

# **CMAAO Resolution on Ensuring Food Safety**

Adopted by the CMAAO General Assembly, Yangon, Myanmar, September 2015

In today's modern society characterized by industrial development, the issue of food safety faces serious new threats such as contamination by heavy metals or harmful chemicals such as endocrine disruptors in addition to the traditional threat of microbial diseases (food poisoning). Furthermore, as consumption of processed food or preferred foods increase with social change, the use of various food additives to enhance preservation and taste has become a topic of heated controversy.

In addition, environment issues are important areas to consider in discussion on food safety as it affects the whole food chain and climate change can pose a serious threat on ensuring food safety.

On the other hand, the supreme proposition that must be dealt with before addressing these threats is securing safe water. In a society without safe water supply, the people will be forced to live unhealthy life in extremely poor public health settings. Directly or indirectly, people consume water throughout their life, and securing safe water leads to ensuring food safety that further leads to national health.

Furthermore, greater public awareness on food safety has resulted in increased public anxiety and distrust regarding food consumption. Physicians and the medical field are in a critical position to provide accurate and objective information regarding standards for safe food intake.

Based on its study on the role and responsibility of the medical community regarding food safety and health, CMAAO hereby adopts the following principles and recommends all individual physicians, NMAs and governments to consider and practice these principles.

## **Recommendations to Physicians and Medical Professionals**

1. Upon observing microbial diseases caused by food sanitation or other food safety incidents during patient care, physicians and medical professionals shall report this to the health authorities in order to contribute to statistical data creation, devising of response strategies and sharing of related information.
2. Physicians shall be aware of their professional role regarding food safety and shall continuously show interest and acquire expert knowledge in order to prevent food safety related incidents and the treatment of related diseases.

## **Recommendation to Each Government**

1. Governments shall create an integrated management system for the food processing and distribution process to prevent soiling and contamination of food, and shall create a foundation to secure food safety by improving related systems regarding the reporting, inspection, verification and monitoring of diseases caused by food sanitation issues and by enacting related laws and regulations.
2. Food adulteration is imposing a constant threat to the public health and ensuring food safety, governments shall establish a strong control system to prevent food adulteration
3. Governments shall cooperate with expert groups based on academic knowledge in order to develop various guidelines ranging from food handling to consumption and shall communicate this to the public and related parties.
4. Governments should also consider the issues of antimicrobial resistance due to indiscriminate use of antimicrobials in animals, safety of genetically modified foods, health supplements, etc. in its policies for ensuring food safety
5. Governments shall encourage research on safety of microbial diseases, chemicals and food additives and shall develop policies capable of guaranteeing food safety by collecting case examples, collecting and creating various statistics and using related academic data.
6. Because food is actively moved across borders through trade, inter-governmental and even global cooperation is essential for safety management. Therefore, governments shall create a cooperative system for constant sharing of information regarding food safety and to prevent any harm caused by food.
7. Because the entire process from food manufacturing to consumption has to be managed in an integrated and organic manner in order to secure food safety, governments shall provide support to enable the creation of a close cooperation system among the government, industry, medicine and academia.

## **Recommendation to NMAs**

1. NMAs shall develop and operate training programs for physicians to enable physicians to acquire professional knowledge regarding food safety and to better understand the role of physicians and the medical community with regards to food safety management.
2. NMAs shall conduct public campaigns to raise public awareness on environment sanitation, food safety and health. Development of education programs targeting young children would be important

as people can raise consciousness on environment and food safety early on in their lives.

3. NMAs shall encourage academic research regarding classification of substances such as food additives whose harmfulness needs to be appropriately managed and regarding humanly acceptable standards for such substances. Also, NMAs shall provide objective and accurate information regarding such topics in a form that is easily understandable by consumers.
4. NMAs shall develop an academic foundation regarding exposure to contaminants and health by encouraging continuous research on chronic health damage due to not only microbial diseases but also chemicals in order to understand the current situation and to accumulate data.
5. By accumulating research and statistics regarding microbial diseases, chemicals and food additives, NMAs shall actively advise development of government policies on food management as an expert group.
6. NMAs should collaborate with other professional organizations such as national veterinarian associations and agricultural experts and etc.