

## **Provisional agenda: Accelerating efforts on food safety**

### **Statement**

Thank you chair. MMI appreciates the opportunity to address the EB. This statement is supported by PHM.

We welcome the attention foodborne diseases are receiving. Unsafe food disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized communities, perpetuates a cycle of disease and malnutrition, puts a strain on healthcare systems and harms local and national economies and livelihoods.

We note that the report suggests the development of international food safety standards in the context of the globalization of food systems. However, the potential implications of top down harmonization of food standards on small scale producers, equity, food security and food sovereignty for L&MICs are not examined.

We caution that transnational corporations will find it easier to conform to the newly promoted food standards whereas small-scale farmers won't. This can have severe consequences on nutrition due to increased availability of low-cost ultra-processed foods. We call upon MS to apply a level of scepticism to this project and to ensure that the opportunities and risks presented by new technologies, harmonization of food standards and regulatory frameworks are fully analysed.

The freeze on ACs and tied VCs are at the root of WHO's lack of resources. This limits WHO's ability to contribute to country and regional capacity building and to act on its priority areas. We urge MS to lift the freeze to their Acs, untie their VCs and allocate the required resources to address the public health concerns posed by food safety with a perspective to ensure that food security and food sovereignty are not being compromised.