

## Summary Report

### *Side Event – CFS 50: Empowering cities and local governments towards sustainable and inclusive urban and territorial food systems transformation*

12 October 2022 / 8.30 – 9.45 AM

FAO HQ - Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome; Green Room (Hybrid Modality)

With more than a half of the world's population living in urban areas, accounting for 70% of global food consumed worldwide, the role of cities is becoming central for food systems transformation. The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit explicitly recognized the role of cities in this transformation, and led to the establishment of a **Coalition on Urban Food Systems**, especially to strengthen representation of local governments in global fora such as the CFS.

This Side Event focused the discussion on how national governments and other global fora could create an enabling environment for local governments, to effectively achieving a sustainable food systems transformation.

The panelists dealt with four main topics:

- 1) The role of **multi-level governance** in strengthening the engagement of local governments
- 2) How can **national governments** and other stakeholders effectively support local food systems stakeholders?
- 3) Raising awareness on alliances and **coalition** on urban food systems
- 4) Beyond urban: territorial and local food systems and their management and governance

This hybrid Side Event saw the participation of 150+ attendees, both virtually and in person, including representatives of national governments, civil society, city organizations, etc. who actively engaged in the discussion with the panelists.

The event was opened by **Maximo Torero**, FAO Chief Economist, followed by **Bernard Lehman**, Chairman of the Steering Committee of High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) at the CFS, to start the panel discussion.

**Anna Scavuzzo**, Vice mayor of City of Milan, provided a local perspective as well as from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, followed by **Marylaure Crettaz Corredor**, Head of Food Systems Section of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), who provided a national perspective.

The Director of Cooperation at the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), **Manuel Lapao**, brought into the discussion the perspective of territorial development as practiced by

members of the CPLP, while **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) closed the panel through a video message.

### **Main takeaways from the Side Event:**

- Cities, including small and intermediary ones must be recognized as a driving force for urban and rural poverty reduction, and sustainable food system transformation. Their role is already recognized in the FAO flagship initiatives, such as the Urban Food Agenda, but must be considered also in global fora and platforms, such as the CFS. The new Coalition on Urban Food Systems is aiming at promoting such recognition.
- Urban food systems are entering in the radar of CFS, with special attention to food consumed in urban areas, informal and formal markets, and land management issues. The CFS can be a platform where governments can come together and deliberate on issues regarding multi-level governance of food systems. The HLPE is also drafting a report, which includes a strategy to better represent relevant local actors in institutions such as CFS.
- CFS is adopting the HLPE recommendations to include “strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems” in the context of urbanization and rural transformation as one of the 7 emerging and critical areas. It has been decided that urban food systems will be the prioritized topic for the 2024 report.  
Cities need to have a voice in global platforms, which would help to strengthen the links between the different levels of government, but also to collect and share information among them. To make this concrete, there is need to promote mutual learning and provide financial support directly to local authorities. The panel recognized the critical role of shifting urban food consumer food choices for the sustainability of the food system in general.
- Cities are now entering in many intergovernmental organizations through their governance structures. This would help in the implementation of food governance mechanisms at the local level.
- Also the perception of food needs to be changed. Food should not be considered just a commodity, but as part of our culture, rights and health. And food consumers in urban areas could have a big role in changing this perception through their urban consumers.
- The work of the new Urban Food Systems Coalition should prioritize policy and regulatory frameworks, in line with the recognition of multi-level Governance as a key lever of change.
- Representatives of members countries from the audience called for specific guidelines to be provided from the coalition, to assist governments in taking actions to reform urban and periurban food systems and to bridge the rural -urban gap.
- Multilevel/multi-stakeholder dialogues, such as the ones that took place in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit, could be an entry point in promoting the recognition of the role of urban and local food systems.
- The functioning of municipal food councils such as those in some many cities worldwide and in CPLP countries could be looked at as forms of governance of local food systems

The world is inevitably urbanizing, so any sustainable transformation of food systems must start from there.

*\*The event was organized by FAO and the Urban Food Systems Working Group.*