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Securing Food Safety to Leverage Economic Growth Opportunities in the African Food Sector: Speeding Progress, Advancing Partnerships and Sustaining Momentum

Waters Corporation organized and co-hosted with The World Bank Group and UNIDO the second annual Food Safety Regional Leadership Dialogue at the 3rd GFSP Annual Conference held in Cape Town in December 2014. This paper is an outcome of a discussion that brought together five African and international food safety experts to explore how best to support and expedite African efforts to improve food safety on the continent through partnerships such as the GFSP. The paper highlights both opportunities and challenges to agricultural production and food trade in Africa. Since the 1980s, the continent—apart from South Africa—has been a net food importer despite having more than half of the world's agriculturally suitable land and considerable renewable freshwater resources. The issue of food safety is addressed both in terms of potential exports (trade) as well as food policies that will encourage compliance with international standards.

Dr. Paul Young of Waters Corporation moderated the panel of the five food safety experts: Ali Badarneh – Industrial Development Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Dr. Ian Goulding – Food Safety and Quality Consultant, African Union Commission; Dr. Lucia Anelich – Food Safety, Food Microbiology & Food Safety Management Systems Consultant, Anelich Consulting, South Africa; Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele – Director, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Department of Agriculture, South Africa; Dr. Chance Kabaghe – Former Minister for Agriculture of Zambia, representing COMESA.

This regional dialogue was organized by Waters Corporation and co-hosted by UNIDO and the Global Food Safety Partnership

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

Economic development in Africa has taken many directions in the last five decades. Since 1960, GDP per capita in Africa has grown from 130 to 1715 in current US dollars. Despite this progress, Africa underperforms compared to the rest of the world, and the continent still faces significant development challenges. Since 1980, Africa has been a net food importer, utilizing valuable foreign currency to feed its population. Though high-income countries can pay for these food bills through other industries, for most countries, this balance of trade is unsustainable. Fortunately, the continent possesses abundant human and natural resources that, if utilized properly, could transform Africa into a major food producing region of the world, driving trade, exports and economic growth; and responding to domestic needs.

This paper, populated largely from the Global Food Safety Partnership's (GFSP) Food Safety Regional Leadership Dialogue (Dialogue) held in Cape Town, South Africa on 11 December 2014, seeks to explore the ways in which Africa can continue progress and speed the development of modern food safety systems, so that as challenges to agriculture, food production and trade are solved, Africa's food and agriculture exports are more closely aligned with international standards and can be a driver of economic growth and poverty alleviation for the continent.

We begin with a review of data that speaks to the opportunities and challenges in the food and agricultural sectors and recognized actions needed continent-wide to improve food safety. It is important to emphasize there is an emerging framework for action in food safety across Africa as well as many emerging leaders who understand the connection between food safety and economic growth in the food sector.

The African Union Commission's (AUC) 2012 and 2013 Continental Workshops on food safety and individual sector leaders such as Pretoria's Lucia Anelich are two examples whose leadership and voices this paper draws heavily upon to frame the Dialogue discussion. There are many others. They are all important reminders that the solutions to food safety challenges in Africa will be African-driven solutions.

Africa, of course, is a massive continent of 54 very diverse countries, and a population of 1.1 billion people. This paper recognizes and applauds just a sample of mechanisms and African leadership already in place to inform the actions of the GFSP, governments, NGOs and the private sector as partners to Africa in improving food safety and the

Continuing to promote the development of economies and the health of

communities. It is that spirit of African leadership and global partnership that this GFSP regional Dialogue Series seeks to contribute and inspire.

Opportunities for the Food and Agriculture Sectors

The population in Africa is young and growing at 2.7%, more than double the global rate (1.2% in 2013). This population growth coupled with low labor costs creates an opportunity and advantage for food producers on the continent, compared with other global regions.

In addition to its human capital, Africa is relatively land rich. Over 44% of land in Sub-Saharan Africa is agricultural land, including arable land, permanent crops, and permanent meadows and pasture. Africa contains more than half of the world's agriculturally suitable, yet unused land. In the fertile Guinea Savanna zone, comprising over 400 million hectares in Sub-Saharan Africa, just 10% of the land is cultivated.

Table 1 - Proportions of Global Agriculture Land, by Region, 2012		
Regions	Agricultural Land (% of global land)	Agricultural Land (% of regional land)
Sub-Saharan Africa (all income levels)	21.8	44.1
North America	9.6	26.0
Middle East & North Africa (all income levels)	7.6	33.4
South Asia	5.3	54.6
Latin America & Caribbean (all income levels)	15.2	37.4
East Asia & Pacific (all income levels)	24.1	48.7
Europe & Central Asia (all income levels)	16.2	29.2

Source: World Development Indicators, 2014
Note: Agricultural land refers to the share of land area that is arable, under permanent crops, and under permanent pastures. Arable land includes land defined by the FAO as land under temporary crops (double-cropped areas are counted once), temporary meadows for mowing or for pasture, land under market or kitchen gardens, and land temporarily fallow. Land abandoned as a result of shifting cultivation is excluded. Land under permanent crops is land cultivated with crops that occupy the land for long periods and need not be replanted after each harvest, such as cocoa, coffee, and rubber. This category includes land under flowering shrubs, fruit trees, nut trees, and vines, but excludes land under trees grown for wood or timber. Permanent pasture is land used for five or more years for forage, including natural and cultivated crops.

Africa currently uses less than 3% of its renewable freshwater sources. As other global regions face water shortages, challenging agricultural output, Africa is still equipped to increase irrigation and expand its agricultural production.

Challenges to Agricultural Production

Despite opportunities for Africa's agricultural sector, the continent has yet to become a global breadbasket. In addition to under-utilized land and water resources, low crop yields and productivity continue to threaten the potential of leveraging agriculture and food sectors for economic growth.

