



Welcome Address By Mr. D H Pai Panandiker, Chairman, ILSI-India

At

*Conference on Food Additives: Safety and Benefits
April 24, 2015, Viceregal Hall, Claridges Hotel, New Delhi*

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this Conference on Food Additives: Benefits and Safety. I am particularly grateful to Ms Rhona Applebaum, President ILSI Global, for gracing this occasion. To ILSI-India Rona is no stranger. The first time she visited ILSI-India and addressed us was in 2007. Since then she has been regularly interacting with us. Under her leadership I am sure ILSI will achieve new heights as a premier institution advancing knowledge and science.

Just a word about the subject of this Conference. The benefits of food additives are obvious; but safety has to be proved. Food additives have been used for production, processing, treatment, packaging, transportation and storage of foods. The object is to maintain safety and freshness of foods, maintain or improve their nutrition value and improve taste, texture and appearance. Without food additives food security would have been extremely difficult if not impossible.

Public apprehension is mainly about exposure to chemicals used in food although every food that we eat is made up of chemical compounds. Nevertheless safety is a concern. Food additives are therefore regulated by national food regulatory authorities as also international organizations to ensure safety.

Food additives have been studied for quite some time and are now better understood though absolute safety of any substance can never be proven. There are additives which are generally regarded as safe or GRAS for short. JECFA evaluates safety of food additives based on long term exposure and there are a number of additives which have been studied and considered safe under Codex General Standard for Food Additives or GSFA. National food regulatory authorities should therefore permit use of substances which have been internationally considered safe if they conform to accepted daily intake and good manufacturing practices

Industry is continuously innovating food products with new additives. It is necessary to encourage innovation which will enable industry to produce a variety of foods and also for a variety of consumers like children, senior citizens, diabetics, obese, and so on. It is therefore important for industry to produce evidence about safety of the final product and for the authorities to take decisions without delay.

This conference will consider all these and related issues which, I hope, will be a useful input for the Authorities in their endeavor to ensure safety of foods.