



Regional Consultation Workshop

“Implementation of GMP/HACCP in Asia – a status review”

**jointly organised by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) and
the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) of Switzerland**

Bangkok, Thailand

23rd – 25th June 2014

Your Excellency Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General, Regional Representative of the FAO Region for Asia and the Pacific,

Your Excellency Mr. Patrick Deboyser, Minister-Counsellor responsible for health and food safety, European Commission

Distinguished representatives and staff of the FAO Region for Asia and the Pacific,
dear Shashi

Distinguished speakers, experts and resource persons

Distinguished participants from the member countries of the FAO Region for Asia and the Pacific

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and indeed an immense honour and privilege for me to be with you here today.

On behalf of my country Switzerland and the Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), I would like to join Mrs Shashi Sareen in extending a very warm welcome to you all to this Regional Consultation Workshop which will entail a

status review of the Implementation of GMP/HACCP in Asia. As you all know, this Regional Consultation Workshop has been jointly organised by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Switzerland.

Switzerland has indeed been very privileged to be able to partner with the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in order to make this important contribution towards improving food safety in the FAO Asia and Pacific Region and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General, Regional Representative of the FAO Region for Asia and the Pacific, and his very hardworking staff for having enabled this partnership initiative to materialise so successfully.

Ladies and gentlemen, Switzerland is a founding member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and my country is strongly committed to enhancing the participation of all Codex Members in Codex work through the organisation of capacity building activities including Codex training seminars and workshops, such as this one, as well as through its financial contributions to the Codex Trust Fund which aims at ensuring the participation of developing countries in Codex activities.

While a lot of resources have been dedicated to the organisation of this Regional Workshop by both the FAO and Switzerland, dear participants, your presence here in Bangkok this week and your active engagement in the preliminary work which has been done so far, clearly indicate your commitment to improving the status of food safety in your countries and in the region. So far, 21 countries have registered to participate in the Regional Consultation Workshop and I am pleased to inform you that an impressive figure of more than fifty participants from the FAO Asia and Pacific

Region are with us here in Bangkok this week. Congratulations to you all on this great achievement!

Foodborne diseases are a significant public health concern globally. In the Asian region, both developed and developing countries are affected. Foodborne diseases not only have a negative impact on human health with their toll of suffering and pain, but they also adversely affect economic activities and trade leading to a loss of earnings and productivity, to name but a few.

Many countries have succeeded in developing national strategies aimed at addressing the challenges posed by foodborne diseases including the development of national legislation and regulations based on Codex documents on food hygiene, good hygienic practices and HACCP. Also, they have allocated a lot of resources in order to ensure food safety along the entire food chain. Nevertheless, there still remains a lot to be done and this Regional Consultation Workshop is an additional collective effort which will contribute to addressing the challenges and constraints faced by countries in the region.

This timely Regional Consultation Workshop is an extremely valuable opportunity for food hygiene experts in Asia and the Pacific Region to discuss the major issues related to the implementation of the principles of food hygiene including Good Hygienic Practices and HACCP in the National Food Control Systems. In addition, this Consultation will avail experts from the region with an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and experiences and to identify best practices, so that countries from the Region can learn from each other's successes and experiences. Another important objective of the Regional Consultation is the identification of issues for

inclusion in a proposed regional guidance document which was mentioned earlier by Mrs Shashi Sareen. Also, countries will be invited to agree on priorities, actions and interventions for strengthening GMP/HACCP in food businesses especially small and less developed businesses in the region. Finally, an important output of the Regional Consultation Workshop will be the identification of the priorities and actions to strengthen regional collaboration in implementing GMP/HACCP.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude my remarks by once again expressing my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the FAO for having made this partnership initiative with Switzerland possible. Switzerland looks forward to pursuing the excellent collaboration with FAO in the field of food safety and quality in future.

I would also like to thank you all distinguished speakers, participants, resource persons and experts for your commitment to improving food safety in the region. Congratulations on your noble and important efforts aimed at ensuring that the people in the Asian and Pacific Region have access to safe and good food.

I wish you a very fruitful and successful Regional Consultation Workshop.

Thank you for your attention!