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**CONFERENCE ROOM DOCUMENT  
The Situation of Food Safety and Quality in the Azerbaijan Republic**

**Azerbaijan Republic  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Management of Plants Protection and Quarantine  
Chief specialist, Radik Kerimov Mamed**

On behalf of the Azerbaijan Republic, I would like to express my appreciation to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization and also the organizers of the Conference, for the invitation to participate in the Pan European Conference on Food Safety and Quality.

Nowadays discussions of food safety and quality are addressing one of the global problems.

One of the main conditions for the increase of economic performance as well as the efficiency of labor is to increase quality and the improvement of the quality and the assortment of foodstuffs available. The problems of production requirements for the population are of global importance. This is connected with an expanding population and its increased requirements for horticultural and livestock production.

Comprehensive measures are required in each country to solve the problems of increasing quality and providing food safety. Legislative authorities have passed several normative-juridical acts to maintain the standardization and safety of food and allow an increase of food products in the Azerbaijan Republic, without breaking or contradicting producer and consumer interests.

The questions on safety and quality control of foodstuffs have been reflected in the laws adopted by the Azerbaijan Republic, “About Producer’s Rights” from 19 December 1996 and

“About Foodstuffs ” from 18 November 1999. These laws reflect all issues related to the protection of the safety and quality of food products.

Based on the above mentioned laws, a number of normative-juridical acts have been passed which regulate the protection of the health of the population, sanitary and phytosanitary control, implementation of new standards, determination of the degree of contamination by various organisms, toxicity determination, identification and control on pests and plant diseases, determination of food quality, strengthening of dietetic, medicinal and ecologically clean products, which are fortified with missing mineral salts, iodine and iron.

On the basis of the above mentioned issues and in line with the needs for the social protection of the population, we have adopted the "Programme about Safety of Food Products of the Azerbaijan Republic." This Programme is taking into account the further abundance of safe food products.

In reference to the fulfillment of the food safety programme, the most actual problem is the guarantee for foodstuffs that have respected high-quality microelements for the improvement of the socio-economic status of the population. That is why enrichment of flour by salts, iron and iodine has kept its importance in actual practice. In this field it is also important to strengthen the control of food products from the point of view of setting controls for the identification and control of toxic elements, heavy metals, nitrates, pesticides, radionuclides, etc. in food products.

Toward this goal and the realization of controls for providing efficient solutions, a very important problem is the reconstruction and modernization of stationary and movable laboratories equipped with modern analytical apparatus for the control of the quality of foodstuffs.

The solution to these problems for Azerbaijan, which has a million people who have become refugees and IDP and which has 20% of its territory occupied by Armenia, is very complicated.

However, food safety plays an important role in flora and fauna protection and for population health.

In spite of the difficult economic situation, our Government foresees in its “Program of product safety for the Azerbaijan Republic” the carrying out of measures for the purpose of increasing the quality of foodstuffs and ensuring product safety, foodstuffs quality, social defense of the population and readiness to address any extraordinary situations, etc. in the period of 2002-2010.

If Azerbaijan is to develop and integrate into the world economy and, in this case, succeed in reaching the above-mentioned goals, the Government is in need of the humanitarian and technical assistance of foreign countries and international organizations.

For the further realization of the Program, the practical advice and recommendations of the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization will benefit the Republic of Azerbaijan.