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# Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU

The Spanish presidency of the Council of the EU lasts from 1 July to 31 December 2023. Spain holds the presidency for the fifth time, this time following the motto 'Europe, closer', which highlights the country's commitment to advancing European unity, bringing citizens closer to the decisions present in their day-to-day lives. It identified various priorities, for instance, to reindustrialise the EU and ensure its open strategic autonomy, advance in the green transition and environmental adaptation, promote greater social and economic justice, and strengthen European unity. When it comes to social policies the presidency aims at ensuring that the wealth generated benefits all citizens equally and serves to improve their opportunities and living standards. The presidency highlights the need for a more competitive economy, but also a fairer and more caring one.



# Report on access to essential services in the EU

According to the Commission's [report](#), people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU have more difficult access to essential services such as energy, transport, and digital communication. The report, being the first one to touch on this issue, sheds light on the structural challenges these groups face in using the above-mentioned services and the need for urgent reforms.

The key findings highlight that, for instance, when it comes to water and sanitation, only 1.5% of the EU population lacked basic sanitary facilities like a bath, shower, or flushing toilet in 2020. Concerning energy.

In 2022, the share of people who struggled to keep their homes adequately warm across the EU increased to 9.3%, showing the initial impact of the energy crisis.

Digital communications affected 2.4% of people in the EU, that were unable to afford an internet connection in 2022.

Regarding financial services, most people in the EU had access to a bank account in 2021, with only Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania showing rates below 90%.

As regards access to public transport, according to the latest available data (which for transport dates back to 2014), 2.4% of all people in the EU and 5.8% of those at risk of poverty could not afford to use public transport regularly.

The report also outlines existing support measures in different EU countries, with a particular focus on social policy measures. For example, in many countries, minimum income schemes help make sure that people without sufficient resources have effective access to the goods and services they need.

The EU also supports access to essential services through its various funds (e.g. European Social Funds Plus, European Regional Development Funds, Recovery Resilience Facility), as well as through targeted legislation, universal/public service obligations, and measures to protect consumers.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that equitable access to essential services is crucial for ensuring that no sections of society are left behind, and everybody can get access to the services they need.



# Towards a European Food Policy Council as a new governance model in the future EU Framework on Sustainable Food Systems

The EESC published the key points of its [opinion](#), looking at the current food systems crisis and the need for change. The EESC calls for the [creation of a "European Food Policy Council" \(EFPC\) that would aim at achieving a more integrated and participatory approach to food policymaking, which accelerates the alignment of policies at the EU, national, and local levels](#). This would contribute to fostering a more sustainable and balanced rural and urban development and, most importantly, would increase the quality and legitimacy of EU food policy.

According to the opinion, the [EESC welcomes the announcement of an EU framework for sustainable food systems \(FSFS\), which will lay the foundations for the systemic changes that need to be made by all stakeholders across the value chain and highlights that the framework should be proposed without delay by the current Commission to address the challenges of food systems in a timely manner as any delay would risk the success of the Farm to Fork strategy](#).

Furthermore, in the opinion, the [EESC calls on the Commission to commit to the structured engagement of stakeholders and civil society in the new governance of this FSFS and points out that the idea of an EFPC would adequately fit into this structure](#). It notes the existence of food-related platforms at local, regional, and national levels, but stresses their insufficiency to effectively achieve a sustainable and just food system and resilience preparedness at the EU level and therefore considers that food democracy needs to be strengthened further and embedded in the food policy process.

The [EESC sees the European Food Policy Council as a science-based, multi-stakeholder, and multi-level platform and as an institutional, independent structure, with a potential composition of academic experts and scientists, food supply chain actors, education system actors and civil society organisations, youth representatives, and institutional representatives](#) (Parliament, Council, Commission, EESC, CoR) and it stands prepared to provide a convening space for the European Food Policy Council.



# IFWC publishes Food Waste Report

The International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC) is a non-profit organisation which represents major catering and hospitality businesses and several other NGO and institutional partners like the FAO or WWF. The purpose of the IFWC is to closely monitor and reduce food waste produced by its members in their economic activity. Precise monitoring of food waste began in 2019 in 139 locations and has been building up in scope since then. In 2022, more than a thousand sites reported their food waste in a reliable way.

