

# “Local governments are taking the lead in paving the path toward sustainable global food systems”

*Attendees will be provided with a sustainable breakfast*

**3 October 2023 from 8:30 to 9:45**

## Venue:

The side event is in person at the Palais Des Nations, Room H.207/8/9 and Online at Microsoft Teams [here](#)

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

**Join with a video conferencing device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

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Meeting ID: 389 326 936 391  
Passcode: 2oXdSS

Video Conference ID: 121 738  
097 5

## Registration:

To participate in this side event in person you must register for the 2023 Forum of Mayors at: [indico.un.org/event/1004421/](https://indico.un.org/event/1004421/)



## Background

The globe's food systems are facing increasing challenges and are deemed unsustainable. It is estimated that in 2022, between 691 and 783 million people around the world experienced hunger. The cost of a healthy diet escalated globally by 4.3 percent in 2021 as compared to 2020<sup>[1]</sup>. The world is not progressing adequately to fulfil the commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is due to the interconnectedness between our **food systems** and their impact on people, the planet, and prosperity.

While food systems contribute significantly to global employment, they also persistently generate soil, water, and air pollution. Furthermore, they contribute to over one-third of greenhouse gas emissions, up to 80 % of biodiversity loss, and utilize around 70 % of freshwater resources. In addition, alarmingly, nearly one-third of all produced food is either lost or wasted, according to data collected by FAO and other organisations.

The prominent **trend of urbanization**, combined with shifts in incomes, employment, and lifestyles, is driving changes across agrifood systems. This trend presents both challenges and opportunities to ensure universal access to affordable and healthy diets. Addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities brought about by urbanization necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between agrifood systems and the rural-urban continuum. Numerous cities worldwide are contemplating how to lead the transformation of their local food systems and play a crucial role in shifting towards a more sustainable global food system.

[1] Sources: FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. 2023. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023. Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation, and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum, FAO

This side-event provides a platform for mayors and diplomats to deliberate on the following questions:

1. Supporting the development of sustainable urban food system policies.
2. Incorporating urban expertise in the formulation of regional, national, and international food system policies.
3. Facilitating dialogues across all levels of government.

This side-event is one of the events taking place in conjunction with the Forum of Mayors 2023. It serves as an avenue for governments at all levels to engage in dialogue and collectively work towards a more sustainable food system within their respective territories. The event is co-organized by the City of Ghent, the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UNOG, and the Global Cities Hub, GCH (previously Geneva Cities Hub).

## Agenda

8:40 - 8:50	<p><b>Opening and Welcome</b> H.E. Mr. <b>Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve</b>, Ambassador – Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations in Geneva</p>
8:50 - 9:00	<p><b>Keynote Speech</b> Mr. <b>Mathias De Clercq</b>, Mayor of Ghent</p> <p><i>The Mayor of Ghent will give his vision on how his city leads the way in the sustainable food transition. The city of Ghent's local food strategy 'Ghent en Garde', has received multiple awards, including the UN Global Climate Action Award in 2019. Ghent's local food system is driven by intense cooperation with civil society, citizens, research institutes and businesses and underpinned by an innovative governance model involving all relevant stakeholders.</i></p>
9:00 - 9:20	<p><b>Moderated Panel Discussion</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What best practices function around the world? What is happening elsewhere? In your experience, what are cities around the world doing to improve the food situation?</li> <li>2. How can the international community help local and regional governments to make their food systems more sustainable?</li> <li>3. How can all levels of government cooperate more strategically to advance the sustainable food transformation in cities?</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. <b>Christophe Golay</b>, Senior researcher and representative of the "food initiative" for the City and Canton of Geneva</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab</b> – Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, Responsible for UNECE's Food in Cities work, Forests, Land and Housing Division</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Olena Ovchynnikova</b>, Technical Officer, Office of Sustainable Development Goals, FAO</li> <li>• A Mayor representing the interregional segment of the Forum of mayors</li> <li>• Moderator: Ms. <b>Kamelia Kemileva</b> Co-Director, Global Cities Hub</li> </ul>
9:20 - 9:40	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
9:40 - 9:45	<b>Conclusions and Closing Remarks</b>