



**Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul**

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item: O	WHO global strategy for food safety (decision WHA75(22) (2022))
Documents:	A79/26 and A79/26 Add.1
Requested action	Take note of the report
Time limit:	3 MINS
Commission	B

Dear Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Gambia aligned with statement deliver by the Central Africa Republic on behalf of the WHO African Region.

Food safety remains a major global public health concern, including in The Gambia, with important implications for health, nutrition, and economic development. Unsafe food contributes significantly to foodborne diseases, undermines consumer confidence, and places additional pressure on already overstretched health systems.

Globally, one in ten people fall ill each year from contaminated food, with the greatest burden borne by low- and middle-income countries. Strengthening food safety systems is therefore essential to protecting public health and ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all. In this regard, the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022–2030 provides a comprehensive framework to guide countries in strengthening national food control systems, enhancing surveillance, and addressing emerging risks in rapidly evolving food systems.

In The Gambia, we are advancing food safety through regulatory, institutional, and community-based interventions. The Government established a Food Safety Agency in 2013 and has strengthened the legal and policy framework for food safety, including standards for food hygiene, inspection, and quality control. A dedicated

budget has been allocated for food control, alongside the development of a multisectoral National Food Safety Strategy and a Food Safety Policy to ensure effective coordination.

Progress has been made in strengthening food inspection and enforcement, enhancing multisectoral collaboration across health, agriculture, and trade, promoting food hygiene and safety practices at community and market levels, and integrating food safety into broader public health and nutrition programmes.

Despite these gains, challenges persist, including limited laboratory and surveillance capacity, gaps in enforcement—particularly in informal food sectors—and emerging risks linked to urbanization, climate change, and changing food systems. There is also a need for stronger data systems and improved risk communication to support evidence-based decision-making.

We therefore call for enhanced global and regional support to strengthen national food control and surveillance systems, build laboratory and technical capacity, support implementation of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022–2030, and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration.

In conclusion, The Gambia reaffirms its commitment to strengthening food safety as a cornerstone of public health and sustainable development.

Thank you.