



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# FOOD SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY DIETS



# What do we want from food systems?

- **Food security**

- Sufficient
- Safe
- Nutritious

- **For today and the future**

- Environmental
- Economic
- Cultural sustainability

**FOOD SYSTEMS FOR  
SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY DIETS**

# Sustainable, Healthy Diets

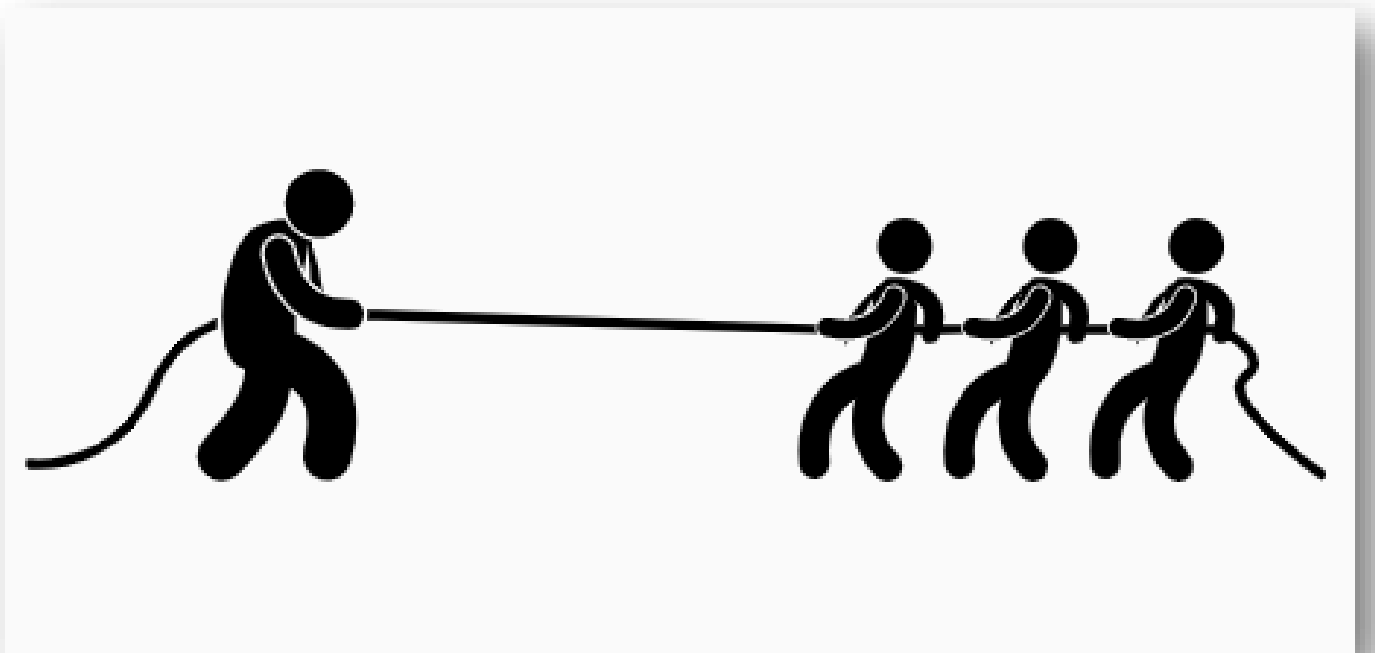
Sustainable, Healthy Diets are dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are safe, accessible, affordable and equitable; and are culturally acceptable.

(Expert consultation on Sustainable Healthy Diets - 19 August 2019)

