Three days of initiatives focused on the Mediterranean Diet. The events will be held to coincide with the year of the Italian coordination of the UNESCO Emblematic Communities, to promote the most sustainable diet and lifestyle for human and planetary health.

It is scientifically proven that the Mediterranean Diet represents one of the most important diets and lifestyles for human and planetary health. This is particularly relevant in the current “Decade of Action” as defined by the United Nations, specifically for urban areas, where the population is growing significantly.

In this sense, New York represents an iconic destination for designing climate-smart cities as the United Nations is working to sustainably nourish its citizens by finding innovative solutions and adopting new technologies. At the same time, we are all struggling with many consequences of the climate crisis, including rising sea levels, floods, food deserts, and energy shocks.

New York is also the epicenter of many food policies’ principles and is the home of policymakers from all over the globe, as it hosts the United Nations headquarters as well as many other organizations working for the public interest.

These are the reasons why New York represents the ideal place to show how powerful the Mediterranean Diet is, especially in the current era.

Since November 16, 2010 the Mediterranean Diet has been listed as a UNESCO Intangible Heritage of Humanity as it is “much more than a simple list of foods. It promotes social interaction, since the common meal is the basis of social customs and festivities shared by a given community, and has given rise to a remarkable body of knowledge, songs, maxims, tales, and legends. The Diet is founded on respect for the land and biodiversity, and ensures the preservation and development of traditional activities and crafts related to fishing and agriculture in Mediterranean communities.”

Since this recognition, Italy, thanks to the Municipality of Pollica as the institutional representative of the recognized Emblematic Community, has been the activator, the catalyst, and the promoter of what is now
an international network universally recognized, taking charge of many initiatives essential for the dissemination and preservation of the common heritage, including supporting the realization of the new joint site of the emblematic communities, organizing the protagonism of the "Mediterranean Diet" heritage at Expo 2015, and ensuring the participation of representatives from all the communities.

In this context and after having hosted the G20 meetings, the UNFSS Pre-Summit and Pre-COP26, 2022 is a crucial year for Italy. This year, the global Food Valley and the cradle of Food identity has elected the new coordinator of the seven UNESCO Emblematic Communities. It assumes crucial importance in the diffusion of the Mediterranean Lifestyle and in the further strengthening of leadership in building relationships and exchanges between the communities representing the Mediterranean Diet.

Future Food Institute, the global ecosystem focused on food innovation and its cultural, economic, environmental, diplomatic, and social impact, is the official technical secretariat of the Municipality of Pollica and the Mediterranean Diet Study Center 'Angelo Vassallo;' and the focal point of the network with the Emblematic Communities.

**The Mediterranean Diet**

*Lifestyle and well-being*

The "Food Systems," the true nexus of society, are facing a profound transformation and are looking for models capable of enabling the entire system, making it become a positive agent of regeneration. This is demonstrated by the strategic plans of large multinational food companies that announce the transition to regenerative models and the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050.

A concrete example of Integral Ecology, the Mediterranean Diet, as a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, represents a solid starting point for an Integral Ecological Regeneration that takes over from the Mediterranean, and becomes a strategic asset for the recovery and the restart of the humana comunitas.

In a perfect balance between humanistic and scientific cultures, the Mediterranean Lifestyle and Diet have contributed to the construction of an identity that has now gone well beyond the territorial or food borders; it has become a model within which we can concretely face the coming years, responding to the challenges inherent in the sustainable development objectives of the UN Agenda 2030 and the new European Farm to Fork strategy for the reduction of agri-food environmental impact, which is considered a landmark at the global level. It is also establishing itself as a practical system within which to build a truly informed food tech future, one which begins locally and builds to a global scale while retaining the priorities of education and future generations.

The cultural model of the Mediterranean Diet applies the principles of integral ecology, capable of implementing solutions that have at heart the health of the ecosystem, the community, and the individual, becoming the long-term strategy needed to realize the concept of "one health." The "Mediterranean Diet," in its most complete interpretation which also includes agricultural practices, seasonality, conviviality, and the cultural dimension, and in addition to the positive impacts it generates on human health and the ecosystem, is interpreted by us as the perfect model of integral ecological regeneration.

