

The Regional Committee,

Recalling resolution WHA53.15, which requested the Director-General to give greater emphasis to food safety;

Recalling also that food safety was one of the eleven priorities identified in the general programme of work, 2002-2005, approved by the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA54.1;

Having considered the draft regional strategy for food safety;<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing that foodborne illnesses associated with microbial pathogens, biotoxins and chemical contamination represent a serious threat to public health in the Region;

Further recognizing the need for improved surveillance systems to evaluate the burden of foodborne diseases;

Appreciating the importance of food safety policy, law and regulations and the standards, guidelines and other recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in protecting health, enhancing trade in safe food and providing economic benefits;

Further appreciating the value of integrating food safety policy with national policies addressing areas such as nutrition, food security, poverty alleviation, gender equity and healthy settings and environment;

Noting the need to strengthen risk-based food safety strategies to focus national efforts on preventing and controlling foodborne hazards;

Mindful of the significant role that food, animal husbandry, agriculture and aquaculture play in the development of antimicrobial resistance;

Aware of the need for primary producers, food manufacturers and processors and food service sector personnel to understand and appreciate their responsibility for food safety, and of the need for training in the safe production, processing, and handling of food;

Aware also of the role that schools and families play in improving food safety;

Taking into account the increasing concern of consumers and consumer representatives regarding the safety of the food supply;

1. ENDORSES the regional strategy for food safety, taking into account the views of Member States, including those noted in the summary record;

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to adopt the regional strategy for food safety as a framework for the development of national food safety programmes;

(2) to provide, through a coordinated multisectoral approach, adequate resources to establish and strengthen national food safety programmes;

(3) to implement food safety programmes that are based on a sound scientific foundation;

(4) to strengthen their participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(1) to support Member States in capacity-building and in the implementation of national food safety programmes based on the regional strategy for food safety;

(2) to work with all key stakeholders, including Member States, international agencies, development banks, bilateral aid agencies, industry, consumer groups and other partners, in the field of food safety in the Region;

- (3) to advocate the significance of food safety for public health, trade and economic development;
- (4) to disseminate accurate food safety information, including information on genetically-modified food when it becomes available, to Member States in order to empower them to make decisions based upon scientific evidence;
- (5) to share the regional strategy for food safety with WHO Headquarters in order to enhance consistency between regional and global strategies;
- (6) to advocate the harmonization of food legislation in accord with the Codex Alimentarius, as a means of facilitating trade and protecting public health.

<sup>2</sup> Document WPR/RCS2/6.