

Baghdad, 23 June 2019 – As the world commemorated its first World Food Safety Day under the theme of "Food Safety, Everyone's Business", the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), renewed their commitment to support the Government of Iraq in ensuring all Iraqis have access to safe, nutritious food by 2030.

The United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2018 announced 7 June of every year as World Food Safety Day in order to reduce the problems posed by food safety issues and to further progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In Iraq, FAO and WHO are working alongside the government to assess functional gaps, and needs for food quality control improvements in the country. In particular, FAO is supporting the Government of Iraq to promote its food safety emergency preparedness through the FAO Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety) that rapidly shares information during food safety emergencies through the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

WHO on the other hand has supported the Ministry of Health and Environment to assess the food safety system and provide concrete recommendations to strengthen the sector. As a follow up to the assessment, meetings and a joint workshop on food safety and quality assurance were conducted to disseminate findings aimed at mitigating the risk of foodborne illness in the country. The agency has also and continues to work with health authorities at the national and local levels to strengthen the basic foodborne disease surveillance.

Due to newly acquired scientific knowledge, conflict, technology and climate-related issues FAO and WHO are prioritizing their assistance towards building capacities of the national food regulatory control systems in Iraq.

Access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health for all to eliminate hunger and achieve food security by 2030. Unsafe food poses global health threats, endangering everyone. Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with an underlying illness are particularly vulnerable.

FAO and WHO commit to continue working with health authorities and partners in Iraq to ensure that all the people enjoy safe food at every stage of the food chain from production to harvest, processing, storage, distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption. In line with this the agencies plan to conduct capacity building workshop for all government entities, starting with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Environment, and Trade and conduct health education and awareness messaging for communities and all responsible officials on food safety.

For more information, please contact:

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