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Launch of the HLPE-FSN report
Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition,
in the context of urbanization and rural transformation
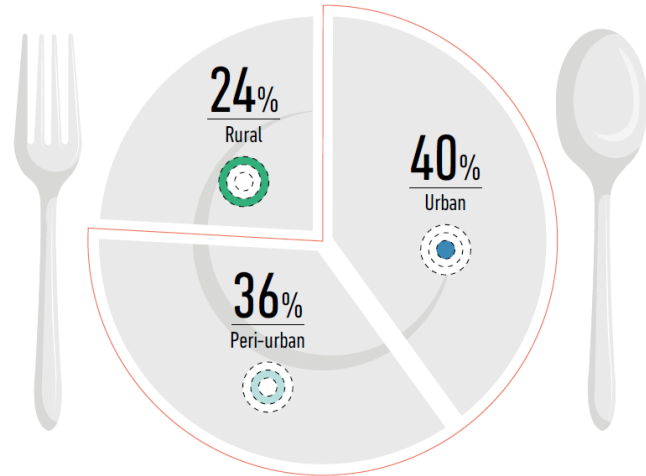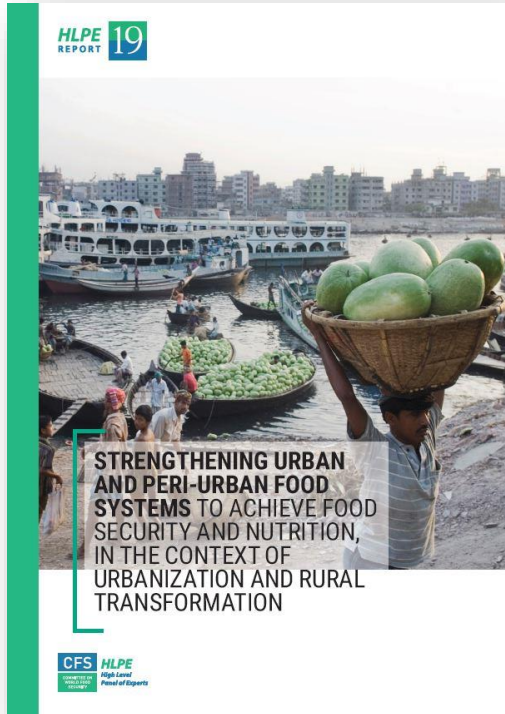
Jane Battersby

Drafting team leader

2 July 2024

Why is it important to address urban and peri-urban food systems and FSN?

- Increasingly urbanized world.

- Over 70% of the world's food is consumed in urban areas.

- U-PU FSN shaped by food systems and by urban systems, and their relationships to rural areas.

- Urgent need to redirect food security and food system policies and investments to address this growing challenge.

DISTRIBUTION OF MODERATELY AND SEVERELY FOOD-INSECURE POPULATION ALONG THE RURAL–URBAN CONTINUUM, 2022

24% Rural

40% Urban

36% Peri-urban

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

- Report process and context

- Theory of change and important features

- Key messages

- Recommendations

Context

CFS request, based on OEWG on Urbanisation, rural transformation and implications for FSN.

The recommendations for the report will form the basis for the CFS policy convergence process on Urban and peri-urban food systems (starting in October 2024).

CFS Policy recommendations (in 2025)

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Report structure

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CHAPTER 1

Rationale for the report, the underlying need for strengthened U-PU food systems for FSN. Principles, core concepts and theory of change.

CHAPTER 5

Most recent available data on U-PU FSN. High prevalence of food insecurity in U-PU areas; highest incidence and women, children, marginalised ethnic groups and migrants. Food safety challenges concentrate in poor U-PU areas. Ultra-processed foods.

CHAPTER 2

How the process of urbanization shapes food security, nutrition and food systems governance in U-PU areas. Importance of the context. Call for improving resilience.

CHAPTER 6

Analysis of the governance challenges and opportunities. Multilevel, multisectoral, multilateral and multi-actor governance processes within and beyond the state. Power asymmetries common in multi-actor platforms.

