

APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum

STATEMENT

Virtual Conference via Microsoft Teams

28-29 May 2021

The APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF), a group of food safety regulators from APEC member economies as well as key international stakeholders, met for the eighth time, since its inception, on 28-29 May 2021, by virtual conference hosted by New Zealand, in the margins of the APEC Senior Officials Meeting 2 (SOM2). The 8th Conference of the FSCF highlighted progress made towards meeting its food safety goals, proposed future project plans, and reaffirmed its commitment to work collaboratively to strengthen food safety systems and enhance the harmonisation of food standards with international standards across the APEC region. These are consistent with member economies' commitments under the World Trade Organization's Agreements on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade to both protect public health and facilitate trade of safe food in the APEC region.

1. We, members of the FSCF, acknowledge the leadership, support and direction given by APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance; APEC Committee on Trade and Investment; APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade; and APEC Leaders, since the inception of the FSCF.
2. We recognize and commend our host, New Zealand, for the remarkable leadership and support they have given to enable this virtual conference to be held successfully under COVID-19 pandemic situation.
3. Further, we acknowledge the past and present members of the FSCF for their contribution in the pursuit of the commitment made to both protect public health and facilitate trade in the APEC region.
4. We reaffirmed the FSCF Operating Principles and the Food Safety Capacity Building Priorities, under which the FSCF has been operating and member economies have been working collaboratively.
5. We recognize the range of food safety capacity building activities that the FSCF and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN) have undertaken since the 7th

conference of the FSCF in Viña del Mar, Chile, in 2019. We commend the membership's continued efforts in various areas over the last two years and the ones presented on the future perspectives.

6. We recognize our ongoing collaboration with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, World Trade Organization (WTO) Standards and Trade Development Facility, World Bank, Food Industry Asia and Australian Food and Grocery Council and Joint Institute of Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN) and acknowledge the efforts that these organizations have made in contributing to food safety capacity building in the region.
7. We commend member economies for their active participation and contribution to the workshops and the work carried out by the e-Working Group under the APEC Food Safety Risk Communication project, and look forward to their continuing support to ensure the finalisation of the APEC Food Safety Risk Communication Framework including the associated guideline documents
8. We commend member economies for paying close attention to Sustainable Aquaculture Production Practices to improve food safety.
9. We commend member economies for active participation in discussion on the Strategies Promoting the Application of the principle of Shared Responsibility to the Management of the Import and Export Food Safety. The project improved participants' understanding of shared responsibility and encouraged cooperation on import and export food safety management. We encourage member economies to share more best practices for references and conduct more in-depth discussions in the areas of common interest.
10. We commend member economies for engaging in discussion on the current practices on pesticide maximum residue limit (MRL) enforcement and compliance, concepts that provide an opportunity to enhance trade facilitation among APEC economies.
11. We commend member economies for participating in the discussions on the first Phases of the Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) for Foodborne Pathogens workstream, which focuses on strengthening capacity of APEC region laboratories' sampling methods.

12. We commend member economies for their engagement in SPS Document Digitalization discussions, which revealed a need for SPS electronic certification and offered a variety of tools for its implementation.
13. We note that an Information Paper on the APEC FSCF Operating Principles and Terms of Reference (ToR), jointly drafted by the FSCF co-chairs, was distributed to member economies and have set up e-Working Group (eWG) under the leadership of the Co-chairs to advance the matter. Chile, US, Peru and New Zealand expressed their interests to collaborate and join the eWG and the Co-chairs extended an invitation to any other interested economies. We agreed that economies should continue to proceed with endorsement of an FSCF ToR as agreed at the previous meeting of the FSCF in 2019 and with the goal of finalizing the ToR prior to the start of SOM3 in August, 2021 and will regularly report the progress to SCSC and FSCF prior to the start of SOM3 in August, 2021.
14. We note that plans and ideas for future projects include: AMR Integrated Surveillance Management, Veterinary drugs residues MRL's harmonization by Chile, Trade Facilitation by New Zealand, Discuss the Strategies to Improve the Transparency and Knowledge of Import and Export Food Safety Requirements by China, and Discuss and Develop the Initiative on Strengthening Cooperation in the Management of Import and Export Food Safety by China and further capacity building lead by the US on Whole Genome Sequencing for Food Safety, compliance and enforcement of pesticide MRLs, and electronic certification.
15. We urge our leaders to take note of the progress and contribution made by this forum to food safety, public health and trade facilitation in the APEC region.
16. We agreed to continue monitoring and reviewing the direction and future priorities of the FSCF and its PTIN to ensure that the future work plans carried out by the groups will continuously deliver tangible food safety improvement and trade benefits throughout the region.
17. We look forward to the next meeting of the FSCF in 2023.



Co-Chair, Australia



Co-Chair, China

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