

SE21: Bringing together urban and food justice – building a common agenda across the CFS workstreams on inequalities and urban and peri-urban food systems

Organized by: Food Equity Centre, IDS; UCT; CSIPM; CONSEA; WFP; HLPE-FSN; World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, Government of France.

Summary of the side event

On Wednesday, 23 October, the side event “Bringing together urban and food justice – building a common agenda across the CFS workstreams on inequalities and urban and peri-urban food systems” brought together key stakeholders from civil society, academia, and international institutions to explore how urban and food justice agendas can be aligned. The session took place both in-person at FAO HQ in Rome and online, with interpretation in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese to ensure inclusivity and foster broad participation, allowing diverse voices from around the world to engage actively in discussions on urban and food justice.

The side event on "Bringing Together Urban and Food Justice" opened with an introduction by **Jane Battersby**, Professor at the University of Cape Town (UCT), who served as the lead author of the HLPE-FSN report #19 and was a member of the drafting team for report #18. Battersby set the stage by addressing the intersection of urbanization and food security, emphasizing the need for integrated approaches to food and urban justice.

In **Panel One: Urban Food Injustices and Local Realities**, moderated by **Nicholas Nisbett**, a member of the Food Equity Centre at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and part of the HLPE-FSN report #18 drafting team, the panelists explored challenges specific to urban contexts. **Iromi Perera**, Director of Colombo Urban Lab, shared insights from urban planning and community dynamics. **Elisabetta Recine**, President of the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (CONSEA) and HLPE-FSN Steering Committee member, discussed the Brazilian experience with urban food security

policies. **Sadullah Kutlu**, International Relations Expert from Konya, Turkey, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) representative, provided perspectives on the role of local governments in supporting food justice.

Panel Two: Action by Governments and International Institutions - Policy and Strategy, moderated by **Jody Harris** from the Food Equity Centre at IDS and a member of the HLPE-FSN report #18 drafting team, focused on policy responses and strategies at different levels. **Ximena Moreno**, Co-coordinator of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) Urban and Peri-Urban Working Group, highlighted the civil society viewpoint on urban food access and equity. **Isis Ferrera**, Senior Urban Advisor in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at WFP, emphasized the importance of urban-focused preparedness. **Erwan De Gavelle**, Head of the Food Policy Office at France's Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, offered insights into how national policy can align with urban food justice goals.

This event illustrated the various levels at which urban and food justice intersect, with contributions from government, civil society, and international organizations shaping a common agenda.

It was emphasized that **urbanization is not just an isolated factor but one that intersects with a variety of issues impacting food systems, including informality, food safety, waste, climate change, and resilience**. These cross-cutting themes can either exacerbate or mitigate food insecurity, depending on how urban systems are structured and governed.

Speakers also brought attention to the critical concepts of the **Right to food** and the **Right to the city**, underscoring that access to healthy, affordable food is a fundamental human right, and cities must be designed in ways that ensure equitable food access for all residents, particularly marginalized communities. The interventions set the stage for a multidimensional discussion on how urban food systems must be reimagined to be more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient in the face of rapid urbanization.

The profound **challenges due to its historic and systemic inequalities**, particularly in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and income were highlighted in different contexts and countries.

Case studies, actions and policies driven by both national and local governments and civil society to bridge the gap in urban food justice were shared,

illustrating how urban and food justice intersect in real-world contexts. These insights highlighted diverse approaches taken by communities, governments, and organizations to address food security challenges within urban settings. The examples provided enriched the discussion, demonstrating concrete strategies that have been implemented on the ground to create more equitable and resilient food systems, especially for marginalized populations in cities.

The event was designed to foster an **interactive exchange**, where participants helped develop a **common agenda for research, advocacy, and policy that aligns with the CFS multi-year programme of work**. The discussions were enriched by contributions from various online and in-person participants, focusing on those most marginalized in food and urban systems and exploring how urbanization can either alleviate or reinforce inequalities depending on structural factors.