are at present most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, ensuring the safety of our global food supply.

Monitoring Systems

Recognizing the challenges presented by climate change and other crises, as well as the opportunities offered by blockchain and smart-labeling technologies, fit-for-purpose monitoring systems are clearly vital for upholding Codex standards. To this end, it is imperative to empower communities from the bottom-up in raising awareness on monitoring with these new technologies to ensure the integrity of our food systems in an efficient, effective manner. Therefore, the voluntary nature of the Codex can be interwoven with the adoption of the aforementioned technologies, incorporating its spirit at every step of our new and evolving monitoring systems to better guarantee risk mitigation in food safety and quality for all.

Conclusion

Standing at the crossroads of a rapidly changing food landscape, the future of food safety is our responsibility. Utilizing technology, we can trace the journey of our food with transparency and accountability. While raising awareness and providing clear, accessible food labeling can empower our communities to make informed decisions – ensuring that every meal is a conscious act. In the face of unprecedented crises such as climate change, governance and robust monitoring systems are critical in developing inclusive, adaptable food standards. Together, we strive towards a future in which every bite is more than just nourishment, rather a testament to our commitment to health, sustainability, and a world in which food is the birthright of all.