

consolidated systems of production and consumption. “Driven by the economics and geographies of the food system; the poor eat badly because it makes economic sense for them to do so.” (Jane Battersby) Easy access to cheap, highly-processed and low-nutrient-value food coincides with rising epidemics of obesity and diabetes, often in marginalised communities.

This session discussed urban food and nutrition security from an (often ignored) urban perspective and deliberated alternative approaches to overcoming shortcomings of the productionist mainstream while focusing on more systemic issues.

INTRODUCTION

Katleen De Flander (IASS, Germany) opened the session by acknowledging the importance of the SDG’s as a political commitment yet emphasising three main concerns: 1) The danger lies in the details of translating global goals into realities in very different local contexts. Many of the urban indicators make little sense on a local level (as pilot tested in 5 cities) and there is a danger that the focus on indicators will take attention away from the overall intention of the goals and more systemic causes. 2) They are missing a large part of the problem: the global political agenda needs to be adapted to an urban world (planetary condition). The urban side of food and nutrition security is a good example of this. 3) The same governments that agreed on the SDG’s are going for free trade agreements, so how serious are they? ‘Big Food’ corporate power clearly controls the food market.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

(source: Jump-starting the SDGS in Germany: Natural Resources and Sustainable Consumption and Production; IISD Reporting Services, SDG Bulletin Vol. 208 (15)

<http://www.iisd.ca/sdgs/jump-starting-germany/html/enbplus208num15e.html>

Jane Battersby (African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, South Africa) presented outcomes of two research projects on urban food insecurity in Africa. She said rapid urbanization leads to increases in both undernutrition and obesity, noting that both are associated with poverty. She noted that SDG 2 ignores urban-rural linkages causing the urban voice to “get lost” in participation. Noting that under SDG 2 agricultural policy remains the sole entry point for food-security related interventions; she asked how the agendas of urban centres can be connected to food security.

Pavlos Georgiadis (We Deliver Taste, Greece) outlined his research on the impacts of the Greek crisis on food systems, noting that agriculture and food manufacturing were among the few sectors incurring only little damage. He suggested that a crisis can be an opportunity to change the food system, noting however that in Greece change was inhibited through inappropriate policies and incentives. He expressed hope that a new EU directive on procurement in the public food sector could support a lasting transformation. Responding to comments, he highlighted the need for a new framework that reverses the commodification of food and suggested that both poverty and education influence malnutrition.

Participants discussed, amongst other issues, the need for: training urban people seeking opportunities in rural agriculture; recognizing that there is a rural-urban continuum; and developing integrated territorial planning reconnecting food production and food consumption.

Florence Egal (Food Security and Nutrition Expert, Italy) presented the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact stating that it commits mayors to take action on sustainable food systems, sustainable diets and nutrition, social and economic equity, food supply and distribution, and prevention and management of food waste. She said the Pact’s Framework for Action and Guidebook provide a collection of good practices available for implementation most of which contribute to several SDGs. She suggested that the Pact has enormous transformational potential since local authorities have to deliver on all SDGs.

Participants then discussed the role of food councils, with one explaining that they can be a place to develop policies that motivate people to think about the production side of food. Another participant explained that many municipalities lack the mandate and budget to address food issues, making it difficult to establish such councils.

Thomas Forster (EcoAgriculture Partners, USA), described approaches to integrated territorial development. He said that the impact of urbanization on food systems places the rural urban nexus at the center of SDG challenges. He outlined the FAO City Region Food Systems, stating that it recognizes the importance of inclusive integrated landscape management and that all city regions have different “foodsheds.” He explained that local authorities need national policy support, noting that SDG 2 provides normative guidance for the national level only. He concluded that integrated territorial development needs to: integrate food system planning; highlight food and fiber flows across the rural-urban continuum; and harness the procurement power of cities and territories.

Participants discussed, amongst other issues, how to overcome the inherent tension between municipalities interested in lowering food prices for their urban constituency and rural jurisdictions seeking to increase prices for producers.

MESSAGES FROM THE SESSION



Figure 2: Session discussion. Photo credit: Piero Chiussi

- Focus on the **'How', not the 'What'**;
- Sustainable production will not lead to sustainable consumption without inclusion of **urban governance**;
- Places of concentration (cities) **demand a different approach** (beyond the production paradigm) to food and nutrition security that includes systemic issues and questions of access;
- Governments should **shift their attention from the individual to the food system** when considering why people eat what they eat. Similarly, there needs to be a radical reconfiguration of food security policy that moves away from focusing on production and household poverty alleviation to consider the nature and dynamics of the food system;
- We need to be prepared to **take advantage of opportunities** to change the system. These could be shocks to the system or legislative opportunities/loopholes to change urban food systems;
- Harness the **procurement power of cities and territories** to advance the transformative agenda for SDG 2;

- We need **more knowledge** about the interlinkage of, on the one hand, transformation processes/drivers towards un-sustainability and, on the other hand, experiences/potentials for transformations towards sustainability;
- **Replace the rural-urban dichotomy** with a framing emphasizing the rural-urban continuum or, more radical, planetary urbanisation and address **food and nutrition** in this different framing;
- Highlight the volume, impact and frequency of **food and fiber flows** across the rural-urban continuum and the need for better information;
- Policy needs to find integrated approaches to implement the SDG's beyond silos. **Food system policies are an ideal** (though largely still not implemented) "**silos buster**";
- Include **food system planning** in the urban policies and ITD (Integrated Urban and Territorial Development) in relation to SDG 11.a;
- It is important for cities to **identify map and support community champions** (individuals or groups) that are prototyping solutions, create and disseminate good food knowledge and engage with them in a fair and honest way; and
- **Empower local urban communities and provide clear mandates to local governments** to achieve the transformational change necessary to realize SDGs 2 and 11. Unlike Local Agenda 21, local interventions should be backed up by national and global policy to induce systemic change in the current global food system, which is ruled by corporate power and economic growth imperatives.

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