



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**



APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum

STATEMENT

Ha Noi, 13 May, 2017

Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future

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 sixth time on 13 May 2017, in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on the margins of APEC Senior Officials Meeting 2 (SOM2). The 6th Conference of the FSCF highlighted progress made towards meeting its food safety goals and agreed to future priority work areas. FSCF members reaffirmed their commitment to work collaboratively to strengthen food safety systems and enhance the harmonisation of food standards with international standards across the APEC region. These goals support the implementation of member economies' commitments under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade to protect human health and to facilitate trade.

1. We, members of the FSCF, acknowledge the support and direction given by the 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 recognise and commend our host, Viet Nam, for the excellent support they have given to enable this meeting to be held.
3. We acknowledge that the FSCF has now been in successful operation since 2007, and mark 2017 as the 10th anniversary of FSCF. Further we acknowledge the members of the FSCF for their efforts in the pursuit of the commitment made to both improve public health and to facilitate trade in the APEC region.
4. We recognise the range of food safety capacity building activities that the FSCF and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN) have undertaken since the 5th meeting of the FSCF in Cebu, Philippines in 2015. We commend the membership's work in various areas over the last two years.
5. We reaffirm FSCF priority areas of work including streamlining export certificate requirements and the harmonisation of import maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides. Activities from 2015 to 2017 included seminars and workshops on the following topics: modern food safety control systems; the appropriate use of export certificate requirements; laboratories and proficiency testing; import MRLs for pesticides; aquaculture; antimicrobial resistance control strategies; hand hygiene, food safety emergency systems; and others. Given the importance of the AMR issues in health and its potential impact in food trade, we agreed to add to the priority areas "building competencies in AMR".
6. We welcome progress on the FSCF Action Plans to implement the APEC Regulatory Cooperation

Plan as reaffirmed by APEC Ministers in 2012. We reaffirm our support for furthering the call by APEC Ministers in 2011, to reduce “unnecessary requirements in official export certificates for agricultural products.” APEC Ministers 2011 Statement also called for eliminating “requirements that are not based on science and essential to ensuring food safety.” Unnecessary certificate requirements have the potential to inhibit the efficient movement of safe food between APEC economies, especially if requirements are more onerous than necessary to provide an appropriate level of food safety protection straining both governments’ and companies’ ability to adopt certificate requirements.

- a. Streamlining export certificate requirements - We therefore welcome the results of the 2017 APEC FSCF Export Certificate Workshop. We endorse the FSCF-PTIN publication *Streamlining Export Certificate Requirements for Food Products in the APEC Region: Facilitating Trade and Improving Food Safety by Advancing Science-based International Standards* and commit to reducing unnecessary export certificate requirements, as well as reassess progress in 2019.
 - b. Harmonization of import maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides - We recognise the FSCF's success in agreeing a new APEC Guideline on Import MRLs for Pesticides. We commend the continuing work to facilitate the implementation of this Guideline, in particular the recent APEC Workshop on the Harmonisation of Import MRLs. We encourage economies to ensure that their import MRL systems are based on the approaches contained in the Guideline.
7. We welcome the Workshop on Modernisation of Food Safety Control Systems. The workshop highlighted that while economies are facing new challenges, economies are working to modernise food safety control systems. The complexity of the global trading system requires many forms of partnership and collaboration. Government, industry, consumers and other stakeholders have shared responsibilities to ensure food safety while limiting trade restrictive measures. Information, experiences, and good regulatory practices were shared and opportunities and tools were presented in the Workshop. Collaboration between economies on food emergencies, laboratory capability, safeguarding food supply chains through the recognition of equivalent systems and harmonization based on international standards can result in stronger food safety systems. In the APEC region, a more energized and fully utilized FSCF will contribute to better food safety outcomes.
 8. We commend progress on harmonization of import maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides in accordance with the broad principles agreed to at the 2014 Special Session of the FSCF in Beijing. Two expert workshops were convened resulting in the successful development of the *APEC Import MRL Guideline for Pesticides –possible approaches to achieve alignment of international MRLs*, published in July 2016. Further events such as presentation of the Guideline in Lima and a workshop in Canberra have facilitated the implementation of the Guideline in APEC member economies.
 9. We commend the contribution of the APEC Wine Regulatory Forum (WRF) in the areas of export certification, pesticide MRLs, laboratory capacity building and traceability. SCSC endorsement of the APEC Model Wine Certificate in 2016 and collaboration on pesticide MRLs for wine grapes contribute to the progressing the FSCF Action Plan to implement the Regulatory Cooperation plans. We welcome outcomes from the 2017 WRF, including: progress on the WRF document “Guide to Development of Wine Standards”; efforts towards implementation of the Model Wine Certificate by economies that require export certification; and new work on the reduction of unnecessary certificates of analysis not related to food safety.
 10. We recognize ongoing work to strengthen good regulatory practice in the development of food safety regulations, particularly in the area of public consultation as addressed in the APEC Food Safety Beijing Statement 2014, the 2016 Lima Workshop on Effective Industry-Regulator

Cooperation, and the FSCF-PTIN publication *Food Industry Associations: Their Role and Value in Policy and Regulation*. FSCF work on good regulatory practice helps to foster a more preventative approach to ensuring food safety through collaborative public-private partnerships. This year's workshop on the Modernization of Food Safety Control Systems, led by China, provided additional examples of how economies are meeting good regulatory practice objectives.

11. We welcome work on best practice models for hand hygiene in food processing facilities and the *APEC Gap Analysis of International Food Hygiene Law, Regulations, and Standards as they Relate to Hand Hygiene Protocols* (APEC Gap Analysis), which examined the variance in hand hygiene guidance between international codes, economy-level codes, and private food safety schemes, as an output of the FSCF. The FSCF also noted that there is currently no internationally-accepted protocol or best-practice model for hand hygiene in the food sector and referred the APEC Gap Analysis to Codex Alimentarius as an information document.
12. We re-affirm the FSCF *Operating Principles* and the revised *Food Safety Capacity Building Priorities*, recognizing the proactive approach that member economies have adopted to working collaboratively on food safety capacity building in the region.
13. We recognise our ongoing collaboration with the World Bank Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP), and acknowledge the efforts that the GFSP has made in contributing to food safety capacity building in the region, building on the APEC FSCF PTIN model.
14. We agree to the future activities:
 - a. Streamlining Export Certificate Requirements – Provide capacity building to support economies to eliminate unnecessary and/or non science-based export certificate requirements and conduct a review of progress in 2019
 - b. Harmonization of import maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides
 - c. Further communication and collaboration on Modernisation of Food Safety Controls Systems
15. We agree to continue monitoring and reviewing the direction of the FSCF and the FSCF PTIN to ensure maximum impact of work in support of tangible food safety and trade benefits throughout the region.
16. We look forward to the next meeting of the FSCF in 2019.



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Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 13 May 2017