

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda item 2

CX/NE 25/12/2

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Twelfth Session

Muscat, Oman

28 September - 2 October 2025

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Food safety in the context of evolving regional challenges

Prepared by the Coordinator (Sultanate of Oman)

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The theme of this session's keynote address is "Food Safety in the Context of Evolving Regional Challenges." This topic was selected to provide a space for reflecting on the realities of food safety in the CCNE region, helping member countries identify both commonalities and differences, and to explore ways of working together toward shared solutions.

The CCNE region is facing a range of pressing challenges—water scarcity, political instability, rapid population growth, emerging production technologies, and shifting environmental conditions—all of which are giving rise to new food safety concerns. Yet these issues are not only obstacles; they can also serve as drivers of growth and innovation. By reframing challenges as opportunities, the region can strengthen its resilience, uncover new possibilities, and turn adversity into a platform for progress.

Building on the insightful presentation by Eng. Saleh Al-Shanfari, this keynote address is intended to foster open and active dialogue. Its aim is to encourage the exchange of knowledge and perspectives among member countries, with a particular focus on food safety priorities and Codex activities of regional significance.

Speaker: Eng. Saleh Al-Shanfari, Chairman of the Food Security Committee, Oman

The CCNE region faces multifaceted challenges to food security, ranging from water scarcity and climate change to political instability. Traditionally, the policy response has emphasized boosting production to meet growing demand. Today, however, these very challenges can be reframed as opportunities to strengthen competitiveness and market positioning.

This presentation introduces a new perspective on food security—one that views food safety and quality standards not merely as regulatory obligations but as strategic marketing tools. By adopting and certifying international benchmarks such as Codex texts, HACCP, and ISO 22000, producers can build consumer confidence at home and abroad, while unlocking access to new markets for food products from the Arab region.

The discussion will highlight the critical link between food security and product quality, drawing on success stories from across the region. The examples have been chosen to demonstrate how compliance with recognized standards has enhanced brand reputation, differentiated products, and increased their competitive value.

Finally, the presentation will provide a practical roadmap for producers and manufacturers. It will show how investment in food safety translates into long-term economic viability, while also presenting national and regional case studies where adherence to high standards enabled successful entry into international markets.