

Mayor Adams Assembles National Group of Experts to Discuss Recommendations Before White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

June 21, 2022

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/rARC55KLAJs>

Assembly of Diverse Range of Voices Will Develop Recommendations to Inform First White House Conference on Food Issues in 50 Years, Conference Takes Place This September

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today hosted a national convening on the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health at Gracie Mansion. The one-day conference, held in partnership with the Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, brought together a broad array of non-partisan stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, industry leaders, nonprofit representatives, and individuals with lived experience to discuss strategies for ending hunger, improving nutrition, reducing the prevalence of diet-related diseases, and promoting equity throughout the food system.

"We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to holistically rethink our food system – and we must seize it," said **Mayor Adams**. "This gathering is an important opportunity to share ideas and perspectives on how to tackle issues, such as food insecurity and the high rates of chronic diet-related disease. It will be the starting point of an ongoing dialogue, and we look forward to working with our partners in and out of government to develop actionable recommendations in anticipation of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health later this year."

"For too long, your zip code determined whether or not you had access to healthy food," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. "Today's convening is a critical step forward to ensure that equity is rooted in all decisions around ending food insecurity and promoting nutrition. New York City will continue to lead the way working with our federal partners, academic experts, and directly impacted New Yorkers to reimagine a better, more equitable food system."

"As we continue to learn to live with and through the coronavirus, we continue to see how important food is in that conversation, said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. "Over the last few years, food insecurity has been on the rise and people with diet-related chronic diseases were at higher risk for more severe disease complications due to the virus. Therefore, today's conference could not come at a better time. Thank you to the mayor for his elevation of these issues to local and national audiences and to everyone participating in today's discussions."

"Schools are truly the center of our communities and play an essential role in combatting food insecurity," said **New York City Department of Education Chancellor David C. Banks**. "I'm incredibly proud that our schools have been able to serve as a resource for our students throughout the pandemic and am committed to ensuring that this vital work continues."

"The food we eat, and the food so many lack, takes a toll on the health of our city and nation," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. "Through numerous programs – many with federal support – we have tried to make healthier options affordable and available to New Yorkers. And there's more we must do. We look forward to a continued partnership with the Biden administration."

"The administration has already demonstrated its commitment to leading on issues of food equity, and today's assembly underscores how New York City can be a national leader on these issues," said **Mayor's Office of Food Policy Executive Director Kate MacKenzie**. "We were proud to host this conference with a broad range of stakeholders, and we will continue to advocate for policies to address the profound inequities in our food system, both here in New York and across the nation."

"Given the critical link between diet and health outcomes, NYC Health + Hospitals is committed to making nutrition a core part of health care, using innovative approaches such as expanding lifestyle medicine services to support patients in adopting healthier

eating patterns, implementing fruit and vegetable prescription programs, and enhancing nutrition education for both patients and health care providers," said **Michelle McMacken, MD, FACP, DipABLM, executive director, Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine, NYC Health + Hospitals**. "We welcome the opportunity to participate in this convening, which will help inform national strategies to reduce diet-related chronic disease and nutrition insecurity."

"During the pandemic there was period of time when we the phrase 'underlying conditions' was ubiquitous," said **Jimmy Oddo, chief of staff, Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. "As a nation, it seemed we finally had a sense of urgency to confront the reality that we are three of four generations into the Standard American Diet pummeling our health, and we seemed poised to begin to attack the causes of the chronic disease that plagues us. My hope is this conference will spearhead a new awareness and commitment to fight."

Earlier this year, President Joseph Biden announced that the White House will host a Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health this September – the first time the White House has hosted a conference on these issues in more than 50 years. To inform and achieve the goals of the conference, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Food Systems for the Future, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, and World Central Kitchen formed the Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, along with an accompanying Strategy Group on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to advise the task force. These efforts – while not formally endorsed by the White House – seek to elevate and identify policy solutions to some of the issues this year's conference aims to address.

Since taking office, Mayor Adams has taken bold steps to make the city's food system cleaner, healthier, and more equitable for all New Yorkers, including:

- Introducing "Plant-Powered Fridays" in all New York City public schools;
- Expanding lifestyle medicine programs to public health sites in all five boroughs;
- Signing executive orders to formalize the city's commitment to good food purchasing and promote healthy food advertising on city property; and
- Investing an additional \$30 million in funding to the Emergency Food Assistance Program in Fiscal Year 2023 – bringing the total investment to \$53 million.

"The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing problems with nutrition and food insecurity here at home and in communities around the nation," said **U.S.**

Representative Adriano Espaillat. "It is unacceptable that as the richest country in the world, there remains a significant population that is unable to adequately feed themselves and their families. That is why this forum is so critical, and I commend Mayor Adams for convening leaders from across New York City to discuss a collaborative approach to addressing food insecurity in our communities. It will take each of us working together with local organizations and partners to find innovative ways to increase access to healthy foods and resources for the families who call New York City home."

"At the same time as we invest urgently in the transition to renewable energy, we must build sustainable food systems at every level of our society," said **U.S. Representative Jamaal Bowman.** "We must continue to expand access to nutrient-dense foods. This will raise strong and well-nourished children as well as healthy adults. We'll increase life expectancy among marginalized communities and see less disease and increased quality of life. It is incredible to work with all levels of government in order to make this a reality."

