PRESS RELEASE

A sustainable diet by 2030 is key to solving the climate emergency

Food is one of the biggest sources of consumption-based emissions in the world’s biggest cities

Action could cut greenhouse gas emissions from the food we eat by more than 60%, prevent 170 thousand deaths and $600 billion per year

Stockholm, Sweden (12 June 2019) — Eating a sustainable diet, healthy portion sizes and avoiding food waste could cut greenhouse gas emissions from the food we eat by more than 60%, according to new research presented today.

The research, conducted by C40 Cities, Arup and the University of Leeds revealed that urban consumption, including the food consumed in cities is a key driver of climate change. When food is bought by an urban consumer in a city, emissions have already been generated along every link of a global supply chain, from the agricultural processes, fertilizers and transportation. Addressing Food-Related Consumption-Based Emissions In C40 Cities, was presented today at the EAT Forum in Stockholm.

Food is one of the biggest sources of consumption-based emissions in the world’s biggest cities, representing 13% of the total in 2017. This could increase by 38% by 2050, the report warns, unless urgent action is taken now.

Cities, businesses, restaurants, farmers and citizens need to work together to help people cut their meat consumption by two-thirds, for example eating meat just two days per week rather than every day. Dairy consumption amongst Europeans is more than double healthy and sustainable levels. In North America, the average person eats 600 additional calories above the recommended healthy intake. By eating an average 2,500 kcal per person per day and reducing food waste, excess food production and associated emissions could be cut.

Whilst citizens have a key role to play in their dietary choices, the report focuses on what action city governments can take to accelerate the transformation of urban food systems. Cities have a prominent role overseeing urban food environment, as procurers, regulators, waste managers, conveners, and educators.

Mark Watts, Executive Director, C40 Cities:
“We are facing a climate crisis on a planetary level. Keeping global temperature rise to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, will require action on a scale never seen before in peacetime. Whilst the challenge can seem overwhelming, a large part of the solution can be found on our kitchen tables. The findings presented by C40 today reveal that by working together, across cities, national governments, supermarkets, restaurants, farmers and individual citizens, we can rapidly reduce the emissions created by the food we eat. To create the future we want, we must take urgent action to cut food waste, reduce meat and dairy consumption, source food locally and reduce the impact of food production, transport and storage. If we
succeed, we will live longer healthier lives, improve food security and deliver a sustainable future for generations to come.”

Anna König Jerlmyr, Mayor of Stockholm:
“Food is a vital part of our lives and a defining aspect of our cultures, especially in the world’s cities. However, the ways we produce, use, and dispose of our food often comes at too great a cost for the environment and public health. By working together the world’s great cities can reinvent urban food systems and drive global supply chains to improve sustainability, promote the health of our citizens, and protect the environment. I am delighted that 30 cities from across the C40 Cities network are meeting today in Stockholm to transform these bold ideas into reality around the world.”

To achieve emissions reductions that are consistent with the limits in global temperature rise that scientists say are safe, will require the following changes:

**Shift to plant-based diets**
- Citizens consuming no more than 16kg of meat per person per year down from an average of 58kg by 2030. This includes 1.3kg beef, when currently the average citizen from East Asia consumes 13kg a year.
- A target of 90kg dairy per person per year, down from C40 average of 106kg, or around 220kg in Europe.

**Eating healthy quantities**
- Consumers limiting their daily food intake an average 2,500 kcal per person per day. North American citizens’ average calorie intake is reported to be over 3,100 kcal per person per day.

**Avoiding waste**
- Reducing household food waste and supply chain waste by up to 100%

These actions would have wide ranging benefits in cities. Eating less red meat and more vegetables and fruits could prevent 170 thousand deaths per year in C40 cities, equivalent to $600 billion, based on the economic value of life. Reducing dairy intake could save 19 billion m3 of freshwater per year.

Consumption-based emissions including food, as well as construction, clothing, aviation, building and others, from nearly 100 of the world’s big cities already represent 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Without urgent action, those emissions will nearly double by 2050. The full findings were laid out in a major piece of research *The Future of Urban Consumption in a 1.5°C World.*

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About C40 Cities:
C40 Cities connects 94 of the world’s greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe. The current chair of C40 is Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo; and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40’s work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit our website, or follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.