

‘Sustainable, Healthy and Fair Food’ is Urban and Regional Food Declaration

Food is fundamental to life and health. Increasing urbanization, the industrialization of agriculture and a changing climate are adversely impacting many parts of the global food system. This interconnected food system includes production, processing, distribution, consumption, waste management, and meaning creation. The food system faces compounding global challenges and variable local issues. The scale of these challenges and issues is reflected in local concerns about food security, producer livelihoods, local economies, damage to ecosystems, persistently high levels of hunger and malnutrition, a pandemic of dietary-related illness and disease, and biodiversity reduction.

Many organization and government policy areas—including health, planning, transport, infrastructure, economic development, education, trade, biosecurity and environment—are relevant to the food system. A coherent long-term food policy, at whatever level and scale of governance, enables the integration of these different areas. Cities and regions need a sustainable, fair and resilient food system that provides dignified access to healthy food for all citizens, offers viable livelihoods for local producers, and engenders careful stewardship of regional ecosystems.

Purpose

To achieve a vision of a sustainable, healthy and fair food system, integrated action is needed from individuals, communities, businesses, organisations and governments. The purpose of this Declaration is to encourage such action through offering the following:

- A set of agreed principles;
- A lexicon of agreed definitions and common language;
- A generalized framework for policy and legislative changes;
- A tool for mobilization and advocacy; and
- An associated set of tools for assessment and analysis.

Vision

Signatories to this ‘Urban and Regional Food Declaration’ share a vision of a sustainable, healthy and fair food system. We commit to the following characteristics as shaping our approach towards such a system:

- A thriving diversity of food production throughout our towns and cities and countryside, from networks of backyard, community and school gardens, to market gardens, ethical animal rearing, orchards, vineyards and food forests in our peri-urban and regional areas.
- A valuing of food producers as caretakers of the land and ecosystems, and as guarantors of our present and future food security.

- An expansion of farmers' markets, a wide variety of farm-gate shops and trails, and high streets revitalised with shops that burst with local and seasonal produce, all supporting a growing local food economy that generates jobs and livelihoods for communities.
- A food system that supports the health and well-being of all, recognising that access to good food is a fundamental and universal human right.

The food system is a complex set of practices that face unique and unprecedented challenges. This Declaration and its principles are based upon four domains as expressed in Figure 1: **Circles of Social Life**¹.

Principles

Ecology: Our food system should actively maintain the health and integrity of the natural environment on which it depends, seeking to maintain the health of existing ecosystems and enhance biodiversity.

Economics: Our food system should support, create and sustain local and regional livelihoods while building a resilient food industry.

Politics: Governments and organisations should collaborate and work holistically, both internally and externally, while proactively engaging with communities to inform policy, planning and legislative actions relating to environmental stewardship, food security, health and wellbeing, and urban and regional livelihoods.

Culture: Our food system should embrace the diverse and cultural significance of food, recognizing its central role in promoting social cohesion, life-long and intergenerational learning, and community health and wellbeing.

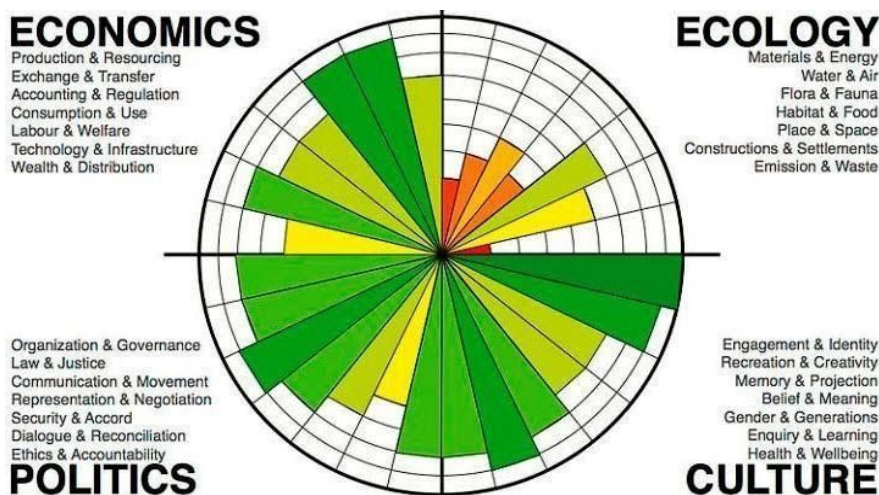


Figure 1. **Circles of Social Life**

An understanding of and agreement with these principles provide the basis to engage in further collaborative action.

¹ Developed by Professor Paul James. For more information, see <http://www.circlesofsustainability.org/> and [Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice](#).

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