# What do we want from food systems?

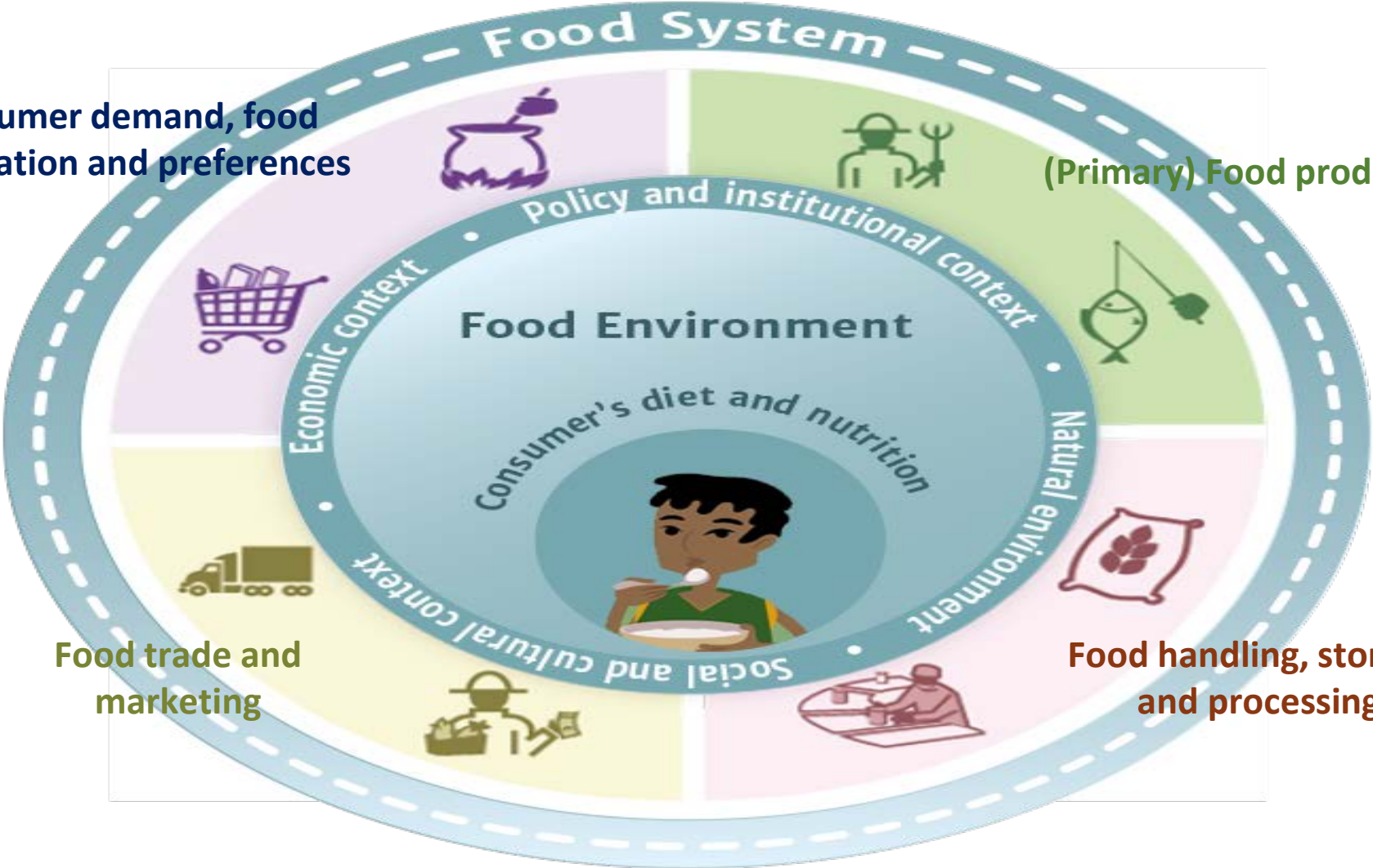
- **Other Interests**

- Income
- Profit
- Rural development
- Employment
- Landscape
- Ecosystem services
- Animal welfare
- ...



