

Food safety in Africa: International partnership to be 'sealed' at the Consumer Goods Forum Global Summit

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An estimated 2,000 people in Africa die from food safety-related illnesses every day, according to the [UN Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) (FAO) and the [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO). This concerning trend was highlighted in April this year when - at a meeting hosted by the African Union in Accra, Ghana - former Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor called on African leaders to champion policies that will help overcome food safety risks. Kufuor said children are particularly at risk, as "one third of all deaths from food-borne diseases are in children under the age of five years."



In an effort to address food safety challenges on both the African continent and in other key global food regions, the [UN Industrial Development Organisation](#) (UNIDO) and the [Global Food Safety Initiative](#) (GFSI) – facilitated by [The Consumer Goods Forum](#) (CGF) – are establishing a strategic partnership for large-scale food safety management capacity building programmes.

To this end, a memorandum of understanding between UNIDO and the GFSI will be officially signed at this year's Consumer Goods Forum Global Summit to be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 15 to 17 June 2016. Scores of CEOs of both global and local retail businesses and suppliers will join the Global Summit – the first of its kind on the African continent – to debate issues such as food safety, sustainability and global environmental practices.

UNIDO and the GFSI plan to jointly dedicate and mobilise resources to upscale food safety projects in targeted geographies. A roadmap, currently being crafted, will implement projects in a number of countries based on the GFSI Global Markets Programme. This free-of-charge pathway to food safety certification sets out how small and less developed food producers and companies can meet the challenge of food safety. It helps growers, farmers and manufacturers develop effective food safety management systems, support capacity building efforts and gain market access opportunities.

The co-chair of The Consumer Goods Forum and chairman of Pick n Pay Stores, Gareth Ackerman, will host the CEOs from the world's most influential consumer and retail brands, such as Walmart, Sainsbury's, Nestle, McCain and Pepsico. The Global Summit is expected to draw more than 800 delegates from over 365 companies in 40 countries.

In South Africa, the GFSI Global Markets Programme is currently being facilitated by the Food Safety Initiative (FSI), which operates under the auspices of the 12,000-member [Consumer Goods Council of South Africa](#) – a key member of The Consumer Goods Forum.

Says Peter Freedman, managing director of The Consumer Goods Forum: "We are very excited about the potential of this strategic partnership between UNIDO and the GFSI. Collaboration is the way forward in achieving food safety across borders and barriers."

He says both organisations are enthusiastic about the potential to have a bigger impact in a number of regions that act as critical links in the global food supply chain – especially Africa.

"In Africa, the projects initiated by the partnership will benefit from a strong UNIDO presence to design and build a joint UNIDO-GFSI multi-country, multi-buyer project for Africa on capacity building. It will also facilitate knowledge exchange and networking, and will go a long way towards enabling access to safe food to all."

Read more at <http://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/>, <http://www.tcgsummit.com/> and <http://www.mygfsi.com/market-access/global-markets-programme/overview.html>.

Manufacturers, service providers and retailers within the consumer goods industry can register [here](#) to attend the Consumer Goods Forum Global Summit.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>