

Title: Pursuing win-wins for nutrition and the environment through a food systems approach

Subtitle: Lessons from cities and their surroundings

Date: 26 April 2023

Time: 6:00 – 7:45 pm (GMT+7)

On 26 April 2023, Costa Rica, the Swiss Confederation, UN-Nutrition, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), ICLEI, Rikolto and RUAF-Hivos co-organized a side event, entitled “Pursuing win-wins for nutrition and the environment through a food systems approach”. Roberto Azofoifa from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Costa Rica opened the session by highlighting the complexity of food systems, the importance of metrics and the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration to safeguard people's nutrition and natural resources.

Stineke Oenema, the UN-Nutrition Executive Secretary, moderated the event and introduced a new discussion paper, [Nutrition and the environment – Nurturing people, protecting the planet](#), emphasizing the need to change the current ‘vicious’ cycle into a ‘virtual’ one. She then passed the floor to James Lomax from UNEP, who presented the main findings from the paper. He called attention to the growing evidence that the triple planetary crisis is exacerbating nutrition challenges, with the most vulnerable affected. He also highlighted how food systems are both key drivers and victims of climate change and some of the synergies and policy options discussed in the paper. He explained how shifting to diets that incorporate more nutritious food and diverse varieties can help improve human and planetary health and measures that can be taken at every food systems stage to promote innovative, sustainable practices. He also mentioned the recent emission gap report and the need to strengthen urban-rural linkages.

Different country experiences were then presented. Tom Arnold drew on his experience from developing Food Vision 2030, Ireland’s agri-food strategy, and discussed the prioritization of coherent food and health policies to deliver improved environmental and health outcomes. Igor Barcellos spoke on behalf of Adilson Pires, the Municipal Secretary and the city of Rio de Janeiro, about the reconnection of Brazil’s national and federal level governance and local policies being used to curb global warming and the hunger crisis, including the use of pesticides and community kitchens. Rose Achieng, the Agri-Nutrition Coordinator in Kisumu County, Kenya spoke about rapid urbanization and the need to consider the investment, production and consumption dimensions of healthy diets in the transition to sustainable food systems. Nyoman Suma Artha, Director of Pasar Rakyat in Bali, provided insight into the challenges that smallholder farmers face and solutions, such as regenerative agriculture to rebalance ecosystems and building value chains for organic farming based on local traditions in Indonesia. Runyararo Esther Chibota, the Hivos Regional Coordinator, then spoke about experiences in Zimbabwe, including the concerning popularity of ultraprocessed foods and changing the perception of youth to promote healthy diets in the context of climate change.

After a thought-provoking Q&A, Nancy Aburto, Deputy Director of the Food and Nutrition Division at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, summed up the panel discussion by emphasizing that agricultural intensification is reducing biodiversity and leading to dietary homogenization and making the connection to FSS coalitions. Overall, this session provided an opportunity to delve into strategies and actions that can and are being taken in different areas around the world to generate co-benefits for nutrition and the environment as part of the food systems transformation agenda.