# Food Systems

Consumer demand, food preparation and preferences

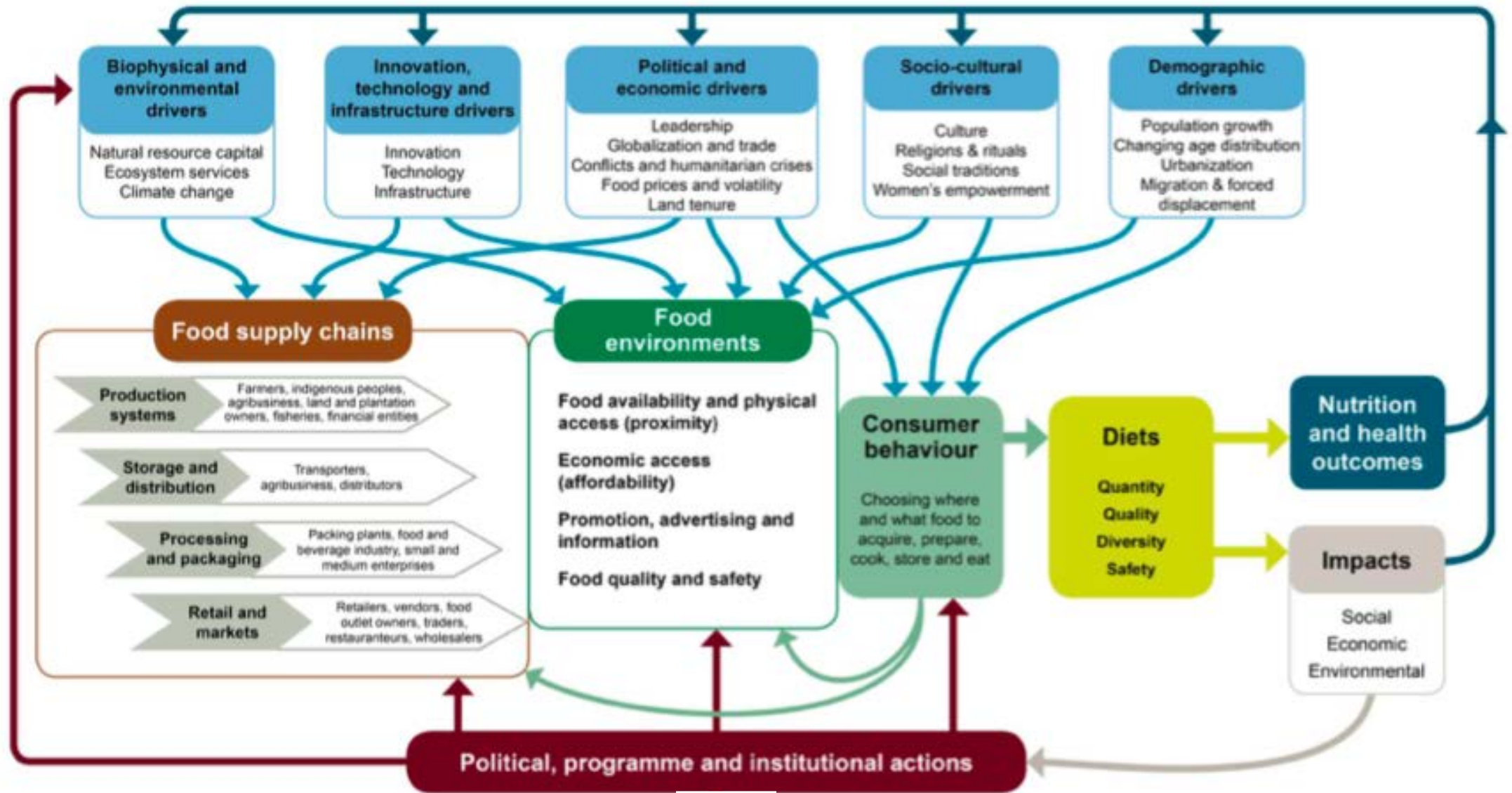


(Primary) Food production

Food trade and marketing

Food handling, storage, and processing

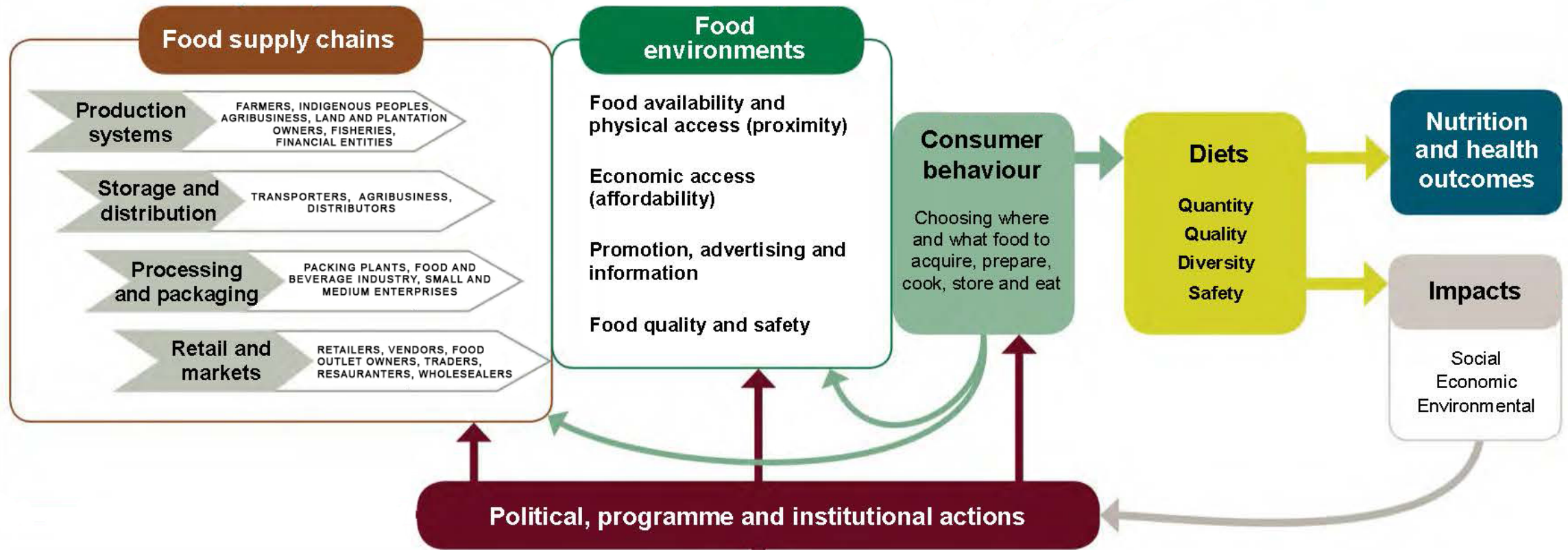
# Food System Framework



(Adapted from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. HLPE 2017)



# Food System Framework for Diets and Nutrition



(Adapted from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. HLPE 2017)



# A Food System Approach for Sustainable Healthy Diets



# Improving diets - social protection in Ecuador

## Food Supply Chains:

- Smallholder friendly procurement especially of nutrient-rich foods
- support to cooperatives for increased market stability

## Food environments:

- Working with grocery stores on 4Ps of marketing to increase sale of healthier options

## Consumer behaviour:

- Social safety net includes conditionality of attendance in preventive care that includes nutrition education







*In Sweeping War on Obesity,  
Chile Slays Tony the Tiger*

# Improving diets of children – marketing in Chile

## Food Supply Chains:

- Regulation on labelling of ALL foods high in sugar, calories, fat, salt in the country
- Taxes on highly sugar-sweetened beverages

## Food environments:

- Elimination of child targets characters on packaging
- Black labelling of foods high in fat, sugar, salt

