



# FAO-UNEP Sustainable Food Systems Programme

## Sustainable food consumption and production

Food consumption and production trends and patterns are among the main causes of pressure on the environment. Fundamental changes in the ways food is produced, processed, transported and consumed are indispensable for achieving sustainable development.

Sustainable consumption and production in food and agriculture is a consumer-driven, holistic concept that refers to the integrated implementation of sustainable patterns of food consumption and production, respecting the carrying capacities of natural ecosystems. It requires consideration of all the aspects and phases in the life of a product, from production to consumption, and includes such issues as sustainable lifestyles, sustainable diets, food losses and food waste management and recycling, voluntary sustainability standards, and environmentally friendly behaviours and methods that minimize adverse impacts on the environment and do not jeopardize the needs of present and future generations. Sustainability, climate change, biodiversity, water, food and nutrition security, right to food, and diets are all closely connected.

Agrifood systems develop within a finite and sometimes shrinking resource base. They therefore need to make use of natural resources in ways that are environmentally, economically, socially and culturally sustainable, to conserve the ecosystem. Growth of agrifood systems must be inclusive; must target objectives beyond production, including efficiencies along the food chains; and must promote sustainable practices and diets.

Consumer choice plays a leading role in orienting production, as consumers select certain types of product according to place of origin, production processes, or producer.



*A customer at the Shoprite supermarket in Manzini, 20km south of Mbabane*

Consumers also exert strong influences through the ways they buy, transport, conserve, cook and consume their food. Food consumption is affected by a wide range of factors, including food availability, food accessibility and food choice, which may in turn be influenced by geography, demography, disposable income, socio-economic status, urbanization, globalization, religion, culture, marketing and consumer attitudes.

## FAO-UNEP Sustainable Food Systems Programme

FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the joint Sustainable Food Systems Programme to improve resource use efficiency and reduce the pollution intensity of food systems, from production to consumption, while addressing issues of food and nutrition security.

This FAO/UNEP joint programme is catalysing partnerships among United Nations (UN) agencies, other international agencies, governments, and industry and



*Fresh fish, shell fish and other seafood on sale*

civil society organizations whose activities can promote the essential transition to sustainability. It is a unique collaborative effort between the leading intergovernmental agencies in the areas of food, agriculture and the environment.

The programme promotes international cooperation in promoting policies, investments, production and consumption patterns that enhance food security while meeting economic and environmental needs.

An Agrifood Task Force (ATF) has been established with representatives of Member States, United Nations agencies, the private sector and civil society. Activities are being designed in response to stakeholders' needs, and individual stakeholders and development partners can select which activities they wish to engage in.

At its third meeting in April 2012 at FAO Headquarters in Rome, ATF defined a pluriannual programme of work and created four groups to implement clusters of activities: i) information platforms; ii) communications; iii) enabling conditions; and iv) market-based approaches.

### For more information:

[www.fao.org/ag/ags/sustainable-food-consumption-and-production/en/](http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/sustainable-food-consumption-and-production/en/)

[www.scpclearinghouse.org](http://www.scpclearinghouse.org)

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