"I'm grateful to Mayor Adams for bringing together policy experts, advocates, government leaders, and people with lived experiences to chart a path for a hunger free New York. Under his leadership, New York is the first major city to convene a discussion like this in the lead up to the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health this September," said **U.S. Representative James P. McGovern, chair, House Committee on Rules.** "Many of the best ideas to end hunger and expand access to nutritious food are coming from the local level—and the lessons learned from today's dialogue will play a key role in informing our country's anti-hunger strategy for decades to come. Under the incredible leadership of President Joe Biden and mayors like Eric Adams, we have the power to work together to end hunger now."

"This first convening will provide the task force with a unique opportunity to hear from not only experts but many working on the front lines to end hunger and malnutrition," said **Ambassador Ertharin Cousin, co-chair, Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; founder and CEO, Food Systems for the Future; former executive director, World Food Programme.** The convening participants will offer evidence to identify not only the root causes of health disparities and hunger in America, but the multisector solutions for positive change. To address these complex, nationwide issues, a successful White House conference will require diverse and geographically widespread

participation as well as citizen-driven momentum. I look forward to the outcomes and ideas generated from this dialogue and the many local conversations to follow."

"I'm honored to be a part of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health – we're recognizing that food is a universal human right and we must do everything we can to ensure everyone, especially children, have access to fresh and healthy food," said **José Andrés, co-chair, Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; founder and chief feeding officer, World Central Kitchen; CEO, ThinkFoodGroup.** "For this to become a reality, we have to address where our food system is broken or threatened from all angles – and seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make food part of the solution to many of the problems we face. Building longer tables, creating resilience in the face of future crises. Food at the end of the day is the heart of every single thing we are."

"I am honored to be a part of this task force that will inform how our country approaches the current hunger, nutrition, and health crisis," said **Senator Bill Frist, co-chair, Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; former Majority Leader, U.S. Senate; global board vice-chair, The Nature Conservancy; senior fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center; adjunct professor of surgery, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Department of Cardiac Surgery.** "Overcoming this challenge starts during these key community listening sessions where we can engage and listen to those of us who have lived experiences with hunger."

"I am delighted that Mayor Adams's and New York City are leading the way in encouraging access to healthier food in the city, especially for school-age children," said **Secretary Dan Glickman, co-chair, Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; senior fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center, former secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture.**

"Today, more Americans are sick than are healthy, suffering from diet-related chronic diseases caused by a food system and policies that make it hard to achieve good nutrition," said **Dean Dariush Mozaffarian, co-chair, Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; Dean and Jean Mayer Professor of Nutrition, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University; Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine and Division of Cardiology, Tufts Medical Center.** "These challenges are harming Americans in all 50 states in profound ways – and especially Americans who have lower incomes or are racial or ethnic minorities,

who face higher rates of food insecurity, as well as diabetes, obesity, stroke, and heart disease. These problems are crushing not only people's health but also our economy. It's time for government at every level – from national to local – to take an active role in finding and supporting solutions. For years, the city of New York has been at the forefront of innovative policies around food, nutrition, and health. I am delighted that Mayor Adams is partnering with us to host this event around the power of cities to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, and advance health for all. It's time for real change."

"I'm honored to join Mayor Adams for today's convening on the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. New York State has so many people and groups who are devoted to ensuring that all New Yorkers, from school children to seniors, have access to fresh, healthy food – but there is so much more that can be done," said **New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A.**

Ball. "Conversations like these are critical to the development of steps and strategies that can address these challenges in our state and nationwide."

About the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Founded in 1922, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and engagement in global affairs. Our in-depth analysis and expert-led research influence policy conversations and inform the insights we share with our growing community. Through accessible content and open dialogue of diverse, fact-based perspectives, we empower more people to help shape our global future. Learn more at thechicagocouncil.org.

About Food Systems for the Future

Food Systems for the Future (FSF) was founded to catalyze, enable, and scale market-driven agtech, foodtech, and innovative businesses across the value chain to improve nutrition outcomes in underserved and low-income communities. Through wraparound support to enterprises and broader ecosystem building, FSF addresses barriers to affordability, availability, and awareness of healthy, nutrient dense foods through our core services: financing, business acceleration, public policy & education, partnerships & community engagement, and nutrition expertise. FSF currently operates in the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa. Learn more at fsfinstitute.net.

About Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University

The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University is a leading U.S. institution focused on education, research, and public impact around the food system, from soil to society. The School's five divisions and additional centers and institutes are renowned for the application of scientific evidence to national and international policy. Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville, and Grafton, Massachusetts, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier teaching and research universities in the U.S. Learn more at nutrition.tufts.edu/

About World Central Kitchen

Founded in 2010 by Chef José Andrés, World Central Kitchen (WCK) is first to the frontlines, providing meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises while working to build resilient food systems with locally led solutions. WCK has served more than 70 million fresh meals to people impacted by natural disasters and other crises around the world. WCK's Resilience Programs strengthen food and nutrition security by training chefs and school cooks; advancing clean cooking practices; and awarding grants to farms, fisheries, and small food businesses while also providing educational and networking opportunities. Learn more at wck.org.