Monitoring food waste and identifying the precise origin of this waste has allowed the involved food services to reduce their food waste by an average of 23% since 2019. When breaking down food waste reduction by segment, the greatest achievement is seen at the preparation and service stage, with respectively 24% and 32% decrease in food waste since 2019. Plate waste however was much more difficult to reduce and decreased by only 10% over the same period.

This food waste report does not claim to be representative of the entire catering and hospitality industry, but it highlights the importance and effectiveness of monitoring in tackling food waste.

# SOFI Report 2023



On 13 May 2023, the FAO together with IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO published one of their annual flagship reports: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023. This year's edition focused on urbanisation, agrifood systems transformation, and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum. Every year, the FAO carries out a study evaluating populations' access to food, looking at both the quantity and quality of food products.

The findings are sobering in terms of hunger, the world has made no significant progress since last year. 735 million people faced undernourishment in 2023, which amounts to 122 million more than in 2019, before the pandemic. Worldwide, roughly 29% of children under five suffered from wasting or stunting.

Not everyone is as likely to suffer from malnutrition. Except for Europe and North America, people in rural areas are more vulnerable to undernourishment. While food in urban centres may be cheaper, there is a risk of a decrease in the quality of available food, with an increase in ultra-processed food and excessively fat and sweet products.

Making a healthy diet available in cities will be a key challenge for the next decades, with almost seven in ten people projected to live in cities by 2050. At a global level, food insecurity also disproportionately affects women, with a gender gap of 2.8 percentage points regarding food insecurity.

The report concludes by advising governments to invest in research and projects favouring a healthy food environment and "increasing the availability and affordability of nutritious foods". The FAO highlights the importance of effective governance involving subnational authorities in ensuring policy coherence, reducing the cost of healthy diets and tackling food insecurity.

## German pact against food waste

In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture concluded an agreement on the reduction of food waste with 14 major retailers and wholesalers, such as Lidl, Aldi or Netto. In this agreement, the companies pledge to cut food waste by 30% by the end of 2025 and by 50% by the end of 2030, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3

In order to achieve their objective, the companies strive to avoid food waste throughout the supply chain, with a particular focus on the interface between suppliers and consumers.

Actions can include staff training, optimising processes, or cutting prices for goods approaching their best-before date. The agreement lists 25 voluntary actions and 5 mandatory actions, among which this agreement obliges 90% of the companies' operating sites to establish at least one cooperation with a receiver organisation. Inspired by the French law, the pact against food waste also states that donated food should go primarily to Food Banks.



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## QU Dongyu of China re-elected FAO Director-General

On 2 July 2023, QU Dongyu was re-elected to a second term as Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). He received a total of 168 out of 182 votes. Nominated by China, Qu was the only candidate for the FAO's top position in the election that took place on the second day of the FAO Conference (1-7 July). His new term will run from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2027.

Since being elected FAO Director-General for the first time in 2019, Qu has campaigned for a wide range of reforms and initiatives to overhaul the organisation's business model, improving efficiency and implementing best practices that support programme and administrative effectiveness.



## UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment

The UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) kicked off on Monday, 24 July 2023, at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome with a high-level opening ceremony attended by over 20 heads of State and Government, and a strong call for accelerating action to transform global agrifood systems. The three-day high-level event is convened by the United Nations Secretariat and hosted by Italy, in collaboration with the Rome-based UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP), with the objective of taking stock of the progress achieved since the first UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

The opening ceremony was led by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, and the Prime Minister of Italy, Giorgia Meloni. In his opening speech, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu highlighted that the UN Food Systems Summit process has made it clear that agrifood systems hold huge power and potential in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He noted the progress achieved in identifying the solutions that agrifood systems can provide for better production, better, nutrition, a better environment, and a better life — such as sustainable farming practices, efficient water management, responsible packaging, reforestation, and reduced food waste — and underlined that these

depended on transforming global agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres, as the convenor of the event, delivered the keynote speech, also recognizing the progress since the first UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. **However, he said, rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals means going much further, and time is running out.** The UN chief asked for a massive investment in sustainable, equitable, healthy, and resilient food systems; for government and businesses to work together to build systems that put people over profit, and explore new ways to lower the cost and increase the availability of healthy food for all; and **to reduce food systems carbon footprint to help end the “senseless” war on our planet and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.**

