

# **Italy Towards Sustainable Food Systems**

## **National Pathway Document for the UN Food Systems Summit**

September 2021

As part of the National Dialogue, Italy organized a permanent roundtable that included the private sector, civil society, academia, local organizations and institutions. The roundtable is open and inclusive and has a regular calendar of meetings.

The roundtable has been addressing the issues of food systems' alignment with Agenda 2030 since September 2020 and its work has made possible to organize jointly a national dialogue in April 2021 and to participate in various other independent dialogues. A knowledge platform has thus taken shape and it has allowed to dive into deeper analysis at the national level of commitments and good practices from the Private sector, thus enabling a better comprehension of needed change for Food systems to grow in a sustainable manner.

The roundtable has identified three streams of work that align with some of the results of the five areas of engagement emerged from the Pre-Food Systems Summit in Rome, in particular, sustainable production, resilience local food network and Food loss and waste.

Starting from a common shared principle that the issues of environmental and social sustainability typical of agro-food systems can only be effectively addressed by respecting territorial differences, biodiversity, the values and traditions present in the various contexts, the national stakeholders proceeded to address the issue of adopting local solutions as food and agro-food activities are a direct expression of the heterogeneous cultures of our societies.

Italy is now continuing its engagement with the various actors in the food systems to work together, with mutual trust and respect, pursuing objectives that can only be ambitious, promoting technological, organizational and social innovation, with the support of public institutions and civil society. While recognizing that strong investments are needed to facilitate the transformation underway, in terms of infrastructures, support for change, access to the innovation ecosystem and food education, the roundtable recognized the central role played by the private sector in combating the loss of biodiversity, climate crises, food insecurity and nutritional issues.

In this area, the path already taken by Italian companies on sustainability issues is significant. Having shared the commitment to further improvements is important and appears in line with what is happening in other contexts and with the requests coming from many international institutions. The alignment with the growing attention to sustainability on the part of consumers allows, moreover, to open up new markets and profitability opportunities for companies with a clear commitment to Agenda 2030. The experiences already gained, the close collaborations between the various actors, the traditional attention to quality, territories, biodiversity and the

principles of the Mediterranean Diet of our companies define a business model and supply chain that can prove to be very effective in the current scenario.

While 2021 has been pivotal in starting this conversation and utilizing the many opportunities to enhance this model, including the G20, the Pre-Food System Summit and the upcoming COP 26, Italy will continue its engagement through the National roundtable on food systems to build up a food system aligned with the Agenda 2030.

Next steps include the refining of three documents, each on the specific work streams of the national roundtable:

- 1) Private sector best practices on food production and marketing.
- 2) Eliminating the waste and loss of food
- 3) Building resilient local food networks against Hunger and malnutrition.