**UCLG Inputs to the SR on the Right to Food**

1. **Which government programs and measures were effective during the pandemic in ensuring that people had access to good food? Please identify those measures you think should be expanded and made permanent.**

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the key role of local governance in building food systems resilience. It revealed that the **right to food is closely linked to local service provision.** Valparaiso (Chile) for example strengthened the participation of local communities to ensure the access to natural resources and essential services such as water, food, health and housing by recognizing them as human rights. Similarly, the Ararquara (Brazil) Ames (Spain) and Saint Louis (USA) ensure food to vulnerable groups by recognising food policy as part of local human rights policies of the city.

Furthermore, the pandemic urged many cities and territories to realise that in order to ensure food availability and nutritious food, **we need to rethink our systems of production and consumption to ensure their sustainability.** These new models must be grounded on **proximity and circularity, focused on developing  another way of daily life with local ecological, economic and social value creation, in accordance with the challenges for our cities and territories**.

Integrating proximity in food-related policy making is central to preserve our planet, develop urban and territorial quality of life, and harness inclusive innovation value creation.Araraquara’s (Brazil) ‘Plan Araraquara Without Hunger’ includes a thematic on the ‘Creative and Solidarity Economy’, which includes the Coopera Program. This aims to foster the generation of work and income with cooperative actions, professional qualifications and productive inclusion. The Plan also focuses on a Solidarity Network, an intersectoral action that seeks partnerships with various sectors of civil society aiming at food collection campaigns, which was essential during the pandemic.

1. **What specific measures would you like your government to build upon or implement that would enable: 1. A just transition for workers; 2. Strong land/water rights and genuine agrarian reform; or 3. Holding corporations accountable?**

Local and regional governments around the world can provide excellent examples of how governments can support just transitions in the context of the climate crisis. For example, the city of Gao (Mali) set up water wells to address the increasing droughts and desertification affecting biodiversity; while heavily impacting the livelihood and the economic development of local communities. Lere (Nigeria) improved and accelerated the planting of trees and developed urban irrigation and farming systems to mitigate the risks linked to the brutal erosion of wild and human life and floodings due to climate change. The Region of Valparaiso (Chile) and the city of Sfax (Tunisia) have been long facing the rarefaction and degradation of their natural resources, mostly due to the activities of private companies. In response, the City of Sfax opposed the reopening of a polluting plant near its coastal area.

1. **What government measures or programs can better connect small, local food producers to consumers?**

Building on the lessons learned from the crisis, food systems are highly placed on the agenda of local and regional governments with **a transversal and multidisciplinary approach, and considering a territorial lens**. In cities and regions **flourish models of proximity, strengthening the collaboration with local producers and communities**. Food in cities implies protection of small producers, establishing rural urban relations, promoting gender policies, taking care of local market networks, active public policies in public purchasing, food waste management, education, 'big data', urban development, food sovereignty, and so on.

**A focus on proximity**

Paris (France) has several initiatives to support urban agriculture, including enabling residents to grow fruits and vegetables on public land and establishing a network of urban farming projects. The city also supports the creation of short supply chains, connecting urban farmers with local markets, schools, and restaurants. New York City’s (USA) Good Food Purchasing program encourages public institutions to purchase food from local and sustainable sources. Barcelona (Spain) promotes proximity through the development of a network of neighborhood markets, where residents can purchase locally sourced produce. Similar initiatives have been implemented in Toronto (Canada), Melbourne (Australia), Copenhagen (Denmark), and Vienna (Austria).

**Solidarity action to help the most vulnerable communities**

Local and regional governments work closely with their social centres to identify people at risk, distribute meals and strengthen links with people who are isolated and vulnerable. These initiatives have been developed with the operational support of local charity networks. Some municipalities have also taken initiatives with local producers through the distribution of solidarity boxes. For example, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Baltimore City's Food Policy and Planning (FPP) Division developed a comprehensive Emergency Food Response involving City agencies and nonprofit, business, and community partners. The City distributed over 1.7 million food boxes, including over 1.4 million produce boxes, totaling approximately 178 million servings of fresh fruits and vegetables to residents in Healthy Food Priority Areas (HFPAs) across the city. In some cases, local government initiatives have been implemented to help students who have sought assistance from social workers in order to provide them with packages provided by food banks. Iztapalapa (Mexico) for example put together a policy entitled “Mercomuna” which facilitated access to food stamps during the pandemic making links between markets, communities, and food drives.

1. **What government measures or programs can better encourage local agroecological practice and movements?**

To deal with the various disruptions to farmers’ activity, food retailers and food aid associations, local and regional governments have deployed the strength of their networks by calling on partners whose expertise and presence in the field has enabled rapid operational capability in the actions targeted and with the tools proposed. For example, the Urban Agriculture Program in Rosario is a citywide initiative that encourages citizens to engage in urban farming by providing training, resources, and support. It has created more than 500 community gardens and green spaces, generated employment and income for thousands of citizens, and helped to reduce food waste and improve access to fresh and healthy food. Similarly, Araraquara has developed policy around Family Agriculture and Agroecology, the strategic action includes Food Acquisition of Family Agriculture, Farmers’ Fairs, Mechanized Agriculture, Community Urban Gardens and the Organic Compost Project.

1. **What should an international coordination plan responding to the food crisis and based on the right to food focus on and include?**

With over 70% of the world’s food now being consumed in urban areas, it is essential that local and regional governments’ are adequately accounted for in all deliberations around food systems transformation. In their efforts to guarantee the right to food for all, local and regional governments are already acting on and innovating on various levers, **such as promoting local food products and models based on care, proximity and solidarity** (Barcelona, Araraquara), **cultural and behaviour change initiatives** (Vienna), protecting urban agricultural land, equitable and sustainable public procurement (Vienna, Copenhagen, New York) **waste-management programs** (Quelimane, London, Rourkela), **empowering diverse populations through food** (Rourkela, Vancouver**), food-sensitive planning** (Cape Town, Milan), **public meal programs** (Addis Ababa, Belo Horizonte, Yeosu, Mouans-Sartoux, Paris, Torres Vedras) and **engaging in multi-stakeholder, integrated, participatory policy processes** (Cape Town, Vienna, Vancouver, Quito, Valencia). Local and regional governments are thus key players in co-creating sustainable and equitable food systems that consider urban-rural connections and the entire value chain, **putting care for people and the planet at the center.**

Despite their significance, local and regional governments commonly lack funded mandates or budgets for their work in food systems and this lack of financing poses a significant barrier to enabling them to achieve their transformative potential. Furthermore, the presence of local and regional governments in international dialogues and related multilateral processes remains limited and overlooked. **Nevertheless, recent momentum following the UN Food Systems Summit and the adoption of the UCLG Pact for the Future has set the tone towards remodeling more inclusive and sustainable food systems that recognise the key role of local and regional governments, alongside national government, international organisations, the private sector and civil society.**