

In action



Joining forces to shape a resilient,
sustainable, safe & healthy food system!

October 2022

In a foreword

2

In the loop

Leave NO ONE behind: Celebrate with us the World Food day on the next 16th of October!

3

Involved

WUWM co-organized with Eurocities, an expert working session meeting "Cities and wholesale markets Collaboration opportunities for food sustainability and accessibility": Find the main outcomes here!

5

In Facts

7

In Focus

8

#WUWM2022, fostering cooperation to reach SDG 12.3 : Only Innovation and investments in better food supply chains can Prevent Further Food Waste

Interview

10

with Abdullah Al Hameli, CEO of Economic Cities & Free Zones, AD Ports Group about #WUWM 2022 Conference

Interview

13

with Delphine Acloque, Expert on food systems in MENA countries.

In Good Practices

18

Peter Defranceschi, Head of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability- share with us the "EU School Scheme and the Manifesto on minimum standards for public canteens" that ICLEI just launched!

In Events

20

WUWM Retail group met in Stuttgart (Germany) with the German association of wholesale markets to foster fresh food street markets and plan forthcoming events!

In WUWM's World

22





In a foreword

2

Dear readers,

October is approaching and so is our Conference, which will take place from the 19th till the 21st of October in Abu Dhabi, under the theme “Global food security in the XXIS: Risk, challenges and solutions to ensure resilient and sustainable fresh food supply”.

The Conference will tackle the most urgent challenges that global fresh food systems are undergoing. This Conference will reunite field actors, the ones that ensuring daily delivery of fresh food to billion citizens around the world with other crucial actors of the chain – policy markets from local, national and international organizations-. Beyond having an overview of the food security situation around the world, identifying flows and risks, and making an assessment of the food supply challenges in the post-COVID-19 world, we hope that this Conference will be a turning point for the fresh food sector with a clear engagement of all the actors of the fresh value chain to engage in a rapid transformation of our sector into sustainability and resilience. The WUWM Abu Dhabi Conference will be indeed a crucial moment for all the key actors involved in the global fresh food supply chain since as a matter of fact is it clear that no change is possible without



dialogue and cooperation among the various multi-stakeholders of our industry. All our operations must be rethought with a systemic approach, that is regenerative (net-positive and circular) and that can ensure better food for everyone. To enhance this path, we are proud to have really high-level speakers, like the H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates, FAO Director General, Mr. Qu Donguy, Ms; Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, and much other top-ranked experts. The aim will be to bring bold ways and concrete pathways to create this new sustainable “food architecture” from the farm to the fork that can ensure better production, better supply chains, better nutrition, a better environment, and better life for all where no one is left behind.

We invite all our members, partners, and, actors in the industry to join forces with us!

Stephane Layani,
WUWM Chairman

In the loop:

**Leave NO ONE behind:
Celebrate with us the World
Food day the 16th of October!**

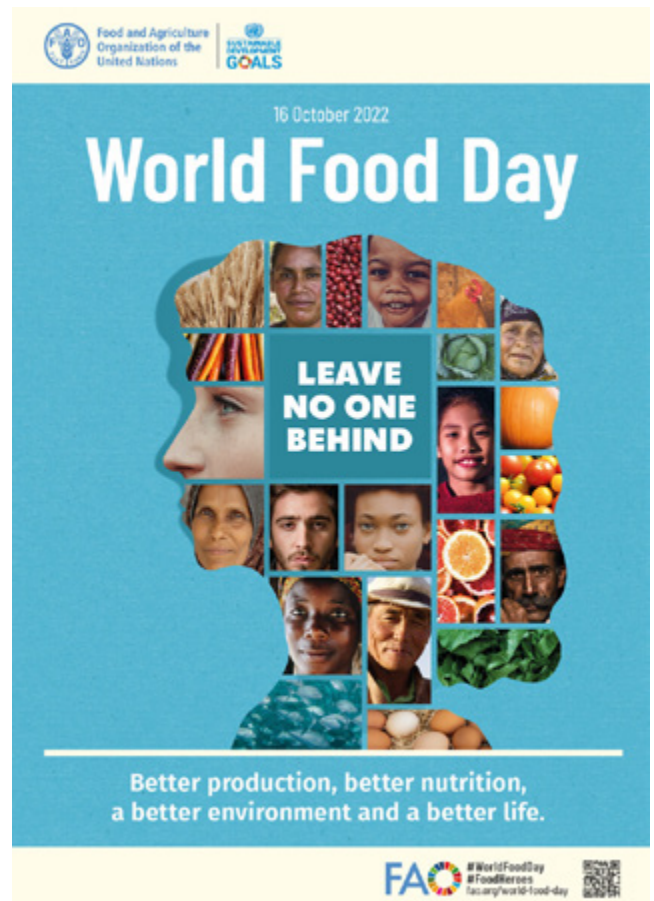
The World Food Day was originally meant to mark the day that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was established- in the year 1945-. The purpose of this celebration is to raise awareness about hunger, malnutrition, sustainability and food production. The celebration of World Food Day helps in spreading awareness about the crucial need for effective agriculture and food policies which are implemented by governments across the world to make sure that there is sufficient food available for everyone.

The day is celebrated widely by many other United Nations organizations concerned with hunger and food security, including the World Food Programme(WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) , and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Collective action across 150 countries worldwide is what makes World Food Day one of the most celebrated UN days on the UN calendar. Hundreds of events and outreach activities bring together governments, businesses, CSOs, the media, the public, and even youth.

This year the theme of World Food Day 2022 is Leaving No one Behind In 2022, we'll be dealing with a continuous pandemic, violence, an unstoppable warming environment, rising prices, and international tensions. This has a negative impact on world food security.

