

TACD

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Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Director General
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

May 29, 2001

Dear Dr. Brundtland:

We are writing in reference to the World Health Assembly Resolution on Food Safety (WHA 53.15) and revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR) as they pertain to transmission of food-borne illnesses.

We support the request to the Director-General to give greater emphasis to food safety, in view of WHO's global leadership in public health and to work towards integrating food safety as one of WHO's essential public health functions. We call upon the WHO to dedicate adequate resources to implement the recommendations in the WHA Food Safety resolution particularly with regard to the following matters:

- Antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms stemming from the use of antimicrobials in food production;
- Health-related decisions regarding genetically modified foods;
- The provision of full and accurate labeling of food products and the prohibition of false claims, particularly in relation to matters that involve food safety;
- The inclusion of health considerations in international trade in food;
- The relationship between the WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization's support of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; and
- The development of procedures for designating experts and preparing scientific opinions so as to guarantee transparency, excellence, and independence.

We further urge that sufficient resources be devoted to the expansion of the IHRs to cover food-borne illnesses so the revision process can be completed as promptly as possible. We support the maintenance of a reliable system to prevent the extension of public health risks through the application of updated and broader routine public health measures for the transport of food in international trade (WHO *Weekly epidemiological record*, 23 February 2001). We are pleased that the Executive Board's Report on this matter (EB107/5) calls for collaboration between WHO and non-governmental organizations.

Enclosed are TACD policy resolutions and background papers that pertain to these matters. We look forward to working with the WHO to achieve these mutual objectives.

Sincerely,



Bruce Silverglade
US Co-Chair, Food Working Group



Sue Davies
EU Co-Chair, Food Working Group

[On behalf of the TACD]