



# FOOD *for* THE CITIES

*“The task of feeding the world’s cities adequately constitutes an increasingly pressing challenge, requiring the co-ordinated interaction of food producers, transporters, market operators and a myriad of retail sellers. It also requires (...) a shared understanding among city officials and national and international development agencies of the common problems and the potential solutions faced when seeking to feed cities on a sustainable basis.”*

Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO

- Urban food security and nutrition
- Urban and peri-urban food production
  - Fisheries
  - Agro-forestry and Non Wood Forestry Products
  - Horticulture and crops
  - Irrigation
  - Livestock
- Food marketing and distribution
- Food processing, street foods and food safety
- Natural Resources Management
  - Forests and trees
  - Land
  - Water
- Policy, planning and institutions
- Rural-Urban Linkages
- Cities in crises

In 2007 the world's urban population reached 50% of the world's population. Expanding cities have increased food needs accentuated by changes in urban lifestyles. Increased urban malnutrition and chronic diet related diseases are also matters of rising concern.



**FOOD.** Urban people primarily rely on purchased food, coming from increasingly distant rural areas, which entails higher costs, often above the purchasing power of the urban vulnerable and poor. This food not only needs to be produced but also cleaned, assembled, packaged, stored and transported to urban markets. The efficiency of these actions will determine the level of prices on urban markets. Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) has developed in response to the increased demand for perishable products especially at lower cost and to the needs of poor households to feed themselves and earn money. In many environments, non wood forest products are key ingredients of diets. UPA whilst contributing to urban diets can also generate health hazards which have to be guarded against through both technical guidance and legal enforcement.

**INCOME.** Production, processing, marketing and preparation of food and agricultural products provide opportunities for better nutrition, income, employment and social integration of the urban poor whilst also responding to urban consumers’ needs for low cost and convenience foods. Support in terms of organisation, information, access to land, training and microfinance is required to ensure sustainable urban livelihoods.

**ENVIRONMENT.** Chaotic urban growth often leads to deforestation, watershed and landscape degradation, as well as serious contamination of soil and water. Appropriate techniques and practices promoting green infrastructure within an integrated approach should be promoted to prevent and mitigate erosion and floods, protect and improve water and air quality, and contribute to food safety and healthy environments. Physical and economic access to wood energy for cooking and heating and for small-scale enterprises is essential for sustainability.

**PLANNING and GOVERNANCE.** Local authorities have a key role in ensuring harmonious urban development and basic human rights of urban populations. Urban governance calls for appropriate planning and policy formulation, infrastructure development, land administration and coordination of local interventions.



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*FAO acts as a neutral forum and leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The Strategic Framework 2000-2015 and corresponding Medium Term Plan 2002-2007 recognised the need for joint efforts and Food for the Cities was identified as a Priority Area for Interdisciplinary Action.*

## FAO is committed to

- Putting information within reach
- Sharing policy expertise
- Providing a meeting place for nations
- Bringing knowledge to the field



## EXAMPLES OF FAO ACTIVITIES

### *Policy and decision making*

- Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and UN-HABITAT on land tenure and rural-urban linkages;
- Food Supply and Distribution to Cities Programme inter-country workshops in collaboration with partner institutions in Dakar, Senegal, 1997; Bangkok, Thailand, 2000; Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, 2002; La Havana, Cuba; and Meknes, Morocco 2003;
- Development of International Guidelines for Policy and Decision Making promoting the optimization of trees and forests for healthy cities and citizens.

### *Partnership and networking*

- Urban and Peri-Urban Technologies for the Horticulture Research and Development Network in African Countries (RADHORT);
- International project "Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture: Towards a better understanding of low-income producers organizations" funded by IDRC (Canada), case studies from: Accra, Antananarivo, Cairo, Caracas, Dakar, Harare, Hyderabad, Kinshasa, Nairobi, and Phnom Penh;
- Interactive web site "Forests and Trees for Healthy Cities: Improving Livelihoods and Environment for All" << <http://km.fao.org/urbanforestry/> >>.

### *Direct assistance to cities*

- National Programme for Food Security in Africa, Asia, Latin America;
- Emergency relief operations in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean;
- Telefood projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Decentralized Cooperation Programme: e.g. Dakar, Kigali, Teresina;
- Technical Cooperation Project assisting the participatory development of a strategy and action plan for urban and peri-urban forestry in Bangui (Central African Republic)

### *Production of resource materials*

- Urban Producers Resource Book, FAO 2007;
- Food for the Cities, a DVD on Addis Ababa, Amman, Lahore and Mexico City cases, FAO 2006;
- FAO-WHO Guidelines for the safe use of wastewater, excreta and greywater, WHO 2006;
- "WISDOM for cities – Analysis of wood energy and urbanization", FAO 2008;
- Food Supply and Distribution Policies to Reduce Urban Food Insecurity - A Briefing Guide for Mayors, City Executives and Urban Planners in Developing Countries and Countries in Transition (publication and CD-ROM), 2000.

For further information and contact, please visit:

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