CHAPTER 3

Challenges and opportunities U-PU food systems. Importance of maintaining food system diversity to ensuring food system resilience and FSN.

CHAPTER 7

Outline of six clusters of policy instruments (regulatory policy, fiscal tools, transfer instruments, market policies, investments, and behaviour change), which combined can form integrated strategies.

CHAPTER 4

How food consumption patterns in U-PU areas are shaped by the interactions of the food system with other systems, including housing, water, energy, and socio-economic status.
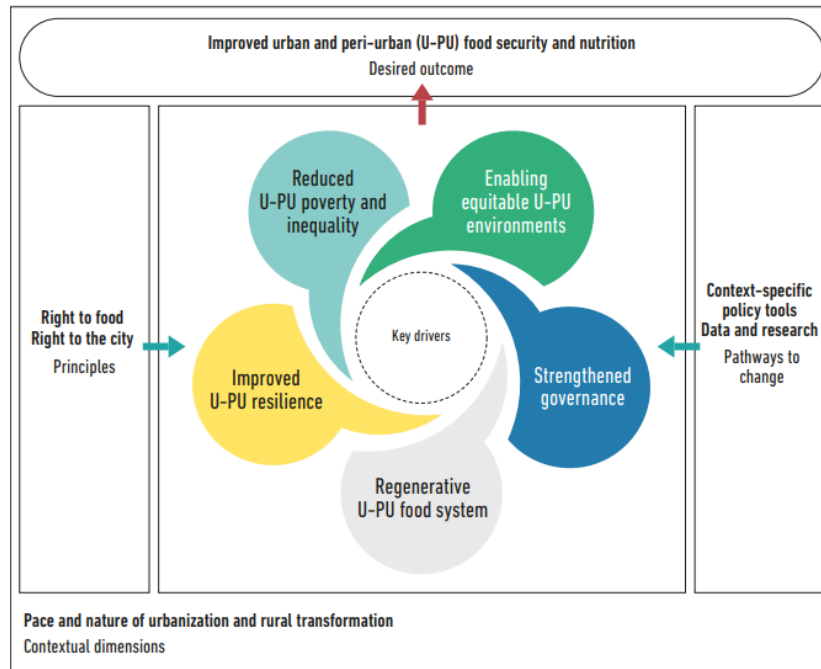
CHAPTER 8

Recommendations.

Key definitions

The urban is viewed as a physical space, but also as a site of politics, a site of economic activity and livelihoods, a location where the presence or absence and distribution of infrastructures shapes urban form and function, and a space in which social relationships shape systems and governance. Importantly, the urban is recognized as a space where there are important flows of materials, energy and resources within and beyond its borders.

U-PU food systems incorporate both

1) food system activities that take place within a given urban or peri-urban area and their interaction with other systems, and

2) food system activities that take place outside the urban or peri-urban context, but which flow into the given urban or peri-urban area, and their interaction with other systems.
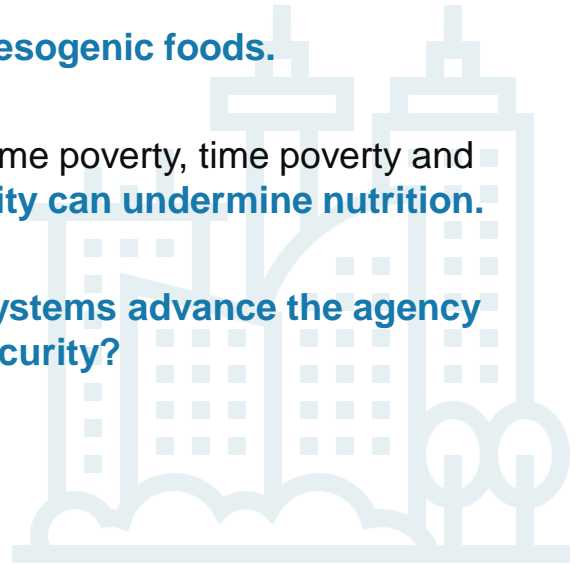
Theory of Change

Improved urban and peri-urban (U-PU) food security and nutrition
Desired outcome

Reduced U-PU poverty and inequality

Enabling equitable U-PU environments

Key drivers

Right to food
Right to the city
Principles

Improved U-PU resilience

Strengthened governance

Context-specific policy tools
Data and research
Pathways to change

Regenerative U-PU food system

Pace and nature of urbanization and rural transformation
Contextual dimensions

Understanding urban and peri-urban food systems

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- Food systems **traditionally oriented towards availability and affordability of foods for urban** populations.

