

REPORT ON THE ZS 832: CODE OF HYGIENE PRACTICE FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WORKSHOP

Date: Tuesday, 14th October 2025

Venue: Mkango Golf View Hotel, Lusaka

Organized by: Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International – Lusaka

In Partnership with: Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA)

Funded by: Solidaridad Organization





Introduction

The ZS 832: Code of Hygiene Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Workshop was held on 14th October 2025 at Mkango Golf View Hotel, Lusaka. The workshop brought together participants from multiple sectors, including CUTS International staff, traders, Urban Futures youths, Ministry of Agriculture and ZCSA technical expert.

The primary aim was to raise awareness of Zambia Standard (ZS 832) Code of Hygiene Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, with a focus on improving hygiene practices, promoting food safety, and strengthening stakeholder collaboration across the food value chain. This initiative was supported by Solidaridad, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable agriculture and food safety in Zambia.

Objectives of the Workshop

1. Disseminate information on ZS 832 Code of Hygiene Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables developed by ZCSA.
2. Sensitize producers, traders, and consumers on the importance of compliance and its benefits.
3. Strengthen collaboration between public, private, and civil society actors to promote safe and sustainable food systems in Zambia

Opening Session

The workshop was officially opened by Madam Angela Mulenga, Country Director of CUTS International Lusaka. She highlighted CUTS International's interventions in safe food handling, consumer protection, and sustainable market systems. She emphasized the importance of creating awareness of food hygiene practices among all value chain actors, including farmers, traders, youths, and consumers.

The session was facilitated by Mr. Victor Sikombe, Consumer Welfare Officer at CUTS International, who guided participants through the day's programme. He provided a clear overview of the workshop objectives, ensuring that participants understood the purpose and expected outcomes of the day. Mr. Sikombe facilitated smooth transitions between presentations, encouraged active participation, and prompted discussions that allowed attendees to share their experiences and challenges in the fresh fruits and vegetables value chain.

Presentation by ZCSA Technical Expert Ms. Mitolo

She began by introducing ZCSA and its legal mandate under the Compulsory Standards Act No. 3 of 2017, which empowers the agency to administer, maintain, and ensure compliance with compulsory standards for the purpose of public safety, consumer protection, and environmental sustainability.

ZCSA currently regulates over 61 imported and locally manufactured products, including food and beverages, chemicals, fertilizers, used textiles, electrical appliances, fuels, and cement, among others.

Scope of ZCSA Work

- Promoting environmental protection and conservation.
- Creating public awareness on environmental sustainability.
- Mobilizing communities through education and participation in conservation efforts.
- Supporting climate change mitigation through tree planting, rainwater harvesting, recycling, and reuse initiatives.
- Promoting green energy technologies and innovation in environmental management.
- Preserving indigenous knowledge and protecting indigenous tree species.

Food Safety: Ready-to-Eat Fruits and Vegetables

- Microorganisms may originate from soil, water, manure, handling, and the surrounding environment.
- Common foodborne pathogens include *Salmonella* spp., *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli* O157:H7, and parasites such as *Cyclospora cayetanensis* and *Cryptosporidium parvum*.
- Participants were reminded of the critical need to observe hygiene at all stages from production to consumption to prevent contamination and protect consumers.

Implementation Phases of Compulsory Standards

Phase 1: 29 Standards (EQA – 11 Oct 2020; Documentation – 1 Jan 2021)

Phase 2: 7 Standards (Mid-2021)

Phase 3: 5 Standards (2020–2021)

Total: 41 Standards implemented to date



Primary Production Hygiene

Key hygiene measures emphasized included:

- Maintaining hygiene during harvesting to prevent contamination.
- Ensuring irrigation and washing water meet microbiological safety standards.
- Keeping harvesting and packaging areas clean.
- Proper maintenance of tools, equipment, and storage facilities.
- Ensuring workers maintain personal hygiene and wear protective clothing.
- Providing adequate sanitation facilities (toilets, handwashing stations, changing rooms).
- Proper handling, transport, and storage to maintain product quality.
- Training, documentation, traceability, and recall procedures to ensure compliance.

Participation and Engagement



The workshop was interactive, with active engagement from youths, traders, farmers, and other stakeholders. Participants shared experiences, challenges, and best practices in hygiene management. Many expressed appreciation for the knowledge gained and the networking opportunities with regulatory bodies and organizations.

Key Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of ZS 832 and its relevance to food safety and hygiene.
- Strengthened collaboration between ZCSA, CUTS, Solidaridad, and community stakeholders.
- Increased awareness of hygiene practices from farm to fork.
- Commitment from participants to implement the standards in their respective sectors.

Conclusion

The ZS 832 Hygiene Practice Workshop successfully achieved its objectives of awareness creation, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement. It reinforced the need for all actors in the fresh fruits and vegetables value chain to adhere to hygiene and food safety standards. CUTS International expressed gratitude to Solidaridad, ZCSA, and all participants for their commitment and contributions toward improving food safety in Zambia. The workshop reaffirmed the collective responsibility of stakeholders to uphold hygiene, protect consumers, and promote a healthy nation.

Prepared by:

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