



FEBRUARY 2017



56 key influencers joined GFSP and FIA for discussions in Singapore (Credit: FIA)

Convening A High-Level Dialogue on Building Trust and Capacity for Safe Food in Asia

In December 2016, GFSP, in collaboration with [Food Industry Asia \(FIA\)](#), hosted an exclusive forum for leading decision-makers from the public and private sectors in Singapore to discuss critical aspects of building trust and enhancing capacity in the region's food safety system.

Our dialogue brought together some 56 key influencers from public, private, non-government organizations and international organizations to examine the status of and strains on Asian food safety systems and to share and showcase examples of best practices in prioritizing and coordinating food safety initiatives.

Governments represented included: Singapore; India; Vietnam; China; and Canada. In addition, dignitaries included the Vice President for Asia, World Bank; the Regional Director, International Finance Corporation; and the FAO Assistant Director General and Regional Representative.

Our discussions surfaced important areas for future focus, including food fraud, risk communication; and needs assessments.

The outcome of assembling this type of thought leadership? Strong acknowledgement that a collaborative global approach is critical to tackle food safety via a "whole of systems approach" to building capacity.

CEO Corner

As global agendas around climate change, hunger, poverty, trade, nutrition, inequality and more are scrutinized, it is important to consider the linkages to food safety. Indeed, at least 12 of the [U.N. Sustainable Development Goals](#) are codependent on food safety. Thus, there is renewed urgency and timeliness around our mission.

In the face of competing priorities, the GFSP remains focused on our goal to improve food safety systems based on prevention and underpinned by science to improve the effectiveness of food safety capacity-building investments.

The GFSP's impact and influence through public-private collaboration for food safety capacity building continues to grow, with our footprint expanding from East Asia to South Asia and Africa. We prioritize assessments to guide actions that are scalable and sustainable and we leverage resources from varied sources to share knowledge and best practices.

On March 1, 2017, I will be joining other food safety colleagues at the [Global Food Safety Initiative's \(GFSI\) global food safety conference](#) for a panel discussion on capacity building in global markets. I'll share more about the GFSP vision for the future (especially future country engagements) in the face of the changing global landscape. I hope to see you there.

I invite you to continue sharing your thoughts and send us your contributions to this newsletter (at gfsp@worldbank.org) and help make it a vibrant platform for sharing ideas, advancing actions and developing solutions to strengthen and amplify the GFSP's impact.

Best Regards,
Lystra N. Antoine
Chief Executive Officer

Q&A with Victoria Kwakwa



Victoria Kwakwa

Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President, World Bank, East Asia & the Pacific, delivered the welcome address at GFSP's December 2016 dialogue in Singapore "Building Trust and Capacity for Safe Food in Asia" held in collaboration with Food Industry Asia (FIA). We spoke with her to discuss her thoughts about food safety challenges and opportunities in the region.

Q1. How would you characterize the food safety landscape in Asia today?

A1: It's changing. While there is still certainly a focus on trade-related issues, such as trying to ensure exporter access to high-income country markets where more stringent food safety standards are applied, countries in Asia are facing greater food safety challenges at home. Food safety is now seen as a food security problem. Major dietary and lifestyle changes are occurring. While modern value chains are growing, most Asian countries still feature very large and fragmented informal food systems. These are difficult to regulate. While public expectations are rising, food safety awareness and the

underlying systems for food hazard surveillance and managing food safety risks are still underdeveloped.

Q2. What is the way forward for policy-makers as well as food manufacturers and suppliers?

A2: Well, of course it is critical to create and support mechanisms for relationship-building and dialogue, such as the GFSP. That's because there is an enormous capacity building challenge in implementing effective risk-based food safety management systems. Meeting this challenge will require close collaboration between the public and private sectors, at country, regional, and international levels. Just as we have catalyzed meaningful global public-private partnership programs in such areas as public health, climate change, infrastructure, disaster risk management, environmental protection, and more, so too can we coordinate around global food safety.

Q3: How have changes in the landscape impacted the World Bank's approach to food safety?

