

## CAC41 - ROME

# **REPORT BY HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW OBSERVERS**

With support from the Washington, D.C.-based World Food Law Institute and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a Howard University School of Law 2018 Alumna and a rising HU 3L student traveled to Rome with Dr. Marsha Echols to observe the 41st session of the 189-member U.N. Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).



CAC creates the international food code of harmonized model standards for food safety and quality, consumer health, and fair practices in food trade. Its internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations relating to foods, food production, and food safety are

adopted as law or are models for governments around the world, especially developing countries.

The Howard students observed the CAC Plenary Sessions, several side events, met with FAO officials and members of the U.S. and international Delegations, and attended a July 4th Independence Day celebration in Rome. During the Plenary sessions they observed discussions about date and front of pack labeling, science-based minimum levels for pesticide residues and additives, the appropriate standard for quinoa and other foods, and the presentations by Observers from institutions like the World Trade Organization and the African Union.

The Rome trip to CAC41 is an example of World Food Law Institute programs designed to encourage an interest in food law and policy among law students and young lawyers. Both Howard students had been enrolled in Professor Echols World Food Law course, which focused on cooperation along the global food chain.

Howard Law student Mohsen Farshneshani described his experience at CAC41. "Attending the Codex

meetings was an astounding experience. As young law students, we were afforded the opportunity to meet with top policymakers and scientists from 180+ countries, including top FDA and USDA officials. It was fascinating to witness the negotiation process and discourse between so many nations within an organizational structure consisting of various bodies and committees."

Regina York, a 2018 Howard Law graduate, judged her CAC41 experience. "It was a remarkable experience to realize the extensive work and collaboration required to create let alone adopt food standards. Observing the Codex meeting and witnessing the debates first-hand made somewhat obscure concepts tangible and instilled greater appreciation for the work of Codex and the FAO. I walked into the Codex meeting on Monday in awe of the task at hand, and I left on Friday evening inspired and enamored by the shared goal of ensuring food authenticity, safety, and quality for all the world's people."

The World Food Law Institute also hosts a Distinguished Lecture, a World Food Law Symposium and a series of off-the-record multi-disciplinary Round Tables for experts. Geographical Indications was the theme during 2017-2018. Given the

great interest in the topic and its multiple aspects, geographical indications will continue to be the Institute's focus during 2018-2019., again with strong support and cooperation with FAO. The Institute's 2019 Symposium will be co-sponsored with FAOLOW, the American Society of International Law and others.