



Inaugural Meeting of the African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum



MEETING AGENDA

11-13 October 2023

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023

A. Official Opening of the Forum

B. Taking Stock of African Food Regulatory Collaboration – Current Status and Future Perspectives

9:00-10:00 Registration and Coffee

10:00-11:00 Ceremonial Opening

Welcoming Remarks by:

- *Dr. Tareq El- Houby, Chairman of the Board / Meeting Host, National Food Safety Agency (NFSA), Arab Republic of Egypt*
- *Mr. Ali Badarneh, Chief of Food Security and Food Systems Unit, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*
- *Dr. Eva Al-Zein, Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO)*
- *Mr. Melvin Spreij, Head of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), World Trade Organization (WTO)*
- *Ms. Kate Newton, Deputy Regional Director, Middle East, North-Africa and Eastern Europe, World Food Program (WFP)*
- *Mr. AbdulHakim Elwaer, Assistant Director General and Regional Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*
- *Dr. José Emilio Esteban, Under Secretary for Food Safety, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*
- *H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission (AUC)*
- *Official Statement from the Senior Official of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt*

The Ceremonial Opening will be adapted according to Protocol Requirements adopted by the Arab Republic of Egypt, host country, and the AUC.

11:00-12:30 Media Briefing and Coffee Break

- Senior Officials Leave
- Media Briefing
- Health Break

12:30-13:00 Introduction of the Forum, its Rationale and Goals

- *Dr. Tareq Al-Houby, Chairman of the Board / Meeting Host, NFSA, Arab Republic of Egypt*

13:00-13:30 Technical Session 1a: Keynote Address

- **Presentation 1:** Priorities, Challenges and Opportunities of Food Regulatory Authorities in Africa
 - *Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Université Laval; Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS) / International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST)*

13:30-14:30 Technical Session 1b: Scene Setting

- **Presentation 2:** A strategic partnership to advance food safety in Africa
 - *Dr. Blaise Ouattara, Food Safety and Quality Officer, FAO Regional Office for Africa*
- **Presentation 3:** Overview of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa and Introducing the African Food Safety Agency (AFSA): Expected Roles and Interaction with African Food Regulators
 - *Dr. Amare Ayalew, AUC*
- **Facilitated Plenary Discussions / Questions and Answers**
 - **Moderator: Dr. Doreen Sakala, Ministry of Health Zambia**

The discussion aims to help identify initial foundational requirements for AFSA to be operationalized that may be facilitated by the creation of AFRAF

14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-16:30 Technical Session 2: Review of Current Collaborative Food Safety Regulatory Agenda at Continental and Regional Level

- **Presentation 4:** Efforts of Harmonization of Food Regulatory Measures Across the Continent
 - *Dr. Liliane Kamanzi, African Organisation for Standardization (ARSO)*
 - *Dr. Hakim Mufumbiro, CCAFRICA Coordinator, CCAFRICA*

16:30-17:00 Wrap Up

Summary of the Day's Discussions and Review of Day 2 Agenda

- *Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Université Laval; GFoRSS/IUFoST*

18:00-22:00 Gala Dinner and Nile Cruise – Maxim Boat – Meeting Point: Hotel Lobby

DAY 2: THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2023

A. Challenges and Opportunities Related to the Modernization and Integration of African Food Regulatory Frameworks

B. Reviewing the Outcomes of the Vienna Food Safety Forum – UNIDO

9:00-10:00 Introduction of Participants:

Participants from the different food regulatory authorities will be asked to introduce themselves, the organization they represent and its food regulatory mandate

10:00-10:30 ■ **Panel Discussion: Status of Food regulatory cooperation and future perspectives of development**

➤ **Facilitator: Dr. Lusubilo Mwamakamba, WHO**

➤ *Dr. Gabor Molnar, UNIDO*

➤ *Dr. Benoit Gnonlonfin, ECOWAS Secretariat*

➤ *Dr. Hakim Mufumbiro, CCAFRICA Coordinator*

➤ *Dr. Blaise Ouattara, FAO*

➤ *Dr. Amare Ayalew, AUC*

➤ *Dr. Mary Muerthi, WFP*

■ **Facilitated Plenary Discussions / Questions and Answers**

This discussion aims to review current status of food regulatory cooperation and integration of food regulatory frameworks being implemented in Africa. It should lead to identify needs and areas of support / investment that can be facilitated by the creation of the African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum and the operationalization of AFSA.

Representatives of international organizations and Pan-African organizations will share their current and future initiatives to further bolster efforts of food regulatory integration in Africa.

