

**Embargo: 9am, 12 February 2019**

## **TRANSFORMING DIETS AND FOOD SYSTEMS: A CRITICAL CROSSROADS**

*Media are welcome to register and attend and press releases are available on request. The [program](#) is online. Please contact [Cathy Reade](#) 0413 575 934 for releases or to arrange attendance or interviews.*

The global food system faces major challenges because of rapid urbanisation, changing diets, climate change, political uncertainties, and anti-globalisation sentiments. In addition to addressing multiple burdens of malnutrition, there is an urgent need to seek a sustainable food system in light of climate change. Appropriate tools and strategies are needed to help navigate food systems at a critical crossroads.

This will be the key message by Dr Shenggen Fan, Director-General, International Food Policy Research Institute in his address to the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) from 12-15 February at Melbourne's Convention and Exhibition Centre.

"Food systems play a key role in nurturing human health and supporting environmental sustainability, yet currently they are threatening both. Global efforts are urgently needed to collectively transform diets and food production at this critical crossroad," said Dr Fan, an eminent economist and contributing Commission member of the newly released EAT-*Lancet* report. Dr Fan is world renowned for his work on transition economies, global food systems, and agricultural and rural development.

"While there is substantial evidence that links diets with human health and environmental sustainability, globally agreed scientific targets to address healthier and more sustainable approaches are lacking and large-scale, coordinated efforts to transform the global food system have been hampered. The EAT- *Lancet* Commission sought to address this through its report which presents scientific targets as well as overall strategies for food systems, including bold targets to transform global diets by 2050."

"Global consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, will need to double, while over-consumption of foods like added sugars and red meat will need to be more than halved, largely to address over-consumption in wealthier countries," according to Dr Fan.

"Healthy and sustainable diets look different from country to country, and we will need more evidence on what drives and challenges the diets of various populations," he said. "For example, small amounts of animal-sourced foods for young children and women of child-bearing age is crucial for nutrition and health especially in poor populations, however, in wealthier countries over-consumption of these foods is not ideal for health or the environment."

"Promoting enhanced production and productivity of healthy and nutritious foods, while also improving markets will be important to lower prices and increased accessibility of healthy and sustainable diets," he said.

"For the transformation of food systems to ensure human and planetary health for all, it will be crucial that agricultural research, which can take years to yield results, gets the support it needs," concluded Dr Fan.

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