While this paper does not seek to recreate the broader research surrounding the challenges of increasing agricultural output in Africa, it is worth mentioning some of the major themes well identified in the research, including in the FAO's 2011 paper "Why Has Africa Become a Net Food Importer."

Low yields and productivity in the African agricultural sector is largely due to limited access to essential inputs, equipment and market infrastructure; limited technology transfer and adoption, including the lack of human capital and investment in agriculture research and extension; and supply shocks, including natural disaster, disease and oil shocks.

Even after production, the industry suffers from post-harvest losses – the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa estimates an annual loss of trade of 450 million US$ due to aflatoxin contamination alone.

Additional challenges to the growth of the productive agricultural sector include the institutional deficiencies and conflict on the continent, including disruptions to the labor force and movement and transportation of goods coupled with varying dependencies on food donations and imports.

Opportunities for Agriculture and Food Trade

To transform Africa's food sector into one that drives economic growth, a robust trading economy must develop for agricultural and food products. But since the 1980s, the continent (apart from South Africa) has been a net food importer. FAO data show that in 1980, trade of food and agriculture products, excluding fishery and forestry products, was more balanced with imports and exports near 14 billion US$

Table 2 – Agricultural Trade (1000 US$)					
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Export Value	2 306 420	14 990 800	15 660 500	20 091 400	62 389 000
Import Value	5 413 860	13 988 300	11 909 100	13 519 700	35 520 300
Net Trade Value	3 107 440	-1 002 500	-3 751 400	-6 571 700	-26 868 700

Source: FAOSTAT, 2014
Note: Agricultural trade refers to imports and exports of food and agriculture products, excluding fishery and forestry products.

Figure 1 - Net Agricultural Trade, Africa
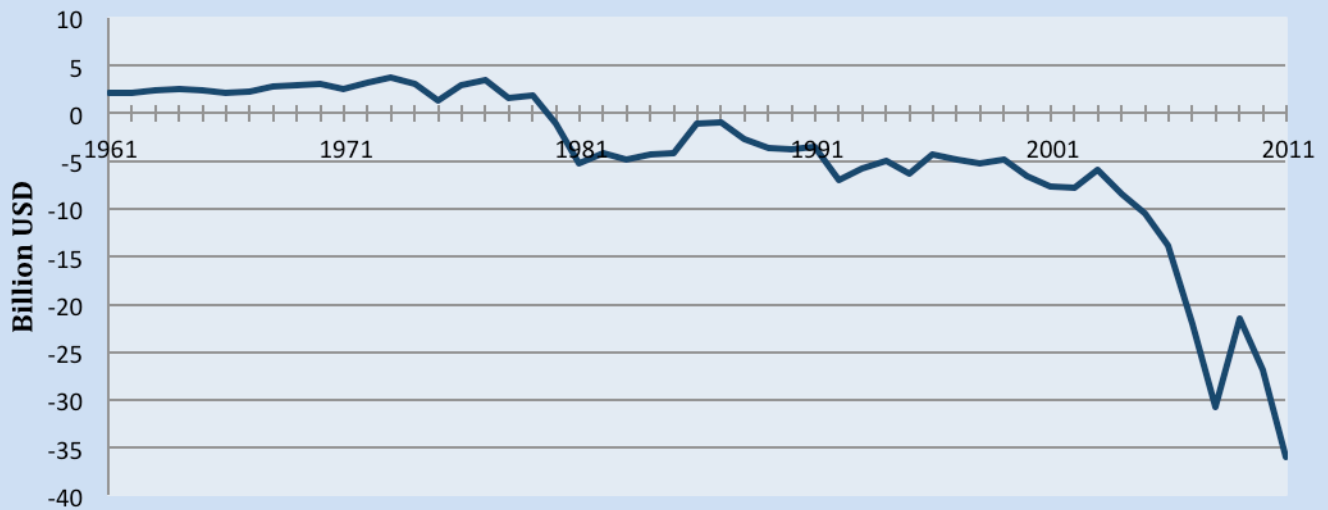
Source: FAOSTAT, 2014
Note: Agricultural trade refers to imports and exports of food and agriculture products, excluding fishery and forestry products.

By 2010, agricultural imports at USD $62 billion were nearly double the value of exports. It is important to note that because the value of imports and exports varies greatly by country and region in Africa, the impact of food and agriculture trade varies as well.

The share of food and agricultural trade with Africa is quite small compared with total global trade, representing just 4.7% of the global value of agricultural imports and exports. Africa is not a competitive region globally for food trade. Though given the vast resources, it has the opportunity to become a global supplier of food. Additionally, rising global demand for food, especially crops that require specific agro-climatic characteristics and intense labor, can provide a competitive advantage for producers in Africa.

Challenges to Food Trade

Though significant opportunities exist for growth, challenges remain to increase both intra-African trade and international food exports. Just as there are both input and policy barriers affecting agricultural production, food trade is hindered by regulations limiting access to important inputs and trade policies that restrict the flow of food across borders. Though informal trade can deliver significant benefits, associated high risks, including SPS risks, loss of revenue and loss of available data undermine potential for sustainable trade.

Without access to the best seeds, low cost fertilizers, agricultural specialists and due to outdated or non-existent regulations, African producers have difficulty competing against others on the continent or globally. High transport costs and poor

services, due to weak infrastructure, further drive higher costs.

Trade policies, especially in the agricultural and food sectors, have varied in the decades post-independence. Anti-production and anti-trade biases in the forms of high production and export taxes led to import substitution in the immediate post-independence era. Gains through structural adjustment in the 1980s to mid 1990s, including aid packages to reduce fiscal debt, and encouraging output and export growth, followed by trade liberalization in the mid 1990s were largely negated by declining world commodity prices.

Additionally, trade policies of foreign governments, including subsidies and dumping, protection barriers, preferential trade and food aid policies have made it difficult for African products to compete in global markets.