- Urban and peri-urban food systems are however often **unsustainable, fragile, unjust, prone to shocks, and not aligned with healthy diets.**

- **Urbanization also provides opportunities** for livelihoods, improved diets and increased agency.

- **Urban and peri-urban food governance can be transformative of wider food systems.**

Specific challenges of urban food systems

- Increased presence of highly processed **obesogenic foods.**

- Responsiveness of urban conditions to income poverty, time poverty and infrastructure poverty: **ensuring accessibility can undermine nutrition.**

- **Under what conditions can urban food systems advance the agency and sustainability dimensions of food security?**

HLPE-FSN Guiding principles – desirable characteristics of food systems

Grounded in the right to food as overarching principle

- **Equitable, just and inclusive** system to ensure **right to food** and other relevant rights;
- **Productive and prosperous** food systems to guarantee **available, healthy, safe, nutritious and affordable** food for all;
- **Participatory and empowering** to include all people and groups to make choices and exercise voice in shaping the system;
- **Resilient** to respond shocks and crises; and
- **Regenerative** and respectful to ecosystem to ensure all dimensions of sustainability.

Some characteristics of U-PU food systems

U-PU food systems are diverse and characterized by coexistence of formal/modern & traditional/informal activities.

Traditional/informal activities have important benefits and should be strengthened, while often some regulatory systems hinder their potential.

Urban agriculture has received significant policy attention, but conflicting evidence of its impact. Importance of urban agroecology principles.
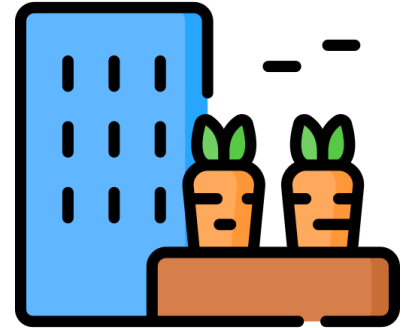
Market and retail (food environments) are critical to FSN in U-PU food systems.

Some characteristics of U-PU food systems (II)

Need to look beyond markets and **consider logistics, transport, processing** and how these are governed across the spectrum and how that affects food security and nutrition outcomes.

Food feeding cities often comes from afar, with **limited control by local governments**.

Non-market mechanisms – such as school meals programs, community kitchens, food banks, and food aid – are essential for FSN, especially of those not served adequately by markets.

