

**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS SUBMITTED BY 49TH
SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING (CCFL49)**

FOR ADOPTION BY THE 49TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Resolve to Save Lives (RTSL) appreciates the work of CCFL in developing these Guidelines and recognizes the genuine operational need that motivated their development - enabling competent authorities and humanitarian actors to maintain food supply continuity during disruptions while protecting consumer safety. We acknowledge and support the underlying intent. However, RTSL notes that substantive concerns were raised at CCFL49 from both Members and Observers, and that the text is being advanced on an accelerated Step 5/8 path. We believe these unresolved concerns, including on for vulnerable population protections around the potential for commercial exploitation, warrant a full inter-sessional discussion rather than adoption at CAC. RTSL recommends that the Guidelines on the Application of Food Labelling Provisions in Emergencies not be adopted at this session, and that the text be returned to CCFL for further consideration and strengthening before adoption.

We offer the following concerns:

Section 2.1.1 of the Scope states that the Guidelines are premised on emergencies being "exceptional and temporary events," but include no maximum duration for flexibilities and no mandatory review trigger for situations where an emergency persists beyond an initial period. Protracted crises (including conflict, prolonged displacement, and recurring natural disasters) are increasingly common. Without time limits or escalation mechanisms, flexibilities could become semi-permanent features of food supply in affected countries, creating the de facto two-tiered system that these Guidelines are designed to prevent. RTSL recommends that the Guidelines include provisions for periodic mandatory review of flexibilities in protracted situations and criteria for when a humanitarian response framework, rather than a labelling flexibility framework, is more appropriate.

Section 2.1.2 of the scope of permitted flexibilities includes "labelling of ingredient substitutions that do not compromise food safety." However, the Guidelines focus exclusively on safety (allergen risk) without addressing nutritional or compositional substitutions that may affect consumer health outcomes, including those relevant to undernutrition, overnutrition, and non-communicable disease risk. In protracted emergencies, populations already facing heightened NCD risk or nutritional vulnerability may be particularly susceptible to harm from undisclosed compositional changes. RTSL recommends that the Guidelines address nutritional risk alongside food safety risk in the review criteria for ingredient substitution flexibilities.

Section 3.1.11 directs competent authorities to ensure that flexibilities do not introduce food safety risks for vulnerable populations, including infants, young children, and persons with special dietary needs. However, the Guidelines provide no specific criteria, product-category restrictions, or linkage to existing Codex standards applicable to these groups. Without such specificity, this provision cannot function as an operational safeguard. RTSL recommends that the Guidelines explicitly identify categories of foods (e.g. foods for older infants and young children) for which specific flexibilities should not apply, or for which heightened review criteria are required, with reference to relevant Codex standards