

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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World Food Safety Day Commemoration: 7 June 2022

Pretoria : South Africa joins the rest of the global community to commemorate the World Food Safety Day which aims to transform food systems to deliver better health sustainably and prevent foodborne diseases such as Listeriosis.

This day also provides an opportunity to strengthen efforts to ensure that the food we consume is safe and reduce the burden of foodborne illnesses globally, and this year WKH GD\ LV FRPPHPRUDWISafe Food, Better Health, World for all as a clarion call for everyone to join the campaign to ensure safe food for all.

Food safety is closely linked to many other Sustainable Development Goals, including economic growth, innovation, responsible consumption and production and climate change. In South Africa, food safety remains a shared responsibility DQG HYHU\RQH business to prevent avoidable health risks

with good compliance and enforcement, to better laboratories, more stringent surveillance and better training and education.

Although, there was no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food, food containers or packaging, but the pandemic has sharpened the focus on food safety-related issues, such as hygiene, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases, climate change, food fraud and the potential benefits of digitalizing food control systems.

South Africa participates in the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is an international food safety organization established to develop global standards and guidance to protect the health of consumers and facilitate fair trade in food.

The Department of Health, through Food Control Directorate develops food safety, labelling and enhanced health and nutrition legislation, and is also coordinating and responding to food safety emergencies or crises such as international notifications requiring action or industry notifications of food recalls due to potential food safety hazards in line with the WHO International Health Regulations.

As part of ongoing efforts by government to protect the consumers and provide communities with healthier environments, the Environmental Health Practitioners conduct routine inspections at food business operators such as manufacturers, restaurants and supermarkets for health compliance, food storage practices and food handling practices. They also conduct training and awareness activities to food handlers, especially in the informal sector as well as community level.

Thus, consumers having concerns with the safety or food labelling are urged to report these to their nearest municipalities.

The National Environmental Health section has developed Norms and Standards, and audits the municipalities against these and is respond to respond to any outbreak of foodborne illness.

As we review our policies and legislation, there is a need for robust monitoring, improved surveillance and detection and rapid response capabilities for food safety emergencies and foodborne disease outbreaks. All these are imperative to protect the health and well- EHLQJ RI 6RXWK \$IULFD TV dSRS XieDAsL R Q IUR communicable and non-communicable diseases.

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