Food environments and urban factors shape consumption

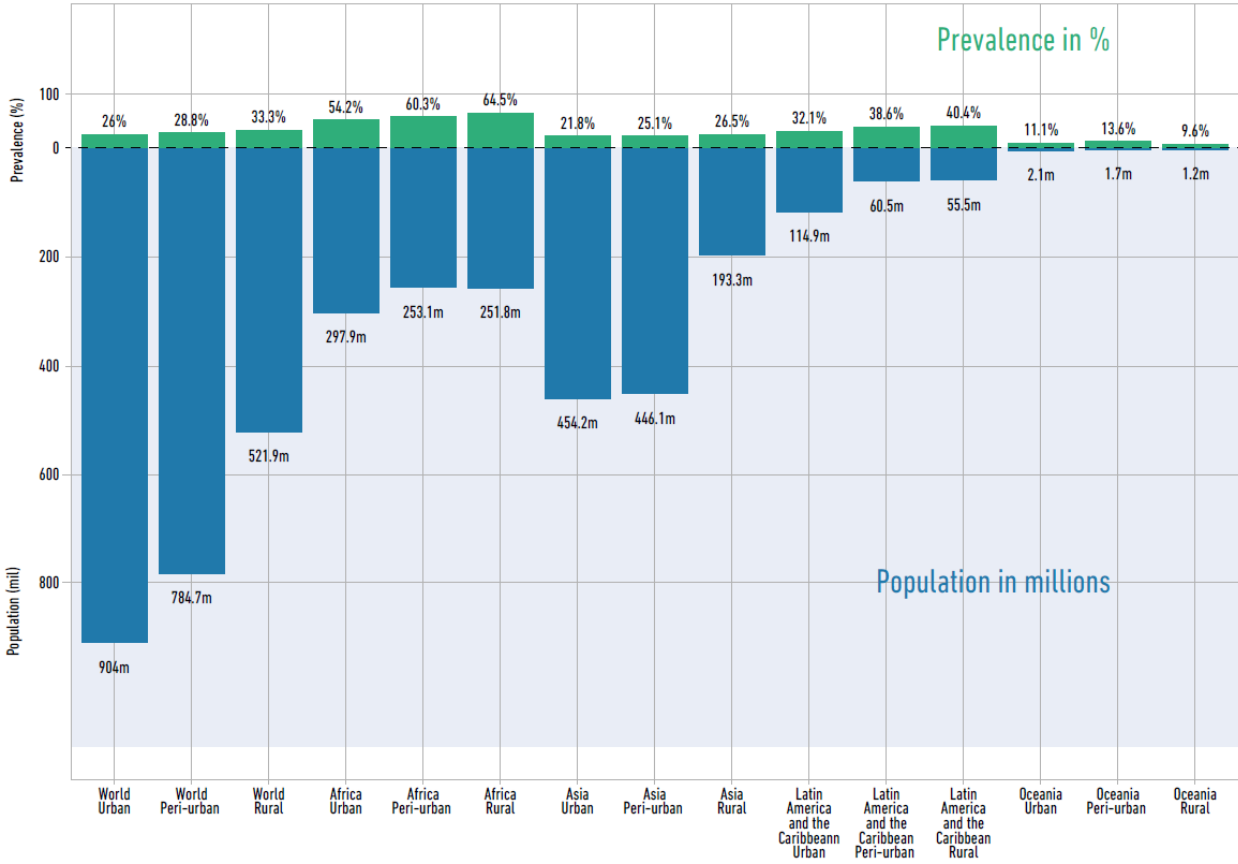Affordability is a key driver of food choice among the food insecure.

U-PU consumption and affordability are shaped by external, family and personal food environments.

Food choice within U-PU food environments extends beyond food system issues, and therefore requires a broader suite of interventions.

Food Security

Population with severe and moderate food Insecurity

Food security and nutrition in U-PU areas

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Food insecurity particularly high in slum areas

High prevalence of multiple burdens of malnutrition

More diverse, but lower quality diets than rural areas

U-PU have distinct hungry seasons

Governance of urban food systems

Complex nature of urban and peri-urban food systems: **multi-level, multilateral and multi-actor governance processes** within and beyond the state.
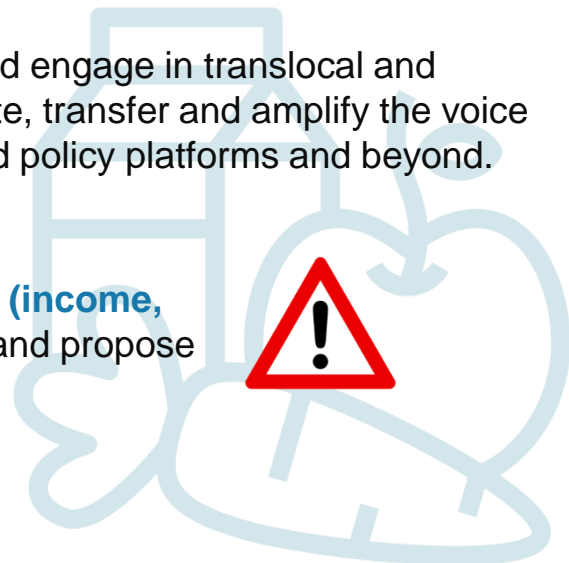
Understand the **powers of local governments**, inclusive of the degree of decentralization, mandates, and capacities, & their relationships to other levels of government, and other actors.

