



Inspiring Trust, Assuring Safe & Nutritious Food

For immediate release

Press Release

State Health Ministers Join Hands for Aligned and Concrete Action to Benefit from Improved Food Safety and Better Nutrition

New Delhi, Jan 09, 2018: A two-day ‘*National Conclave on Food Safety and Nutrition*’ was organized by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the country’s food regulator, FSSAI, on 8th and 9th January 2018. On 8th January, the first day, State Health Secretaries and Food Safety Commissioners reviewed at length the current status of food safety and nutrition in the country and deliberated on the way forward. Senior officials from Ministry of HRD, Health and Family Welfare and Women and Child Development, industry associations, World Bank, WHO and World Food Programme, Development Partners such as Tata Trusts, GAIN and PATH participated. This was presided over by Smt. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

On 9th January, the second day, a round table of State Health Ministers was held. This was presided over by the Union Health Minister, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda. This was the first ever meet of State Health Ministers and State Health Secretaries that has huge implications for the health and wellbeing of citizens and is the key to preventive healthcare.

During the round table, a team of researchers from Denmark, who have carried out a rapid assessment of economic costs of food borne diseases in India, shared their findings. According to them, food borne diseases impose a huge economic burden on India. As per their estimates, this would amount to as much as 0.5 percent of India’s GDP or about 28 billion USD.

Five key decisions have been taken in the State Health Ministers Roundtable. First, recognizing that safe, hygienic and healthy diet is the key to preventive healthcare, the first pillar of National Health Policy, 2017, the State Health Ministers agreed to improve convergence between National Health Mission (NHM) and Safe and Nutritious Food (SNF) campaigns initiated by FSSAI. This would include using funds from NHM for strengthening of food safety systems in the States, integration of emergency response system under NHM for emergency response to food poisoning and food borne illnesses

and use of resource books, like ‘Pink Book’ for SNF@Home, the ‘Yellow Book’ for SNF@School, ‘Orange Book’ for SNF@Workplace and so on. Further, they decided to launch sustained campaigns in cities, districts and States under the banner of Safe and Nutritious Food (SNF) to develop city, district and state-wide ecosystems and declare them Smart Food State / District / City.

Two, recognizing that eating habits are formed early in life and are difficult to change later, the State Health Ministers agreed to use appropriate curriculum and content on food and nutrition in schools to promote healthy eating habits and build awareness amongst citizens particularly young citizens and encouraging them to use simple methods to test food adulteration and food spoilage through mobile food testing labs (‘Food Safety on Wheels’) and food labs in schools and colleges.

Three, the State Health Ministers decided to launch a campaign with a special focus on young citizens and school children for limiting energy intake from fat to less than 30% of the total daily calorie intake and eliminate trans-fats completely (i.e. bring down consumption of trans-fat to less than 1% of total calorie intake, reducing salt consumption to less than 5 gm per day and limiting intake of free (added) sugar to less than 10% of daily total calorie intake by 2022 (India@75).

Four, the State Health Ministers decided to promote and encourage supplies, distribution and retailing of fortified staples in the public distribution system as well as the open market and work towards fortification of all refined and packaged edible and all packaged milk by vitamin A and D to pave the way to make it mandatory in the near future.

Five, the State Health Ministers decided to promote organic food and dietary diversification by various measures to integrate local and regional cuisines. They decided that efforts should be made to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables to at least 450-500 gm/day and moderate the intake of refined carbohydrates.

Further, the State Health Ministers assured to work towards creating a culture of self-compliance amongst food businesses by helping them build internal capacities, focus on third party audit, making enforcement transparent, standardized, predictable and fair by adopting a digital compliance platform, encouraging rating and fair competition amongst food businesses. States agreed to strengthen the food safety machinery and the state food lab system in their respective States.

During the Roundtable, the State Health Ministers adopted a joint resolution with a seven-point charter. This includes – 1) supporting development of robust food standards and code of practices for safe food; 2) creating a positive regulatory environment; 3) establishing a credible and robust national food testing system; 4) addressing



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FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS
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micronutrient deficiencies and promoting healthy dietary habits; 5) bringing about large-scale social and behavioral change in citizens on safe and nutritious food; 6) building a culture of self-compliance in food businesses; and 7) developing effective institutions and institutional arrangements backed with competent human resources and adequate financial resources.

During the Roundtable, the Union Health Minister also released a framework for ‘Clean Street Food Hubs’ and ‘Safe and Hygienic Food Festivals’. These two initiatives would help build capacities of street food vendors and will go a long way to inspire citizens’ trust in unorganized street food vending.

The Minister also released FSSAI’s ‘Healthy India Food Calendar’. First of its kind, this calendar covers India’s main festivals, the food associated with them and their nutritional benefits. This calendar captures the wisdom behind traditional Indian dishes and popularizes them and integrates 12 of FSSAI’s key initiatives by weaving a strong narrative around safe and nutritious food for all, touching the lives of all our citizens, wherever they are. FSSAI’s website with a new look and a focus on its key stakeholders was also launched today.

The Hon’ble Health Minister said that the focus should shift from disease centric treatment to preventive and promotive healthcare. He highlighted the various initiatives taken by the Central Government in this regard. He also urged the State Governments to use the ‘Pink Book’ for households; the ‘Yellow Book’ for schools and other resources developed by FSSAI and popularize Mascots – Master & Miss Sehat.

The Minister of State, MoHFW, Shri Chaubey emphasized the need for States to have dedicated officers to focus on food safety and nutrition and urged all stakeholders to work together.

Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, MoHFW informed the State Governments that they have complete freedom to use funds under NHM for food safety and nutrition related activities, however, the use of the funds should be based on milestones.

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