



GFSP

Global
Food
Safety
Partnership

The Delhi Declaration of Intent

A Commitment to Work Collaboratively to Strengthen Food Safety Systems in South Asia

PREAMBLE

Food safety is essential to achieving the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, twelve of these goals are co-dependent on improved food safety. In emerging Asia, unsafe food has significant consequences for public health, nutrition, domestic market development, and trade competitiveness. Growing recognition of this is spurring increased regulatory and other governmental measures as well as increased private sector investment in food safety management along their supply chains.

Nevertheless, in much of low and middle-income Asia:

- We have an incomplete understanding of the incidence, severity, and impacts of food borne hazards, due to limited reporting or surveillance data and limited analysis of the economic burden of unsafe food;
- Changing demographics, diets, technologies, and structural patterns of food production and distribution are altering the mix and locality of food safety hazards as well as the opportunities to address them; and, partly as a consequence of these factors,
- Many regulatory measures and much public investment in food safety are undertaken in a reactive mode (i.e. after an outbreak, scare or trade interruption) rather than being strategic and based on considerations of risk and/or economic welfare.

On 17 May 2017, a high-level dialogue was convened in New Delhi by the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) in collaboration with the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to review emerging challenges and opportunities for improving food safety management in the region. Leading decision makers and change agents from government, the private sector, and multilateral organizations discussed a variety of strategic issues, many of which will require more concerted and coordinated action to effectively address. What follows summarizes the event deliberations and various statements of follow-up intent from among the entities which participated in the dialogue. While reporting on the latter, this Declaration does not constitute a binding commitment on the part of any of the participating institutions.

BUILDING TRUST AND CAPACITY FOR SAFE FOOD IN ASIA

- Meeting participants emphasized:
 - That food safety needs and priorities in Asia are rapidly changing, putting considerable pressure on both public and private sector entities to approach these challenges strategically as well as collaboratively;
 - That the agenda of safe food, and the necessary strengthening of stakeholder awareness, incentives, and capacities, needs to be elevated in policy discourse and closely linked with broader development goals (i.e. food security and nutrition) and initiatives (i.e. improved hygiene; regional market and trade integration)
 - The special challenges associated with addressing food safety hazards in primary agricultural production and within informal food distribution channels populated by large numbers of micro and small enterprises and food vendors
 - The challenge at hand in maintaining consumer trust in the quality, safety and integrity of food and in communicating effectively with consumers through various channels; and
 - The scope for increased technical collaboration between countries in the region as well as opportunities to learn from one another's experiences.
- Specifically, in relation to India, the dialogue also signaled to the States that the federal government recognizes the importance of prioritizing investments and other actions to address both near- and long-term food safety challenges.

RESOLVED: OUR INTENTIONS FOR COMMITMENTS AND CALLS TO ACTION

Our Purpose:

To provide a more explicit pathway for achieving safe and nutritious food for all through collaborative actions.

COUNTRY INTENTIONS

1. Strengthen the economic rationale for greater investments in food safety at national and sub-national levels and for supporting private value chain initiatives.
2. Pursue collaboration on implementation among South Asian countries' use of food safety systems via existing platforms such as SAARC /BIMSTEC and/or other platforms.
3. Engage in intentional, simplified, and accessible communications on food safety to consumers, educators, regulators and other stakeholders.

4. Engage in continuous knowledge sharing of best practices among the countries in the region. In this regard, Singapore has offered to host study tours and provide laboratory training as a way to enhance the quality of knowledge and expertise.
5. Recognize and encourage the role of the private sector as an equal partner in food safety management.
6. Consider more effective coordination at the ministerial level for food safety management and ensure the regulatory/institutional frameworks are streamlined
7. Collaborate to build capacity for risk assessment and data generation at national for Codex standard setting
8. Create regional centers of excellence to reduce duplication of effort and resources at the country level, including India's intention through its Food Safety and Standards Authority and the Export Import Council to jointly establish an international Food Safety Training Laboratory.

PRIVATE SECTOR INTENTIONS

1. Intensify collaboration between the Indian food industry and FSSAI to align efforts on food safety. FSSAI will work with public and private food testing laboratories in India to establish a network of reference laboratories for various foods and procedures.
2. Make company level training accessible to stakeholders along the value chain – from plough to plate, including SMEs and street vendors.
3. In partnership with the GFSP (through the support of two of its Governing Council members, namely the Waters Corporation and Food Industry Asia), FSSAI and EIC will pursue discussions to create an International Food Safety Laboratory in India to support laboratory training needs in India and beyond.

GFSP AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS INTENTIONS

The GFSP will:

1. Generate knowledge products on food safety and make them available to partners in the region.
2. Support collaborative actions in South Asia through existing platforms.

3. Continue to support capacity building for food safety lab training and laboratory testing in India and the rest of Asia.
4. Facilitate cross-country knowledge exchanges including between India and Singapore to share how Singapore supports, manages, and regulates their informal food centers.
5. Support the creation of the International Food Safety Training Laboratory in India.

The World Bank will:

1. Respond positively to requests from South Asian governments for dedicated and systematic engagement on food safety systems through its entire range of products and services.
2. Continue to integrate food safety aspects into all projects where relevant.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency will:

1. Continue to support food safety capacity building in India.