

## 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture

### **Item 2.7: Rationale for a new FAO Food Safety Strategy**

#### **Introduction notes**

Without food safety there is no food security. Unsafe food carries high social, health, and economic costs that impede the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup> The dynamic changes in food systems, technologies, societies, economies, population growth, urbanization, globalization, and in the environment require commensurate updates to food safety approaches. The 2019 FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees encouraged FAO and WHO to build on the momentum created by two global food safety conferences<sup>2</sup> and continue supporting Members in raising their commitments, investments and actions for food safety. The meetings urged a renewed focus on food safety within the governing bodies of FAO and WHO. Following membership request, the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly adopted the resolution “Strengthening efforts on food safety” (EB146.R9) which requests WHO to update, in coordination with FAO, and in consultation with Members and OIE, the WHO global strategy for food safety, aiming to address current and emerging challenges, including innovative strategies for strengthening food safety systems.

Developing a new FAO Food Safety Strategy will align and integrate FAO’s work on food safety with its current organizational changes and provide broader support to food systems transformation, fostering integration of scientific, regulatory and capacity development food safety perspectives across FAO work as well as building synergy with WHO’s new food safety strategy. The new FAO Food Safety Strategy will employ One Health approaches to address food safety in the context of climate change, agricultural intensification, new technologies, innovation, food fraud, digitalization of food systems and circular economies, antimicrobial resistance and emerging zoonotic diseases. The Strategy will align with new developments in food systems and provide inputs and solutions for managing unforeseen global challenges and crises that may affect the food supply. Launching a new food safety strategy presents an opportunity to stimulate action, provide guidance and focus the support on achieving the 2030 Agenda with consideration for food safety issues as the transformation of food systems accelerates.

The Committee on Agriculture is invited to:

- Note that a new FAO Food Safety Strategy is needed to align with the SDGs and reflect the on-going major transformation in food systems.
- Request FAO to develop a new food safety strategy to serve as an international guidance, policy and advocacy instrument for decision-makers to guide adequate investments for sustainable, safe and resilient food and agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> While important for all SDGs, food safety is a critical contributor to achieving the Members’ commitments expressed in SDG 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 17. The new strategy will detail the specific food safety relevance and contribution to the referenced SDGs: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” (SDG 1), “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG 2), “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (SDG3), “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” (SDG8), “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” (SDG12), “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (SDG13), “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” (SDG17).

<sup>2</sup> The outcomes of [two recent conferences](#), the First FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference and the International Forum on Food Safety held in 2019, have underlined how changes in food systems require a critical need for re-thinking the place of food safety in sustainable development.