



## THE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS COALITION - “THE UFS COALITION”

# DECLARATION OF ENGAGEMENT

### Background:

Over half the global population resides in urban areas, and by 2050 this is expected to rise to 68% (UNDESA 2020). At present, urban areas consume 70% of all food produced, and are responsible for 70% of global waste and 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2020). The rapid pace of urbanization increases the demand for basic goods and services, including food, and changes the way people produce and consume, and how food loss and waste is managed throughout the food system. Many urban and peri-urban communities experience food insecurity. At the same time, urbanization is associated with transitions towards unhealthy diets where overweight, obesity and undernutrition (wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies) co-exist among urban residents.

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), endorsed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2016, called for integration of food security and nutrition as well as environmental issues in urban and territorial planning. The momentum towards more focus on urban food systems has carried on through global processes such as the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) (both 49th and 50th sessions), as well as the Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G). Such events further strengthened the understanding of, and demonstrated the importance of urban and local food systems as key levers for overall food systems transformation. In 2022, the UN General Assembly positioned the New Urban Agenda as a roadmap for SDG achievement, climate action, and crisis reduction.

However, in practice, and despite global acceptance, there is currently limited recognition of the key contributions of urban administrations and local and regional governments, especially those of small and intermediary cities, in promoting inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation. Urban food systems issues are rarely integrated in national policy frameworks, and local governments are seldom included in national consultations, which results in challenges in building an enabling policy environment for food system transformation in cities. This in turn, means that the policy and resource space urban and local governments have to manage food systems is limited as are their possibilities to contribute to national food systems policies.

The mechanisms to integrate coherent and coordinated food system policy and planning into broader local and national planning processes are complex. They require establishing meaningful synergies across food system policies and across other related sectors and actors (e.g. health, environment, economic development) at both local and national levels.

The establishment of a Coalition on Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Food Systems – the UFS Coalition – is called for to facilitate coherent, coordinated policies and actions on urban food systems and to foster linkages between national, local and regional governments, while building on the relationships and expertise of all food systems stakeholders.

## **The UFS Coalition was first called for in July 2021 at the Pre-Summit of the UNFSS. It strives to prioritize the following in 2023-2026:**

- At global level: Support local and regional governments to engage in global policy debates, following up on the extensive exchanges conducted as part of UNFSS, N4G and CFS49 in 2021.
- At national, local and regional levels: Support national, local and regional governments in meaningfully engaging with one another with the aim of harmonizing policies and programs related to food systems. This includes implementation of their national food systems pathways and other relevant agreements, while building on the relations and expertise of all food systems stakeholders.

## **The Urban Food Systems Coalition aspires to achieve the following:**

- Creation of a space for dialogue among stakeholders at all levels (geographical, administrative, political) on priority actions for urban food systems transformation;
- Leveraging and facilitation of knowledge/ experience exchange among key stakeholders and production, management and distribution of appropriate data for evidence-based policy design and implementation;
- Continued inclusion of various sectors beyond governments at different levels, including civil society, private sector and non-governmental actors critical to functional food system policy and practices;
- Mobilization and leveraging of human and financial resources to support the capacities of urban administrations to integrate food systems into urban policies, planning and investments.

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# DECLARATION

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**We are convinced that cities, local and regional governments and food systems actors are key to building inclusive, resilient, equitable and sustainable food systems and improving nutrition. By affirming the below, we join the UFS Coalition:**

1. Food systems are currently on an unsustainable path, economically, socially and environmentally. Fundamental changes are necessary.
2. Adoption of systems thinking is necessary to facilitate synergies between food system components and multiple stakeholders, and to set shared priorities. Systems thinking broadens the list of possible levers to accelerate food systems transformation.
3. Actions to transform food systems need to focus on urban and local levels, including locally-led initiatives and governance structures, and to be inclusive of all local actors, including non-governmental actors and citizens.
4. Promoting multi-actor and multi-level governance, including effective consultation and cooperation between national and local and regional governments (vertical coordination) and across different policy departments (horizontal coordination) is key to achieving the much-needed policy coherence that will transform food systems.
5. Governance of local and urban food systems goes beyond administrative boundaries, including robust rural-urban linkages. Territorial approaches help to address food systems challenges in a coordinated way and optimize opportunities for all, across urban, peri-urban and rural areas.
6. Leveraging existing activities, networks and actors, and integrating them in policies and governance structures will be key to supporting food systems transformation.
7. There is an urgent need to produce appropriate data on food systems at urban and local level to improve understanding, to inform evidence-based policies, and to support monitoring and evaluation.

**Name:** ..... **Title:** .....

**Country/Organisation:** .....

**Email:** .....

**Stamp (if applicable):**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....