

Chair's closing remarks at the International Symposium on Food Safety and Quality: Applications of Nuclear and Related Techniques

Zhijia Ye

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Good afternoon again! Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our Symposium is going to close soon after 4 full days of continued presentations and active discussions. As the Chair of the symposium, I may not be able to summarize all of the presentations of the whole conference. With the assistance of the Symposium secretariat, I would just like to make a few more remarks to highlight some of the key issues we have presented and discussed at different sessions and the remarkable outcomes of the Symposium.

This Symposium took place at IAEA Headquarters. Over three hundred participants representing 93 countries have attended and the representatives from African Development Bank, European Commission, UNIDO, WHO and from our host organizations IAEA and FAO were also present at the Symposium.

In the last four days, we had an opening plenary session and seven scientific sessions followed by three discussion sessions and a poster session as well.

Dr. Kwaku Aning, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation, attended the opening of the Symposium. In his opening speech, Dr. Aning highlighted the meeting's purpose and addressed the importance of application of nuclear techniques and conventional methods to ensure food safety and quality.

Dr. Qu Liang, Director of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, on behalf of the FAO also made opening remarks at the Symposium.

In the follow-up sessions, we have covered a wide range of issues in the presentations and discussions which are relevant to:

- The research and application of nuclear technology for agrifood safety;
- International efforts to improve food safety;
- Using nuclear science and applications to track adulteration in food products;
- Nuclear-physical methods for detecting pollutants and microelements in food;
- And effective nuclear techniques to assess and manage risks, and to protect consumers worldwide.

From the excellent presentations and discussions as well as the posters, we can draw the following remarks and common awareness:

1. Nuclear and isotopic techniques for traceability and authenticity, and irradiation technology, are the key to ensuring the integrity of national and global food control systems. South/south cooperation and support from agencies such as FAO/IAEA are essential for the effective implementation of such systems.
2. Currently, failure of food control systems is a large scale problem – e.g. 26 out of 28 EU Member States were affected by the horsemeat scandal. Good systems exist for food safety, but not food fraud. Even the best food control systems need continuous improvement, for example the USA Food Safety Modernization Act. Policy makers play a key role.
3. Food safety is a vital component of global food security. A collaborative approach is required to develop and implement effective systems for food safety, and contribute to food security. Feed safety is an integral part of food production and safe food.
4. There is a growing trend and urgency towards willingness of governments to change control systems.
5. Provenance testing is essential to support the reputation of industry, but it is necessary to make industry aware of the verification techniques available and the benefit of applying them.

6. There is a large range of food contaminants. However, in most developed countries the number of non-compliant samples is relatively low. This is not always true in developing countries.
7. There is an urgent need for education and training in developing countries to enable them to implement monitoring and comply with food safety standards.
8. Science-based food safety plans are important to build consumer confidence, and rapid alert systems are critical in alerting consumers of hazards.
9. Active cooperation between government, private sector (producers, processors, distributors...), academia and consumers is needed to ensure food safety.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Up to the closing of the meeting, I would like to draw the final conclusion that this Symposium is well prepared and organized. It is a big success!

With this impression in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the speakers for their wonderful presentations!

The chairpersons of the all scientific sessions and the moderators and panel members of the discussion sessions!

The contributors of the posters and all of you for your active participation to each of the sessions of the Symposium.

By the end, would you please all join me to give big hands to all members of the scientific committee and staff from the Secretariat for their continued efforts and hardworking which made this Symposium possible and successful.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Just before the closing of the Symposium, I would like to express my confidence that this Symposium will lead to a more collaborative relationship among the IAEA member countries in areas of food safety, particularly on the issues related to application of nuclear and related

techniques in the future, which will certainly be mutual beneficial to the consumers, the industry and the economy of all countries.

With these anticipations, I'd like to end my remarks.

Thank you very much!