A3: We continue to evolve and expand our work to reflect the changing interest of clients as well as advances in our own understanding of the opportunities. In the early 2000s, for example, we provided analysis and technical assistance focused on trade and international market access issues, including providing the initial funding for the formation of the [Standards and Trade Development Facility](#), housed at the [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#).

More recently, we are approaching food safety as a broader economic development issue, with linkages to public health, nutrition, domestic food market development, smallholder farm commercialization, and public administration and governance issues.

Our interventions related to food safety are being embedded into a growing range and number of investment projects. We are currently supporting food safety capacity building in 20 countries, including China and Vietnam. Interventions include the upgrading of laboratory facilities and urban public market places, enhancing regulatory oversight capacity at national and provincial levels, aligning local standards with international best practice, and promoting good agricultural and manufacturing practices in selected food value chains. At the same time, the [International Finance Corporation \(IFC\)](#) has been expanding its food safety advisory work with private-sector clients. Its work often involves addressing both management systems within company facilities and the needed supply chain governance measures in their sourcing of products and raw materials.

We are hopeful that our work can be effective in addressing the dual challenge of strengthening regulations and improving capacities and practices of farmers and food industry players to help lower consumer exposure to food safety hazards and importantly, maintaining or restoring consumer trust in the safety of their food and in the systems which are supposed to ensure this.

PARTNER NEWS AND FEATURES

Myanmar's Changing Food Safety Landscape

The [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#), a member of the GFSP Governing Council, is supporting the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to upgrade its National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), which will help to increase export competitiveness, stimulate trade and export-led growth, and foster the development of value-added food products and the diversification of export market opportunities.

UNIDO, with funding from the Government of Norway is supporting the country to strengthen infrastructure services such as accreditation, standardization, metrology, calibration. This will be accomplished through the development of a National Quality Policy, provision of sustainable laboratory testing and quality assurance services, and enhancement of inspection capacities.

The project also aims to help food processing enterprises meet international standards required by global food supply chains.



A Myanmar food safety team at work in a beans export company

UNIDO works closely with the national stakeholders at different levels:

- Enterprise level: Supporting 11 food processing companies to adopt relevant international standards under the GFSI's Good Markets Program.
- Advisory level: Qualifying six national consultants through an intensive one-year coaching program and enrollment into the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) qualification as accredited food safety trainers. In addition, local food safety training resources are under development in the local language through cooperation with the Food Science and Technology Association Myanmar (FoSTA) with the aim of recognizing them as an accredited food safety training provider in the country.

- Laboratory testing level: Developing capacity of seven laboratories (three microbiological, one oil testing, two organic residues, inc. one pesticides in grains) through procuring equipment, training laboratory staff and supporting laboratories towards ISO 17025 accreditation.
- Institutional level: in response to the [Food And Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) food safety capacity assessment, providing specialized training to 50 inspectors as well as tailored technical assistance related to Risk-Based Approaches (RBA) to the Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Ministry of Health to help strengthen the food safety control system.

UNIDO is currently engaged with the government of Myanmar FAO, the [World Bank Group](#), [International Finance Corporation](#), and local and international retailers to formulate a second, large-scale phase of the project. This will include a comprehensive Sustainable Supplier Development Program to support many small and medium producers through their integration into the local and regional supply chains.

Thanks to UNIDO, a member of the GFSP Governing Council, for this contribution.

SPOTLIGHT EVENT

[The Global Food Safety Conference: Leadership For Growth Innovation, Networking & Efficiency](#)

February 27 - March 2, 2017, Houston, Texas

Look for GFSP CEO Lystra N. Antoine and GFSP Governing Council Member Ali Bardaneh from UNIDO at Breakout 2B: Global markets - capacity building (March 1st at 4 PM CT)

About GFSP



GFSP works to improve developing country food safety capacity building and to improve public health and food market development outcomes in low-and middle-income countries. We bring together concerned actors and programs that are otherwise separate. GFSP is hosted by the World Bank Group with an opportunity to leverage its independence, expertise funding and convening power. Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

Comments, contributions and stories for our next newsletter can be sent to gfs@worldbank.org.

SAFER FOOD STRONGER ECONOMIES HEALTHIER WORLD

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

[DOWNLOAD AS PDF](#)

[JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP | GFSP@WORLDBANK.ORG | GFSP.ORG