

## Time to push for a sustainable food system, say scientists

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

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From top to bottom, tropical tabbouleh, Mediterranean tabbouleh and California tabbouleh | Photo Credit: AP

### **EAT-Lancet Commission releases report on healthy diet**

“The way we are producing food today is causing increased emission of greenhouse gases, depleting fresh water supply, compromising land use, exhausting the nitrogen and phosphorous cycle, and endangering biodiversity,” said K. Srinath Reddy, one of the two Indian commissioners on the EAT-Lancet Commission, and president, Public Health Foundation of India (PHAI), at the release of the EAT-Lancet Commission’s report here on Thursday.

In his video-recorded message, Dr. Reddy stressed, “We need to find a safe space to provide food security to everyone by 2050.”

### **International panel**

The report, authored by 37 international experts, including two from India, has been put together by EAT, the science-based global platform for food system transformation, and the journal *The Lancet*.

The EAT-Lancet Commission’s report, for the first time proposes scientific targets for what constitutes a healthy diet derived from a sustainable food system.

“With 1.35 billion people, that is, 1 out of 6 people globally here in India, India would soon surpass China to become the most populated nation in the world, and that too on one-third of the landmass of China. Feeding all our people a healthy diet in a sustainable manner without compromising on our ecology and environment is going to be the most important challenge for us in the coming decades,” said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. Presenting the EAT-Lancet Commission report, Brent Loken of EAT, said: “ If we don’t fix the food

system, we cannot achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The great thing that FSSAI is doing is beginning this conversation in India."

### **People's movements**

Presenting some key steps required for the 'great food transformation', Lawrence Haddad, executive director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), a global initiative launched by the United Nations in 2012, said: "Taxes on unhealthy foods, subsidies for healthier food options, strong leadership in the public and private sectors and strong civil society movements, is the need of the hour."

Highlighting the importance of food safety, he cautioned: "As food systems become more formal and organised, food safety threats increase, not decrease. FSSAI has brought the worlds of food safety and healthy eating together."