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Governance of urban food systems (II)

Cities are acting **as food policy innovators** and engage in translocal and transnational networks to collaborate, cooperate, transfer and amplify the voice of urban government in global and regional food policy platforms and beyond.

Need to take diverse situations into account (income, connectivity, size, governance, capacities), and propose context-specific solution.

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Policy instruments

- A range of policy actions is required to shift institutional structures, power dynamics and individual behaviours:

  – Regulatory policies
  – Fiscal instruments
  – Transfer and redistributive mechanisms
  – Market policies
  – Investments from public, private and community sectors
  – Behaviour-change instruments

- Need for data and capacity strengthening

Overarching recommendations

- **Integrate food system into urban planning** and include other sectors in cities for food sensitive planning and design.
- Ensure that urban food policy focuses on **affordable, healthy, and nutritious** diet for needs of low-income groups.
- Acknowledge and support the role of **informal sector** and actors, while balancing between food safety and informality.
- Strengthen **local and territorial aspects**, while recognising that **many will continue to depend on food from elsewhere.**
- Invest in **information technology and digital systems** for improving the evidence base policy making, while ensuring the access to technology for informal sector and small food producers.
- Protect **decent work and employment** in U-PU food systems.

Urban and peri-urban food systems for FSN (1)

- Production
  - e.g. land-use zoning to protect urban agriculture, livestock and fishing; support for territorial systems and shorter supply chains
- Trade
  - e.g. include local government in national dialogues on food trade; consider implications of trade policies on poor and food-insecure U-PU consumers
- Midstream
  - e.g. Encourage public and private sector investment in infrastructure, logistics, innovation and technology; foster diversity in midstream actors

- Markets and retail
  - e.g. protect and sustain traditional markets; work with market traders and street vendors to improve food safety
- Public procurement and non-market initiatives
  - e.g. invest in nutrition-oriented public procurement programmes; strengthen the role of civil society organizations in providing food aid in times of crisis
- Food loss and waste
  - Provide supportive infrastructure and access to innovation and technology to informal-sector actors; promote and support circularity

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Urban and peri-urban non-food systems for FSN

- Explicitly integrate food into urban planning, including incorporating food sensitive planning and design principles.
- Incentivize investment towards low-income residents and neighbourhoods for the provision of water, sanitation, waste management and reliable energy.
- Enhance decent work and employment in U-PU food systems.
- Strengthen urban health services and promote nutrition in health services.

Urban and peri-urban governance for FSN

- Increase financing and capacity of local and urban governments to tackle urban food system challenges.
- Include local and subnational government in the development of national policies that are relevant to the food system.
- Identify mandates of different levels of government and ensure that policy is multilevel, multisectoral and multi-actor.
- Develop inclusive multi-actor platforms to encourage the active participation of local communities in decision-making processes.

Urban and peri-urban resilience and sustainability for FSN

- Develop U-PU food system resilience plans.
- Identify critical food infrastructure to be prioritized in times of crisis, and populations and areas most vulnerable to food insecurity.
- Embed resilience thinking into urban planning and design.
- Maintain and enhance food-system diversity to bolster systemic resilience.
- Integrate food into climate-adaptation plans.

Data and research for FSN

- Develop U-PU specific data tools.
- Ensure finer grained disaggregation of data to allow analysis of intersectional vulnerability.
- Incorporate qualitative and spatial data into U-PU food policy.
- Invest in monitoring and evaluation of food policies and programmes, including non-food specific impacts.
- Invest in and learn from city food networks as a mechanism for sharing knowledge and training and increasing local government voice in national and international policy spaces.