As the agriculture and food sectors mature and solve many of the challenges outlined above, and there are more opportunities for trade, the quality and safety of African food products will come under increasing scrutiny. Food safety needs to be addressed before it becomes a major obstacle to food exports. Additionally, without effective regulation of food safety to eliminate non-compliant operators, there is no incentive for investment by progressive operators to

deliver safer and better quality food for all.

A risk analysis approach across the food system is required to fully unlock the potential of economic growth through agriculture and food trade in Africa.

Food Safety Systems in Africa

Food safety systems in Africa show a patchwork of regulations and organizations. Though laws and regulations exist in all countries, few countries have central organizing agencies, and the ministries, departments and agencies involved differ greatly between countries, including Ministries of

Agriculture, Trade, Health, Drugs, Industry, Veterinary Services, Education, Science and Technology and Customs. Building on the 2005 situational analysis completed for FAO of agencies with oversight on food safety in 2005, Appendix 1 contains the current agencies in each of the countries in Africa.

A situational analysis of national food safety systems in Africa prepared for the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa in 2005 identified a number of components and related actions needed to improve food safety systems on the continent. These 14 identified improvements needed for the food safety systems in Africa have remained relevant – and are still a

potential guidepost to measure progress – over the past decade.

- **National food safety policies** should be a high priority for governments.
- **Food legislation** is frequently outdated, inadequate and fragmented. New legislation needs to stem from food policy and science-based approaches.
- **National food safety standards** should be in agreement with regional or international standards, such as Codex Alimentarius, IPPC and OIE.
- **Science-based risk assessments** of food safety issues should be completed at a national level or

  regional level, if more appropriate and harmonization of science-based food safety legislation is required.
- **Inspection mechanisms/schemes** should operate with clear policy and qualified personnel.
- **Laboratory support service** requires adequate, recurring budgets to ensure modern
- **Epidemiological surveillance of food-borne diseases**
- **Membership in Codex**
- **Biosafety concerns – regulations and biotechnology and GMOs**

equipment, personnel and quality assurance procedures.

- **Capability of industry to supply safe food.** When appropriate, the food industry can provide capacity for food safety and quality assurance monitoring.
- **Information networks on food safety issues** should work to build confidence among consumers and the media.
- **Training/education in food safety** should be on-going and focused towards government officials, industry leaders and consumers.
- **Consumer awareness raising** to encourage consumers to be quality and safety conscious
- **Coordination of food safety activities at a national level** should include all relevant stakeholders including ministries of health, agriculture, trade/industry, fisheries, tourism and others, as appropriate.

should be adopted as the food industry increases use of modern biotechnology.

Challenges to Developing Food Safety Systems in Africa

In the decade since the above improvements were identified at the 2005 Conference on Food Safety, developing a modern food safety system has proven elusive for many countries in Africa. Countries struggle with the legacy management systems in place compounded by ad hoc adjustments to address specific trade related barriers, a product/sector-focused approach, and legislation linked to a specific institution rather than function. Additionally, lack of vision for long-term planning for development of food safety systems compared to actual short-term policy horizons coupled with vested interests in the status quo (e.g. lawful extortion in fees for control services impacting on competitiveness) continue to challenge development.

As noted above, the laws and regulations concerning food safety are piecemeal and jurisdiction is distributed among many different agencies within governments, making it difficult to update and coordinate new policies.

Though food safety systems strive to harmonize standards and systems with international ones, like Codex, doing so comes at a significant cost and can deter more basic changes to existing systems. Countries that have less-advanced systems may not have the institutional capacity, human capital and necessary budget to implement these harmonized standards. Even when regulations are in place, Codex or otherwise, consistent enforcement of those regulations at different border posts of countries is an enormous challenge.

These challenges to food safety and subsequent economic growth opportunities are understood by leaders in Africa, and acknowledged in the *2013 African Union Commission's (AUC) Recommendations For the Missions, Functions and Structure of African Union Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed* (See also, Appendix 2):

"*The weak compliance with international food-safety and quality standards hampers the continent's efforts to increase agricultural trade both intra-regionally and internationally. Weak coherence between domestic public health, agriculture and trade policies*

means that the developmental benefits of trade opportunities available to African producers cannot be optimized."

Addressing Food Safety Challenges in Africa

To address some of the challenges described above, and specifically outlined during the 2005 Regional Conference on Food Safety and its associated situational analysis, the AUC convened a series of Continental Workshops in 2012-2013. The workshops served not only to identify the challenges, but to build a road map for the response required to address them.

As noted in the *2013 AUC Recommendations For the Missions, Functions and Structure of African Union Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed*:

"The First Continental Workshop was held in Kigali, Rwanda on 29th and 30th October 2012 and endorsed the need for a food safety management coordination mechanism at the level of the African

The proposed AU Food Safety Coordination Mechanism overall objectives are to:
- Protect public life and health by reducing the risk of foodborne illness, and taking into account animal and plant health issues, and the environment;

- Protect consumers from unsanitary, unwholesome, mislabeled or adulterated food;

region, and recommended that this should include a system for alerting all African Union (AU) Member States of any ensuing food safety concerns. It also discussed the principles to be applied, and outlined the mechanisms and procedures to be developed."

"The Second Continental Workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 5th to 7th November 2013, undertook analysis of the specific food safety challenges, focusing on the majority of the challenges and needs identified nearly 8 years earlier at the 2005 Regional Conference. Specific areas were addressed at the Workshop focusing on 'where and how a regional approach could add value, by providing leadership, creating synergies, avoiding duplication and ensuring a coordinated and coherent approach to strengthening food safety management systems across Regional Economic Communities and Member States.

- Increase market access and competitiveness in food trade, including raising production levels;

- Promote and facilitate inter-African food trade and exchange between the Member States;

- Contribute to economic development by maintaining consumer confidence in the food system; and

- Provide a sound scientific and regulatory foundation for trade in food.

