

Our seat at the table: maximizing transformative opportunities across the rural-urban continuum to deliver healthy diets from sustainable food systems

Side Event of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security

25 October 2023 / 1.30 – 2.45 PM (CET)

FAO HQ - Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome

Red Room (Hybrid Modality)

Summary Report

Transformative action to deliver healthy diets from sustainable food systems is essential to end malnutrition in all its forms and achieve the interlinked, and interdependent 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Local and regional governments have successfully promoted the importance of local and territorial food systems in achieving overall food systems transformation and the SDGs. This event showcased the examples and opportunities to accelerate coherent national and local action.

Moderator Corinna Hawkes, , opened the session by underscoring the commitment of FAO to improving urban food systems and the vital role of CFS in elevating the role of cities, as well as the upcoming HLPE report on [strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization and rural transformation](#).

The unique opportunities municipalities and local governments provide to the food systems transformation agenda were emphasised within the many examples shared from the Mayors of Quelimane, Mozambique and Chefchaouen, Morocco. These demonstrated the potential of grassroots initiatives which directly respond to residents' needs, data and evidence generation to guide action as well as the great benefits of cross-learnings and solidarity between cities. They also highlighted the challenges to advancing this agenda such as transportation and the need for supportive national and international policies to foster innovation, clarify governance structures and direct the provision of necessary human and financial resources needed to deliver on the food systems transformation agenda. Moreover, they stressed the importance of including local and regional governments within global policy processes related to food and particularly highlighted the key role that they can play in the CFS as the closest level of government to both communities and nature.

Opportunities for impact were also shared by the World Farmers Market Coalition and Consumers International. Emphasising the potential of Farmers Market to unite stakeholders, connect farmers to market and consumers to nutritious foods, as well as the role of local governments in putting consumers' perspectives at the forefront of policy discussions at CFS. UN-Nutrition emphasized the need for upholding the right to food to guide all transformative action to ensure access to affordable, healthy diets. Emphasising the rapidly growing trend of urbanization in shifting diets, as detailed in the [2023 SOFI report](#), and the many initiatives and tools to guide healthy transformation at the local level such as [Food Based Dietary Guidelines](#) and the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#). Many more examples of inspiring initiatives and reports were shared by audience members demonstrating the

growing momentum of local governments, and localized approaches in advancing transformation actions to deliver healthy diets from sustainable food systems for all.

Co-organized by: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN-Nutrition, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), The Urban Food Systems Coalition (UFSC), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), GAIN, The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, The Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems (HDSFS)