STRENGTHENING URBAN AND PERI-URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE CONTEXT OF URBANIZATION AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

FIRST DRAFT

Rationale

(i) By 2050, the world's urban population is expected to nearly double, making urbanization one of the twenty-first century's most transformative trends[1]. Considering that an estimated 1.7 billion people of the world's 2.2 billion people experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity already live in urban and peri-urban areas, this rapid urban growth represents a significant food security and nutrition global challenge.

(ii) Urbanization and peri-urbanization result from interconnected transformations in demography, economies, culture, social systems, land use and technology and innovation. Understanding the changes occurring throughout agriculture and food systems requires therefore adopting a rural–urban continuum lens. This approach allows highlighting the growing interconnectedness of urban, peri-urban, and rural areas as a foundation for addressing socio-economic dynamics, planning effective resource production and distribution, and developing policies that reflect the complex realities of these interlinked communities.

(iii) Building on a rural-urban continuum approach, the following CFS policy recommendations are envisioned as a focused, action-oriented guidance tool to enhance the ability of urban and peri-urban residents to realize their right to food in the context of multiple challenges such as climate change, political instability, economic downturns including unsustainable debt, increasing inequalities, conflicts, man-made and natural disasters and rapid and unplanned urbanization.

(iv) The Policy Recommendations recognize that the complex nature of urban and peri-urban food systems requires a systems approach that integrates multi-sectoral, multi-level, multilateral and multi-actor governance processes, within and beyond the State, to promote an enabling policy environment that empowers stakeholders and fosters collaboration to deliver equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems. In particular, it is important to highlight the key role of local governments, municipal authorities and local food systems actors as agents of change in driving innovation and building resilient food systems to achieve food security and tackle all forms of malnutrition.

(v) At the same time, ensuring food security and nutrition across the rural-urban continuum requires policies that adhere to human rights obligations and principles such as participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and the rule of law. This entails fostering policies that address inequalities and are people-centred, protect the planet and are age- and gender-responsive and that contribute to the realization of all human rights, particularly the right to adequate food.

(vi) These Policy Recommendations are addressed primarily to national and subnational governments, in particular regional/metropolitan/municipal departments. Additionally, the recommendations are addressed to private sector associations, philanthropic foundations, civil society organizations, International Organizations, universities and academic institutions. They are voluntary and non-binding and should be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law, and with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments and in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. They build upon and complement relevant existing CFS policy instruments and are informed by the CFS High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) report on "*Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems to Achieve Food Security and Nutrition, in the context of Urbanization and Rural Transformation*".

[1] A/RES/71/256 – New Urban Agenda

A. Urban and peri-urban food systems for food security and nutrition

Production

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, should:

1. Respect legitimate tenure rights and prioritize equitable access to land, water, finance, services, innovation, technology and other food production resources to address the needs of the poorest, most vulnerable and those most left behind[2]; *(access to resources)*

2. Develop, reform and implement land-use zoning policies, including forestry and greening, that support biodiversity, micro-climate regulation, sustainable food production and citizens' well-being, by safeguarding and supporting urban and peri-urban agriculture, small scale farming, livestock, aquaculture and fishing activities; (*zoning policies*)

3. Prioritize agricultural advisory and extension services that preserve, sustainably manage and use natural resources, enhance soil health and conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. This could entail, among others, promoting climate resilient farming techniques, agroecological and other innovative approaches[3], biotechnology and bioeconomy strategies as well as regenerative and nutrition sensitive practices; *(extension services)*

4. Promote bioeconomy and its production chains programmes aiming at the development of new production models that integrate sustainable use of natural resources, technical innovation and the development and integration of local economies in the value chains; *(bioeconomy)*

5. Strengthen food systems actors' equitable access to finance, capacity building, technology development and transfer for the use of innovation and technologies such as modern greenhouse structures, water efficient hydroponics and aquaponics, vertical and indoor farming, renewable energy systems, rooftop gardening, artificial intelligence (AI), as well as social innovations such as community gardens; *(innovations)*

6. Facilitate agricultural product aggregation systems in diverse urban and peri-urban contexts, allowing small scale producers and micro and, small-medium enterprises (MSMEs) to produce the volume needed to access markets, processing, quality control and marketing services. *(product aggregation)*

Midstream (storage, processing, transportation, wholesale)

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, the private sector and civil society should:

7. Strengthen investment in innovation and technology, such as climate-resilient, energy-efficient and affordable storage systems, biodegradable or recyclable packaging and digital platforms to effectively leverage the opportunities that urban and peri-urban food systems provide; *(investment in food systems)*

8. Strengthen public and private investment, including Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in infrastructure dedicated to storage, processing, marketing and logistics and enhance capacities in the intermediary segments of urban

[2] For the purpose of these policy recommendations the poorest, most vulnerable and those most at risk of being left behind refer to: women, smallholders, family farmers, peasants, landless, farmworkers, homeless, informal workers, migrants, internally displaced people, refugees, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, racial and ethnic minority groups, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic illnesses, older people, youth, boys and girls.

[3] In line with the CFS Policy Recommendations on *Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. 2021

food value chains including supermarkets and modern convenience stores, to increase consumers' access to fresh and perishable foods while supporting local economies and promoting sustainability; *(investment in infrastructure and logistics)*

9. Encourage social innovations such as community supported agriculture, community gardens, smart ruralism, food cooperatives, food hubs and farmers' markets that enhance access to safe, healthy and nutritious food while contributing to equity, social inclusion and resilience across the rural and urban continuum; *(social innovations)*

10. Foster diversity of food actors and support inclusive wholesale markets to strengthen connections with small-scale producers and informal sector actors, ensuring fair, economically viable, supply chain practices to redistribute value. This could entail supporting the use of innovation and technologies for small businesses, including startups in developing market driven solutions that connect consumers to small scale producers through digital platforms and delivery services; *(inclusive supply chains)*

Market, retail and trade

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, should:

11. Recognize the important role of territorial markets and shorter supply chains that integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational zoning policies and urban planning to promote: (i) market access for smallholder farmers and family farmers; (ii) sustainable management and use of natural resources and land; and (iii)increased access to fresh produce for all residents across the rural-urban continuum*; (territorial markets)*

12. Protect and sustain traditional markets, including territorial and local, by strengthening investment in infrastructure, operations, logistics, innovation and technology, access to land, water and affordable energy, as well as by providing capacity development and training to value chain actors, particularly informal vendors, to ensure compliance with hygiene standards to enhance food safety in urban and peri-urban areas; *(food safety)*

13. Address power imbalances and inequalities among different actors within agriculture and food systems across the rural-urban continuum to foster competition and diversification of food distribution channels. This entails supporting traditional and community markets, street food vendors, supermarkets and online delivery services; *(diversified distribution)*

14. Support non-market channels, such as food procurement, community kitchens solidarity kitchens and food banks that enable equitable access to adequate, safe, nutritious and affordable foods, which promote livelihoods and increase the resilience of households; *(non-market channels)*

15. Strengthen the capacities of peasants, smallholders[4], family farmers - especially women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities - to access international, regional, national and local markets, by strengthening cooperatives, farmers collectives, associations, unions, networks and other organizations, while also promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship, which can expand their bargaining power and allow meaningful participation in agriculture and food systems value chains, including in territorial markets[5]; *(inclusive market participation)*

16. Incentivize urban ad peri-urban residents' equitable access to healthy diets, particularly in areas where multidimensional poverty is prevalent, including through appropriate regulatory instruments such as nutritional

[4] For the purpose of these policy recommendations, references to smallholders include small scale producers and processors, pastoralists, artisans, fishers, communities closely dependent on forests, Indigenous Peoples and agricultural workers.
[5] In line with the CFS Policy Recommendations on Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition. 2024

labels and fiscal measures that promote consumption of safe, nutritious and fresh foods; *(regulatory and fiscal instruments)*

17. Promote behavior change, by empowering consumers to make informed choices towards healthier diets through targeted food nutrition education such as dietary diversification, awareness raising campaigns, which can include targeted public education campaigns, interpersonal communication and community dialogues, as a way to positively influence knowledge, attitudes and social norms, while also recognizing the importance of traditional food culture; *(nutrition education)*

18. Assess the implications of trade policies on public health and food systems with a view to enhancing the accessibility and affordability of healthy diets for urban and peri-urban consumers, particularly the poorest and most food insecure. (*trade policies*)

Public procurement and non-market initiatives

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, should:

19. Prioritize and invest in nutrition oriented public procurement programmes, such as school feeding programmes, public distribution systems, incentivizing locally produced foods, prioritizing smallholders and family farmers and targeting the poorest and most vulnerable across the rural-urban continuum, to achieve multiple objectives related to nutrition, sustainability, biodiversity, social inclusion and resilience of livelihoods; *(food procurement programmes)*

20. Strengthen government capacities to provide food aid in crises, leveraging civil society's reach and local networks and ensure the right to be free from hunger and malnutrition through food aid that reinforces local and national food systems for long-term resilience; *(food assistance)*

Food losses and waste

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, and all relevant stakeholders should:

21. Strive to minimize food loss and waste throughout all stages of the food value chain by: providing supportive infrastructure such as shading and cold storage units; facilitating access to innovation and technology to informal sector actors to preserve perishable foods; supporting redistribution programmes that repurpose surplus food; and creating awareness among food systems actors involved in public procurement, hospitality sector as well as consumers to reduce waste; *(food losses and waste)*

22. Promoting and supporting circular economy through separate collection of organic municipal waste and agricultural residue for composting, biogas digestion and production of animal feed, recognizing the role of local food losses and waste platforms, food recovery networks and waste-to-value innovations. *(circular economy)*

B. Urban and peri-urban interrelated systems that impact food security and nutrition

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, should:

23. Incentivize access to and investments for the provision of services and basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, including for housing, reliable and affordable energy, safe drinking water and sanitation, waste management, education, and information and communications technologies to enable safer food handling, targeting low-income residents and neighborhoods; *(physical and social infrastructure)*

24. Increase responsible investment in infrastructure, including for transport and mobility solutions, services and technologies and ensure that it benefits areas where multidimensional poverty is prevalent, by adopting territorial approaches while also strengthening local, national, regional and international trade and market connectivity; *(improved connectivity)*

25. Enhance equitable and affordable access to quality health services for all across the rural-urban continuum for improved food security and nutrition outcomes, particularly for women of child-bearing age, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and youth; *(health services)*

26. Embed and explicitly integrate food, including food trade infrastructure, into urban planning to ensure that all residents across the rural-urban continuum, regardless of income, race, or geography, can access healthy, nutritious, affordable food and integrate land-use planning with food security and nutrition policies by providing legal frameworks for urban and peri-urban farming; *(urban planning)*

27. Integrate spatial planning into urban and peri-urban food security policies to promote sustainable land use, respect legitimate tenure rights, safeguard agricultural land and sustainable fisheries management, urban forests and green spaces, to enhance climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and food systems' resilience and foster disaster risk reduction. This requires strengthened coordination between land-use planning and food system governance to manage urban growth while enhancing the resilience of food systems across the rural urban continuum; *(spatial planning)*

28. Design interventions, including contingency planning and early warning systems, and adopt best practices that integrate disaster risk reduction into urban planning and design, prioritizing climate risk mitigation and adaptation, enhancing resilience of supply chains, and strengthening critical infrastructure, such as cold storage, water availability and distribution networks, to ensure food security and nutrition can continue to meet the needs of urban and peri-urban residents in times of crisis; *(resilient supply chains)*

29. Integrate food security into urban, housing and zoning policies by supporting food production solutions within the built environment, including urban farms, urban gardens, green infrastructure, and the use of underutilized spaces in both new developments and urban areas in need of improvement. This may entail identifying and removing regulatory barriers to urban agriculture, particularly in areas where food insecurity is most prevalent; *(housing and zoning)*

30. Develop and support policies that integrate urban agriculture curricula into primary and secondary schools, providing youth with relevant technical skills and practical learning in areas such as sustainable agriculture and food systems, healthy diets, food security and nutrition, food literacy, supply chain management and food processing, with a view to encourage youth employment[6] in these sectors; *(education)*

31. Promote access to decent work and employment in food systems across the rural-urban continuum, with specific attention to young people, women, informal, seasonal and migrant workers, by strengthening and enforcing regulatory frameworks and laws to ensure safe working conditions and to enable wages that provide an adequate standard of living*; (decent work and employment)*

32. Develop and invest in social protection and gender equality programmes, including shock-responsive and conditional cash transfer programmes, that meet the specific needs of the poorest and most vulnerable across the rural-urban continuum, prioritizing youth and women. (s*ocial protection)*

[6] In line with the CFS policy recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and nutrition. 2022

C. Urban and peri-urban governance for food security and nutrition

Governments should:

33. Ensure that municipal financing is adequate and coherent with municipal mandates, particularly in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) contexts, and identify and promote innovative approaches for mobilizing resources, such as municipal bonds, public funds and public-private partnerships; *(financing and resource mobilization)*

34. Include local and subnational governments and all relevant stakeholders in the development of national food security and nutrition policies and strategies, leveraging their contributions as stewards of local knowledge and experiences in improving the quality, sustainability and accountability of interventions towards inclusive and strategic governance; (*inclusive governance)*

35. Recognize and integrate the diverse and specific needs of local and subnational governments in the implementation of their urban and peri-urban food policies in the context of trade and investment agreements to balance global trade benefits with local food security; *(trade agreements*)

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, should:

36. Develop and strengthen the capacities of food system actors across the rural-urban continuum, particularly those of the poorest, the most vulnerable and those most at risk of being left behind, to effectively engage in and influence decision-making, including in areas related to trade and investment, by enhancing their skills in financial and digital literacy, market dynamics, land tenure, climate resilience, consumer awareness and accountability mechanisms among others; (*capacity development)*

37. Strengthen the agency of food system actors across the rural-urban continuum, particularly the poorest, the most vulnerable, and those most at risk of being left behind, by fostering and financially supporting their meaningful inclusion, participation and representation in multi-level, multi-actor and multi-sectoral platforms, such as food policy councils; *(agency)*

38. Promote and support North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation as well as subnational, decentralized and city-to-city cooperation to help achieve an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate food across the rural-urban continuum; *(cooperation for development)*

39. Systematically map and analyze existing national and local policies to assess their coherence and impact on urban and peri-urban food systems and promote human rights-based accountability and transparency frameworks that assess roles, responsibilities and mandates of different levels of governance, while fostering inclusive multi-actor participation across platforms with specific measure for managing conflicts of interest. *(accountability)*

D. Strengthen data, research and knowledge systems to enable improved understanding and monitoring of food security and nutrition across the rural urban continuum

Governments, including subnational and local government authorities, International Organizations and all relevant stakeholders should:

40. Promote capacity development on FSN data collection, analysis and use[7], ensuring respect of intellectual property rights, prioritizing areas where current FSN data availability is poor, with a focus on those countries which are lacking resources, infrastructure, data literacy and skills to fill data gaps and. This may entail developing capacities in areas such as geographic information systems, remote sensing, digital tools and participatory mapping to target areas most vulnerable to food-system disruption and to inform long term planning, contingency plans and crisis response; *(capacity development)*

41. Promote financial and technical support for urban and peri-urban food systems, including statistical capacity building, voluntary technology transfers on mutually agreed terms, as well as innovative frameworks such as South-South and Triangular cooperation, among others, to strengthen capacities to generate, collect, and analyze high quality data and use it to guide decision-making related to FSN; *(technical support)*

42. Encourage disaggregation of FSN data by geospatial location and socioeconomic status and incorporate qualitative data to capture multiple and compounding dimensions of vulnerability across the rural urban continuum; *(data disaggregation)*

43. Invest in tools, information technology and digital systems that address data gaps such as those in the midstream sector and streamline and simplify FSN data collection while improving data quality and analysis tools, including AI-driven analytics, amongst others, to track food systems disruption in real-time; *(investment in data collection)*

44. Invest in and enhance participatory monitoring, adaptive learning strategies and evaluation of food policies and programmes by implementing comprehensive assessment frameworks that also include evaluating economic development, environmental socio-economic sustainability, and other broader socio-economic impacts on urban and peri-urban food systems; *(monitoring and evaluation)*

45. Invest in and learn from local governments, city food networks, local universities, civil society organizations and local knowledge institutions, as a mechanism for leveraging diverse knowledge, including traditional knowledge, digital tools, participatory frameworks, and multi-level and multi-stakeholder platforms. This approach ensures transparency, enables progress tracking, and facilitates the sharing of lessons, results, and challenges and good practices between cities, territories and across sectors; *(knowledge sharing)*

46. Prioritize funding for context-specific interdisciplinary research, including research innovation qualitative and participatory research that focuses on food security and nutrition, encompassing sustainable agricultural practices, urban and spatial planning, supply chain dynamics, public health, and social sciences to address community needs. *(interdisciplinary research*)

[7] In line with the CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening collection and use of food security and nutrition (FSN) Data and related analysis tools to improve decision-making in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.