Specifically, 10 missions have been identified for the AU FSCM:

1. To advocate and support the adoption by Member States of a coherent and compliant policy and legal framework for food safety;

2. To provide technical and logistical support to Member States for the implementation of effective, efficient, valid and reliable food safety control systems;

3. To ensure the provision of an appropriate scientific basis for informed decisions by food safety managers;

4. To provide technical and logistical support to laboratories providing testing services for official controls of food safety;

5. To quickly exchange information about food and feed-related risks to ensure coherent and simultaneous actions by all network members with the view of protecting consumer health from imminent public health risks;

6. To coordinate the development of requisite professional skills, knowledge and expertise for official control;

7. To promote coordinate and support measures to build the food safety capacity of African food business operators;

8. To promote and coordinate research on the assessment of food safety risks affecting African producers and consumers;

9. To strengthen the awareness, knowledge and confidence of African consumers regarding food safety matters; and

10. To ensure the provision of adequate technical and financial support for food business operators to invest in food safety improvements along the food chain.

Both initiatives – *the Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System* – have been endorsed at the AU/EU Heads of States summit held in Brussels (2-3 April 2014), and have now been included in the AU/EU joint cooperation roadmap for 2014/2017. Once the initiatives are fully approved, the AUC will begin the process

to develop the organization, including the permanent legal basis, budget, staffing and material resources, and work with major development partners and UN agencies.

Speeding Progress, Advancing Partnerships, Sustaining Momentum

In an increasingly global food system, the Global Food Safety Partnership, facilitated by the World Bank Group, brings together the full suite of actors in food safety –

from international organizations and governments to industry, NGOs and academics. Working on multiple continents, the GFSP has developed a suite of training modules to improve aquaculture in Malaysia, is working in China on the design and implementation of a national action plan in cooperation with a number of GFSP partners, and is supporting Zambia with a comprehensive needs assessment and follow-up plan.

For the 3rd GFSP Annual Conference, more than 130 participants from over 50 organizations convened in Cape Town from December 8-12, 2014. The conference illustrated the achievements of the GFSP in its first two years of operation, and outlined continued collaborative action for 2015 to scale up the world's response to food safety challenges among public, private and academic actors worldwide.

Conference highlights included:

- Conference participants reinforced that improving food safety is a shared priority that can only be achieved by public, private, civil society and academic sectors working together.

- The World Bank Group providing the necessary convening power to support a global platform on food safety. Participants recognized and commended the growing level of collaboration and leveraging of expertise that the GFSP Advisory Groups from around the globe bring.

Each Working Group identified how they would support implementation of GFSP activities in 2015.

- An interactive session on the final day provided feedback on the opportunities beyond 2015, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the Partnership. It was recognized that opportunities ultimately rest in the strength of stakeholders: this commitment and perseverance need to be maintained. Among the many actions listed as necessary to improve the Partnership, communication and raising the GFSP profile stood out: communication both internally and externally, with potential donors (CEOs, governments, foundations), and the public to increase participation, attract more financial contributors, and increase alignment to support implementation of priorities.

As an ongoing feature of the GFSP Annual Conference, Waters Corporation, in partnership with the World Bank Group and this year, with UNIDO, hosted the 2nd Annual Food Safety Regional Leadership Dinner Dialogue.

The 2014 Dialogue was designed to explore how African efforts to improve food safety on the continent might be expedited with momentum sustained through partnerships and expertise facilitated by the GFSP.

A prestigious panel of experts was convened for the Dialogue by Waters, the

World Bank and UNIDO to address the following topics:

1) The road map to improved food safety and food commerce as identified by the AU Continental Workshops in 2012 and 2013;

2) Ways these improvements might be accelerated and the role of the Global Food Safety Partnership their facilitation;

3) New partnerships with NGOs and the private sector that could be explored; and

4) Ideas to sustain momentum, building on best practices learned from past experiences.

The Food Safety Regional Dinner Dialogue in Cape Town has given the GFSP and others a wonderful opportunity to listen to our esteemed panelists and to learn about the changing face of food safety in Africa. Africa is a massive continent with 54 very diverse countries so dealing with 'food safety in Africa' is not a 'one size fits all' scenario. The challenges are significant, and varied. However, much progress is being made and that must be applauded.

As the economic base changes in Africa with increased trade and investment in the region, the growing middle class will have an incredible power to demand safe food. Governments, industry, international organizations and other interested parties, must respond to this demand in a collaborative and coordinated manner in order to improve public health, increase trade opportunities and to enhance economic growth. In the not too distant future, Africa could become a net food exporter and a 'bread basket' to the world – lifting populations out of poverty and creating new economic opportunities. But this will require continued progress on food safety.

This dinner Dialogue has been an important time to gather Africa's food safety stakeholders and leaders and reflect on the progress made over the last decade, with an eye on speeding progress, advancing partnerships, and sustaining momentum. In 2005 the FAO/ WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Africa identified 14 improvements needed in food safety on the continent and the 2012 and 2013 Continental Workshops on Food Safety provided a road map to achieve the continent's most important food safety goals. These meetings and their importance have been discussed elsewhere in this white paper. They are important milestones to understand and even more important benchmarks to measure progress against.

Through this Dialogue, we have heard about the challenges associated with the technical aspects of food safety, where technical and regulatory guidance and involvement in Codex will be critical. We have also discussed the immense challenges surrounding the supply chain, including the infrastructure required to facilitate the efficient and effective movement of products to market. Food safety capacity building is taking place in many arenas with many willing partners from within and outside of Africa focusing on agribusiness, a range of technical issues and the food supply chain infrastructure, including integration with the retail sector. Despite these barriers and challenges, progress is being made.

