

IPES-Food (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems)

Press release

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City and Regional Governments Lead the Way on Real Food and Climate Action, as National Governments Lag.

On the eve of COP28, food system experts urge governments to stop neglecting food systems in their climate pledges, and to pay attention to the pioneering emissions-slashing efforts of cities and regions.

Read the report and summary at: <https://www.ipes-food.org/pages/plateplanet>

16 NOVEMBER, BRUSSELS - As national governments lag on urgent and far-reaching climate action, they need look no further than the pioneering strategies of their own cities and regions to transform food systems - according to a [new report out today](#) by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food).

Governments will soon gather at COP28 (Dubai, November 30) for the first global review of progress towards the Paris Agreement, however, the UN has concluded that governments are way off course in limiting greenhouse gas emissions to reach the 1.5°C goal. And they are still ignoring a clear and proven pathway to slashing emissions: making our food systems more sustainable. The new report '[From Plate To Planet](#)' finds weak and fragmented action at the national level, with food systems routinely overlooked in climate negotiations and national climate plans - despite food systems contributing one third of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The picture is completely different, however, when we look to city and regional governments. The report unveils the efforts of dozens of leading cities and regions to reduce food miles, cut food waste, transform school canteens, and spark shifts to sustainable diets. The expert panel calls on national governments to take inspiration from local action and harness the emissions-cutting potential of transforming food systems.

Olivier De Schutter, co-chair of IPES-Food, said:

"It's truly inspiring to see cities and regions leading the way on action to transform food systems and reduce emissions. Even more remarkable, they have kept forging ahead despite Covid-19, despite the cost of living crisis, and often without much support from national governments.

"These policies are quietly working because local governments are addressing climate change with communities long-term together with other challenges that people care about, like healthy diets and supporting local businesses.

"These are no longer just inspiring examples. Local governments are offering a blueprint for real people-centred climate action - and laggard national governments must start to follow."

In total, the emission cuts pledged by local and regional governments go 35% above and beyond those pledged by national governments, and these pledges are being translated into real and measurable actions, especially when it comes to food systems.

Following a 3-year process of engagement with pioneering local authorities,[1] the report highlights a range of inspiring local food and climate action.

IPES-Food calls on national governments to take the opportunity of the Paris Agreement stocktaking at COP28 to systematically include food systems and local action in their climate commitments. Further, it calls on governments to build on what cities are already doing - supporting local government actions with more funding and scaling out successful approaches to other cities and regions.

De Schutter added: *“It’s time for national governments to build on the pioneering work of local governments to transform food systems - drawing down emissions from plate to planet.”*

Inspiring examples of city and region action on food and climate

From mega-cities like São Paulo and New York that are providing millions of healthy, sustainable meals per day in their schools and hospitals to Mouans-Sartoux, a town in France that has helped nearly 60% of residents shift to healthy and sustainable diets, the IPES-Food report showcases the actions of pioneering cities and regions.[2] These are drawn from signatories of the [Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration](#).

New York City, USA

- [Committed](#) to a 33% food emission reduction by 2030 across all City agencies, including schools, hospitals, jails, senior centres, and homeless shelters.
- Introduced plant-based default meals in all 11 public hospitals, resulting in a 36% reduction in carbon emissions in the first year.

Kate MacKenzie, Food Policy Executive Director for the NYC Mayor’s Office said: *“We are making significant strides in reducing emissions through serving less carbon-intensive foods. We hope the example of our increased plant-based food offerings - which are not only good for people but also lead to reductions in food waste and sustainable supply chains - can spur other leaders to enact new policies on food and climate change and join New York City in committing to reducing food-related emissions by 33% by 2030.”*

São Paulo, Brazil

- [Protected](#) ecosystems and farmland in rural districts on the outskirts of the city from urban development.
- 160 farmers have been offered technical assistance to boost yields, increase income, transition to sustainable farming practices, and find urban buyers for their fresh, organic produce.

Aline Cardoso, Secretary for Economic Development at the City of São Paulo, said: *“Our food policies in the Department for Economic Development are very cross-cutting - acting on 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals - we are fighting poverty, hunger, inequality, and fostering a green economy.”*

Mouans-Sartoux, France

- [Integrated food policies](#) simultaneously protect farmland, promote organic agriculture, serve 100% organic food in schools, incentivize a shift to sustainable healthy diets, and slash food waste.
- 59% of Mouans-Sartoux residents have changed their eating habits to eat healthier, more sustainable food resulting in a 26% reduction in food emissions.

Gilles Pérole, Deputy Mayor of Mouans-Sartoux, Delegate for children, education and food, said: *“Whether it’s for school meals or for local residents, our sustainable food policy that promotes organic produce, local agriculture, green food and reduced food waste has helped us cut the climate impact of food by 26%. If we decide, it’s possible!”*

Notes:

[1] [The Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration](#).

[2] For more on the actions taken by these cities, see the [full report](#) and [additional case studies](#)

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IPES-Food (The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems) is an independent, expert panel shaping debates on how to transition to sustainable food systems around the world | @ipesfood