Acknowledgements

HLPE-FSN members
    Oversight committee led by Hilal Elver

HLPE-FSN secretariat

Geetika Anand for research assistance
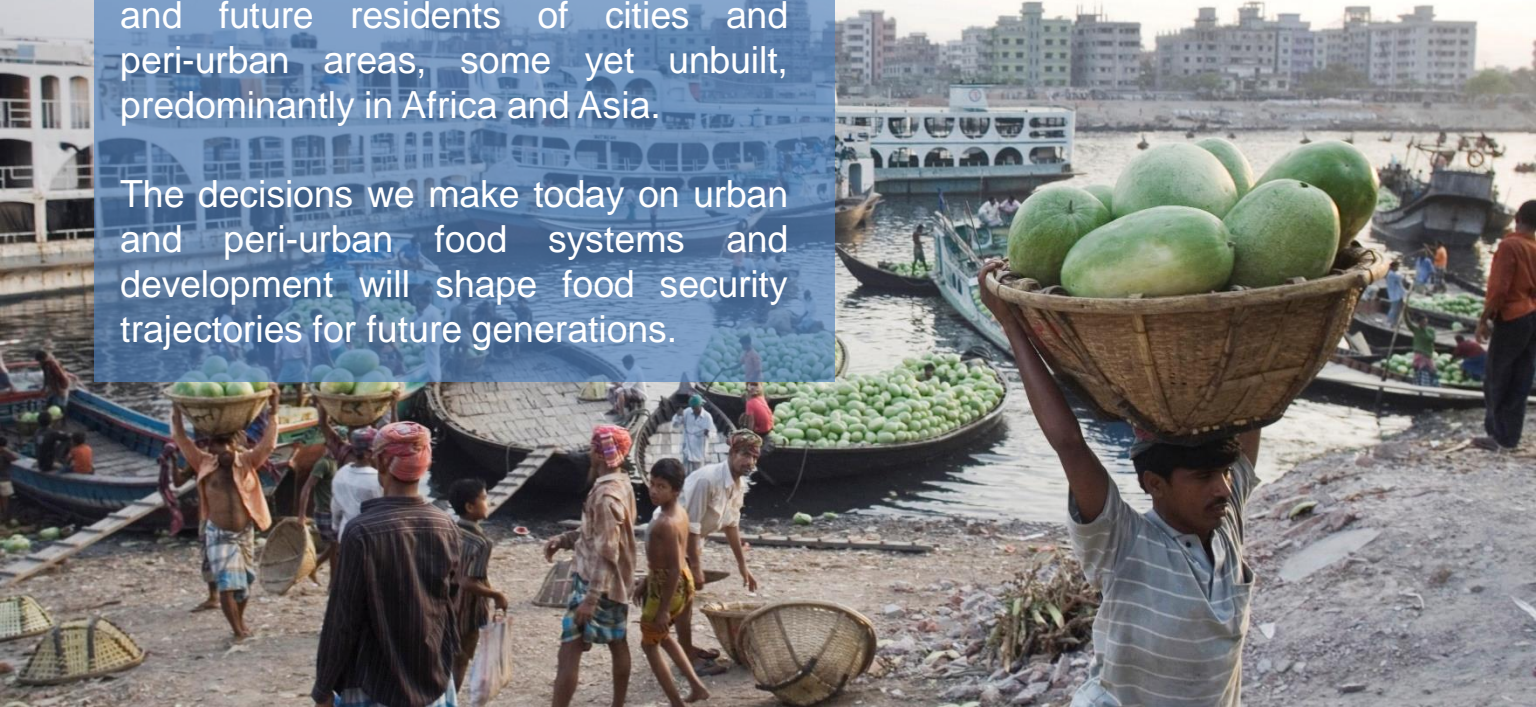
Consultation participants

Peer-reviewers

Colleagues who provided input and advice

This report is dedicated to the current and future residents of cities and peri-urban areas, some yet unbuilt, predominantly in Africa and Asia.

The decisions we make today on urban and peri-urban food systems and development will shape food security trajectories for future generations.

Thank you!

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