GFSP is involved because we know that these challenges are not ones that any single government or industry can solve alone. The GFSP has the convening power to bring all relevant players together to tackle the wide-ranging issues in Africa and beyond. A coordinated, continent-wide approach to food safety will achieve the greatest result in the fastest time and African leadership has charted its own course through the complicated landscape of food safety, across 54 diverse nations seeking integrated solutions.

Making the world's food safer requires that all relevant players come to the table to learn and to act. It is critical that there is coordination, communication, technical advisory processes, testing procedures and relevant and appropriate capacity building to improve food safety issues in this vast continent. With this, both the African continent and nations around the globe will reap the rewards.

Dr. Paul Young, Waters Corporation

The following section reflects an edited oral and written transcript of the Global Food Safety Partnership Annual Meeting, Regional Dialogue Series, Cape Town, South Africa, 11 December 2014.

The dialogue consisted of a panel of regional food safety experts – representing UNIDO, AUC, African food industry, and Government –moderated by Dr. Paul Young from Waters Corporation.

Ali Badarneh – *Industrial Development Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*

Dr. Ian Goulding – *Food Safety and Quality Consultant, African Union Commission*

Dr. Lucia Anelich – *Food Safety, Food Microbiology & Food Safety Management Systems Consultant, Anelich Consulting, South Africa*

Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele – *Director, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Department of Agriculture, South Africa*

Dr. Chance Kabaghe – *Former Minister for Agriculture of Zambia*

Each of the panelists was asked to briefly speak and give their perspective on the African context around food safety and promoting economic growth. Following the remarks are a series of questions posed by the audience in attendance and answered by the panelists.

Panel Discussion

Ali Badarneh
Industrial Development Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. Badarneh is currently working as Industrial Development Officer at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. UNIDO provides a variety of technical cooperation activities to assist developing countries in adding value to the output of their agricultural sector and generate increased employment opportunities. Thereby, food safety is one of the key issues which needs to be addressed in particular when it comes to upgrading the trade-capacity and competitiveness of developing countries, and countries in transition, in a global trading system where increasingly stringent requirements apply with regard to product quality, safety, health and environmental impacts.

According to Mr. Badarneh, Africa with its high number of LDCs has always been and will remain in the foreseeable future the main geographical priority area of UNIDO's interventions. In particular in the area of trade capacity-building the difficulties local small-scale suppliers (farms and SMEs) are having in adequately responding to market requirements, which in turn prevents them from seizing business opportunities with local, regional and global buyers (retailers and manufacturers), remains one of the biggest challenges on the continent.

During the panel discussion, Mr. Badarneh sketched a model of how SMEs in a number of African countries could, through the provision of technical assistance, be linked to the supply chains of local/international retailers. "It's an example of where UNIDO could make a real difference, and hopefully such interventions will give the chance to the SMEs not only to integrate into their local supply chains, but to take this as a catalytic step to move into regional and global markets", noted Mr. Badarneh.

"In UNIDO trade capacity-building is one of the three main thematic areas as enhancing the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate in global trade is becoming increasingly critical for the economic growth of these countries. Interventions in this area involve the upgrading of competitive productive capacities for international trade and the upgrading of quality and compliance infrastructure", noted Mr. Badarneh. "As to see any of such initiatives succeeding we need to pursue an inclusive and sustainable strategy, we need to partner with everyone possible on the ground, and we need to complement what others are doing".

Dr. Ian Goulding
Food Safety and Quality Consultant, African Union

Dr. Ian Goulding is currently providing technical advice and support as part of a team of consultants working with the African Union (AU) Commission, particularly with the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). One AU Commission initiative, Dr Goulding has been working on in particular, is the African Union Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism.

According to Dr. Goulding, while the AU Commission has an animal health function (AU-IBAR) and a plant health function (the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council), there has been a gap in terms of their institutional response in food safety. To address this gap, Dr Goulding notes there has been a series of workshops supported by international partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNIDO and the European Union (EU). The workshops have been attended by African member state food safety officials and policymakers who are working to develop a concept of an African Union Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for food and feed.

As a result of these workshops, officials and policymakers have created a document which lays out the structure, functions and mission of a future Food Safety Authority for Africa. According to Dr. Goulding, the Authority, at least initially, will not be a regulatory body, but it will focus on things like coordination, communication, advisory, advice to member states, and importantly, capacity building so as to provide continental-wide leadership on development of these food safety issues.

"In this respect, its aims are very close to the GFSP, and one of the exciting possibilities is to try and explore ways in the future in which this AU-wide mechanism as a regional body can interface with the GFSP, the various regional economic communities and the member states, to deliver this kind of continent-wide leadership, which is so obviously and evidently in need within the African region," noted Dr. Goulding.

Dr. Lucia Anelich
Food Safety, Food Microbiology & Food Safety Management Systems Consultant, Anelich Consulting, South Africa

Dr. Lucia Anelich began the discussion by reminding participants of the sheer size of Africa. It consists of 54 countries; it has 1.1 billion people; and it is incredibly diverse—with many

challenges and many common problems. Additionally, of the 1.1 billion people, 230 million are food insecure.

Meanwhile, Dr. Anelich noted, around 300 million people consist of a growing middle class group with swelling incomes, access to travel, and they want the same things their Europeans and American counterparts have—fancy smartphones, iPads and better quality food. According to Anelich, this growing middle class sector is going to drive food safety to a large extent in Africa.

Dr. Anelich then listed some practical challenges facing the continent that provided further context and insight into the biggest issues in food safety today facing Africa today: participants. For example, she listed aspects such as identifying the needs regarding food safety and food safety standards; how the continent handles the challenge of infrastructure development; how goods get to market? Transport infrastructure. And since energy is often inconsistent, how would the growing food industry and the population run refrigerators and freezers?

