

**AFRICAN UNION**

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## **CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY**

**6 TO 7 JUNE 2022, ONLINE**

### **Background**

Each year one in ten people in the world fall ill from contaminated food. In Africa alone 137,000 people die every year due to consumption of unsafe food. It has been estimated that the public health burden of foodborne diseases is comparable to malaria and HIV-AIDS. Apart from its public health impact, unsafe food has serious implications for food security, nutrition and trade. Improvements in food availability will not benefit many of those at nutritional risk without corresponding improvements in the nutritional quality and safety of food as well as a reduction in food contaminants. Unsafe food further limits access to markets with far reaching impacts on farmers and producers namely loss of family income, inability of farmers to build capital and savings with consequential limitations on ability to access social services.

If not managed, unsafe food will continue to reduce agriculture-derived incomes and drive rural farmers and traders in particular into poverty and impoverishment. This is why enhancing food safety is not just a public health issue but a development challenge. The production, trade or consumption of unsafe food could undermine the attainment of the objectives of African Union Agenda 2063 the Africa We Want, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Malabo Declaration Commitment on ending hunger and tripling intra-African trade in agricultural products by 2025, and the successful implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Cognizant of the impact food safety has in Africa, the African Union Commission (AUC) has placed high-level political commitments to ensure that issues of food safety are adequately addressed in order to meet development goals. This year, the AUC will join the rest of the world to commemorate the fourth World Food Safety Day. The celebrations will be used 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.

### **Objectives**

In commemoration of the World Food Safety Day, the African Union Commission will organize virtual events from 6 to 7 June 2022. The objectives of the events are:

1. Raise awareness and mobilize collective action to improve food safety in Africa.
2. Share experiences and solutions for addressing Africa's food safety challenges
3. Identify key actions and strategies to address current and future challenges to food safety in Africa.