

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Opening Remarks

CRD17

Original Language Only

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

Fiftieth Session

Panama, 12 – 16 November 2018

Opening Remarks Anita Katial – USDA's Regional Agricultural Counsellor

Panama has an important history with the United States and with the food trade. This country's strategic location as a major shipping route is pivotal to international food trade. Panama is important to the United States, both as a direct trading partner and as a facilitator of global trade. And it's also a key player in our network of trade agreements in this region. In fact, two week ago was the six-year anniversary of the implementation of the U.S. - Panama Trade Promotion Agreement!

Our collaboration is strong. We work together on trade and in making sure that it's good for everyone. That's the reason we are here today, to work on those international food standards, set by CODEX, that will guarantee safety, quality and fairness in food trade.

The United States understands that for trade to be successful we have to have those science-based Codex standards, which you all work so hard on.

On our table we can find spices from Mexico, fish sauce from Thailand, baking mixes from the United States, or plantain chips from Panama. Food is produced and shipped all over the world. And for this food exchange to work globally, food safety is essential. We need robust domestic markets that are open to innovative products and technologies. That's the only way we can continue expanding global trade in food. Panama, through AUPSA, its own food safety authority, has shown how important it is to have a link between the use of technology and the implementation of science-based food safety practices. This is critical in order to respond to the dynamic trade flow of food products that come through Panama due to its strategic geographical location.

And we know that when major illness outbreaks and contamination incidents damage consumer confidence, the loss of sales can be significant and take a long time to recover.

So, we operate in a world where consumer confidence is a key pillar of the global food system and consumer expectations for food safety are high. They expect that everyone involved in producing, processing,

transporting and marketing food is doing everything they reasonably can to prevent problems and make food safe.

You, Codex delegates and observers, help define our response to the current challenges in international food trade and in maintaining consumer confidence. I commend you for your contributions to Codex.

And I want to thank the Government of Panama, the Codex Secretary and the U.S. Secretariat for organizing and hosting this meeting. As you can see, they have worked together very well and forged strong relationships in the process.

I wish you all a productive session and a pleasant visit.