

MEDIA RELEASE

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REVOLUTION NEEDED TO TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Food systems are at the centre of many of the global challenges of our time including malnutrition, climate change and environmental degradation. Their transformation will require a revolution, with a wide range of actions from all sectors and at all scales.

This will be a key message of Dr Sandro Demaio, CEO of EAT Forum, in his keynote address to “*Reshaping Agriculture for Better Nutrition: The Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, Health Nexus*”, the 2018 Crawford Fund annual conference in Canberra on 13-14 August. Dr Demaio will make his address in Parliament House on 14 August, with international and Australian specialists discussing the need to reshape agriculture to address the increasingly urgent and competing needs of the hungry and the over-nourished, and the finite resources of our environment.

“Food is fueling several of the major global challenges of our time. Current food systems fail one in two people worldwide and poor diets are now the leading risk factor for disease, globally,” said Dr Demaio, who was formerly Medical Officer for non-communicable conditions and nutrition with the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development at the global headquarters of the World Health Organization.

“Food systems also represent a significant driver of environmental degradation. Yet because food cross-cuts the major health, environmental and sustainable development challenges of today, bending the curve of unhealthy, unsustainable food provides one of the greatest opportunities to achieve our Sustainable Development Goals. “

“Mounting research demonstrates the benefits of transforming our food systems, but a crucial next step is translating this research into action.”

“Scientific targets defining healthy diets and sustainable food systems can help link agriculture and health sciences and sectors to better practice and policy.”

“It may take a revolution to foster more constructive conversations, collaborations and help track change, but I remain an optimist,” he concluded.

Dr Demaio will outline some of the major linkages between food, people and the planet, and present information from the coming EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems as well as the Lancet Series on the Double Burden of Malnutrition. The former will synthesise the best available science to define what constitutes a healthy diet globally and what sustainable food production looks like that preserves functional ecosystems, and the latter outlines the important opportunities for integrated action on malnutrition in all its forms.