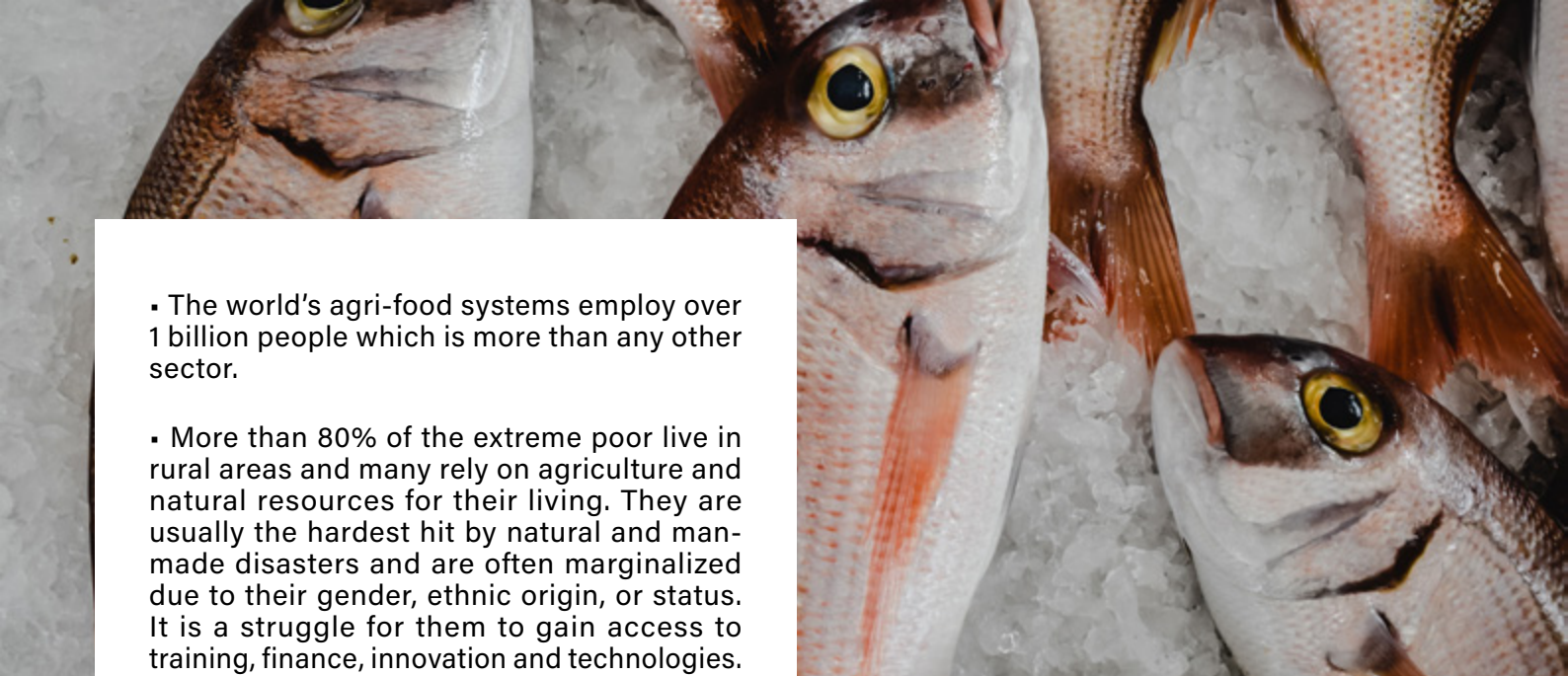
In this context, urgent action is needed in order to create a world where everyone, everywhere, has regular access to sufficient nourishing food. There should be no one left behind.



According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), households in emerging economies are spending an average of 25% of their budget on food - up to 40% in sub-Saharan Africa and 60% in Haiti - rising inflation is putting families in desperate straits and perpetuating the cycle of poverty across generations, particularly the cycle of poverty in rural areas. Moreover, 276 million of people are facing severe food insecurity with an increase of 25% in acute hunger since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Other recent FAO statistics show that today:

- Almost 40% of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet.
- 2 million people are obese or overweight due to poor diet and sedentary lifestyles.
- The world's food systems are responsible for more than 33% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- 15% of the world's food is lost due to inadequate harvesting, handling, storage, and transit, and 17% is wasted at a consumer level.



- The world's agri-food systems employ over 1 billion people which is more than any other sector.

- More than 80% of the extreme poor live in rural areas and many rely on agriculture and natural resources for their living. They are usually the hardest hit by natural and man-made disasters and are often marginalized due to their gender, ethnic origin, or status. It is a struggle for them to gain access to training, finance, innovation and technologies.

The FAO calls for urgent action to ensure sustainable agri-food systems in which everyone will have access to a diverse range of affordable, nutritious, and safe foods, and no one goes hungry or suffers from malnutrition in any way.

Sustainable agri-food systems can ensure food security and nutrition for future generations without jeopardizing the economy, society, or environment. Ultimately, they lead to more efficient and effective production methods, improved nutrition, and a healthier environment for everyone.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's clear that a different approach is needed immediately. In addition to making it more difficult for farmers – who are already dealing with climatic variability and extremes – to sell their harvests, it has also worsened poverty in cities, causing an increasing number of people to need food banks. Efficient and regenerative agri-food systems that can feed 10 billion people by 2050 are needed.

“We believe that a healthy and sustainable food environment needs adequate infrastructure that can support large volumes of daily supply for all in a highly organized world.”

WUWM is proud to take part in this day and to promote efficient and sustainable fresh food value chains. Accessibility to healthy diets should be a right for all. We believe that a healthy and sustainable food environment needs adequate infrastructure that can support large volumes of daily supply for all in a highly organized world. In this context, we believe that modern fresh food wholesale markets are at the core of this new approach to food security, as they are the main providers of fresh, quality, seasonal food to citizens around the world. Often public infrastructures (which is the case for more than 90% of wholesale markets around the world) are the operational arm of governments to ensure better fresh food supply. They also have the potential to become the cornerstone of the reterritorialization and sustainable transformation of local food systems. By structuring and giving transparency to the market they play a crucial role to ensure the commercialization of produce to the rural farmers, fostering stability in the prices, and reducing food waste along the chain. Ultimately reducing prices to consumers and helping to bring more accessibility to fresh produce to poor households.

Together we can transform agrifood systems and build forward better by implementing sustainable and systemic solutions that consider development in the long term, inclusive economic growth, and greater resilience.

It's time to work together and create a better, more sustainable future for all. Make #WorldFoodDay YOUR day. Join the call by organizing an event or activity or show how you are taking action by connecting with us online!

Involved:

WUWM co-organized with Eurocities, an expert workshop, titled “Cities and wholesale markets Collaboration opportunities for food sustainability and accessibility”: Find the main outcomes here!

WUWM co-organized with Eurocities, the Milano Urban Pact, and the “European Union Food Trails initiative” a high-level working meeting with several European city representatives and wholesale markets on the 26th of September. The title of the workshop was «Cities and wholesale markets - Collaboration opportunities for food sustainability and accessibility to healthy diets». The aim of the workshop was to present good practices of cooperation between wholesale markets and cities. The idea is to showcase the multiple and cross-sector collaborations that cities can foster with wholesale markets in order to achieve city objectives in terms of better accessibility to healthy diets, better nutrition, better logistics, a circular economy, and a greener sector.

