Declaration by France urbaine
For a transition committed to food production that is sustainable, responsible, and solidary

Urbanisation, population growth, use of resources, the quality of water, air, and soils, etc. All those factors call the current food-production system into question, and they must lead us to envisage production and consumption models that are more respectful of the environment and health. How can we feed 9.5 billion inhabitants in 2050? Can we continue to use natural resources in the same manner when the food-production system already absorbs 75% of fresh water consumed whilst generating 30% of greenhouse gases? How can we stem the collapse of biodiversity?

Faced with the proven need to move towards a food-production system that is more respectful of the environment and more solidary, we must all make a commitment. Several initiatives taken by citizens, associations, and NGOs have already opened up transition pathways. We represent France’s large cities and intercommunal authorities, which support them and which have started to refocus their policies to contribute to transforming the food-production system.

Because protecting of the earth and its resources requires it, because we are constantly listening to requests from our fellow citizens, and because we all have a right to a healthy food supply, we reaffirm, at local level, our desire to:

- contribute, on the one hand, to building proximity circuits between producers and consumers with all the players of the food-production system, in particular through support given to logistics platforms, and, on the other hand, to identifying and promoting local food products whilst ensuring respect for the social, environmental, and cultural values that they bear;

- encourage mass-catering establishments to move to supplies of high-quality local products, reduce food wastage at every step of food chains, and support action taken to fight against food insecurity;

- protect and reactivate agricultural land as part of planning programmes and documents, and make it easy for young farmers to establish themselves in our territories;

- guarantee access to healthy nutrition for all members of the public, support awareness-raising and educational work to encourage changes in food-related behaviours, and promote shared and school gardens;

- promote the diversity of food cultures and work to promote the local, national, and even international influence of French gastronomy;

- encourage research and innovation as levers of food transition;
encourage the development of investments in ecological transition.

Nonetheless, and because the transition to a more sustainable and solidary system has an international dimension, it is our duty to act beyond our territories. Boosted by our country’s assets in agriculture and food production, we are convinced that we have an important role to play on the international stage in order to contribute to a vast movement supporting sustainable and solidary food production.

That is why, within France urbaine, we commit ourselves to:

- organising ourselves to more effectively and strongly carry the voice of French territories through advocacy work in the national, European, and international processes concerning the development of the food-production system;

- work with European institutions to promote the transition of the food-production system by following the course of negotiations relating to the next Common Agricultural Policy, especially maintaining and strengthening its second pillar, and by working to have the quality of food production taken into account in the criteria for allocating support and financing;

- be present and act within European and international organisations (European institutions, the UNO, the FAO, the WTO, etc.) by developing alliances with all national, European, and international players that are also anxious to encourage food transition (other levels of local authorities, networks of elected officials, voluntary-sector players, etc.), in order to support common advocacy;

- promote decentralised solidarity and co-operation work for the benefit of partners that are particularly exposed to great contemporary dramas (climate change and migrations, the deterioration of their natural resources, the impoverishment of landworking communities, conflicts, etc.);

- take part in all public and private efforts to affirm the social, environmental, and cultural responsibility of players intervening in agricultural and food-production systems.

It is essential to mobilise all forces in order to stimulate and be successful in the transition to a sustainable, ethical, and solidary food-production system. Our commitments are part of that process. It is within our grasp to contribute to building territorialised food-production systems and promote the necessary paradigm change that flows from it. Hence, the commitment and the work of citizens and voluntary-sector players, coupled with our pro-active approach, must position France as a pioneer of a food-production and agricultural transition model that is more sustainable and solidary.

We, the elected officials of large cities and intercommunal authorities, shall make sure of it.