

United under One Health to promote a holistic approach to food safety in Asia and the Pacific

FOOD SAFETY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

It requires multisectoral
collaboration from food
production to consumption:
a One Health approach.

THE CHALLENGE

Food can be a vehicle of disease transmission if contaminated with harmful microbes or chemicals. In the Asia-Pacific region, an estimated 225,000 people die every year and another 275 million fall ill from consuming unsafe food.

Food safety is closely linked to nutrition and food security. Unsafe food creates a hazardous cycle of disease and malnutrition, particularly affecting infants, young children, older adults and the sick.

The globalization of food trade, a growing world population, climate change, ecosystem degradation and rapidly changing food systems all have an impact on the quality and safety of food.

WHY A ONE HEALTH APPROACH AND WHAT IS IT?

One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems), are closely linked and inter-dependent.

Food safety begins at the farm and ends on the plate.

Agriculture and food production are dependent on natural resources. Inputs, such as feed, fertilizers and chemicals, contribute to the presence of residues in food as well as in the environment. This in turn adversely impacts human, animal, plant, and environmental health.

Beyond production, food may be contaminated during storage, processing or transportation, and in the kitchen or consumer levels. In other words, food contamination may happen at any stage of the food chain. Tackling health hazards such as harmful microbes, pesticides, antimicrobial substances, heavy metals, microplastics, and many others, requires a One Health approach.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS UNITING

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO) have been working together to ensure food safety along the entire food chain, from production to consumption, while the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have joined forces to bring wider stakeholder groups together.

FAO is an international organization overseeing all aspects of the food chain, thereby providing a unique vision for food quality and safety. FAO generally addresses food safety issues along the food production chain. FAO and WHO are founding organizations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which had dual objectives, i.e., protecting the health of consumers and facilitating fair practices in food trade. Codex standards are based on sound science provided by independent international risk assessment bodies or ad-hoc consultations organized by FAO and WHO.

WOAH (founded as OIE) is responsible for setting standards in the domains of animal health and veterinary public health, including animal production food safety. We ensure transparency in the global animal disease situation, collect, analyse, and disseminate veterinary scientific information, encourage international solidarity in the control of animal diseases, and safeguard world trade by publishing health standards for international trade in animals and animal products. In our improvement of the legal framework and resources of national Veterinary Services, we provide a better guarantee of food of animal origin and promote animal welfare through a science-based approach. WOAH also supports capacity building activities through its network of Collaborating Centres.

WHO aims to facilitate global prevention, detection and response to public health threats associated with unsafe food, including food safety emergency responses through the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN). WHO works to ensure consumer trust in their authorities and confidence in a safe food supply. WHO has been engaged in generating evidence-based information to inform policy decision-making, such as estimating the burden of foodborne diseases through the Foodborne Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG), and the generation of contaminant data and information through the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS).

UNEP supports environmental protection efforts, which are key for ensuring food safety. On sustainable food systems, UNEP has been engaged in initiatives focused on the mainstreaming of biodiversity into health and nutrition programmes and sustainable food systems and diets, food waste, sustainable commodity production, innovative finance for sustainable land-use, economic analysis of impacts and dependencies of agri-food value chain on nature, ecosystem-based adaptation, and integrated landscape approaches for resilient agriculture. UNEP also works on the environmental dimensions of antimicrobial resistance, and on pesticides and fertilizers.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters, and the impact of climate change. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020. To fulfill its mission of ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, WFP ensures that the food assistance it delivers is safe, nutritious and of good quality.



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Together, in the Asia-Pacific region, we will:

- promote food safety and address foodborne disease issues by providing evidence-based information to inform the policy decisions of Members
- raise awareness among key stakeholders* on the importance of a One Health approach to food safety, including through policy dialogue and public-private partnership
- call for planning and collaboration in the implementation of food safety measures across government ministries and agencies
- support capacity building of food safety professionals in the public sector

* food safety, public health, animal health and environmental officials in countries; technical and resource partner organizations in the region; private sector and consumers



For more information:

www.fao.org/food-safety

www.unep.org/events/webinar/world-food-safety-day-asia-pacific-edition

foodqualityandsafety.wfp.org/

www.who.int/health-topics/food-safety

www.woah.org/en/what-we-do-global-initiatives/food-safety