

Ref.: C.L.39.2018

**The Future of Food Safety – Transforming knowledge into action for people,  
economies and the environment**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12–13 February 2019 and Geneva, Switzerland, 23–24 April 2019**

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) presents his compliments to Member States and has the honour to invite them to the International Conference on Food Safety, co-organized by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in early 2019. Under the overall theme of **“The Future of Food Safety – Transforming knowledge into action for people, economies and the environment”**, the conference will open in Addis Ababa in collaboration with the African Union (AU) and conclude in Geneva in collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

WHO estimates that each year as many as 600 million, or almost one in 10 people in the world, fall ill after consuming contaminated food. Of these, 420 000 people die, including 125 000 children under the age of five years.

Despite a growing recognition of the fundamental role food safety plays in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the main objectives of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition, efforts to strengthen capacities for food safety remain fragmented and the gains, particularly in many developing countries, have been well below expectations. Adding to this challenge are the impacts of climate change, new technologies, as well as evolving food production and supply systems. The safety of food sources depends on our collective ability to anticipate and be prepared for the future. The priority issues identified by this Conference and its call for concerted, multisectoral actions will reinforce global collaboration and help ensure that no one is left behind.

The Conference will comprise two events: The opening event, **“The First WHO/FAO International Conference on Food Safety”**, on 12–13 February 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, will raise awareness of the main challenges to food safety emerging globally through a high-level ministerial panel and identify key actions to be implemented through thematic sessions. The concluding event, **“The WHO/FAO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade”**, on 23–24 April 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, in collaboration with the World Trade Organization, will further analyse trade implications of key food safety issues, and launch a call for key actions to operationalize the high-level appeal made in Addis Ababa.

The Conference is expected to gather around 600 participants including ministers, senior policy-makers with responsibility for food safety in governments, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, development agencies as well as participants from non-governmental organizations representing food producers, consumers and

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academia. The participation of representatives from developing and least developed countries is strongly encouraged.

The participation of Member States is essential to the successful outcome of both events. The participation of Ministers and other high-level decision-makers responsible for food safety is strongly encouraged. Considering the theme of the Conference, a national delegation could involve multiple sectors, including at least one nominee from the health sector in addition to other relevant sectors such as agriculture, environment and trade. **The name(s), title(s), affiliation and contact details of the delegate(s) nominated for attending**

**(a) the opening event in Addis Ababa, 12–13 February 2019**

**(b) the closing event in Geneva, 23–24 April 2019**

**should be sent by email to [foodsafety@who.int](mailto:foodsafety@who.int) as soon as possible, but no later than 14 January 2019, with copy to [food-quality@fao.org](mailto:food-quality@fao.org).** Upon receipt of the nominations, instructions on the registration process will be sent directly to the nominees. Due to the capacity of the meeting facilities, we may ask to limit the number of delegates per delegation in order to accommodate delegations from all participating countries.

To facilitate a wider participation in the meeting, and in accordance with resolution WHA50.1, special consideration will be given to delegates from countries which are classified as “least developed countries” by the United Nations. Depending on the availability of funds, every effort will be made by the organizing partners to cover economy class air travel to Addis Ababa and/or Geneva by the most economical route as well as accommodation for the duration of the Conference for one delegate per least developed country per event. **Member States who wish to ask for travel support should send an email to [foodsafety@who.int](mailto:foodsafety@who.int) no later than 14 December 2018, including a copy of the letter from their Government indicating the name, affiliation and contact details of the participant to be supported.**

Conference documents, including programme structure, provisional agenda, thematic briefs, as well as organizational arrangements for both events will be posted in due course at **[www.who.int/foodsafety/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/)** in the six official languages and will be communicated directly to participants.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Member States the assurance of his highest consideration.

GENEVA, 8 November 2018