During the meeting, experts showed the strong relationship between wholesale markets and cities and how vital it is to foster this relationship to benefit from all the potential that it can create. Diverse and concrete examples of three of the major wholesale markets in Europe were presented on different topics of city policies:

Rome wholesale market presented a project to prevent food loss and waste, “Frutta che Frutta non Spreca”, a concrete initiative to reduce food waste by recovering fruit surplus. CAR build a processing infrastructure on site in order to transform and put fresh fruits into cans as smashed purees and confitures. This procedure extend the life of those products from 1 week to 6 months and help poor people to have access to healthier diets – as these cans are distributed at really low price in special “solidarity” shops around Rome.

A second case of city-wholesale market collaboration was presented by Mercamadrid, which presented two best practices: The first one concerns cooperation with Madrid city hall to foster sustainable, efficient, and connected mobility with the goal of decarbonizing freight transport for electric mobility. Together they are developing: 200 charging stations for electric vehicles like the “Volta zero” truck, which is the first electric truck on the market! Hydrogen plants for creating energy thanks to solar energy and water from Madrid to supply heavy vehicles like trucks or buses, and zero-emission vehicle fleets.

The second project is about education on the food system and healthy eating. Madrid city hall brings school children to Mercamadrid to raise children’s awareness of the functioning of the food chain from a sustainable perspective.





6

The third best practice was presented by the Rungis market in Paris. The project is called "Agoralim" and it is planned to be finished in 10/15 years. It is located in the framework of meeting the food needs of Paris and its surrounding areas which count more than 18 million people. The goal of the project is to create a sustainable food environment that can provide local richer, cheaper and fresher food to the citizens. A key point is the reterritorialization of food supply chains by strengthening the relationship between farmers and consumers. Agoralim will help local farmers to an effective transformation to sustainable agriculture by providing them with 100 hectares of agricultural land and supporting them financially and technically. Multiple cities are engaged in Agoralim alongside other major stakeholders (farmers, associations, retailers, etc..). Showing again a clear example of engagement between cities and wholesale markets to foster food systems transition in concrete projects.

For a long time, cities were not considered major actors in terms of food policies, mainly because food is usually produced in rural areas. Nevertheless, COVID pandemics and other major events brought back to the table the importance of city engagement in food policies and the role that local authorities can play in developing sustainable food systems. Also when cities are not collaborating with wholesale markets they can develop policies that are then hard to be followed by the sector. To strengthen collaboration means also to be more effective in terms of better and greener logistics, better food procurement, fostering effectively local farmers, facilitating education for kids on healthy eating, reducing food waste and helping food banks, and creating new sources of energy (bio-gas, solar panel, etc).

"During the meeting, experts showed the strong relationship between wholesale markets and cities and how vital it is to foster this relationship to benefit from all the potential that it can create."

At WUWM we want to support and facilitate cooperation between cities and wholesale markets, we think this collaboration are key in order to ensure food security and SDG in cities. We look forwards to strengthening our relationship with Eurocities and with other cities' organizations sharing our values of better food policies and more sustainability in cities!

In facts:

- Almost 40% of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet.
- According to the 2022 Global Report on Food Crises Mid-Year Update, the number of people in food crisis or worse is forecast to reach up to 205.1 million in 45 of the 53 countries/territories. The highest number of acutely food-insecure people in GRFC history.
- Poverty and drought are the most common causes of food shortages in the world.
- Agriculture causes about 23% of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions and uses up to 92% of the world's freshwater.
- According to the World Economic Forum reducing food waste is the 3rd most effective way to address climate change
- Almost half of all fruit and vegetables produced are wasted worldwide (UNEP)
- Lack of technology and infrastructure is the main cause of food waste in Africa, as opposed to household food waste in the developed world.
- The world's agri-food systems employ over 1 billion people which is more than any other sector.
- Agriculture is among the less penetrated sectors in terms of digitalization and application of digital technology. Nevertheless, many studies have shown that technology can help transform the global food production system and mitigate its impact on the climate and environment.

“Almost half of all fruit and vegetables produced are wasted worldwide.”





In Focus:

#WUWM2022, fostering cooperation to reach SDG 12.3 : Only Innovation and investments in better food supply chains can reduce food waste.

8

Each year the world produces more food than it consumes, yet as much as 40 percent of all fresh food is wasted before it reaches our tables, according to a recent study by the United Nations Environment Programme. Today almost half of all fruit and vegetables produced are wasted.

In the sight of succeeding to achieve SDG 12.3 (halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses) by 2030 experts in the field are calling for a 'smarter supply chains' that adopt industry-wide initiatives that seek to eliminate the current risks in the system. They advise that the industry needs to take a new, more innovative approach to supply chains, which views them more as an ecosystem with each participant optimizing their role and deploying the necessary technologies, processes, and methodologies.



In this sense, they call for the adoption of an approach of "living supply chains".

"The concept of the fully functioning 'living supply chain' is not far off, but it can only become a reality when all participants – producers, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers – are able to contribute data in real-time" said Dr. Chris Mejía, a Research Scientist at the MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics and the Director and Founder of the MIT Food and Retail Operations Lab, who will be speaking at the WUWM Conference.

"It is true that more sophisticated, global food supply chains require greater infrastructure and training, we must start building them now" he added.

“Experts in the field are calling for ‘smarter supply chains’ that adopt industry-wide initiatives that seek to eliminate the current risks in the system.”

The conference will review some of the best practices being deployed in global markets. For instance Rungis Wholesale Market has established its own business incubator, Rungis&Co. to enable entrepreneurs and new companies to test innovative solutions and services in support of food provision. Benoit Juster, Executive Director of Operations at the Rungis Wholesale Market, explained: “Wholesale markets need to support innovation in food supply to develop local solutions that meet the needs of their communities”

The conference will also profile some of the critical projects and policies being undertaken in the region to support enhanced food chains. Such as the UEA’s ambitious Food Security strategy, which aims to make the UAE the world’s best in the Global Food Security Index by 2051 and among the top 10 countries by 2021, develop a comprehensive national system based on enabling sustainable

food production through the use of modern technologies, enhance local production, develop international partnerships to diversify food sources, activate legislation and policies that contribute to improving nutrition and start legislation and policies to reduce waste. Showing the importance of government mobilization and ambitious food policy frames in order to foster at local level food system transitions. Also, the Abu Dhabi’s ports initiative will be forecasted: the company announced that it is developing one of the region’s largest food trading and logistics centers at KIZAD, in partnership with Ghassan Aboud Group. A clear example of private sector mobilization and engagement.

