ITEM 19: ACCELERATING FOOD SAFETY

Thank you chair.

We would like to thank the Director General and the secretariat for the preparatory report for this item. We also positively note WHO's involvement in the two most recent meetings on food safety: The First International Conference on Food Safety in Addis Ababa (a collaboration between the African Union, WHO and FAO), and the International Forum on Food Safety and Trade (which was organized by the WHO, FAO and WTO).

As markets become global, and as food production chains fragment across countries we must work to effectively monitoring for hazardous substances. Our actions should be, by definition, multisector.

The vast network of collaborations the WHO has with other agencies, including with FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Food Programme, and WTO certainly reflects this reality, and properly responds to it.

We as member states also need to adopt a “farm to fork” approach, by taking into account all stages in the chain, from raw material until the food reaches the consumer. A necessary step in this direction would be enhancing international collaboration on food safety. We need to fully participate in the WHO-FAO International Network of Food Safety Authorities, INFOSAN. We need to adhere to the food safety and nutrition standards issued by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the executive organ of the WHO/FAO food standards programme, and actively promote their full implementation.

There is much we can do to prevent food borne disease. We particularly wish to highlight the role that innovation plays in this context.

One of the recommendations from the Addis Ababa / Geneva meeting was to (make) use of new technologies to improve food safety, such as whole genome sequencing, processing of big data using artificial intelligence, block-chain and other innovations in product-tracing; while assessing potential risks using the application of novel technologies such as genome editing.

It is our duty to do our best in order to assure sustainable funding for scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission. As co-sponsors- we fully support the draft resolution before us.

We look forward for the publication of the WHO country tool for estimating national foodborne disease burden.

Thank you for your attention.