



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

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To: **Heads of Delegation**
WTO Members and Observers

From: Roberto Azevêdo
Director-General

Date: 14/01/2019

**Invitation to the FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on
Food Safety and Trade
23-24 April 2019, Geneva, Switzerland**

"The Future of Food Safety - Transforming knowledge into action for people,
economies and the environment"

I am pleased to invite you to the '**FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade**', to be held on **23-24 April 2019**, at the WTO headquarters in Geneva.

This Forum is part of the International Conference on Food Safety jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Under the overall theme of "The Future of Food Safety - Transforming knowledge into action for people, economies and the environment", the Conference comprises two events: 1) "The First FAO/WHO/AU International Conference on Food Safety", 12-13 February 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and 2) "The FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade", 23-24 April 2019, hosted by the WTO in Geneva.

The Addis Ababa event will raise awareness of the main challenges to food safety emerging globally. The Geneva event will address trade-related aspects of food safety, in particular trade facilitation of safe food in the context of rapid technological change and digitalization.

Foodborne illnesses and unsafe food have a major impact on public health. New technologies offer tools that can both assist in managing food safety risks and help trade flow more smoothly. The Geneva event will explore the opportunities and challenges arising in this context, and implications for the continued relevance of Codex standards.

Discussions will be articulated around three thematic sessions covering the following topics: (i) digitalization, food safety and trade; (ii) ensuring synergies between the food safety and trade facilitation agendas; and (iii) promoting harmonized food safety regulation in a period of change and innovation.

The meeting will engage participants representing various sectors in governments with relevance for food safety, including food and agriculture, health and trade at the level of ministers and senior policy makers. Representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional agencies, development partners, food producers, consumers, research and academia are invited to participate.

WTO Members are invited to inform the Secretariat, by email to foodsafety@wto.org, of the names of their representatives, at their earliest convenience, but not later than 29 March 2019.

More information, including the programme and organizational arrangements, will be made available at <https://www.who.int/food-safety/international-food-safety-conference/>.