



15TH INTER-AMERICAN MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 11- 12 June, 2008

Agriculture and Health: Alliance for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas

Provisional Agenda Item 3

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Report of the COPAIA 5 Meeting

Declaration of the Fifth Meeting of the Pan-American Commission on Food Safety (COPAIA 5), Rio de Janeiro, 10 June 2008.

The members of the Fifth Meeting of the Pan-American Commission on Food Safety (COPAIA 5), consisting of delegates from the ministries of health and agriculture and representatives of the consumers and producers sectors of the subregions of the Andean Area, the British Caribbean, Central America and the Latin Caribbean, the Southern Cone, and North America gathered in Rio de Janeiro on June 10, 2008,

Recognizing that access to safe food and nutritionally adequate diet is a right of each individual,¹ and convinced that:

- Food safety is an essential public health function, which protects consumers against health risks posed by biological, chemical, and physical hazards associated with food;
- If uncontrolled, the risks associated with food may become a major cause of diseases and premature death, as well as entailing losses owed to diminished productivity and serious economic damage to the agricultural, livestock, and tourist sectors including agri-food industry, food processors, food distribution and retailers;
- Effective risk management and communication requires surveillance systems that can link disease outbreaks and illness to specific food supply chains;
- Appropriate implementation of food safety measures among and within countries can improve food safety on both a regional and a global scale;
- Integrated food safety systems can make possible the management of potential risks throughout the food chain from production to consumption
- Measures aimed at food safety should be based on scientific evidence and on risk analysis principle, and avoid raising unnecessary barriers to food trade;
- The production of safe food is a primary responsibility of the food industry;
- Consumer education is an essential factor in promoting appropriate measures for ensuring food safety in the home; and the sale of foods in general;
- Interactive communication with consumers is important for ensuring that society's values and expectations are taken into consideration in decision-making;

¹ World Declaration on Nutrition (1992) FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition, Rome

Now therefore the COPAIA 5 delegates recommend the:

- Designation of competent food safety authorities as independent under a comprehensive legal framework encompassing the entire food chain from production to consumption;
- Adoption of regulations and other measures based on risk analysis to ensure food safety along the entire food chain from production to consumption, consistently with the guidelines and norms of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other relevant organizations that work on the definition of norms and standards;
- Ensuring the food legislation's effective enforcement through methodologies based on risk analysis, such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) whenever possible;
- Adoption of programs for the monitoring of food, total diet studies and disease surveillance systems, so as to obtain prompt, reliable information about the prevalence and emergence of food-transmitted diseases and biological and chemical hazards in food sources;
- Establishment of procedures, such as traceability and alert systems throughout the food industry, to allow the prompt identification and investigation of incidents related to contaminated food, and report to the WHO incidents contemplated in the International Health Regulation (IHR 2005) through the International Food Safety Authorities Network-INFOSAN and the IRS focal points;
- Promotion of communication and effective consultation with consumers, the food industry, and other relevant sectors with a view to the formulation, implementation, and review of food safety policies and priorities, including education with a systematic focus along the entire food chain from production to consumption;
- Proceeding further with the strengthening of capabilities in respect of food safety by means of effective cooperation between developed and developing countries, as well as among developing countries, so as to promote the access to food safety for all; and

- Establishment of cooperation programs among international and regional technical cooperation organizations involved in food safety in areas of common interests and pursuant to the Member States' mandates.

Remark from Canadian delegation:

Canada would welcome the opportunity to review proposed recommendations made by various members concerning nutrition, obesity, sugar, salts, etc., as we support these as important nutritional quality issues. However this issues are not traditionally referred to in English as food safety issues.