

Food. Restart from creativity
International summit organized by
the Unesco Creative City of Bergamo
20 November 2020

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the mayor of Bergamo, Giorgio Gori, for this brilliant initiative. With 25 recognitions, Lombardy is a leading region in Italy for the participation in Unesco's programs, and within Lombardy it is Bergamo that plays a leading role.. Bergamo belongs to the network of Creative Cities, has a World Heritage property and hosts a Unesco Chair. The decision to restart after the pandemics, that has severely affected it's citizens with an international summit on creativity is yet another exemple of the importance that the city plays in the programs of Unesco.

The Creative Cities Network with its 246 members represents a very dynamic platform for dialogue among different stakeholders on urban contemporary development challenges. The pandemia has added a new dimension of complexity and this international summit will defintely help in shedding some needed light on the challenges that the cities are facing in this complex environment.

As you all know The cities of the network identify culture and creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development. The Italian President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, in his speech at last year's Fabriano international meeting of the Creative Cities has underlined the importance of the role of creative cities. Within this framework the more specific interlinkage between culture, creativity and food has been strongly underlined by the "Parma Declaration" of the 2019 Unesco World Forum on Culture and Food.

The world's population is likely to reach 9 billion by 2050, 70% of which will be living in cities. In order to feed this population agricultural production will have to increase by 70%. Against this backdrop there is an urgent need to provide effective and sustainable responses and action-oriented solutions to the global challenges to ensure food security, food safety and widespread well-being. The Cities are the breeding grounds of expertise to develop technologies and scientific research for sustainable food production and distribution and for the implementation of new models of education to foster proper patterns of food consumption and avoid food waste.

Given the complexity of the situation we cannot assume that there is a common set of answers. This is the case where one size does not fit all. As stated by the "Parma Declaration", cities have different knowledge systems and skills. Food traditions in production and consumption reflect communities' cultural diversity but cities, mixing tradition and innovation, are learning fast. We see innovative examples of food production and consumption, such as community based kitchen gardens and orchards for fruit production within the city's boundary, just to give two examples of creative models for sustainable development. Food is also a way for cities to deal with intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and the safeguarding of cultural diversity.

Dealing with food in a sustainable way also contributes to address important socio-economic challenges such as poverty, inequality, public health and the preservation of cultural heritage, as stated in global goal 11 for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.

One final comment. Food is included not only in the network of the Creative Cities but also in all other major Unesco's designations. Global Geoparks and Man and the Biosphere Reserves have

developed programs to support local food producers and food services; the Intangible Cultural Heritage list includes 17 elements related to food, among which the Mediterranean diet that was listed for the first time ten years ago; the World Heritage has several properties related to agricultural production while several Unesco Chairs deal with food and sustainable development.

This is a clear sign of the relevance of food as a social and cultural practice for all human being regardless of ethnic or religious differences and is a good and inspiring opportunity to look for synergies and collaboration among different Unesco's initiatives.

Wishing you all a fruitful meeting I thank you for you attention.