Italian Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, officially inaugurated the event with a welcoming message, saying that Rome will become the Food Security Capital of the World for three days, a choice “that pays tribute to Italy’s traditional commitment to this crucial issue”. **“Food security has always been one of the strategic guidelines of our foreign policy and a priority area of Italian development cooperation.** And it has become one of the major challenges of our time, in a completely interconnected world,” she said, **inviting nations to invest in research and technology, finance at scale, and cooperate to transform food systems.**

The opening ceremony also had the participation of Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed; Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina; Primer Minister of Samoa Fiame Naomi Mataafa; Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal; President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan; Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD; Cindy McCain, WFP Executive Director; and Agnes Kalibata, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Former Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

**The UNFSS+2 included a series of high-level events, dialogues and side events related to transforming agrifood systems on topics such as food waste, climate change, healthy diets, partnerships, science and technology, indigenous people’s knowledge, and transportation.**

The high-level event comes at a time when up to 783 million people are facing hunger globally, one-third of all food produced is lost or wasted, and more than three billion people cannot afford healthy diets.

Read the original article [here](#).



# UN FSS +2 Stocktaking Moment / Acting together: City, subnational, and national governments reshaping agrifood systems

Global challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition – driven by climate, biodiversity, and socio-economic crises and conflicts – require urgent and collective action and coordination among multiple actors, including city, subnational, and national governments, along with civil society, academia, and the private sector. The recent Side Event that took place in the framework of the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment in Rome, on 24 July 2023 – led by the Urban Food Systems Coalition, the Local 2030 Coalition, and the Politecnico di Milano with the support of 20+ partners\* – brought together experts and leaders to discuss how interconnected and innovative solutions can pave the way for transformative food systems that cater to the needs of all, leaving no one behind.

While setting the scene for the discussion, Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), emphasised the significance of cities in addressing food systems, especially when it comes to food insecurity and nutrition, given their high food demand. This requires both horizontal coordination within urban and rural areas and vertical coordination between regional, national, and local entities. Urban-rural linkages are essential for fostering strong, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems that provide healthy, diverse and environmentally friendly diets.

The discussion, moderated by Jane Battersby, Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town, focused on two main questions, as per the perspective of different actors: How can cities, subnational and national governments work together to deliver interconnected and innovative solutions to ensure transformative food systems?

Examples related to key food systems entry points such as food and nutrition security, food losses and waste reduction, resilience to shocks, and extreme events.



City, subnational and national governments join actions with multiple actors towards healthy, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient food systems

24 July, 12:30-13:30 (CET)  
Ethiopia room



July 2023  
UN FOOD SYSTEMS  
SUMMIT +2  
STOCKTAKING MOMENT  
IN-PERSON SIDE EVENT

Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of the City of Chefchaouen and President of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Forum of Intermediary Cities, highlighted the importance of collaboration between national governments and municipalities. He stressed three main ideas: (1) local authorities' pivotal role during crises, (2) multi-actor collaborations for inclusive resilience, and (3) the significance of partnerships in ending hunger by 2030. Strengthening public governance, involving the third sector, academia, and the private sector is also crucial in addressing food insecurity comprehensively.

As a representative of the Resilient Local Food Supply Chain Alliance, Giaime Berti, emphasised the need for sustainable urban food policies, which can impact the entire food system from production to consumption.

However, the focus should extend beyond just urban centres and consider the entire territory; equal attention should be given to the food environment in both urban and rural areas. Building a reciprocal alliance between cities and the countryside is essential to ensure a fair and local supply chain and improve the living conditions of both farmers and urban dwellers. Therefore, a multilevel governance model to bridge the gap between urban and rural regions becomes crucial to enable a transformative environment.

Multistakeholder and cross-sector partnerships were also a strategic feature of the interventions shared by Giulia Bartezzaghi,

Director of the Food Sustainability Lab at Politecnico di Milano. She emphasised the key involvement of academia, local governments, civil society, and businesses, who mobilise a unique set of resources and capabilities towards the same goal. These partnerships can play a critical role in food recovery and redistribution in cities, addressing food insecurity while also tackling food waste. Universities, as facilitators and promoters, can bring diverse expertise to, and learn from these initiatives, promoting a systemic change in the urban food landscape.

Maria Renata Siqueira, co-founder and President of Pacto Contra a Fome, highlighted Brazil's food system challenges, such as food loss, food waste, and food insecurity. Pacto Contra a Fome aims to mobilize society to fight hunger, underscoring the role of public governance, non-governmental organisations, academia, and the private sector. By working together, these actors can identify and scale up sustainable solutions to address hunger and malnutrition in all its forms in both urban and rural areas.