Stephane Layani, WUWM Chairman, said: “Now is the time for action, the time to take bold steps to introduce measures that will enable each industry actor in the living food supply chain to avoid unnecessary risks and bring more efficiency. This conference will address supply chain risks but also the many exciting opportunities for increased cooperation as a vitally important global industry”.



Interview

with Abdullah Al Hameli, CEO of Economic Cities & Free Zones, Abu Dhabi Ports Group about the #WUWM2022 Conference

As WUWM is organizing its annual conference for 2022 in a couple of weeks we are glad to share with our readers an insightful interview with Mr. Abdullah Al Hameli, CEO of Economic Cities & Free Zones at Abu Dhabi Ports, who shares with us why he thinks that this conference would play a role to find solutions and mitigate the possibilities of a food crisis.

Mr. Abdullah Al Hameli, why do you think that this conference could play a role to find solutions and mitigate the possibilities of a food crisis?

In some ways, a food crisis is already affecting the world. The UN General Assembly has warned of a rising wave of hunger and malnutrition, with factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and international conflicts resulting in nearly a billion people going hungry in 2021. We're fortunate, in the UAE, to have visionary leadership that has anticipated these issues and developed an extensive strategy for food security, by focusing on modern technologies and enhanced local production to ensure the sustainable production of fresh food.

However, the core challenges of sustainable food supply require global collaboration between food producers and distributors, so that we can reduce food loss, increase supply chain resilience, and promote innovation and digital tools to ensure food security. This is why, AD Ports Group is hosting the WUWM Conference in Abu Dhabi this year. Sharing innovations, best practices, and new approaches will enable us to mitigate the impact of the current crisis and avoid future disruption to food supply chains.



This is the first time that a MENA country is organizing a WUWN conference. Why do you think that this conference could be a landmark for the region?

Historically, the MENA region has been exceptionally dependent on food imports, with around 50% of food imported to the region. There is also an over-reliance on processed foods and diets with insufficient fresh fruit and vegetables, resulting in obesity and other health challenges.

The United Arabs Emirates (UEA) and the wider region are taking proactive steps to reduce that dependence. For example, ADAFSA is launching several initiatives that aim to boost local production and enhance market accessibility and competitiveness for local products. These initiatives also look to encourage food and agricultural supportive industries. In February 2022, AD Ports Group announced the launch of the 'Abu Dhabi Food Hub - KEZAD,' in partnership with Ghassan Aboud Group, which will cover a total land area of 3.3 million sqm and feature market areas, complementary activity zones, industrial cold storage, logistics, waste management, and water treatment amenities.

So, the time is right to host WUWM in the region. We are eager to learn from global wholesale markets and to share our learnings from the intensive activity of recent years.

The UAE aims to become among the top countries in terms of food security. Could you please share how did your country come to have this goal? What are the steps that you are planning to develop to reach this goal? In which way the structuration of the food supply, through a food hub, would help you to achieve this goal?

By launching the National Food Security Strategy 2051, the UAE aims to achieve zero hunger by ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round throughout the world. The strategy specifically aims to implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems.

In terms of the Food Hub, research shows that more efficient wholesale markets, and overall urban market outlets, result in more affordable channels for food to reach everyone, reduce waste, and increase the diversity of people's diets. We see huge potential for the Abu Dhabi Food Hub – KEZAD to increase access to food across the region and contribute to the National Food Security Strategy.

11

It's worth noting that we are exporting our expertise in this area. As well to the Abu Dhabi Food Hub – KEZAD, AD Ports Group is also establishing integrated food storage and distribution hub in Uzbekistan to enhance that nation's food trade across global markets and boost Central Asian food security.



“The key aim of the conference is to find pathways to provide communities with balanced, healthy, and nutritious diets, and to overcome the current challenges restricting access for a significant proportion of the global population.”

The UAE used to import 80% of the food items consumed. Covid showed the need to relocalize the supply chain to bring more resilience in terms of external shocks. Nevertheless, your region is particularly arid and warm for food production. In your opinion what is the role that innovation can play to overcome these difficulties?

Innovation is a crucial tool for promoting food security. In the UAE, every component of an extensive food supply system is being digitalized, and we are seeing rapid growth in the agri-tech market driven by the increasing demand for enhancing crop productivity and cultivation.

The core principle of digital transformation is to replace outdated and analog processes with modern, fully integrated technology. Digital food platforms can integrate with smart sensors, scales, meters, and thermometers to automatically conduct the readings that help monitor product quality and process efficiency.

To support innovation, we are taking a multi-agency approach to this challenge. Alongside the National Food Security Strategy, we are placing advanced technologies and Fourth Industrial Revolution solutions at the heart of our strategy.



One of the specificities of your model is the engagement of one of the biggest logisticians, AD ports, in the development of this regional food hub. In which way do you think that the port is adding value to the traditional structure of a wholesale market?

A robust logistical offering can play a fundamental role in the accessibility and cost structure of food commodity supply chains. With its deep-water capabilities, strategic geographical location, and access to an extensive road, air, and future rail network, Khalifa Port enhances the movement of products, which is instrumental to the abundance and competitiveness of food in the region.

Combined with this, AD Ports Group has extensive Economic Cities & Free Zones resources, including the recently launched KLP21, which is one of the largest and the most advanced temperature-controlled logistics hubs in the region. We're providing an ideal ecosystem for food producers and tech companies.

“Sustainable food supply requires global collaboration between food producers and distributors so that we can reduce food loss, increase supply chain resilience, and promote innovation and digital tools to ensure food security.”



What can the attendees of the conference expect of the event?

The key aim of the conference is to find pathways to provide communities with balanced, healthy, and nutritious diets, and to overcome the current challenges restricting access for a significant proportion of the global population.

We have representatives from major stakeholders shaping food systems, from government bodies to food producers, wholesale market authorities, food banks, logisticians, and university experts to discuss these critical issues.

Confirmed speakers will include H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates; H.E. Saeed Al Bahri Salem Al Ameri, Director-General, Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA); Graham Sanders, CEO, Abu Dhabi Food Hub – KEZAD; Mr. Stephane Layani, Chairman, World Union of Wholesale Markets; Chairman and CEO, Rungis International; and Mr. Pierre Levy, CEO and Co-Founder, Califrais.

By bringing together key stakeholders in Abu Dhabi, we will be able to actively address the current issues and look ahead to a more stable, food secure future.



Interview

**with Ms. Delphine Acloque
(PhD), renewed expert on food
systems in MENA countries**

13

In view of the forthcoming conference, we had the pleasure to interview, Delphine Acloque, renewed expert and researcher on food systems in MENA countries that share with us her views about the main challenges in terms of food security, innovation, agri-food chains in the MENA region and also “good recipes” that this arid region could share with other countries in the world facing more and more extreme weather conditions in terms of agriculture and sustainability.

