

## THE FIRST FAO/WHO/AU INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE

Addis Ababa, 12-13 November 2019

### “Chairperson’s Summary”

The First FAO/WHO/AU International Conference on Food Safety met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 12 to 13 February 2019, with more than 500 participants representing over 110 governments, several international and regional intergovernmental organizations as well as civil society and the private sector.

Participants recalled the previous and ongoing efforts<sup>1</sup> made by governments and other stakeholders; highlighted the integral role of food safety in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2, 3 and 8; and recognized that foodborne diseases make 600 million people ill and cause 420,000 premature deaths annually<sup>2</sup> and that this translates into productivity losses of US\$95 billion a year in low- and middle-income countries alone<sup>3</sup>. Participants further noted the ongoing changes in climate and in global food production and supply systems<sup>4,5</sup> and the need to empower the consumer through improved and evidence-based health and nutrition information and education.

Participants emphasized, *inter alia*, the importance of:

1. Integrating food safety into national and regional policies as a means to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by setting a firm political commitment and coherent actions across multiple sectors in order to promote safe and diversified healthy diets;
2. Enhancing the participation of all countries in the standard-setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and facilitating the implementation of Codex standards;
3. Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration and applying multisectoral “One Health” approaches to address sustainability challenges in food production systems and ensure the availability of and access to safe, sufficient and nutritious foods;
4. Combatting and containing antimicrobial resistance in the food chain through prudent use of antimicrobials in animal and plant production;
5. Integrating food safety into national plans and commitments for climate change adaptation and mitigation;

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<sup>1</sup> FAO Conference Resolutions 3/2017, 4/2017, 9/2017, 3/2013, 2/97; World Health Assembly Resolutions WHA53.15, WHA55.16, and WHA63.3; the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action adopted by the Second International Conference on Nutrition organized by FAO and WHO in 2014 as well as and the General Assembly resolution 70/259 proclaiming the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025); the Rome Declaration adopted by the First World Food Summit in 1996; UN General Assembly resolution 70/1 adopting universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

<sup>2</sup> WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases, WHO, 2015

<sup>3</sup> The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, World Bank, 2018

<sup>4</sup> FAO. 2016. The State of Food and Agriculture: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security. Rome, FAO

<sup>5</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition. Rome, FAO

6. Increasing investment in national food control systems, enhancing risk-based approaches and including building capacity for managing food safety emergencies, in order to ensure the safety of food supplies in informal and formal markets, with specific attention to vulnerable populations;
7. Ensuring adherence to adequate food safety management in the food sector, with special attention to small-scale operators, and leveraging private sector investment in building safe and resilient food and feed supply chains;
8. Enhancing partnership among public sector, private sector and academia/research, including South-South cooperation, which is essential for fostering innovation as a means of improving safety and resilience of food systems;
9. Taking actions to ensure that all countries can benefit from the developments in food sciences and technologies that are providing new tools for the assessment and management of food safety risks;
10. Enabling consumers and civil society to engage and contribute to food safety discussions, foster ownership of decisions, collaborative actions and public confidence in food systems, and drive enhanced food safety practices, sustainable food systems and related policies;
11. Raising public awareness, promoting food safety education and training in communities and schools, fostering dialogue and inspiring actions to enhance food safety, using the World Food Safety Day as a global reminder of the need to maintain a high level of public awareness;
12. Improving the evidence base for food safety decisions through systematic efforts on the monitoring of foodborne hazards and the surveillance of foodborne diseases, on estimating the public health and economic burden of foodborne diseases, and on the improvement of food safety risk assessment methodologies;
13. Contributing to global integrated data and sharing expertise, knowledge and information on existing and emerging food safety issues so as to inform forward-looking policies, regulations and programmes.