

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Opening Remarks

CRD12

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Sixth Session

Opening Remark Dr. Steve Wearne- on behalf of CAC Chair and Vice-chairs

Minister, representatives of FAO and WHO, Professor Park, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends.

My thanks to the Task Force Chair, Professor Yong Ho Park and our hosts in the government of the Republic of Korea for providing me with the opportunity to speak briefly to you on behalf of the Codex Alimentarius Commission chair, Guilherme da Costa, and my fellow vice-chairs Mariam Eid and Professor Purwiyatno Hariyadi.

I am honoured to be representing the Commission chair and vice-chairs at this sixth meeting of the Task Force. When we took office in summer of 2017, we wrote to all member countries setting out our intention to be close to member countries, to understand their viewpoints, and to work tirelessly to promote consensus within Codex. The subsidiary bodies of Codex are where the hard work on standards development is done, under the skilled chairmanship of Professor Park and his fellow chairs, and both he and you should feel free to engage me and call on me to support the work of the Task Force and our efforts to find consensus on the proposed draft revised code of practice and the proposed draft guidelines on integrated surveillance.

And we have some serious work to do here this week.

I often hear, and I say it myself, that Codex is a member-led organisation. What does that mean when it comes to countering antimicrobial resistance? I suggest we find the answer in the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in October 2016. This political declaration, and I quote, says that:

“this requires coherent, comprehensive and integrated multisectoral action, as human, animal and environmental health are interconnected”

“acknowledge[s] that increasing awareness and knowledge on antimicrobial resistance and all of its implications requires the sharing of good practice and findings”

“commits to work at national, regional and global levels... to initiate, increase and sustain awareness and knowledge-raising activities on antimicrobial resistance in order to engage and encourage behavioural change in different audiences”

Strong messages indeed, and directly relevant to the work we have before us this week.

This was a resolution of United Nations heads of state and government – the heads of state and government of each of us. Each of our nations is already politically committed to work at national, regional and global levels – and of course, this includes here, at Codex.

Political agreement has already been achieved – our task is to agree on the technical texts that will help deliver this political agreement.

We also need to recognise the legitimate expectations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which at its meeting in July this year reiterated its overwhelming support for the project documents on which our work is based, and supported further timely progress being made.

There is important work for us to do, and yet time is short. The work of this task force is due to end in 2019, with possible extension to 2020.

In order to achieve great things, in the short time we have available, we need more than ever to be open to the potential for us to find consensus, wherever that potential exists. We need to focus our sights on reaching consensus so that we might propose texts that can be progressed through the Codex step procedure.

And so, I wish us all a productive week. And I stand ready to support consensus-building in whatever way I can.

Thank you.