Could you tell us in a few lines what are the specific characteristics of the systems in the MENA region? What do you see as the main challenges facing the region today in terms of food security?

The MENA region is very concerned about the food security of its populations in the context of price inflation and the destabilization of world trade. However, the food risk is not new in the region, which experienced food riots in 2008 and then the «Arab Spring» revolutions, whose food component is undeniable. The countries of North Africa and the Middle East face four major challenges to ensure access to sufficient food in quantity and quality.

- The first challenge is environmental. Dominated by an arid climate and a limited amount of arable land and freshwater, the countries of the region are faced with the challenges of overexploitation of resources, and more broadly with the risks of climate change: salinization of land and water tables, droughts or, conversely, devastating floods.

- The second challenge is demographic, with growth exceeding 3% in several countries in the region, and urban. The region's cities attract rural populations, but also immigrants, who are in the majority in most of the Gulf metropolises. While the major challenge is to supply the growing megacities, such as Cairo, Tehran and Istanbul, it is also a question of meeting the new needs of a middle class of city dwellers living in secondary cities. They are increasingly looking for diversified and healthy products that are easy to access and quick to cook or eat.

- The third challenge is commercial and logistical: most MENA countries are extremely dependent on imports and therefore on external sources of supply. This is the case for basic products (wheat, rice, sugar, oil), but also for products from the food industry. About 50% of foodstuffs are imported throughout the region, and this share reaches very high levels in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which depends on imports for more than 80%, in Qatar (90%) and in Kuwait (more than 95%). The challenge is to secure food logistics to avoid supply disruptions while developing storage capacities and conditions, which are often limited or deficient.

“The MENA region is very concerned about the food security of its populations in the context of price inflation and the destabilization of world trade.”

- The fourth challenge is geopolitical: the MENA region is a place of multiple tensions and rivalries, whether military, politico-religious, border, or water-related. These conflicts have repercussions on the food supply and availability of populations, as in the case of the famine in Yemen or the drop in agricultural production in the northern part of Syria. The blockade on Qatar between 2017 and 2021 was a decisive indicator of the combination of geopolitical and food risks.

It is also important to emphasize the great disparity in national situations, with extremely large differences in wealth and population. While Qatar has the world's largest GDP for a population of less than 3 million, Egypt must feed a population of 100 million in a context of strong economic fragility. In order to evaluate and compare the food security of the different countries on the planet, the Global Food Security Index, developed by Economist Impact, takes into account different criteria: affordability; availability, quality and safety of food; natural resources; and resilience. In the 2022 ranking, the MENA region includes the most food-insecure countries: Syria (113th) and Yemen (111th), but also countries that are steadily moving up in the ranking. This is the case of Israel and the UAE, respectively in 23rd and 24th position, which aim to reach the top ranks by 2050.

“Reforming markets is a major challenge for many countries in the region.”

Could you also share with us some of the «good practices» that you have observed (e.g. UEA food security plan = diversification and local production to reduce extreme import dependency)?

In the MENA region, food security and water security are two sides of the same coin and good practices are to be found in the combination of these two components. Most countries in the region have placed agricultural and food issues at the center of their national development strategies for the 2030 or 2050 time frame. These strategies all emphasize the need to find solutions to water risk and environmental constraints. The case of Egypt is very interesting here since the food security of the Egyptian population will necessarily require hydro-agricultural solutions. While the country is looking for alternative sources of water to the Nile, recent investments have been made in wastewater treatment for agricultural purposes. Egypt is also increasing its trade initiatives with Asia, Europe and Africa to diversify its supply channels while seeking to modernize its storage infrastructure, which is essential to secure its supply.

Among the most promising practices, aquaculture is booming in the region. This sector contributes to improving food self-sufficiency and security, thanks to the supply of proteins, but it also provides jobs and income in rural areas where opportunities are limited. Egyptian fish farms have grown very rapidly, accounting for 92 percent of MENA production. Saudi Arabia comes second with 4.2% of production. While aquaculture production was until now destined for domestic markets, often with a lack of cold chain efficiency and an unclear market system, the promotion of aquaculture is accelerating the transformation of the sector. Saudi Arabia exports high-quality shrimp to world markets and several countries are looking to invest in export infrastructure and processes. In the short to medium term, the emergence of wholesale markets associated with industrial fish processing zones can be envisaged, which would position the MENA region on the global map of major seafood/aquaculture routes and hubs.





The MENA region, with a particularly dry climate, may have «recipes» that help foreshadow a situation for the agri-sector that climate change will spread to other regions of the world: what are the lessons that could be drawn for other regions?

Among the oldest recipes, developed by peasant populations, we find of course the choice of crops adapted to the climate. This is the case for durum wheat, olives, or dates, which are part of traditional North African and Near Eastern diets. However, the last decades have seen the rise of new crops, often much more water-consuming. This is the case of soft wheat, of which MENA countries are very large consumers, in connection with new eating habits that now favor «Western» bread. The globalization of food habits leads to the following dilemma: how to meet the demand for diversified and globalized products, while the climate outlook is very pessimistic and dependence on the outside world is a major risk?

In order to face this dilemma, many innovations and technological «solutions» are spreading. Drip irrigation, invented in Israel in the 1960s, has spread to all the countries in the region: we talk about a drip revolution. Israeli start-ups are now at the forefront of agritech, allowing the country to exert real soft power in the region through the sale of their technologies and the circulation of Israeli experts and engineers in different countries in the region. To respond to the constraining environments and the lack of arable land, hydroponics is a major innovation. It is based on soilless culture and can be coupled (or not) with vertical agriculture. These two technologies are developing very rapidly in Israel, the UAE and Qatar. These innovations are based on very advanced control of the growing conditions: air conditioning, artificial

lights, and fertilization at the root. In cities, vertical farms stack crops on several floors, while in rural and desert areas, greenhouses are multiplying. High-value crops (tomatoes, cucumbers, salads, fresh herbs) are favored and are only accessible to a small portion of the population. While this is a promising model, it comes up against financial, nutritional and environmental (water and energy) limitations that make it difficult to disseminate to economically fragile countries, where there is a lack of investment capacity and trained personnel.