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:00 Technical Session 3a: View from the Food and Agrifood Sector – A Panel Discussion

➤ **Moderator: Eng. Khaled Shedeed, Deputy Chief of Party, TAIB Project-USDA**

This session will feature short presentations from representatives of the food and agri-food production sector in Africa as well as representatives of the World Food Program, to review and document the challenges and impediments faced by the production sector to access African markets, resulting from regulatory / technical barriers, as well avenues to address such challenges.

Panel Discussion

■ **Reviewing impediments to intra-regional trade in Regional Economic Communities of the African Continent**

➤ *Dr. Benoit Gnonlonfin, ECOWAS-US AID*

■ **Facilitating regional/international trade in agri-food commodities to Support Economic Development and Food Security**

➤ *Mr. Melvin Spreij, Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)*

- View from the Industry - Egyptian Experience in Accessing African markets, Challenges and possible enablers
 - *Eng. Ashraf El Gazayerli, President of the Egyptian Chamber of Food Industries*
 - *Eng. Hani Berzi, Chairman of the Egyptian Food Export Council*
 - *Eng. Abdelhamid Damardesh, Member of the Egyptian Senate and President of the Egyptian Agriculture Export Council*
- Impediments faced by WFP in the movement of food and agri-food commodities to address food security challenges, resulting from regulatory barriers and limited access to quality infrastructure – Discussion of challenges in developing food safety requirements for the movements of products supporting food aid programs
 - *Mr. Fernando Ubarana, Food Safety and Quality Advisor, Regional Bureau, WFP*

12:00-13:00 Technical Session 3b: Investing in Capacities and Competencies to Upgrade the Performance of the AgriFood Production Sector and Food Regulatory Oversight in Africa

- **Presentation 5**
 - *Prof. Charles Aworh, President, International Academy of Food Science and Technology, University of Ibadan Nigeria*
- **Presentation 6:** Developing & maintaining laboratory infrastructure and testing standards to supporting African food regulatory authorities
 - *Dr. Owen Fraser, AOAC INTERNATIONAL, Past President AOAC Africa Section*

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Technical Session 4: Promoting a Food Regulatory Collaborative Agenda of African Food Regulatory Authorities

- **Moderator: FAO**
- **Presentation 7:** Assessments of national food control systems in Africa as a basis to improve the collaborative food safety agenda across and within countries.
 - *Dr. Catherine Bessy, Senior Food Safety Officer, Food Systems and Food Safety Division, FAO*
- Panel Discussion: Setting up strategic agenda to improve the delivery of food control services
 - **Facilitator: Dr. Saber Mansour, Food Safety Officer, FAO, Dr. Jean Kamanzi, FAO**

The Panel discussion will explore different strategies and approaches implemented by countries to improve the effectiveness of their national food control systems. The discussion should lead to recommendations in terms of successful approaches supporting sustainable improvement of national food control systems.

It should also lead to some recommendations as to what national regulators may require in term of support from Continental structures, such as AFRAF and AFSA to further enable their food regulatory functions.

15:30-16:30 Technical Session 5: Modernizing African Food Regulatory Regimes – Mainstreaming Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programs in African Food Regulatory Systems

- **Facilitator: Dr. Gabor Molnar, UNIDO, Industrial Development Expert**

- Panel discussion on the uptake of vTPA in Africa and beyond
 - *Mr. Cor Groenveld, Former Market Development Director, FSSC Foundation and UNIDO consultant*
 - *Dr. Mike O'Neill, Head of Codex Policy, UK Food Standards Agency, United Kingdom*
 - *Dr. Mahmoud Camara, Head of Codex, Codex Focal Point, National Food Safety Agency, Mali*
 - *Mr. Melvin Spreij, Head of the Standards and Trade Development Facility*
 - *Dr. Benoit Gnonlonfin, Senior SPS Coordinator, ECOWAS-USAID*

*The Panel discussion will review experiences underway to mainstream the application of vTPA in African food regulatory regimes, including the development and uptake of the relevant food safety assurance schemes needed **by the African food production sector** that may contribute to facilitating intra-continental Trade.*

It should lead to some recommendations as to how such experiences can be leveraged to enable better integration of vTPA in African food regulatory regimes, supporting effective food safety conformity assessment.

- **Launch of the vTPA Assessment Tool**

16:30-17:00 Coffee Break

17:00-17:45 Technical Session 5: Modernizing African Food Regulatory Regimes – Continued

Introducing Remote audits and inspection in food conformity assessment

➤ **Moderator: Dr. Gabor Molnar, UNIDO Industrial Development Expert**

- **Presentation 8:** Codex Alimentarius Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems - Developing guidance on the use of remote audit and verification in regulatory frameworks

➤ *Dr. Glen Edmunds, Australia*

This session aims to review the progress of the development of the Codex text on remote audit and inspection and seek initial input from African food regulators to ensure its suitability to address the African Context.