## Consumer behaviour:

- Educate consumers on labelling
- Sensitive consumers on importance of good nutrition



# Lessons

- Widespread multi-sector, multi-level action is needed (e.g. Ecuadorian work with primary producers, markets, schools, public, etc.)
- Harmonized data and analyses for policy making (e.g. Data on health outcomes and 'win-win' opportunities in Ecuador)
- Policy coherence should be a targeted outcome (e.g. diverse entry points in Chile)
- Engage with food systems actors (e.g. SMEs in Ecuador, Large companies in Chile)
- Governmental leadership mandatory (e.g. Regulatory action in Chile, local and national leadership in Ecuador)



# Challenges

- Lack of data
- Governments don't have Ministry of Food Systems
- Moving to sustainability may result in food price increases
- Trade-offs and interests

# Potential Pitfalls

- Developing meaningful narrative for Policy Makers
- Not acknowledging importance of trade-offs to constituents
- Villainizing the private sector
- 'Romanticizing' the past
- Overcoming common misconceptions
  - Urban nutrition challenge = overweight & obesity
  - Local production = healthy and sustainable
  - Processed food = unhealthy

# Thank you

Nancy J Aburto, PhD MS  
Deputy Director  
Nutrition and Food Systems Division

[Nancy.aburto@fao.org](mailto:Nancy.aburto@fao.org)

Fragmented view of food systems

