

for Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners



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Background

In commemoration of **2025 World Food Safety Day**, with the theme *Science In Action*, four Horizon Europe-funded projects, FoodSafety4Africa (FS4Africa), FCI4Africa, UP-RISE, and HealthyDiets4Africa (HD4A), co-organised a two-day Symposium titled **Food Safety Symposium for Next-Gen Food Safety Practitioners** on 4th and 5th June 2025. The Symposium was conducted primarily in English, with simultaneous French interpretation, to encourage participation from partners in francophone countries. The 2025 World Food Safety Day (WFSO) Symposium, moderated by **Fadel Ndiame** (Food Systems Transformation Solutions, FS4Africa project) and **Parvez Haris** (De Montfort University, HD4A project), highlighted the role of science in providing evidence for policy and guidance for practices that enhance food safety.

On Day 1, an opening address was delivered by **Hans-Joerg Lutzeyer**, an active senior at the European Commission, Directorate General Research and Innovation, Bioeconomy and Food Safety. Following this, **Amare Ayalew**, Manager of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) at the African Union Commission, delivered a keynote address. Project coordinators of HD4A, FCI4Africa, FS4Africa, and UP-RISE projects, **Prof. Dr. Michael Frei** (Justus Liebig University), **Dr. Shiferaw Feleke** (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture [IITA]), **Dr. Titilayo Falade** (IITA), and **Prof. Dr. Sarah De Saeger** (University of Ghent), respectively, provided highlights of their projects' objectives and progress in addressing food safety matters.

A high-level panel discussion included panelists **Monica Ermolli**, European Commission, Joint Research Centre Ispra, Italy; **Hans-Joerg Lutzeyer**, European Commission, active senior at Directorate General Research and Innovation of the European Commission, Belgium; **Adewale Olusegun Obadina**, African Continental Association for Food Protection, Nigeria; and representatives from the four hosting projects: **Rose Omari**, FS4Africa, Ghana; **Adama Neya**, FCI4Africa, Burkina Faso; **Kokeb Tesfamariam**, UP-RISE, Belgium, and **Juliana Kiio**, HD4A, Kenya.

Key Takeaways

- 1** The interlinkage between safe food and nutritious food is critical for food security. Malnutrition leads to infectious cycles, affecting nutrient intake, absorption, and metabolism. Similarly, nutrient losses can occur because of foodborne diseases. Moreover, malnutrition can result in higher susceptibility to foodborne diseases due to compromised immunity.
- 2** Partnership and collaboration are critical for addressing challenges. The Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) Partnership (FNSSA) framework has provided an apt platform for the implementation of research and innovation ideas that provide the needed evidence, information, and platforms for addressing food security challenges, particularly as it relates to Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero hunger.
- 3** EU-AU Project collaboration synthesises innovative platforms. Collaborative efforts among projects such as FS4Africa, FCI4Africa, UP-RISE, and HD4A, can catalyse efforts in addressing current food safety challenges and forging a path for the advancement of food safety in Africa. These projects are delivering important knowledge and solutions such as the use of early warning systems, microbiome solutions, capacity development initiatives, artificial intelligence tools, and optimisation of systems that promote trade, including addressing non-tariff measures that inhibit fair trade.
- 4** Emerging initiatives are developing on platforms to strengthen food security efforts. Imminent initiatives like the Food 2030: R&I Policy Framework of IA5 (via Pathways for Action 2.0) and recent adoption of the Africa Food Safety Agency (AfFSA), via its mandate and functions, provide frameworks that incorporate research and innovation to provide longer-lasting solutions and address food safety challenges in the African continent in a concerted manner. The establishment of the AfFSA was adopted at the 38th Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Key Takeaways

- 5 The new Africa Food Safety Agency (AfSA) offers a platform for long-term solutions rather than episodic ones. The Agency will operate by meeting its objectives and performing its functions, including the Africa Food Safety Data Hub, a strategic resource of AfSA, aligned with global efforts. Specifically, the agency will build up on existing initiatives towards: a) generating evidence; b) implementing innovations; c) providing platforms for fostering collaboration and multi-actor engagement to address food safety concerns; d) supporting the modernization and harmonization of strategies for food safety improvements; e) strengthening stakeholder capacity for management of food safety risks and institution of controls. The large volume of players in the informal sector suggests that the AfSA utilises a regulatory model that encourages food safety rather than policing, improving awareness, food safety culture, and food safety monitoring. This can cause positive changes to advance food safety in the informal sector.
- 6 Development of small businesses in the informal sector should be encouraged. This can be achieved via incentivisation of compliance, community-level interventions, emergence of trade opportunities can allow small and medium enterprises to be involved in regional quality food as they meet food safety standards. Efforts need to be such that they do not hamper small business development. It is critical that excessive policing does not inhibit the development of small food processors, and that the fears of the informal sector are allayed that formalization will increase tax or enlist them for policing so that safer food can be made available to the public.

