



International Inter-Agency Working Group for Specialized Nutritious Food Products

13th Inter-Agency Harmonization Meeting

May 26-28, 2020

Communiqué

Goal of Inter-Agency Working Group: The overarching goal of the International Inter-Agency Group for Specialized Nutritious Food Products (SNFPs) is to promote appropriate formulations, modifications, and use of specialized nutritious food products in a manner that complies with international standards and is consistent with guidance from normative bodies on nutritional value and food safety, also taking into account advances in science, including product-related research and development, operational needs of agencies, and empirical understanding of costs and effectiveness (*Inter-Agency Working Group for Specialized Nutritious Food Products Terms of Reference, October 2016*).

Purpose of Communiqué: To share the main topics discussed and future priorities determined at the 13th Inter-Agency Harmonization Meeting.

Key Topics Discussed

The key topics discussed during the meeting were: (a) next generation product innovations and new SNFP formulations; (b) Codex Alimentarius update; (c) naturally occurring contaminants in humanitarian foods; (d) food safety and quality supplier remote auditing; (e) traceability; (f) review of action points from 2019 meeting; (g) the *Global Action Plan on Child Wasting* and areas of overlap between product use and guidance; and (h) research coordination: links between program and supply discussions.

Major Outcomes

- Discussion of peanut-free RUTF formulations, the [Technical Expert Meeting on RUTF](#), and WHO process for developing recommendations related to RUTF formulations with alternative protein sources
- Presentation of Codex Alimentarius process, status of RUTF standard, and application of Codex to SNFPs
- Overview of natural food toxins and process contaminants involved in recent incidents and how existing Codex standards can be applied to control contaminants, especially at raw materials stage
- Discussion of how to proceed when national standards conflict with Codex
- Introduction to USDA remote auditing process
- Overview of traceability challenges, need for systems such as QR codes to trace and track SNFPs, and partnerships between agencies, including the TraceAID working group
- Review of updates to the [SNF Product Sheet](#) to include SAM products
- Agreement on need for products targeted at adults, including PLW and the chronically ill, such as the [Nutritious Drink](#), and prevention products
- Overview of *Global Action Plan on Child Wasting* framework for global actions to reach SDG targets to reduce child wasting, including aims, processes, and timelines
- Agreement on importance of linking programmatic research, product development, and supply chain considerations in planning process, including the impact of GAP guidelines on supply needs, especially in the context of COVID-19
- Discussion of supply chain challenges involved in reaching children in need of MAM/SAM treatment and the importance of attempting to involve CHWs in the delivery of treatment and work with local health ministries

	Key Discussion Points	Areas for Ongoing Discussion
Theme 1: Specifications for SNFPs	Next Generation Product Innovations and New SNFP Formulations	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut-free RUTF formulations and Technical Expert Meeting on RUTF • Update on protein quality/dairy content • Update from WHO on RUTF guidelines and systematic reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF acceptability studies of alternative RUTF formulations to be conducted in coming year (UNICEF) • Possibility of programming an oat-based RUTF formulation found to be equally acceptable to peanut-based formulation • WHO recommendations for RUTF formulations with alternative protein sources following July expert meeting and anticipated October publication (WHO) • Status of Nutriset RUTF patent and implications of expiration
	Codex Alimentarius Update	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the Codex Alimentarius process and status of RUTF standard • Codex texts applicable to our products (including discussion on Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods and its application) • Pending points for RUTF standard • Assessing protein quality • Acceptable processing technologies • Codex application to complementary foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of eight-step Codex standard-setting process (currently at fifth step) • Adjustments to essential fatty acid levels (UNICEF)

	Key Discussion Points	Areas for Ongoing Discussion
Theme 2: Food Safety and Quality Assurance	Naturally Occurring Contaminants in Humanitarian Foods	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mycotoxins involved in recent incidents • Overview of natural food toxins and process contaminants • Application of existing Codex standards to control contaminants, especially at raw materials stage • Agreement on how to control contaminants • Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Tropane Alkaloids Executive Summary • When national standards conflict with Codex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final report on FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Tropane Alkaloids • WFP compliance testing for contaminants • Status of process based on remote audits conducted during summer of 2020
	Food Safety and Quality Supplier Remote Auditing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of USDA remote auditing process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of process based on remote audits conducted during summer of 2020
	Traceability	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of traceability challenges and need for systems to trace and track SNFPs • Finalization QR code data fields and consideration of other AIDC technologies • TraceAID working group and other partnerships, including between USAID and WFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Incident Management (FIM) training (WFP) • Retreat with implementing partners to better understand existing systems and how best to share data (USAID)

	Key Discussion Points	Areas for Ongoing Discussion
Theme 3: Programming and Research	Review of Action Points from 2019 Meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNF Product Sheet updated to include SAM products • Product needs of adults, including PLW and chronically ill • Nutritious Drink concept developed for adults, in particular PLHIV, and acceptability also tested among PLW in Burkina Faso (paper in press, MCN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for new product targeted at PLW reflecting higher protein needs in comparison to existing LNS or guidance on using existing RUTF/LNS for PLW (limit amount as vitamin A content is high for consumption during pregnancy) • Need for some tweaks on the Nutritious Drink to limit 'stiffening' after left standing for a while (e.g. add amylase)
	Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and Areas of Overlap between Product Use and Guidance	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUTF programming and supply chains, especially in the context of COVID-19 • GAP framework for global actions to reach SDG targets to reduce child wasting, including aims, processes, timelines • Prevention products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of draft roadmap for launching GAP in multiple countries (UNICEF/WFP/FAO/WHO/UNHCR) • Establishment of guideline group/scoping meeting and commission of systematic reviews related to managing growth failure in infants (WHO) • Increasing awareness of existing products and how to use them
	Research Coordination: Links between Program and Supply Discussions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking programmatic research, product development, and supply chain considerations in planning, including the impact of GAP guidelines on supply needs • Supply chain challenges involved in reaching children in need of MAM/SAM treatment • Involving CHWs in the delivery of this treatment and working with local health ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and when to involve supply chain partners in these coordination discussions • How to encourage WHO to make a genuine endorsement of community programming for wasting • Wasting research: Which questions should be prioritized and how can we move this research agenda forward? • Incorporating prevention and continuum of care into programming and product sheet 	

Attending Organizations

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Action Against Hunger (ACF)
- Tufts University Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR) acting as Secretariat
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Plans for Next Meeting

- Date: September 22-24, 2020

If you have questions regarding this communiqué or the Inter-Agency Working Group for Specialized Nutritious Food Products, please contact the Secretariat at tuftsfaqr@gmail.com or the following agency contacts:

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