Consequently, Dr. Anelich noted Africa has 4 billion U.S. dollars in loss of products because of these issues that can't easily be resolved, so when discussing food safety matters, other important aspects such as developing the necessary infrastructure must be taken into account. "I think the World Bank is extremely well-positioned to deal with these multi-disciplinary matters because it's not only about food safety, but the World Bank deals with other matters as well, such as infrastructure development, and I think that's absolutely vital ."

Dr. Anelich also highlighted a promising development by the African Union—the development of expert groups which are working to develop common positions for all countries in Africa that are members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These groups include: Food Hygiene, Pesticide Residues, Contaminants in Foods, Food Additives, Food Labeling, Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses, Residues of Veterinary Drugs, Fish and Fishery Products, Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. Additionally, there are two new proposals on the table for new expert working groups—the Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems and the Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

"This is a growing area. When we meet, we develop country positions on those particular Codex Committee agenda items. These positions are sent through to all the Codex contact points on the African continent, and the countries are encouraged to use those positions as their official position at those particular meetings," noted Dr Anelich. "And we've seen a

huge improvement in activity and particularly participation in the Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings, and I think this is very important progress that we've achieved."

Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele
Director, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Department of Agriculture

In his remarks, Dr. Ntshabele discussed the need for Africa to begin trading with itself, highlighting one recent project that launched four years ago, the Tripartite Trade Negotiating Forum, wherein different regional economic communities, including the Southern African Development Corporation, EAC and COMESA are in negotiations for a Free Trade Area from Cape to Cairo.

He noted, "Amongst that, there has been conclusion of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary chapter of those discussions, but again within the regulations themselves, in the regions, the regional communities, you will find that there have been division – for instance the Southern African Development Community has a SADC SPS annex through which work has progressed with regards to guidelines for food safety, guidelines for registration of agro-chemicals, and guidelines for veterinary public health. And there are annual meetings that take place for the different expert groupings. So I think they're going to have the 7th SPS Committee Meeting in SADC, which is made up of the livestock people, the plant protection people, and food safety people, and the three ultimately, and that's part of the work towards harmonization to enhance trade amongst each other."

Dr. Ntshabele also stressed the need for Africa to develop smart partnerships that show value. "It really has to be a synergistic relationship that we understand what is the value of having a partnership with the GFSP for that recipient country and what is the win-win situation, the 1+1 equals to 5, and that's very critical if we're going to make success in this discussion," said Dr. Ntshabele.

"I also think we need to think beyond the discussion that we've had today," said Dr. Ntshabele. "I think there is a case to be made for the public good nature of food safety."

Dr. Chance Kabaghe
Former Minister for Agriculture of Zambia

Dr. Kabaghe began his remarks calling for African governments to start prioritizing and putting into their budgets food security, food safety issues.

According to Dr. Kabaghe, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has called for 10 percent of government budgets should go to agriculture. "I would like us to go further. We should say of that 10 percent, some percentage, perfectly calculated, should go to food safety because to tell you the truth, as a former minister, I know safety is not something that will be budgeted for. If it is, it's by chance," said Dr Kabaghe.

Dr. Kabaghe also highlighted the changing and shifting political candidates and a need to keep in mind the political economy of agriculture. "I think African governments have now developed professionalism. We have so many candidates who are really professional in their jobs. I would advise this kind of what we are doing is really political economy of agriculture. We need to talk to the ministers of agriculture, the ministers of health and ministers of local government. We have to speak to committees of parliament for this kind of work," said Dr. Kabaghe.

But how can all of this work be done to see effective results on the ground? According to Dr. Kabaghe, all partners need to consistently ask: "How can we do this best?" "Who are the champions?" "Who is going to convince the minister of agriculture and convince the president of a country so that this particular aspect of food safety takes prominence?"

"I think to me, those are things that we as professionals, we as technicians should be domesticating. Come 2025, if we find that we are not tripling that, and to me it should not only be inter-African but it should also Africa with the whole world, but the onus is on each one of us to convince and domesticate the whole system," said Dr. Kabaghe.

Questions and Answers from the Audience

Q: When you look at the global Food Security Index, there are about 109 countries that are ranked according to food security. You will find that the African countries, some of them are doing better in terms of food safety and quality, but the accessibility and affordability is poor, so how do you tackle the problem of food safety without maybe considering the issue of food security?

A: [Mr. Badarneh I would like to make a quick reference to the 3ADI initiative which aims at accelerating the development of the agribusiness and agro-industries to ensure value-addition to agricultural products. The leading agencies: **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** and the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**, joined forces to support a well-coordinated effort to enhance development impacts. The cooperation builds on sharing knowledge and harmonizing programs in ways that capture synergies, avoid fragmented efforts, and enhance developmental impacts. This is a comprehensive initiative which addresses food security, and you have the rest of the elements such as food safety and others well integrated because I fully agree with you, it doesn't make sense that you have a food safety policy framework or a strategy in a country isolated from your overall food security strategy.

A: [Dr. Kabaghe]: It's true that most African countries are struggling to have food security, there is no doubt about it, and this is why I keep on saying that food safety has been an off-front area, but if our presidents, when they met in Malabo, they said that they needed to see intra-African trade, and most of it was agriculture. They wanted to triple. That means that many countries now in Africa are reaching self-sufficiency. One of the countries leading for the region is Zambia. We are producing enough maize than we need, soyas, wheat, and what have you. We are now exporting. We need now to start looking at safety issues. We may not all grow at the same level but to tell you the truth, right now to me whether you are food secure or not, issues of safety of whatever you produce should be taken into consideration.

A: [Dr. Ntshabele] I just wanted to say that one of the issues that becomes very important is to integrate your food security objective with the market requirements in mind so that you produce a tradable commodity, and therein you improve incomes, and that would deal with that once you food security, you are able to trade in those commodities that you've produced and people are able to earn incomes, and that way you improve the ability of your people to access food if it's an issue of affordability.