This technical session will include a short presentation from the representative of the Chair of the Codex Committee on Food Import Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), followed by a period of questions and discussions.

17:45-18:15 Reviewing a Proposed Charter for the African Food Regulatory Forum – Collective Discussion

18:15 Adjournment

19:00 Official Dinner

During the dinner participants may be called upon to further discuss some recent changes to their food regulatory frameworks, and how they see the role of AFSA and of the AFRAF in supporting their intervention

➤ **Moderators: Dr. Wezi Chunga-Sambo, AUC and Prof. Samuel Godefroy, GForSS / IUFoST**

DAY 3: FRIDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2023

Technical Session 6: Reviewing the Development of the African Food Safety Governance in the Global Context

This session will include the participation of international regulators beyond the African continent.

It will aim to support the strengthening of the food safety governance in Africa, with the addition of AFRAF as an enabler of this enhanced governance, contributing to the development and operationalization of the African Food Safety Agency.

Contribution of partner organizations from around the world will be reviewed with a strong emphasis on support of the development of capacities and competencies that may enable AFSA as an engine that drives evidence-based food regulatory decision making. The ultimate objective is to align these decisions across the African continent with the expected results on removal of impediments to intra-continental trade and support to food regulatory harmonization across Africa and beyond.

9:00-10:00 Introduction of International Food Regulators

➤ **Moderator: Dr. Amare Ayalew, AUC**

▪ Introductory Remarks

➤ *Mr. Raj Rajasekar, Vice Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Representing the Chair of CAC*

▪ Introductory Remarks from Representatives of International Food Regulators:

➤ *Dr. Donna Bennett, Regional Agriculture Counselor for the MENA Region, Government of Australia*

➤ *Dr. Mary Frances Lowe, United States Codex Office, US Department of Agriculture, United States*

➤ *Prof. Dr. Tanja Schwerdtle, Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany*

➤ *Mr. José Pedro Vieira, Head of the International Relations Department, Economic and Food Safety Authority, Portugal*

➤ *Dr. Tycho Vermeulen, Agricultural Counsellor to Egypt and Jordan, Kingdom of the Netherlands*

10:00- 11:30 Plenary Discussion: Updates on Major Changes in Food Regulatory Oversight and Addressing the Needs of Building a Strong and Cohesive Food Regulatory Oversight in Africa

▪ Introductory Review of the Vienna Food Safety Forum

➤ *Dr. Gabor Molnar, Food Safety Technical Lead, UNIDO*

▪ Open forum to engage with African food regulators

➤ **Moderators: Dr. Wezi Chunga-Sambo, AUC and Prof. Samuel Godefroy, GForSS / IUFoST**

Discussions will focus on:

A. Recent changes to their food regulatory frameworks, and how they see the role of AFSA and of the AFRAF in supporting their intervention.

B. The needs associated with the operationalization of the African Food Safety Agency and how international regulators can play a leading role in supporting such operationalization.

The discussion will also serve to review and share experiences witnessed in other parts of the world that can be useful to enhancing the food safety governance structure in Africa.

This session begins with a review of the outcomes of the Vienna Food Safety Forum, convened by UNIDO in 2022 and which discussed various avenues of collaboration to promote food safety capacity building throughout the continent and beyond and conclude with a Facilitated Open Discussion between African and International Regulators on the topic of Opportunities of enhanced collaboration between African and International Regulators.

11:30-12:00 Coffee Break

12:00-12:45 Adopting the Path Forward for Future Collaborative Action in Africa and Globally

- Charter and Modus Operandi for an African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum
- Review of the Cairo Declaration “Advancing Integration of Food Regulatory Systems in Africa with Enhanced Collaborative Mechanisms: AFRAF and AFSA”
 - *Dr. Amare Ayalew, AUC and Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Université Laval, GFORSS/IUFoST*

12:45-13:45 Friday Prayer

14:00-15:00 Closing Ceremony

Official Closing Remarks

- *Dr. Amare Ayalew, AUC*
- *International Organizations: UNIDO / WFP / FAO / WHO*
- *Dr. Tareq Al-Houby, Chairman of the Board / Meeting Host, NFSA, Arab Republic of Egypt*

15:00 Forum Adjournment followed by Lunch

Afternoon Activity Organized for Participants from African Countries – in Nearby Area
