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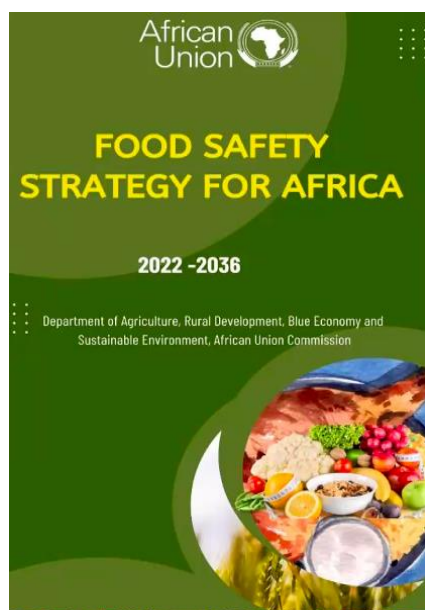
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World Food Safety Day Commemoration sets motion for the implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa

The Food Safety Strategy for Africa (FSSA) has been launched during the global commemoration of the 4th World Food Safety Day held annually on June 7th. This year, the AUC joined the rest of the world to commemorate the fourth World Food Safety Day. Attracting participants from International organizations, academia, business community-SMEs, farmers, and policymakers, among others, the celebrations aimed to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, thereby contributing to human health, food and nutrition security, economic prosperity, market access, and sustainable development.



Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the African Union Commission (AUC) officially launched the strategy, which was developed by the AUC, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development with the support of other stakeholders. She stated that the Food Safety Strategy for Africa was developed with a desire for all people in Africa to have access to safe and nutritious food. “The Strategy provides a harmonized framework to implement activities that mitigate various food safety threats that negatively impact consumers’ health and trade” she added.

The strategy was endorsed during the 35th Ordinary summit of the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in February 2022, to contribute to addressing food safety challenges that have the potential of slowing down the attainment of the Malabo Declaration aspirations such as ending hunger and tripling intra African trade in agricultural commodities, and ultimately the African Union Agenda 2063 and related flagship programmes. The aim of the strategy is to reverse the situation by contributing to improving public health, food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihood and economic growth on the continent with a focus on six strategic areas, namely: strengthen food policy; legal and institutional frameworks; improve capacities in food control systems; promotion of food safety culture, trade facilitation, reinforce research and innovation, as well as establish, bolster coordination mechanism and investments. Additionally, the strategy is developed as a tool for the implementation of the Continental SPS Policy Framework for Africa endorsed by AU policy organs in 2020 to trigger maximum impact to improve health protection and increase trade within the context of the AfCFTA Agreement.

In the statement by Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA- NEPAD delivered by Dr. Martin Bwalya, Ag Director, Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation (KMPE) stated that African leaders have begun to tackle the food safety challenges through the Malabo declaration and the SPS framework for Africa as a means to promote and boost intra-African trade in agriculture

commodities and services, that also require enhancing policy and institutional capacities as well as food policy systems and legislations. He also informed that the AUDA- NEPAD has developed a Nutrition and Food Systems Implementation plan- 2019 – 2025, that is focused on the implementation of the high impact action that promote food safety, quality legislation and regulatory frameworks.

In his Statement, H.E Wamkele Mene, the Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) said “the commemoration is important for us in Africa because we have to collectively tackle the challenge of food safety on the continent, since the burden of consuming unsafe food, affects Africa the most with an estimated 91 million people falling ill due to foodborne diseases”. He further welcomed the launch of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa (FSSA) highlighting that it’s a testament of commitment by the AU to ensure that the continent is guided in effort to promote food safety and build consumer confidence and trust to facilitate intra Africa trade in food and boost confidence in food traded under the AfCFTA. “The volume of trade in food is expected to rise as we trade more good under the AfCFTA, however food safety is a precondition to access regional markets and high values domestic markets in developing countries, to protect consumers from unsafe food and change the narrative that Africa bares the big burden of foodborne diseases to a thriving continent” he added.

In a statement from H.E Al-Sayed el-Quseir, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, delivered by Prof. Dr. Hend Abdallah Director Central Lab For Analysis of Pesticide Residues and Heavy Metals in Food (QCAP),, she urged all member’s states to implement strategies and policies that were endorsed by the 4th Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture Rural Development Water and Environment (ARDWE) and more in particular the FSSA to ensure safe food for the consumers and trade in safe food for increased economic development on the continent.

Prof. Lucia Anelich of the Anelich Consult, South Africa, in a keynote address observed that Food safety, nutrition and food security are inextricably linked, and that unsafe food creates a vicious cycle of diseases and malnutrition, particularly affecting infants, young children, elderly and the sick. “Foodborne diseases impede Socio-Economic development by straining health care systems and harming national economies, tourism and trade” says Anelich. She further recommended the need for the urgent and greater awareness of food safety at the higher political levels, just as malaria and HIV are handled, the provision of adequate resources to help address food safety, and making food safety as important as the safety of exported foods.

The outcomes of the two technical sessions that preceded the commemoration, were presented highlighting the need for improved advocacy and partnerships to improve food safety; the creation of favorable food safety environment to facilitate the achievement of continental and global commitments; and effective capacity building on food safety; the need for government/private sector investment in food safety equipment, collaboration among national stakeholders, including SMEs and regulatory institutions; and the provision of a one-stop-shop on food safety issues in member states.

In his remarks, Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa Director of Agriculture and Rural Development commended the experts for great outcomes arising from the technical sessions that preceded the commemoration and reassured that these recommendations would guide the implementation of activities of food safety in the continent.

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