

SE23: Cities as Agents of Change in Agrifood Systems: The Role of Inclusive Multistakeholder Governance from Local to Global Level

Organized by: FAO, ICLEI, GAIN.

Summary of the side event

The side event discussed the importance of cities and local governments in transforming agrifood systems to ensure inclusive, sustainable, and resilient food systems, especially in urban and peri-urban areas. This issue is central to the discussions at CFS52, which focused on urban food systems through the 2024 HLPE [report](#) on Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems. The report highlights how urbanization is reshaping global food systems, with more than half of the world's population living in cities, and a disproportionate number of food-insecure people residing in these areas.

This side event at CFS52, co-hosted by FAO, ICLEI, and GAIN, explored real-world examples of local, national, and global actions to improve urban food systems.

Opening remarks by FAO's Zhimin Wu (Director of Forestry Division) emphasized the role of cities in achieving multiple SDGs, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). As promoted under FAO [Green Cities Initiative](#), Wu advocated for integrating forestry, agriculture, and circular bioeconomy models in cities to build sustainable food systems.

Key presentations included Mayor Jacques Kossowski of Courbevoie, France, who focused on how mayors can create greener, more sustainable cities by reducing food waste. He shared the city's [approach](#) to reducing food waste. The concept is to engage the local private sector - supermarkets, restaurants, retailers - to give the surplus to charities for poor people. Furthermore, the municipality is educating children in school canteens by limiting waste and the real value of food.

In Mozambique, GAIN's Abel Dabula discussed the challenges of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition in urban areas. [GAIN](#) works with city governments and local markets to design inclusive food systems solutions, focusing on nutrition,

local governance, and climate-smart infrastructure. In cities like Beira and Pemba, GAIN has enhanced traditional markets, built resilient supply chains, and promoted local food systems.

Grace Kaziya, Director of Housing and Social Services at the city of Lusaka, Zambia, shared insights into the city's food markets and how they are currently being transformed through initiatives such as [AfriFOODlinks](#) and the [GIZ-funded Transformative Initiative on fresh food markets](#), which support effective multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogues. She highlighted the need for stronger coordination and governance structures, through platforms such as the Lusaka Food Policy Council, to ensure urban food systems' transformation.

Lilian dos Santos Rahal of Brazil presented the country's [multi-level approach](#) to tackling food insecurity and malnutrition in urban areas. Brazil's government has launched an urban food agenda targeting 60 priority cities, aiming to improve food production, access, and consumption through eight transformative entry points, such as reducing food waste, promoting healthy urban food environments, and improving social assistance and public food services.

Corinna Hawkes, FAO's Director of Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division, concluded by emphasizing the need for collective, multi-stakeholder action to drive sustainable urban food systems transformation. This includes collaboration between UN agencies, city networks, NGOs, and research institutions to create inclusive and impactful solutions.

The side event underscores the crucial role of cities in advancing inclusive, sustainable agrifood systems, with examples from around the world showing how local governance, community involvement, and multi-stakeholder partnerships can address food insecurity and malnutrition while fostering resilience to climate change.

This event is participated by 150 people all over the world.

Contact Focal Points

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