Key Takeaways

- 7** The focus on the informal sector requires innovative approaches for surveillance and regulation. Prioritisation of the informal sector is critical to address gaps to enable food safety to be advanced in this sector via policies, practices, processes, and people (including early career professionals). Within this system, there is a need for infrastructure, suited regulatory and surveillance systems, increased awareness among stakeholders, identification of approaches that meet the informal sector so that the needs of this sector are not lost under the radar of policy, as is often the case.
- 8** Modernisation, coordination, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement are critical to addressing the priority areas for food safety. At local, regional, intra-continental, and inter-continental levels, it is important that the informal sector is not left out or left behind in technological improvements. The informal sector is capable of catering to demands where food safety is met. In some cases, such as in the manufacture of ready-to-use-therapeutic foods (RUTF), unsafe commodities in local supplies necessitate the importation of crops (that can be domestically produced safely).
- 9** Food Safety enhances preparedness and resilience. Food safety is critical for development, and multiple organs within the African Union and European Union are interested in collaborative efforts in food safety and capacity development of the next generation of food safety professionals.

Presentations by Early Career Practitioners

On 5 June 2025, early career food safety practitioners comprising postgraduate students affiliated with the projects gave highlights of their food safety research covering areas of awareness, risk modelling, food hazard incidence, and use of probiotics in addressing mycotoxin incidence. A compilation of their presentation citations is indicated as follows.

De Girolamo A., Okott S., Hadush, K. T., Merhdie M., **Coffi V. E. C.**, Odukoya J., Manizan L.B, Lippolis V., De Saeger S., Moretti, A. + UP-RISE Consortium (2024). Mycotoxin contamination of cereals and fermented foods across African regions in the last 10 years (2014-24), World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Mohammed M., Hohler J., Van Der Fels-Klerx I. (2025). Mycotoxins and predictive models in Africa, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Virol J., Van Der Fels-Klerx I., Hohler J (2025). Incentive food safety in African traditional fermented food production: focus on informal entrepreneurs & intervention design, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Ayorinde F., Olowolafe B., Banwo K., Sinda-Kendoum, Falade, T. D. O. (2025). Safety Assessment of bush mango seeds along its value chain, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Ondiek, F., Juliana K., Eid, B., Parvez, H (2025), Levels of acrylamide in foods consumed by mothers and children aged 6-23 months in Makuani and Nairobi Counties, Kenya, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Presentations by Early Career Practitioners

- **Adesina, T.**, Banwo, K., Ibnou D., Falade, T. D. O. (2025). Are Urnab and Peri-Urban African households aware of food hazards, and does this influence their purchase patterns? World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.
- **Ilboudo, I.**, Compaoré H., Compaoré I., Traoré M. S., Dembélé L. E., Nikiéma F., Déborah L., Sawadogo H., Kabré E. (2025). Biocontrol des moisissures aflatoxinogènes du maïs par des formulations à base de bactéries lactiques, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.
- **Santara, B.**, Dabiré C., Coulibaly O., Kaboré K., Konaté, K., Dicko M. (2025). Bioactives from peanut skin: chemistry, pharmacotherapeutic functions and industrial applications, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.
- **Aboudou, A.**, Falade, T. D. O., Djouaka R., Zandjankou-Tachin, M. (2025). Integrated strategies to reduce pesticide residues in cereal and legume grains: a pathway to comprehensive management in Benin Republic, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.
- **Daffeh, B.** (2025). Effects of aflatoxin inhibiting technologies on the productivity of groundnuts in Elgelyo-Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.
- **Baah-Tuahene S.**, Omari R., Saalia F. K., Narrod C., Corradina M. (2025). Aflatoxin mitigation and adoption barriers in Ghana's groundnut sector, World Food Safety Day Symposium For Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners, Online, 5 June 2025.

Video Recordings

Video recordings of the 2025 World Food Safety Day Symposium for Next Gen Food Safety Practitioners are now available online.

[Watch Day 1](#)

[Watch Day 2](#)



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