The awareness of how much the Mediterranean Diet is more than a simple food model, but a wealth of science, traditional knowledge, skills, and identity values generated by a territory, is consolidated in Cilento,
which can be considered as a real laboratory of land and sea biodiversity, able to release a unique natural wealth in the world. A cultural project that intersects multiple disciplines and has its roots in the sixth century BC.

**The scientific and nutritional context**

Since ancient times around Pollina, scientific and medical skills gravitated in the area leading to the birth of the first modern western school of medicine, the Salerno Medical School, born in the ninth century. But it was only after the war that the **American scientists Ancel Keys** (inventor of the “K ration”) and **Margaret Haney**, moved to Pioppo, a village in the Cilento municipality of Pollica, and intrigued by the longevity of the local population, and studied the correlation between the local lifestyle and the epidemiological incidence of cardiovascular disease. The scientists codified the fundamental characteristics that are common to the traditional diets of the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea (from Spain to the Greek islands, passing through Southern Italy). A path that led to the discovery of the benefits of what, in the sixties, they defined for the first time as the “Mediterranean Diet.”

Still today, the Mediterranean Diet is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) for being a healthy and sustainable dietary pattern, reducing obesity and cardiovascular risk while promoting protection against depression, anxiety, and elderly cognitive decline.

“A set of ingredients, skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols, and traditions, ranging from the landscape to the table” outlines the close correlation between nutrition, health, and the environment. With the creation of the **Double Food Pyramid**, the different types of food of the Mediterranean Diet were compared with the impact of their production, to understand the very close connection between our food choices and the future of our planet.

**One Health Approach**

Human health and our shared environment are part of a deeply interconnected system. The WHO works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to promote multi-sectoral responses to food safety hazards, risks from zoonoses, and other public health threats at the human-animal-ecosystem interface and provide guidance on how to reduce these risks. As the population increases and the demand for food grows. With people and animals living closer together, the interdependence of human health and animal health, and the health of our shared environment health is without question. This is known as One Health.

Around 60% of all human infectious diseases are zoonotic, meaning they can be transferred between animals and humans. Healthy animals mean healthy people and a healthier planet. Protecting animal health helps protect against the transmission of animal-borne diseases and to protect an essential food source. Safe and sustainable food production is a key element of One Health. This is why Animal health Europe recommends a **One Health transition to sustainable food production under the EU Farm to Fork Strategy**. Healthy animals contribute both to safe food and our food security while minimizing impacts on the environment.

FAO promotes One Health in its work on food security, sustainable agriculture, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), nutrition, animal and plant health, fisheries, and livelihoods. Ensuring a **One Health approach is essential** for progress to anticipate, prevent, detect, and control diseases that spread between animals and humans, tackle AMR, ensure food safety, prevent environment-related human and animal health threats, as well as combatting many other challenges. The application of a One Health approach is
critical for achieving the **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and at large, the EU **Green Deal** because everything is interconnected.

In October 2022, the Municipality of Pollica, the Mediterranean Diet Study Center "Angelo Vassallo," and the Future Food Institute, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and with the participation of UNESCO representatives, are organizing, a series of High-Level events in New York to explore the opportunity to foster mutual actions to **strengthen Mediterranean alliances** and promote "**Mediterranean Diet**" has a strategic asset for sustainable development.

The schedule will be held from November 17th to the 19th, 2022, and will be composed of:

- High-level panel hosted by the Italian Embassy at the UN in New York and co-sponsored by Morocco, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus
  - The event will be an opportunity to engage all Mediterranean countries and unite, perhaps to support joint campaigns on today’s most relevant issues, such as food security and the challenges driven by climate change.
  - The event will be included in **ASVIS’s Sustainable Development Festival calendar**.
- “**Mediterranean reception**” at Di Martino New York involving all high-level stakeholders and the official delegation and the Consuls in New York representing the Countries involved in the Network of the seven Emblematic Communities of the Mediterranean Diet
- Masterclass and tasting at **The Culinary Institute of America**.

The Mission includes Stefano Pisani, Mayor of Pollica and President of the UNESCO Network of Emblematic Communities of the Mediterranean Diet, a senior representative of MIPAAF (Italian Ministry of Agriculture), the President of the UNESCO Convention's Body of World Experts, Professor Luigi Petrillo, and a delegate from FAO.

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