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Private Sector Mechanism

Position Paper

Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization and rural transformation

Introduction

The world's food systems are at a critical point with growing calls for efforts to ensure food systems provide healthy diets while also reducing their impact on the climate and environment. Urban and peri-urban food systems offer unique solutions as they provide increased access to food in urban areas by developing shorter and more resilient value chains. Moreover, as urban areas expand and the demand for healthy food increases, these innovative ways of producing food provide much needed access to a wider diversity of food products thereby fostering diet diversity leading to more favorable nutritional outcomes and reducing food loss and waste related to poor transportation and cold chain infrastructure. A diversified food system is a resilient food system.

1) Promote urban and peri-urban food systems as an exciting and attractive business and career prospect.

- Showcase the diversity of career options within urban and peri-urban food system to attract talented people with demonstrated interest in such areas as biology, environmental science, urban planning, agricultural engineering, plant science, politics, economics, marketing, business, sales, robotics and more.
- Celebrate national strategies that incentivize entry into the field, especially those that support fair compensation to farmers, work to alleviate stigmas against agricultural professions, simplify access to markets, and mobilize government resources for knowledge sharing between countries and sectors.

2) Utilize public spaces for the creation of urban and peri urban food systems

- Accelerate the safe conversion of land use from non-agricultural to agricultural purposes, for example by making the land use histories of urban spaces publicly available and making soil testing resources more easily accessible.
- Build multistakeholder councils to consider spatial dimensions and strategic use of public spaces in the context of urban and peri-urban food systems.
- Establish clear legal frameworks for the use and transfer of vacant lots and public land for agriculture.
- Facilitate investments in the unique needs of urban agriculture, including sustained soil remediation and improvement processes.

3) Create policy environments that encourage innovation and technology adoption and investment to effectively leverage the opportunities that urban and peri-urban food systems provide.

- Capitalize on the unique strengths and opportunities of developing countries, as the policy and regulatory environments of the developing world can allow for more nimble innovation and adaptation.
- Ensure that regulatory frameworks are fit for purpose, encourage innovation and adaptability, are uniform across countries and regions and are targeted towards engaging women, youth and marginalized peoples.
- Establish policy frameworks that facilitate innovative financing models for individuals and businesses investing in urban and peri-urban food systems.
- Incentivize agricultural R&D, including R&D supported by farm groups, co-operatives, and the private sector.
- Encourage innovative uses of technology throughout urban and peri-urban food systems to capitalize on the strengths of market proximity.
- Promote tax incentives for the installation of on farm renewable energy.
- Integrate renewable energy systems to power urban farm operations, such as lighting, irrigation, and climate control.

4) Support farmer and community markets

- Provide financial incentives to create rural urban linkages to support farmers to participate in urban food systems.
- Facilitate investment in urban farmers and thereby creating local employment.
- Support food banks through direct linkages to urban farmers and community markets.

5) Create school based agricultural systems

- Create school based agricultural systems to reframe agriculture as a rewarding, relevant professional choice in where young people can have an incredible impact on issues such as climate change, hunger and malnutrition, population displacement, poverty alleviation, and more.
- Create innovative partnerships and collaborations with industries, businesses, and organizations to expose youth to urban farming and agriculture in ways that integrate academic and production-focused learning opportunities.
- Invest in tertiary education with a focus on numeracy and finance; robotics; artificial intelligence; agronomics; communications and marketing; agriculture-specific business management; supply chain management; logistics; food processing and value addition; and innovative retail.

6) Facilitate value added processing

- Facilitate agricultural product aggregation systems in urban contexts, allowing numerous small producers to access markets, processing and branding services they normally would not produce enough volume for.
- Disseminate technical assistance related to cooperative management, marketing, and logistics.
- Provide financial incentives for urban farmers to access processing and branding.