Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



CCLAC24

Dear CCLAC Members and Observers:

It is a pleasure to write to you ahead of the upcoming 24th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC24), which will take place in **Montevideo, Uruguay, from 23 to 27 November 2026**.

It will be a great pleasure to welcome you to Uruguay to review what we have achieved over the past two years and jointly define the priorities for the next phase. Logistical information on registration, the venue, accommodation and other practical matters will be provided in separate documents. In this letter, I would like to focus on the substance of the session and the collective work ahead.

We are approaching CCLAC24 at a particularly significant time. We have completed the implementation period of the **Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025** and are embarking on a new phase with the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031. The session in Montevideo will allow us to review progress, identify challenges and agree on how we can work more effectively together in the years ahead, in line with the priorities and objectives set out in the new Strategic Plan.

During this period, the CCLAC coordination team sought to strengthen regional coordination on the issues discussed in the various Codex committees. Our aim was to ensure that countries received information earlier, were aware of the positions of other Members and had more opportunities to identify common interests.

A particular priority has been the extensive use of new technologies to reduce disparities among our countries in their capacity to participate. We set three objectives: to enable all Members to access, in their own language, the documentation circulated by the Codex Secretariat; to provide them with daily updates on developments while each committee is in session; and to equip them with better tools for strengthening regional coordination.

The next phase, the first results of which we hope to present in Montevideo, aims to enable countries in our region to submit Codex-related queries quickly and in their own language, and to access the information they need to support their participation and decision-making.

These technologies also offer a particularly valuable opportunity: they make it possible to create genuine public goods. Once a translation, information, monitoring or knowledge-access service has been developed, making it available to more countries does not diminish the quality or usefulness each country receives. On the contrary, the more widely it is shared, the greater its collective value. For this reason, the services and tools developed by the CCLAC coordination team have also been made available to the other Codex regions.

The same rationale underpins another initiative that we will present in Montevideo: a comparative review of the institutional and regulatory frameworks governing food in the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our aim is to build a knowledge base that can be validated and enriched by the countries themselves and used by all.



CCLAC24 will also provide an opportunity to discuss which aspects of current and future Codex work are particularly important for the region. The generation and submission of regional data, the implementation of Codex texts on antimicrobial resistance, the One Health approach, the capacity of the scientific advice system, the prioritisation of new work proposals and participation modalities are among the matters that warrant our attention.

As we prepare for CCLAC24, I invite you to reflect on these and any other matters you consider priorities for the region, as well as on the main challenges and opportunities your countries face in participating effectively in Codex work. Your contributions will be essential to enrich the discussion and help identify regional priorities for the next period.

None of this can replace what lies at the heart of CCLAC: the participation of its Members. Technology can facilitate access to information and help us follow numerous discussions, but it cannot determine our region's priorities or formulate the positions we wish to advance. That task rests with the countries themselves. I would therefore like to encourage you to participate actively in CCLAC24. We need to hear both from countries that regularly participate in Codex committees and from those that face greater barriers to doing so. It will be particularly important to broaden the participation of Caribbean small island developing States and smaller economies, so that constraints related to language, distance or resources are progressively less of a barrier to their ability to shape Codex work and contribute to the region's collective decisions.

Our diversity is one of the strengths of Latin America and the Caribbean. It makes reaching common positions more complex, but it also makes doing so especially valuable.

I hope that the session in Montevideo will allow us to review what we have achieved and discuss frankly what we want CCLAC to be in the years ahead: which issues we should prioritise, how we can generate more regional knowledge, how we can broaden participation and how we can make better use of new technologies. I am confident that, with the active participation of all Members, we can build a shared vision to guide CCLAC's work throughout the new strategic period.



I look forward to welcoming you in Montevideo as we continue to build that path together.

Kind regards,

Leonardo Veiga
Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)