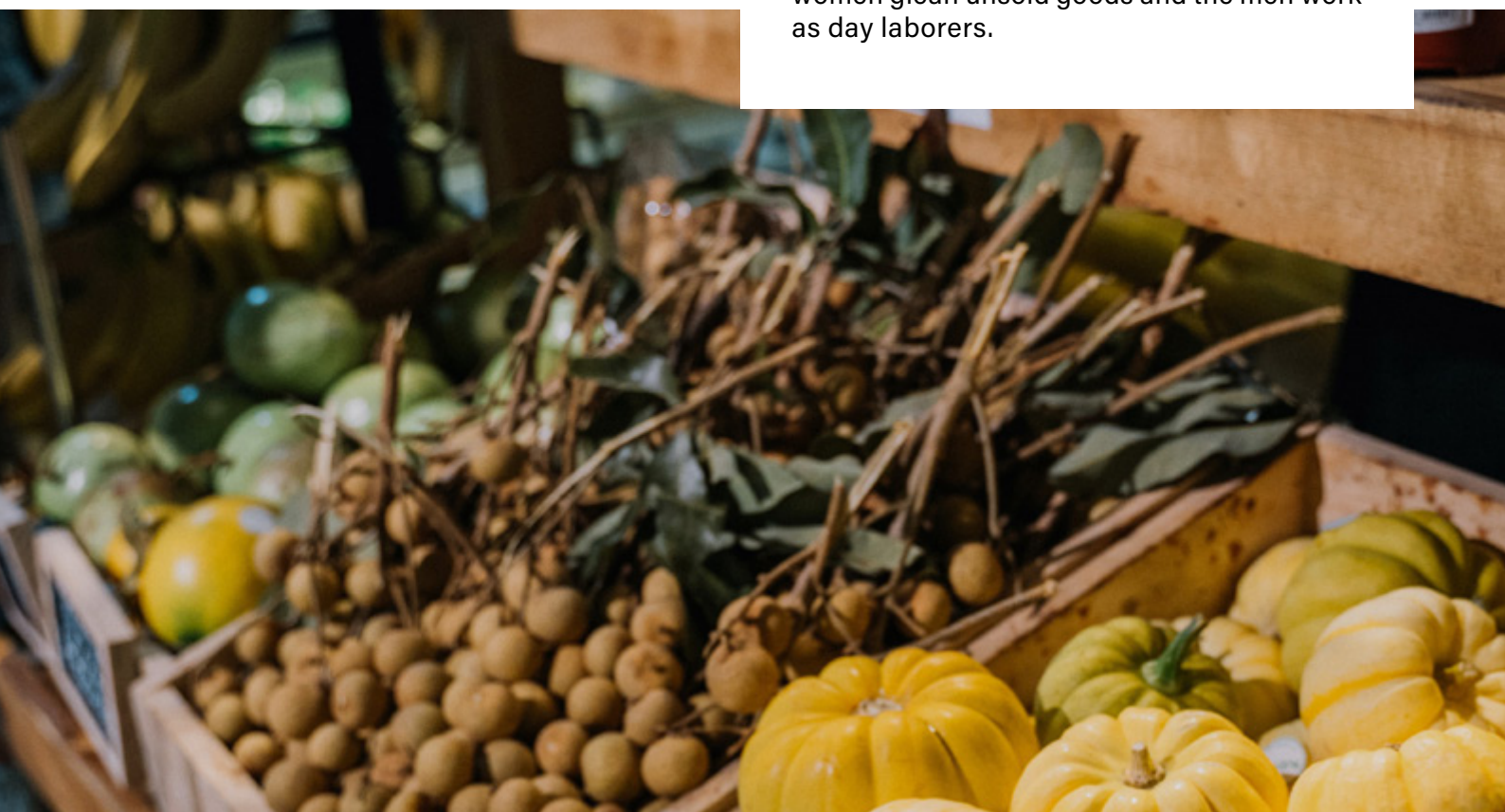
Another recipe experimented on in the region to cope with increasing salinization and the risk of rising sea levels: is salt-tolerant crops. In Dubai, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture has developed pilot projects based on a circular economy model: brine waste from desalination plants is used for aquaculture and for the production of halophytic plants. In particular, there are plots of samphire, previously unknown in the MENA region, but whose commercialization remains very uncertain.

What is the current role of wholesale markets in the region? What role do you think they can play in ensuring the transition of food systems to sustainability and resilience and under what conditions?

Wholesale markets in the MENA region are very diverse: there are recent and modern markets such as the Dubai Central Market (inaugurated in 2004 and expanded to meet the very rapid growth of the fruit and vegetable market), but also many markets that are not adapted to contemporary sanitary and logistical requirements. This is particularly the case in secondary cities, where wholesale markets, still often located in the city center, have no refrigerated storage facilities and face very high daily food losses. Many of the region's markets face a series of problems: poor hygiene, inadequate regulatory frameworks, informal transactions, an increase in the number of intermediaries, and a lack of standardization and price transparency. There are many reform projects, but they are slowed down by divergent interests and complex political issues. Taking the example of Morocco's wholesale markets, a draft law was finally adopted in the summer of 2021 after a decade of tension and controversy. It aims to reform the 1962 law giving markets a monopoly on urban supply. The reform was criticized in particular by local political elites, who see the markets as a source of tax revenue.

MENA wholesale markets are also suffering from competition from other marketing segments. Large supermarkets and hypermarkets, which have been expanding rapidly since 1990-2000, tend to contract directly with producers. They select the desired sizes and qualities, which in turn weakens the functioning of wholesale markets. This is the case in Egypt, where high-quality fruits and vegetables do not (or only exceptionally) go through wholesale markets. Many development agencies and international partners are working with governments in the region to modernize and expand the missions of wholesale markets to attract new customers and reaffirm their role. The aim is also to move towards e-commerce, although this is still the preserve of a minority of countries in the region.

Reforming markets is therefore a major challenge for many countries in the region. Still, these measures must be based on a detailed understanding of the territories and the actors who make their living from and in the market. As anthropologists have shown, wholesale markets are vital «resource spaces» for the precarious populations of the region's large cities. This is illustrated by the wholesale market in Beirut, which is located next to a shantytown, where Syrian populations who arrived en masse with the war in Syria are concentrated. These extremely vulnerable populations survive from day to day thanks to the market's activity: the women glean unsold goods and the men work as day laborers.





You are also an expert in logistics for food systems. Could you share your opinion on the path that countries should follow to ensure better logistics in the fresh food sector?

