

# **International meeting Urban food policies Markets, catering services, urban/rural connections**

**16-18 November 2015, Montpellier**

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## **Providing an opportunity for local urban authorities from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America to share experiences and exchange views on food policies**

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The UNESCO Chair on World Food Systems and CIRAD, gathered together within the Surfood (Sustainable Urban Food Systems) programme, in collaboration with many partners<sup>1</sup>, are organizing an international meeting dedicated to the sharing of knowledge and practices among local governments of cities and urban areas, along with research and development actors. The objective is to contribute through dialogue to a better knowledge and understanding of urban food policies in the world, their construction, modes of action and impacts.

This meeting will provide an opportunity to show that, in addition to national policies and international agreements, cities can also make a vital contribution to food security and sustainable food systems.

In this perspective, the organizers are **calling for contributions from local governments of cities and urban areas in Southern countries** that explore experience gained in three little-studied subject areas:

1. Market infrastructure and logistics;
2. Catering services;
3. New types of relationships between cities and rural areas.

This applies to large cities but also to small or intermediate towns in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

## **Call for contributions**

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### **Context**

In recent decades, under the impact of both globalization and decentralization, the governments of cities and urban areas (urban governments) have become increasingly powerful political actors. Since the 1990s they have mobilized to implement policies that are more engaged than those of their national states, especially in the environmental field (Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Aalborg Commitments, etc.). These governments have acted locally, while joining together at national or international levels to have an impact on the policies at these scales (Metropolis, UCLG, ICLEI, ORU Fogar, etc.).

It was national and international policies primarily that previously drove the food system, but since the 2008 food price crisis it has also emerged as a local policy issue. This is reflected in recent statements signed by city collectives that advocate the implementation of local policies to promote a more sustainable food system (the Bonn Declaration of Mayors – 2013; Seoul Declaration – ICLEI – 2015; “Milan Urban Food Policy Pact” – 2015). Research on this issue is also being mobilized, contributing to the building of exchange networks to improve knowledge on the initiatives taken by cities and their effects on food.

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<sup>1</sup> This conference is organized in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), the FAO (Food for the Cities Programme), the Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUA Foundation), the United Regions Organization – Fogar, the Mercadis (wholesale markets of Montpellier), Agropolis Foundation and the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH).

Thus, cities are addressing sustainability challenges caused by the dominant industrial food system and exacerbated by increasing urbanization that amplifies distancing and concentration phenomena. A multitude of actors have been mobilized to experiment with alternative models. Urban governments, aware of their available resources (knowledge concentration, financial means, public authorities, biomass, workforce, citizen initiatives, infrastructure, services and markets) are conducting experiments and building food policies aimed at both ensuring the **food security** of the population (urban and rural) and **improving the sustainability of the food system** by focusing on its environmental, social and economic impacts.

The phenomenon of the construction of food policies by urban governments is now beginning to be studied, especially in cities of industrialized and emerging countries where the formation and formalization of these policies is the longest established and most advanced (e.g. Toronto, Bristol). But these initiatives, which are to varying degrees structured into food policies, are also multiplying in developing countries in different contexts. While many studies have enlightened the issue of urban and peri-urban agriculture, other modes of action are still little known and rarely debated.

For this reason, the organizers are launching a call for contributions, inviting **policymakers and/or technical managers from urban local authorities** to share their experiences and exchange with other cities. Proposals for papers should address one or more of the following subject areas:

### **1. Market infrastructure and logistics**

The creation of market infrastructure, central locations for food to flow into the city and to disperse throughout it, is an important driver that urban governments can mobilize to improve food security and sustainability of the food system. Market infrastructure includes wholesale markets, markets, retail stores or kiosks, supermarkets, fairs, development and management of street selling, storage warehouses and food processing areas (e.g. slaughterhouses, small-business estates, industrial zones). The organization of logistics (transport, exchange platforms) is also a driver that urban governments can utilize.

### **2. Catering services**

By catering services we mean the provision of food to schools and workplaces (company restaurants, areas for private catering, food courts, etc.). While local authorities do not directly manage catering services, they are able to play a role in their organization and regulation. For example, authorities can intervene to ensure access for all to quality food, to influence types of food production through public contracts, to improve the quality of jobs, educate consumers, reduce waste and pollution, etc.

### **3. New urban/rural relationships**

Historically, cities have shown little concern for the specifics of food production, the working conditions and remuneration of farmers and the effects of production methods on the environment and biodiversity. Cities have been regarded simply as market opportunities that have encouraged competition including between their agricultural periphery and more remote areas. The geographic, economic and cognitive gap between urban and rural populations has generated misunderstandings and concerns. It is in response to this distancing that cities and rural areas are now seeking to invent new types of relationships that are more balanced and supportive. Such relationships include the re-localization of the urban food supply, urban investment in rural areas, the provision of urban services to local farmers, partnership or contractual agreements between urban and rural areas, but also experimental forms of food production and the contribution of city representatives in agricultural policies. To avoid reducing the subject solely to issues of re-localization and linkages with peri-urban agriculture or near hinterland, topics that have already been extensively covered elsewhere, there will be a preference for analyses of new forms of relationships between urban and remote rural areas.

For each of these themes, papers should not be limited to a description of what has been done but should also analyse the value and the effects of interventions in relation to the objectives of food security and the sustainability of food systems (e.g. the effects on: price levels and stability; access to food for vulnerable populations; nutritional quality of food; employment in urban and rural areas; conditions of food production; consumption of resources, both non-renewable (oil, phosphates) or endangered (water, firewood), in urban and rural areas; pollution; health and nutrition, etc.).

## How to respond to the call for papers

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Complete the online form – [http://urbanfoodpolicies2015.cirad.fr/submit\\_a\\_paper](http://urbanfoodpolicies2015.cirad.fr/submit_a_paper)

In case of difficulties or for further information, contact: urbanfoodpolicies2015@supagro.fr.

### Important recommendations

This call for papers is open to political or technical administrators of towns, conurbations, cities, urban areas or city-regions. The organizers aim to obtain a balanced selection of the presented cases to encompass metropolises and medium-sized cities. While papers may be prepared with the help of experts (field officers, scientists, etc.), the organizers will only cover the expenses of one representative per selected presentation.

The undertaking or policy presented should have been implemented over a long enough period to show results and impacts (quantitative and qualitative). However, proposals for the presentation of plans or policies that have yet to be implemented – or that have been implemented but for an insufficient time to yield results – may still be submitted. Such papers will be subject to review by the Organizing Committee and may be selected for more informal discussion sessions (e.g. posters). In this case, the organizers will not fund the participants.

Abstracts should address the following points:

- *What policy/action has been implemented? A description of the strategy, its design and implementation must be provided;*
- *What are the impacts (measured or observed) of this policy or action?*
- *How have city or urban authorities intervened in the process? What modes of governance have been used and how are the actors linked together?*

Abstracts should not exceed two pages, i.e. about 5,600 characters, and must be submitted in English, French or Spanish.

### Timetable

The closing date for the call for papers is 17 August 2015.

A selection will be made in late August on the basis of the submitted abstracts. Selected authors will be contacted in September 2015 and will be required to submit a full paper to the organizers at least one month before the event, i.e. prior to 15 October 2015.

Full papers will be presented by the authors at the “Urban Food Policy” conference to be held from 16 to 18 November 2015 in Montpellier and will be published in a book at a later date.