ILSI
International Life
Sciences Institute

South Africa

ILSI South Africa is a proud member of the International Life Sciences Institute network, whose branches and Research Foundation work together to provide the science that improves human health and environmental sustainability.

ILSI South Africa organises scientific and educational activities on food safety, nutrition and optimal human health. We also support science leading to adoption of cleaner technologies and a healthier planet.

Our Success in 2014

ILSI South Africa was active throughout 2014 delivering on existing projects and developing new programs for 2015 and beyond.

Food Safety Risk Assessment Workshop

The World Trade Organization requires science-based food safety regulations and standards to be developed to protect consumers across international borders. While a number of countries have already developed such regulations, many African countries have not modernized their food safety standards based on the latest scientific risk assessment methods.

To raise awareness and fill gaps in knowledge, ILSI South Africa organized a workshop which brought together food safety experts from throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In fact, 13 of the 15 SADC countries were represented. Presenters, both international and local, SADC delegates, and other participants from government, academia, industry reviewed up-to-date safety assessment practices, outlined the roles and responsibilities of the risk manager, and discussed the importance of regional harmonization so consumers enjoy a safe food supply regardless of where they live.

ILSI – University of Ghana Food Safety Training

ILSI, via the ILSI Platform for International Partnerships and ILSI South Africa, began collaborating with the University of Ghana's Department of Nutrition and Food Science to run the Food Safety and Nutrition Centre. ILSI assumed this role from the Industry Council for Development in early 2014. The Centre provides technical expertise for supporting training and education among public health professionals from Ghana and neighboring countries. ILSI South Africa participated in the July workshop by providing training on a number of modules. The Centre's courses are well-received and interest in them remains high in Ghana. ILSI South Africa is also assessing opportunities to expand training into Nigeria and other countries.

Participants and Prof Lucia Anelich (Executive and Scientific Director, ILSI South Africa) at the Food Safety for Nutritionists Program held in July 2014 at the University of Ghana.

Participants at the Food Safety for Nutritionists Program held in July 2014 at the University of Ghana being trained by Benjamin Mintah, Programme Coordinator.

Speakers, from left to right: Christine Broadhurst (Unilever South Africa and Chair, ILSI South Africa Board of Trustees); Prof Lucia Anelich (Executive and Scientific Director, ILSI South Africa); Dr Alejandro Amezquita (Unilever UK); Dr Paul Hepburn (Unilever UK and ILSI Europe); Dr Anne Constable (Nestle Switzerland); Dr Jean Kamanzi (FAO – African Regional Office); Dr Gordon Shephard (Medical Research Council, South Africa); Dr Harris Steinman (FACTS, South Africa). Not shown: Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele (Dept of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa) and Michael Glavin (Food Standards Agency, UK)

Nutrition, Health and Wellness

The 2014 South African Biannual Nutrition Congress, with an overarching theme of "Optimal Nutrition for All," was a collective event of the 25th Congress of the Nutrition Society of South Africa and the 13th Congress of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa. For the very first time, ILSI South Africa contributed to the conference programme, and hosted a plenary session entitled The Post-2015 Nutrition Agenda for South Africa. The session served as a platform of information sharing between government and the nutrition fraternity in South Africa.

From left to right: Ms Lynn Moeng (Dept of Health); Prof Hettie Schönfeldt (President, ILSI South Africa); Dr Rendani Ladzani (University of Pretoria); Mr Gilbert Tshitaudzi (Dept of Health); Prof Melvyn Freeman (Dept of Health)

Topics covered included an update on the progress of South Africa towards achieving the set of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), set by the United Nations in 2000, as well as the policy planning landscape for future developments towards improving nutrition. Furthermore, the session included a focus on obesity and non-communicable diseases in future alignments of policies and programmes, which have been generally neglected in the original set of MDGs. The ILSI South Africa session was very well received, with 450 delegates attending.

Nutrition Task Force

In 2014, ILSI South Africa built on a decision made in 2013 to commit to the establishment of its first Task Force, i.e. a Nutrition Task Force (NTF). The first meeting of the NTF was held on 13 May 2014, during which a committee and a vision for the NTF were established. The Vision is:

> *"ILSI South Africa NTF intends to contribute in relevant and meaningful ways to nutrition science informed by the pertinent needs identified for the South African population, through collaborative partnerships between academia, government and the industry. The ILSI South Africa NTF will work to build, support and promote local relevant nutrition and public health science and capacity across the lifespan."*

In this regard, the major activity of the NTF is to investigate a potential project on a Total Diet Study for South Africa, a first for ILSI South Africa.

And Coming in 2015

Microbiological Risk Assessment Workshops

A need for hands-on training in Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA) in the Sub-Saharan Africa region was established at the Food Safety Risk Assessment workshop held in Johannesburg in 2014. A first workshop is being planned for a region in Sub-Saharan Africa for 2015 and material developed by FAO/WHO/ICD will be used for training purposes. The material has been reviewed and some revision will be undertaken to update the training material accordingly.

ILSI – University of Ghana Food Safety and HACCP Training

Plans are afoot to update the training material so that it can be used for subsequent training sessions planned for Ghana. In addition, the Food Safety for Nutritionists programme will be introduced for the first time in Nigeria as part of an expansion plan to extend this training to other countries in Africa in the future.

Our Leadership

ILSI South Africa's Board of Trustees is made up of a dedicated group of public- and private-sector scientists who work together to set the organisation's goals and steer its activities.

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