

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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Republic of Korea, elected as inaugural chair of APFRAS

- Minister Oh Yu-kyoung, elected as the inaugural chairperson of APFRAS
- Adopted the "APFRAS Seoul Declaration", pledging to strengthen a close cooperation system among APFRAS members
- Committed to leading international cooperation on food safety and supporting domestic food exports by removing non-tariff barriers

The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (Minister Oh Yu-Kyoung) has announced that it hosted the first Asia-Pacific Food Regulatory Authority Summit (APFRAS 2023) on May 10(Wed.)~11(Thu.), bringing together seven countries* who agreed to work together in harmonizing global food regulations and strengthen cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

* New Zealand, Vietnam, Singapore, China, The Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Australia

On May 11, Republic of Korea was elected as the chair at the inaugural meeting of the senior representatives of food regulatory authorities from seven countries. With Oh Yu-kyoung, the Minister of the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety appointed as the chairperson, Republic of Korea will serve as the chair for three years with tasks of establishing a secretariat, running working groups and communicating among APFRAS members.

The Members adopted the Terms of Reference (TOR) for establishing APFRAS and decided on the implementation tasks for operating working groups and achieving strategic goals.

APFRAS Working Groups will analyze food regulatory environments in the Asia-Pacific region and conduct in-depth discussions on the digitalization of food safety management and carbon neutrality measures in the food sector.

In addition, the members agreed to cooperate in response to changes of the international food environment by promptly analyzing new global issues for food safety. All the seven members adopted and signed the "APFRAS Seoul Declaration" which calls for enhancing the cooperation system to create a safe food distribution environment and tackle common challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

In order to continue the close cooperation among members, they agreed to hold the APFRAS meeting once a year. As the chair, Republic of Korea will host the second APFRAS meeting in Seoul in 2024.

Besides, Minister Oh Yu-Kyoung agreed to continue for further development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on food safety cooperation with Mr. Lim Kok Thai, Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Food Agency. The MOU is to identify issues of common interest to both countries, such as standards for novel food and to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations.

"The launch of APFRAS is a significant achievement as it is the first time for the senior representatives of food regulatory authorities to come together to discuss various issues related to global food safety and to agree on capacity building among regulators", said Minister Oh.

She also stressed, "As the elected chair of APFRAS, I will do my best to identify new food safety issues and changes quickly and make Republic of Korea a leader in advancing food safety level of member countries. I will also work to encourage more countries to join APFRAS."

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ASIA-PACIFIC FOOD REGULATORY AUTHORITY SUMMIT

APFRAS Seoul Declaration

We, the senior representatives of food regulatory authorities gathered on May 10 and 11, 2023, at the Asia-Pacific Food Regulatory Authority Summit (APFRAS) in Seoul, commit ourselves to work towards enhancing strategic leadership in the region and to address common opportunities and challenges in the food sector including emerging technology and novel food. We envisage the APFRAS as a platform to help strengthen strategic relationships to address common challenges in the food sector and secure safe food trade in Asia-Pacific region.

APFRAS members face global changes in food environment including consequences of climate changes in food production, development of novel food and new production technology, and discussion on UN food system transformation. Recognizing that ensuring food safety in the region depends upon collaboration among the multiple stakeholders to respond to global changes, we, along with international organizations, all APFRAS participating countries now have shared value on this matter. We appreciate the benefits of cooperative responses to changes in global food environment and exploring regulatory convergence in the region.

We consent to further strengthen cooperation on food safety regulations and enhance the competencies of food regulatory authorities. We note that plans and activities for future projects include: facilitating the analysis of the food regulatory environment in the region; enhancing cooperation in the development of food safety policy and exploring regulatory convergence of food standards; improving the

exchange of information, including a regional database of food safety regulations; promoting the exchange of expertise, experience and best practices. We also recognize that these will improve communication between APFRAS members and contribute towards safe food trade in the region.

We urge our leaders to take note of the latest innovation in food regulatory science and secure a new engine for growth. We support efforts to promote technical cooperation in the development of regulatory standards and safety evaluation for novel foods and food processing by applying new technology. We also recognize the benefits of collaborating on research in food technology related to new and emerging areas; and expanding the digital transition of food safety management systems.

We approved the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for establishing and operating APFRAS today, and discussed subjects and activities of working groups under the APFRAS. We recommend that the working groups would be established in suggested time and members can continue with technical discussions about common areas of interest in detail.

Recognizing that leadership and vision made by the leaders of food regulatory authorities are highly valued and supported, we strongly support member countries' effort to ensure food safety in multiple sectors.

At this first official meeting of the APFRAS, we appointed the Republic of Korea as a Chair. The APFRAS secretariat would make the best effort to analyze food regulatory environment, facilitate sharing of good practices and lessons, technical support on working groups under the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of APFRAS.

The APFRAS secretariat also would support to enhance regulatory competencies of member countries and region. In this regard, we call on the APFRAS participating countries to make efforts to improve regional food safety by facilitating cooperation among member countries and enhancing food regulatory competencies. The next APFRAS meeting will be held in Seoul again in 2024.