

## The Global Cities Pledge on Food Justice

### Summary

The experience of the pandemic has shone a harsh and hard light on the fragility of food security within urban cities exacerbating existing inequalities in many communities.

Birmingham City Council is calling on cities across the world to collaborate with us to raise the voices of cities in national and international arenas and collaborate with us for action on food justice.

As an elected member of the MUFPP Steering Committee, Birmingham is calling on city leaders to pledge towards working collectively to address SDG 2 and ensure that the right to food is enshrined in city food policy.

Cities that pledge will be invited to work with us as part of a learning and sharing network to build political networks between cities as we work together to ensure food justice for our citizens across the world.

### Rationale

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights set out the right to adequate food. Article 12 recognises the right of everyone to enjoy the highest standards of health. Member States are therefore expected to ensure that all their citizens (regardless of status) have adequate access to safe and nutritious food at all times. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is grounded in human rights and to achieve, protect, respect, and fulfil the right to food within this timeframe city authorities play a key role in ensuring that the food system is safe, healthy, sustainable and accessible to all especially in times of crisis.

Despite policymakers and food system stakeholders setting out to tackle inequalities, up to 811 million people are expected to go to bed on an empty stomach each night. Furthermore, food poverty is no longer confined to the developing world. Cities in Europe and North America are reporting increases in citizens struggling to access nutritious food. As an example, the Food Foundation reported 14% of UK families experienced food insecurity in 2020 at least once during a six-month period<sup>6</sup>. In today's Food System, access to a healthy, sustainable diet is more a privilege than a right. Food poverty was made visible during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to place a psychological, moral, and financial burden on city authorities. The hopes and aspirations of cities will not be met if they are unable to respond to the right to adequate and nutritious food.

During the COVID-19 crisis, some cities implemented emergency food plans, but many were unprepared. In some regions, this unpreparedness has been exacerbated by the climate crisis and disaster

displacement. Despite the best efforts of City Mayors committed to tackling food system issues since signing the MUFPP, it appears we are now in a state of food emergency and need to work together to respond to these crises. This includes a recognition that Article 11 also states that member states should consider the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need

As an elected member of the MUFPP Steering Committee, Birmingham is calling on city leaders to pledge towards working collectively to address SDG 2 and ensure that the right to food is enshrined in city food policy. Cities that pledge will be invited to participate in a global network to work together to address Food Justice through our shared work on food systems and our key role in national and international food systems.

## The Pledge

*“As city mayors, we are committed to addressing food justice by acknowledging that all our citizens irrespective of status are entitled to safe and nutritious food at all times. We recognise the benefits of a collaborative partnership to address the global challenge of food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and disaster displacement.”*