A: [Dr. Goulding] I think it's important to recognize that it's not a question of either food security or food safety. They are essentially intimately combined in that your food safety is an integral part of any food security policy, and a food security policy should have sections in it which deal with how food is going to be made safe, because without that, you can't have secure supplies. But I think what's interesting in the African context particularly is the food supply system is so dependent on vast numbers of very, very small businesses, small farmers, small processors, small distributors, even down to chop bars and small restaurants, all of which play their role in delivering adequate nutrition and food to people on a daily basis.

And the real challenge presented by Africa in the context of what we're trying to do in this meeting, I think, is how to bring about the changes in what those operators do because that's where you get food safety conditions improving, by altering, by changing the acts or omissions of those operators. That's the real challenge in how to reflect the importance of food safety within that system without disturbing the food security impacts which they have, because the last thing you want to do is come in with heavy-handed regulations and close down half of your food supply chain because of non-compliance. It means there has to be commensurate support measures for them to be able to make investments in order to adapt their systems to make sure that the food is safe at the same time.

A: [Dr. Anelich] I think a lot of it has already been said but absolutely, the work that has also been done at street food vending level has shown that the street food market is a huge market in Africa, and it creates a lot of employment as well, so coming back to what Ian was saying, we have to be very careful. We have to balance food security and food safety, of course, but also not coming with heavy-handed regulations so that one shuts down these businesses because a lot of people are dependent on that one person who is running that street food stall as the sole income provider. That one person is often the only person able to bring home money that night to buy food for another day, and we really have to be very aware of that.

Q: Looking at the title of today's dialogue, "Food Safety Regional Dialogue," and reflecting on the opening remarks that Africa is a continent of 54, 55 countries, and all are as diverse as this group is, I'm wondering, we're all here to have some common objective, and I think regional focus, if we wanted to maintain a regional focus, would be something like a common goal that we could drive to, and I'm wondering what would be the entry points for a group like this with the focus on food safety to enter on a regional basis on this continent? Are there any common entry points to focus regionally, and what we can take away from this?

A: [Dr. Kabaghe] Working for the CBC, the COMESA Business Council, just two weeks ago we had a very key meeting in Kampala where some of my members of staff from my fishing company, they were there. This was organized by CBC with the initiative from COMESA, and this is where we had the hospitality industry hotels, you know, Serena Hotel, Protea Hotel, and they were talking to suppliers of fish and other product to their hotels. So COMESA organized that, and looking at safety issues, and after the meeting, those companies were guaranteed with specification on safety, food safety requirements for them to supply to those hotels. This is but one of the many examples.

To me, I think the entry point, to me really, are our regional groupings, and for now we have the COMESA, and have done so well with the harmonization of the seed industry, the rules and regulations of the seed industry. I cannot see how they can also fail to do the harmonization, and make sure that food safety issues, because they are working very, very, very hard to have open borders. You can't open borders if issues of SPSs are not taken into consideration, so me that, Arta, would be the right entry point. Thank you.

A: [Dr. Anelich] I'd like to say, one of the discussions we've been having is a similar one in terms of regions, i.e. how we divide regions into groups and what would be the best approach for risk assessment training, for example, and if one takes SADC into consideration, which consists of 15 countries in the southern hemisphere, one of them is Tanzania; however Tanzania trades largely with Kenya and Rwanda and other countries in the eastern African region, so one would have to review that and say, well, perhaps we don't include Tanzania in this particular case in the SADC region. So in some cases, these divisions are almost artificial, and it is sometimes a good idea to look at the trading sector and then at that group of countries that trade most with one other - that might be an entry point.

A: [Mr.. Badarneh]: I wanted to reflect on what Ian said on this AU initiative, and I see that the region has decided to establish an African Food Safety Coordination Mechanism, which will shape the way Africa will address food safety. In this regard I think it is a perfect opportunity to learn from the GFSP concept and to establish a kind of "mirror mechanism" which involves from day one the academia, African food businesses, multinationals investing in Africa, and relevant multilateral organizations which will all together define an inclusive and sustainable food safety framework for Africa. I am positive that the Global Food Safety Partnership would be very willing to advise on such a mechanism and the approach to be taken.

A: [Dr. Ntshabele] My comment would be that each of these regions, has a secretariat, so there is a formal institution that exists that you can engage with. Similarly, the African Union in itself, there is a system that's been set up that is responsible for food safety entirely for Africa, and I think that would be, in my opinion, the best entry points. You should realize also that as Ian mentioned, that's there is a coordination – I think Lucia also said the same thing – with regards to Codex activities, so it's almost a dynamic. It's not static that you can only have that entry. You should understand that there would be multiple entry points for a particular, I think, activity that's envisaged

A: [Dr. Goulding] Yes. In the discussion paper, you will see the 10 main missions that the African Union Commission has decided should be the activities of this new organization, this new institutional setup for food safety under the AU, and you'll there that many of the activities are very close to the aims and objectives of the GFSP, and I think it's a question of finding out where there is a match-up to be able to identify those activities which can form the partnership.

I think there are still many issues to be decided as to which is the best level for certain activities, so between the regional and economic communities and the AU, there's still a lot of policy work required to decide where best to locate things. So for example, issues on border controls, for example, might best dealt within the regional economic communities, whereas the African Union might deal with things like regional centers of excellence for education and training in food safety, so there needs to be some teasing out of the exact level where these things need to be addressed. But I think within this framework, there are going to be plenty of opportunities for identifying the entry point within this emerging framework.

Q: If I just take one commodity called sugar, if you want to trade it across, there have been a lot of conflicts that one country does not allow inter-regional trade. How do you go about this in terms of facilitating trade? And of course when you are talking of goods trade, you are talking about safety in this equation.