Lastly, Tidjani Hassoumi, Director of Environment and Landscape at Niamey Municipality, shared several initiatives aimed at enhancing food access through resilient food systems. A pilot project connecting small-scale producers and urban markets in Niamey demonstrates the potential to strengthen farmers' supply chains and promote resilient and sustainable production and healthy diets. Such projects create bridges between food waste reduction, food and nutrition security, and landscape conservation and management.

Representatives of the youth and UN-Habitat took the floor from the audience, highlighting the importance of involving young people and building linkages between different scales of governance of food, including the global level. This side event showcased the significance of cities in driving transformative food systems and underscored the need for collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Multilevel, multistakeholder approaches are essential for creating inclusive, resilient, and sustainable, food systems that cater to the needs of all populations. By working together, governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector can foster positive change and ensure food and nutrition security for present and future generations. The actions shared during this event can inform, inspire and further accelerate the implementation of food system pathways and policies into practical, inclusive delivery to pave the way for a better, more sustainable future for all.

\*The event was organised by: the Urban Food Systems Coalition (UFSC); Local2030 Coalition; Politecnico di Milano; In collaboration with: FAO, the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diet for Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS); Food is Never Waste Coalition; Resilient Local Food Supply Chain Alliance; the City of Milan; Self Employed Women's Association; Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments; United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); UN-Habitat; UNDP; 3rd Working Group of the National Council for Development Cooperation (CNCS); ACRA Foundation Italy; European Food Banks Federation (FEBA); Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Read the original article [here](#) and watch the recording of the event [here](#).

# UN FSS +2 Stocktaking Moment / Global Leaders and Stakeholders Rally for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation

The UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) saw over 3,300 participants, including delegations from 182 countries, 21 world leaders and 126 ministers, 225 Non-state Actor organisations and close to 900 UN system representatives, gather to share efforts and steer global action towards sustainable food systems.



In her remarks at the closing ceremony, UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina J. Mohammed, acknowledged the urgent need to address the challenges faced by food systems, stating, "We are failing in our quest to end poverty and hunger; in our fight against climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss; and in our pursuit of gender equality, shared prosperity and peace for all. Yet, I am heartened by what I have seen over the last three days. In two years, the vision that the Secretary-General put forward in the 2021 Food Systems Summit has rooted, creating momentum for a movement."

The summit provided a platform for countries to share their food systems journeys through more than 100 voluntary reports, offering vivid accounts of achievements and pointing to the challenges. The global community highlighted the importance of accelerating progress, in particular on access to financing, emphasising the urgent need for debt relief and increased liquidity for developing countries facing crises.

The UNFSS+2 culminated in the launch of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation. The Call to Action focuses on six concrete objectives: embedding food systems strategies in national policies; establishing food systems governance with a whole-of-society approach; investing in research, data, innovation, and technology capacities; promoting business engagement and accountability for sustainability; including full participation of marginalized groups including women;

farmers, youth, and Indigenous Peoples; and ensuring long-term, concessional finance for food systems transformation.

"We leave this stocktaking with a clear path forward, and a renewed sense of urgency and conviction. At every step, the UN System, led by the coordinated action of the Rome-based agencies FAO, WFP and IFAD, and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, will continue to provide leadership to make food systems transformation a reality for 155 countries and stakeholders that have embarked on this process already, and those that we encourage to join in the future", DSG Mohammed continued.

The Call to Action outlines the priorities for the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub for the coming years, which include a focus on increasing the capacity of National Food Systems Convenors to shepherd inclusive national processes as well as coordinating UN entities, leveraging international Coalitions of Action and aligning with other actors to optimise support for national and global action. The Hub will continue its pursuit of evidence-based and multistakeholder food systems transformation processes, through the promotion of independent scientific advice. It is additionally tasked to draw on the newly created Window for Food Systems Transformation under the UN Joint SDG Fund - for which \$100 million needs to be secured by the end of 2024 - to enable fast-tracked transformation processes, working with the Resident Coordinators, the UN Country teams and the broader ecosystem of support.

The UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment has set the stage for concrete and accelerated efforts to turn the tide, empowering stakeholders and food systems actors to work in synergy and in solidarity to make food systems work for the benefit of people, planet and prosperity.

Read the UN Secretary General’s Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation [here](#).



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