



REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-third session

Johannesburg, South Africa, 1–5 September 2003

RESOLUTION

**FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH: A SITUATION
ANALYSIS AND PERSPECTIVES**

The Regional Committee,

Mindful of the WHO Constitution which includes food safety as part of the Organization's mandate;

Recalling the World Health Assembly resolution WHA53.15 (May 2000) that recognized food safety as an essential public health function;

Considering that the major risks associated with food in the region are microbiological, chemical, physical, radioactive and biotechnological;

Acknowledging that foodborne illness significantly contributes to the burden of disease, particularly among high-risk groups such as the poor, children, travellers and victims of disasters;

Concerned that the lack of adequate research on food safety hinders the development of evidence-based preventive and control strategies and policies;

Approving the document AFR/RC53/12 entitled "Food Safety and Health: Situation Analysis and Perspectives";

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to develop or update food safety policies and legislation that are based on scientific risk assessment and prevention along the entire food chain;
- (b) to ensure the harmonization of food safety regulations with international food standards and norms, including active participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its committees;
- (c) to incorporate or strengthen food safety education and information into training programmes for food handlers at all levels, consumers, producers and farmers;
- (d) to integrate or strengthen food safety matters in the curricula from the primary school level to higher learning institutions;

- (e) to provide functional laboratory facilities, adequate resources and networks as part of the national surveillance system ensuring the preparedness and response of countries to food hazards;
- (f) to ensure national, intercountry and regional coordination and networking among the various stakeholders, including the private sector;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to continue to advocate for inclusion of food safety in the overall national development goals and strategies;
- (b) to provide technical support for the development and implementation of food safety policies and legislation;
- (c) to promote food safety research and surveillance;
- (d) to strengthen collaboration with other international partners and relevant bodies to make scientific decisions on food safety and health issues relating to new technologies, including genetically modified foods;
- (e) to report to the Regional Committee at its fifty-fifth session, in 2005.