

## Focus on training for capacity bldg, says Agarwal at global safety meet

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Working closely with the private sector, India's food authority is ensuring that the food businesses invest adequately in improving the food safety across the supply chain. There is strong emphasis on capacity building of food supervisors and food handlers through structured training programmes and over 100,000 of them have so far been trained. This was stated by Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, while addressing the first-ever international conference on food safety and nutrition. It was held in Ethiopia recently.

He added, "Significant capacities have been built for lab testing and food safety audit and management in the private sector to share responsibility for food safety overall in the country. Finally, India's food authority has forged many partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, so that everyone is invested in safe food and healthy diets for all people."

FSSAI, in a statement, said that India's 3P unique model of food safety, involving people, private sector and partnership, found a lot of traction amongst the low- and middle-income countries, including African countries during the conference. The exhibition booth at the conference attracted hundreds of regulators from across the world.

Agarwal said, "India's low cost and effective model of food safety, that primarily focusses on empowering consumers and building capacities of key stakeholders, has relevance for all low- and middle-income countries that are struggling to set up system for food safety."

"In many of these countries, food safety has to compete with their public health priorities for scarce resources," he said during a panel discussion involving heads of national food authorities in the conference. He is leading a four-member delegation for participation in the conference.

In the inaugural session, José Graziano da Silva, director general, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said, "There is no food security without food safety." He added that the conference provided a great opportunity for the international community to strengthen

political commitments and engage in key actions on food safety.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general, World Health Organization (WHO), said, "Food should be a source of nourishment and enjoyment, not a cause of disease or death."

He added, "Unsafe food is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths every year, but has not received the political attention it deserves. Ensuring people have access to safe food takes sustained investment in stronger regulations, laboratories, surveillance and monitoring. In our globalised world, food safety is everyone's issue."

The Conference was attended by Roberto Azevedo, director general, World Trade Organization (WTO) and Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson, African Union Commission.

The conference on food safety convened jointly by FAO, WHO and WTO, along with the African Union, saw the participation of about 800 government officials, experts and other stakeholders of food safety and public health from around the world.