17

The countries of the region are particularly active in the development of their agri-logistics infrastructures. This is evidenced by the colossal investments made to expand ports, modernize them and extend refrigerated storage capacities. Since the end of the 2000s, the UAE has pursued very ambitious strategies in food logistics. The aim is to ensure its own food security, but also to strengthen its ability to influence the security of others. Dubai Ports World, which controls many ports and strategic food routes, continues to weave its web across the world's oceans. DPW is in charge of developing the Egyptian port of Ain Sukhna on the Red Sea. This is a major maritime opening located at the interface between the Suez Canal to the north, Cairo to the west and the countries of the Horn of Africa to the south. These agro-logistics hubs, which are essential to global value chains, contribute to the geopolitical and geo-economic influence of the UAE. Another large-scale project that attests to the growing importance of agricultural relations with Asia is the establishment of an agri-food corridor linking the Middle East to India. This corridor should link Indian farms to UAE ports and Emirati agribusinesses in the coming years. The creation of a platform to connect Indian and Emirati players and the mobilization of digital technologies through partnerships with Israel are also planned. More broadly, this corridor illustrates the strategies for diversifying food supplies in the MENA region.

"The countries of the region are particularly active in the development of their agri-logistics infrastructures."

While long distribution channels dominate many products, direct sales and local product development initiatives are also underway. For example, farmers' markets and baskets of fresh produce ordered over the internet have emerged in recent years in Egypt, the Maghreb, and the Gulf. These initiatives are likely to develop to meet the new expectations of the middle and upper middle classes in cities. The Maghreb countries have also embarked on geographical indication procedures in order to enhance the value of the link to the territory of certain products.

The future of food in the region will lie in the coexistence and hybridization of production and marketing models in order to satisfy customers with very different expectations and financing capacities. It is therefore the necessary agility of food logistics actors that must be encouraged to position themselves at the interface between local and global and in contact with a plurality of economic, social and cultural requirements.

In Good Practices:

Peter Defranceschi (ICLEI) share with us the “EU School Scheme and the Manifesto on minimum standards for public canteens” that they just launched!

18

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in more than 125 countries, they work to influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.

In this sense, ICLEI works closely with an extended network of local and regional governments and partners on a broad range of topics, among them food system transformation.

ICLEI just launched a petition for a “healthy meal for every child in every school”. The petition is part of the “Buy Better Food campaign” and contains a concrete proposal for the implementation of the objectives of the European Union(UE)’s Farm to Fork strategies in relation to the procurement of sustainable food and the EU School Scheme. WUWM signed this petition and is happy to share with all our members and readers insightful information about this campaign that we hope all our members and partners will also join!



“Every child should have access to a healthy meal at school and learn where the food comes from.”

Dear Peter, could you share with our members an overall view of the campaign.? Why did ICLEI launched it? What are the main objectives/goal of this campaign?

Sustainable public food procurement sounds complex to many but in essence, it means a big impact on a small plate! With the right requirements, you can have most of the Sustainable Development Goals on one plate – more regional food, health, culture, and climate change action.

With an increasing number of parents having difficulties affording fresh food, we co-developed this most concrete and simple proposal for the European Commission for the implementation of the Farm to Fork strategy. Every child should have access to a healthy meal at school and learn where the food comes from. With some meals, it is difficult to tell, and we see more and more children eating less than half their meals because they no longer trust what is in them.

The campaign received large amounts of support, could you share with us how is the campaign going?

We reached over 6,000 signatures in a short time and we reached more people than we would probably reach in five years’ time! We have everybody, from my tango teacher to famous influencers to the Cabinet of EC President Ursula von der Leyen, who will certainly agree with our Petition as she has seven children, a medical degree, and is a past Family Minister! We hope to obtain at least 10,000 signatures by the 11th of October when we will hand over the Petition to the European Commission at a high-level EURegionsWeek Session at the European Committee of the Regions. But I admit it is a tough side job to make the numbers rise fast!





Alongside the petition it is presented the Manifesto on minimum standards for public canteens, a Manifesto aimed to inspire policymakers on what «purchasing healthy meals» could mean in concrete terms. Can you tell us more about the Manifesto?

Indeed, the Petition is about “Healthy meals for every child in every school” and the Manifesto provides concrete targets, tender criteria, and enablers on what “healthy meals” could entail. The Manifesto is about minimum requirements for public canteens and was developed within the EU Food Policy Coalition and screened by legal experts. After all, it was the European Commission themselves who strongly encouraged us to go ahead with our ideas on the Petition and the Manifesto. It aims to inspire the European Commission and the EU Member States as well as regional and local public authorities with seven actionable propositions for establishing minimum standards for public canteens in Europe.

What are the 7 criteria elaborated in the Manifesto?

The Farm to Fork Procurement Manifesto presents seven mandatory (minimum) and optional criteria for public canteens in the following areas:

1. Healthy food
2. Organic and other agro-ecological products
3. Small-scale farmer’s support
4. Climate action
5. Social economy and labor rights
6. Fairtrade
7. Animal welfare standards

The Manifesto is currently being layouts and will then be widely promoted.

And why the focus on the schools?

The Petition is on schools because we think providing a healthy meal for every child in every school is a low-hanging fruit for policymakers as it provides so many benefits, also economic ones, and ensures equal access to healthy food. We coordinate the largest EU project on sustainable food procurement called SchoolFood4Change, which aims to impact over 600,000 children and young people in over 3,000 schools in 12 EU Member States. This will be achieved through innovative tenders, through a whole school food approach which sees schools as catalysts for urban food system change – not just a place where children are fed, and finally, through empowering cooks and focusing on planetary health diets.

The Manifesto is more generally on public canteens, including hospitals, elderly homes, and other public canteens.

In which way do you think that wholesale markets could work with cities to help implement the objectives of the campaign?

What better way to reconnect children and young people to food culture than to bring them to food producers and wholesale markets where they can learn so much? Sustainability is a lot about diversity, fresh food, and fruits and vegetables.

We can learn from your good practice examples like Madrid, where the regional government ensures that healthy and fresh and local fruits and vegetables are bought at local wholesalers at Mercamadrid for school canteens and school events so that the children have nutritious and healthy diets.

We would like to explore with you how the cooling and storing chain could be improved to avoid food loss and waste in cities. Also, my colleague from our India Office recently told me that they were very interested in linking cities and markets as it is the local governments in charge of markets, whereas food procurement and other food-relevant areas belonged to higher governmental levels.

In Events:

WUWM Retail group met in Stugart (Germany) with the German association of Markets to foster fresh food street markets and plan forthcoming actions!

WUWM retail group met in Stugart on the 30th of September to plan forthcoming event to support fresh food retail markets. We had the pleasure to interview, Jean-Paul Auguste, WUWM Retail Group Director, and Frank Willhausen, from GFI that sharead with us the main outcomes of this fruitful meeting.

