

5.1 CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

i.Objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

a.Protecting Consumer Health:

CAC aims to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade by establishing science-based standards and guidelines.

Standards cover areas such as food additives, contaminants, residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs, and hygiene practices.

b.Facilitating International Food Trade:

CAC promotes harmonization of food standards to facilitate safe and fair international trade in food products.

Harmonized standards reduce trade barriers, promote transparency, and build consumer confidence in the safety and quality of food products.

c.Promoting Coordination and Cooperation:

CAC fosters collaboration among member countries, international organizations, and stakeholders in setting food standards and guidelines.

It encourages information sharing, capacity building, and technical cooperation to enhance global food safety and quality management.

ii.Functions and Activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

a.Development of Codex Standards:

CAC develops Codex standards, guidelines, and codes of practice through expert committees and consultations with member countries.

Standards cover a wide range of topics including food additives, contaminants, hygiene practices, labeling, and methods of analysis.

b.Risk Assessment and Scientific Advice:

CAC conducts risk assessments and provides scientific advice on food safety and quality issues based on the latest scientific evidence.

Expert committees review data, assess risks associated with food hazards, and recommend appropriate safety measures and regulatory limits.

c.Adoption and Implementation of Standards:

Codex standards are voluntarily adopted by member countries as benchmarks for their national food regulations.

Countries implement Codex standards to ensure consistency with international norms, facilitate trade, and protect public health.

d.Capacity Building and Training:

CAC provides technical assistance, training programs, and workshops to support member countries in implementing Codex standards.

Capacity-building activities enhance national food safety systems, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and improve compliance with international food standards.

iii.Significance of Codex Alimentarius Commission:

Global Food Safety Authority: Codex standards are recognized internationally as benchmarks for food safety and quality, guiding national regulations and industry practices.

Consumer Protection: Codex standards ensure that food products meet minimum safety and quality requirements, protecting consumers from foodborne illnesses and contaminants.

Trade Facilitation: Harmonized Codex standards reduce trade barriers, promote fair competition, and facilitate access to global markets for food producers and exporters.

Scientific Rigor: CAC's reliance on scientific evidence and expert consensus ensures that food standards are based on sound science and risk assessment principles.

iv.Challenges and Criticisms:

Speed of Standard Setting: The process of developing and revising Codex standards can be lengthy due to the need for consensus among member countries with diverse interests and priorities.

Resource Constraints: Limited funding and technical capacity in some member countries may hinder effective participation in Codex activities and implementation of standards.

Industry Influence: Balancing the interests of public health and industry stakeholders in setting standards can pose challenges, particularly in controversial areas such as food additives and pesticide residues.