



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

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**MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO
FOOD SAFETY IN THE 2026 FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

1. The five FAO Regional Conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East and North Africa, held from March to May 2026, addressed food safety as a strategic enabler of resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems. The outcomes of the Regional Conferences provide important inputs to inform FAO's normative, standard-setting and operational work.
2. The Conferences emphasized food safety as a cross-cutting and systemic priority for agrifood systems transformation, contributing to resilience, sustainability and crisis preparedness, particularly in regions affected by climate stress, transboundary threats and fragile contexts.
3. Across regions, food safety was recognized as essential to food security, nutrition and public health, and as a prerequisite for safe trade, market access and value chain development through sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and alignment with Codex standards. Several regions also linked food safety to integrated surveillance, early warning systems and digital and data-driven tools, including artificial intelligence and traceability, in support of multi-hazard risk management. In specific regional contexts, food safety was associated with broader sustainability agendas, including resilient supply chains, food loss and waste reduction, circular bioeconomy and inclusive value chains. Persistent challenges include fragmented systems, limited capacities and inequalities affecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), family farmers and smallholders. Political will, sustained investments and predictable funding were highlighted as critical factors for overcoming these challenges.
4. A common feature across regions was the objective of integrating food safety within One Health approaches, linking human, animal, plant and environmental health, including risks related to zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The Conferences also reflected a shift towards preventive, science- and risk-based approaches across the "farm-to-market" continuum, emphasizing upstream interventions in primary production, inputs and plant health, rather than relying primarily on end-product control.

Recommendations for FAO

5. The Regional Conferences highlighted FAO's role as an integrator within agrifood systems, supporting Members to build coordinated and risk-based food control systems tailored to regional priorities.
6. Across regions, FAO was called upon to support the integrated, preventive and system-wide strengthening of food safety in several priority areas, including:
 - Enhancing national food control systems and regulatory frameworks in alignment with Codex, including inspection, monitoring and surveillance, as well as analytical services;
 - Facilitating safe trade and standards implementation through enhanced Codex participation, SPS implementation and regional harmonization;
 - Strengthening governance, multisectoral coordination and the integration of food safety into One Health frameworks;
 - Advancing risk-based and preventive approaches, including risk analysis and preventive food safety systems across value chains, while strengthening risk communication and food safety culture;

- Developing integrated surveillance, multi-hazard monitoring, early warning and data systems to support timely, evidence-based decision-making;
- Enhancing resilience and crisis preparedness by integrating food safety into emergency response, supply chain resilience and shock preparedness;
- Where regionally relevant:
 - Addressing emerging risks and sustainability challenges, including AMR, transboundary pests and diseases, climate- and input-related risks, and supporting safe approaches to food loss and waste reduction and circular bioeconomy practices;
 - Supporting inclusive and resilient value chains, with particular attention to smallholders, SMEs and family farmers, and improving equitable market access and participation;
 - Promoting digitalization and innovation, including the uptake of digital tools, artificial intelligence, traceability systems and data platforms.