1. What are the main outcomes of this join meeting between GFI and LYLM group?

20

Mr. Auguste: GFI has proposed to host the usual LYLM meeting in September when we need to debrief about the May/June campaign. And the opportunity to be hosted in Stuttgart was great as a lot of market events took place this week-end, showing how dynamic is the city centre life! . The German Minister for Agriculture joined us on the Saturday celebration on Schiller Place and explained us how the federal government was supportive of markets and LYLM initiatives. The next meeting of the LYLM Committee is scheduled for 2 December in Paris.

Mr. Willhausen: On 1 October, Stuttgart celebrated its traditional Thanksgiving weekly market as an action day in front of the Stiftskirche on Schillerplatz. The event was also the final highlight of the campaign year «Experience your local market» 2022, the German offshoot of Love your local market(LYLM) . This year we were able to have our Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Cem Özdemir, as the patron for our campaign - a great and deserved success for our GFI member markets and for us as an association. The Federal Minister personally opened the

Harvest Week Market and had intensive exchanges with the LYLM Committee representatives from many european countries. The LYLM Committee Autumn Meeting on the previous day, Friday 30 September, took place as an international meeting in Stuttgart City Hall together with the German colleagues. First on the agenda was an exchange about the current work and challenges of the markets. We then started with the LYLM planning and discussed possible themes and venues for 2023. The meeting was extremely cordial, friendly and productive. It showed how important the personal, informed exchange on specific market topics remains.

What is LYLM working plan for the next 12 months?

Mr. Auguste: After a 2022 campaign which has been a good success, but not yet at the attendance level than the pre-covid period, it is time now to see the full LYLM event in action in 2023. As usual in September a diversity of themes has been discussed, waiting the end of the year meeting to fix decisions on the final themes and the launch site and date. War, economic depression, inflation issues are right now pushing the populations to consider the level of products prices as a priority and in such a psychological environment, it is important to choose themes which will make retail and wholesale markets on the best qualitative level, defending at the same time our ability to compete. Green issues also seem to be amid the main themes to support (local food, zero plastic bags...etc).





What is WUWM retail group doing in order to foster the role of fresh food markets?

Mr. Auguste: We are organizing Love Your Local Market! and this work has to be recognized fully and supported by all WUWM members. The visibility coming from the LYLM campaign helps political bodies (governmental, regional, local authorities), central administrations, to understand retail and wholesale markets are the only yet efficient logistical solutions to help fresh product come from the farm to the plate, to help local agriculture to survive.

Markets are also amid the last places to offer real human relationships and that capital is an assets on which to invest for cities! As all populations need to eat and have daily food, food products are the core part of our actions and this is securing the attractive unique position of markets.

Mr. Willhausen: Our association has been a network, mouthpiece and action partner for the German fresh produce markets for over 20 years. We offer our members a broad transfer of knowledge about markets and market analyses and central issues of trade management. Our business units focus their commitment, experience and expertise on efficiency and effectiveness aspects for the future viability of our markets. Our campaigns «Vitamin G as in wholesale market» and «Experience your weekly market» ensure visibility, relevance and legitimacy of our value chain in urban society and politics. In addition, as a central point of contact, we bundle marketing measures of national and international partners in the qualified, independent food retail trade. As part of our network with the WUWM, we have been taking study trips to European market cities for years, where we are allowed to look behind the scenes of the markets.

“Wholesale markets are at the centre of the fresh food value chain. Therefore, it is necessary to work closely with all partners in the value chain.”

Can you tell us why do you think that it will be beneficial for wholesale markets to strengthen relations with fresh food retail markets ? And in which way you think that we can achieve this?

Mr. Auguste: LYLM has been conceived from the beginning to attract also wholesale markets to it. During the covid times in 2020, as restaurants were closed, as well as companies canteens... etc, retail market traders have been maintaining and even increasing their buying on wholesale markets. It has been clear i.e. in Rungis, France. This shows that the traditional link between both types of markets is essential. Wholesale markets need to understand and sustain the permanence of this business link. Retail markets need wholesale to maintain access to a large diversity of products, at short distance for them, making their alliance been THE actual efficient short circuit.

It is time to see both sides play together in a denser way. To promote joint events, like LYLM, is a first good step to a deeper understanding and ensure future fidelity between our respective tenants, that's why in 2022 LYLM Market campaign was also launched in Lisbon wholesale market. The public visibility of LYLM campaign gives us a strategic way to increase contacts with public deciders and get their support, get fundings, prevent our lands to be transformed as real estate speculation sites, thus maintaining short distance and timetable to deliver fresh food to city centres. LYLM can and will become also a think tank for proposals of other joint actions as members have discussed this project in Stuttgart.

Mr. Willhausen : At the LYLM Committee meeting, we discussed further improving the relationship between wholesale market operators and retail markets. Wholesale markets are at the centre of the fresh food value chain. Therefore, it is necessary to work closely with all partners in the value chain. And that is why relationship management is our daily work! This is how we keep our markets competitive as a platform of the unbound wholesale trade and the unbound retail trade. This concerns the existential trade relations between both trade levels as well as the joint communication. In Germany, we have the advantage that half of our GFI wholesale markets also manage 85% of the weekly markets in the country.

In WUWM's World

- On the **13th of September**, WUWM attended the online meeting **"Market systems at the center of urban-rural linkages"** organized by UN-Habitat
- On the **14th of September**, WUWM attended the second webinar **"Youth for the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture at COP27"**, organized by the FAO Climate Change Knowledge Hub and YOUNGO in collaboration with the World Food Forum, YPARD, IAAS, UNFCCC, and COP.
- On the **23rd of September**, WUWM attended the videoconference **"3rd Ad Hoc Meeting of the Expert Group on the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism (EFSCM)"** organized by the European Union.
- On the **26th of September**, WUWM attended the **"Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices in the Food Supply Chain"** organized by COPA and COGECA in partnership with the European Commission
- On the **26th of September**, WUWM attended the Eurocities Working Group Food online meeting **"Cities and wholesale markets Collaboration opportunities for food sustainability and accessibility"**, co-organized with Eurocities, the Milano Urban Pact, and the "European Union Food Trails initiative".
- On the **27th of September**, WUWM attended the webinar **"Waste not, want not! How to design an effective information-based food waste campaign"** organized by EUFIC
- On the **29th of September**, WUWM attended the **"South Africa Food Systems Lab- Streamlining multi-level governance between local, provincial and national government for sustainable and resilient food systems in South Africa"** co-organized by WUWM and ICLEI



About WUWM:

We aim to facilitate access to healthy diets for everyone in the world by delivering more sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality fresh food supply systems. We exchange ideas, share best practices and cooperate with our partners in international organizations, governments, businesses, and the public.