A: [Dr. Kabaghe] Thank you. I am very much aware of the sugar problem. In fact, I think it started from Zambia who were exporting, and it was marooned at some border in spite of meeting the necessarily standards. I know we are already having problems with milk which is supposed to be coming from Kenya, and so on and so forth. I think, colleagues, the problem that we have is that we have not done enough work in the awareness, in teaching our own people to understand, the politicians, and everybody in the whole value chain. I

23

think once we have done with this and people start accepting the rules of the game, this will be an issue of the past.

This morning we are discussing to say, okay – in fact, just as this question came, we are just discussing it. Supposing now you have COMESA agreed, harmonized. What about ECOWAS in West Africa? How do you now cross them to have an African harmonized system? I was in Ethiopia, in Addis at the AU – no, actually it was in Cairo, a few weeks ago, we were discussing about forming the African Business Council which now superintends over all the blocs. Once a particular standard or set of standards is agreed at the Africa Business Council, it permeates throughout the whole system, but we have to start from some point. It won't be perfect but to me, that's the best entry point for now, but we have to do our work in sensitizing that all of us understand what food safety is all about.

Q: Is it relevant for GFSP to get involved in the discussion about GMOs? Do any of the panelists have an opinion?

A: [Dr. Anelich] I certainly do. I think we must be very careful because GMOs are not a food safety issue as far as we know. In the past 20 years of GMOs existence, whether we agree with it or whether we don't, there is no scientific evidence to show that GMOs are a food safety issue, so as far as I'm concerned, I do not think it should be within the mandate of the GFSP to discuss GMOs.

A: [Dr. Kabaghe] I can explain the COMESA position on GMO because presidents of COMESA discussed the GMO position. They have said that each country would decide on the GMO as they wish because there was so much controversy among different countries, just like there is controversy right now between Europe and America. That's a known problem. So they have said the position for COMESA countries, 19 countries, is that a country would decide on what to do with the issues of GMO.

Q: We have a very complex competing public health environment, where they're looking at Ebola or maternal mortality or HIV-AIDS, with the growing I think issue around NCDs. But from where all of you sit, because you're in very strategic positions, could you talk a little bit about how we as a group can help in this competing environment to really insert and position food safety as that kind of a major public health issue, and one which we all need to rally around?

A: [Mr. Badarneh] Like I said in my opening remarks, although it is a challenge, but you really have to define the value of having a rigorous food safety or regulatory system, and be able to translate that to some tangible values for the Ministry of Health, or your

government in general. For instance, one of the best selling points will be to show the opportunity costs arising from a poor food safety system/environment. Meaning, you need to give the fact that you are not able to participate in global trade a price tag, and need to

show the long-term effect of chronic diseases. For sure this is not always an easy sell because governments don't like to deal with opportunity costs in the short term, and beyond their legislative period.

A: [Dr. Goulding] I think if I could come in there, it's obviously a sovereign decision for any country as to how they allocate their political priorities across any area, but I think one of the unique things about food safety, it is this nexus of health, trade, and economic development driven by agro food businesses, so there are other imperatives which operate other than the public health one. And I think that actually raising awareness of the role of better regulation as even a driver for economic development, because it goes directly towards the investment environment, so that unless a food business operator sees that his investment in improved food safety activities – whether it's upgrading his water supply, or putting in a new floor or something like this, or training staff, or putting in better process controls – whatever that investment is, if he sees his neighbor not making that investment and he's allowed to continue operating, it puts him at a disadvantage so he's not going to do it, so effective regulation also has a good, clear role in terms of the investment environment.

And the other aspect of this, I think, which is not widely recognized is the role of risk assessment here because proper risk assessment has a lot of advantages for resource-limited control systems because it means you can use your risk assessment to drive the focus of your controls, and there's no reason why you can't also build in to your public health risk assessment other agents, non-food-related hazards, to work out the most cost-effective, economically cost-effective way of improving people's livelihoods. So I think risk assessment can answer some of those questions, and we don't have the mechanisms in place yet within Africa because we don't understand the full set of risks there. There are unique products, unique processes, wide regional differences, and we don't have the consumption data to make the proper risk assessments.

Q: How can GFSP help?

A: [Dr. Goulding] One thing that's very important is in April of this year, there was a summit with African Union Heads of State and the European Union at which they agreed on a new phase of their partnership for development, and one of the issues that was specifically mentioned in that communiqué was support for the new Food Safety Mechanism, so there

will be a funding stream coming from the European Union, and that should be used for two things, broadly. One is building the capacities of the regional bodies, both the AU and the RECs, to be able to implement the wide range of tools necessarily to bring about this sea change. The other will be, as a channel, it will be channeled to member states to allow them to undertake the necessary investments, so there will be donor support, strong donor

support coming through for that, and I think that's going to make a major difference. What we need, of course, is the software in terms of the tool boxes, which maybe GFSP will be a major contributor to that to make it happen.

A: [Dr. Anelich] On a slightly separate point, the AU has been funded currently to run all these Codex committees, and part of that is to fund the food safety experts in those Codex committees, as well as the other experts in the relevant Codex mirror committees to attend those particular Codex committee meetings together with their country delegations. That's been going on for around 4 years or 5 years. . That external funding source is coming to an end but the wonderful thing about that is that African Union members have committed to continue the funding on their own for these Codex committees because they've seen the benefit, which is exactly what we need. We need Africa to find solutions for Africa, and this is what is currently happening in that space.

A: [Dr. Kabaghe] I think that African governments have the capacity. They can also raise resources to prioritize food safety as a key item for them to budget for. I'm saying so because we have all sorts of subsidizes, be it on inputs, be it on maize, and many of them do not produce the required results. If our governments can really understand, have proper awareness the importance of food safety in terms of trade, in terms of health, in terms of maybe just being comfortable to move crops around, they should be able out of their budgets to put in money. With that, donors can help technically because we are now developing our University for Food Security and Technology and what have you, but I think we should, as African governments, be able to raise enough money to meet the requirements in terms of food safety if the awareness is right.

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