Press Release

Students Present Generation Next's View on Healthy Diets and Sustainable Food Systems as World Experts Listen at India launch of EAT-Lancet Commission's Historic Report

New Delhi, 04th April 2019: ONE of the most influential public health documents of this decade, the EAT-Lancet Commission's 'Food Planet Health', was formally released for India today at the headquarters of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Policy-makers, development agencies, embassy representatives, farmers' associations, food tech entrepreneurs, researchers and students were present at this event, which was webcast live to 43 colleges across the country. Additionally, three groups of students from reputed institutes of nutrition; food technology and food waste management presented their analyses of the report to provide the perspective of the generation of future leaders.

Authored by 37 international experts, including two from India, brought together by EAT, the science-based global platform for food system transformation, and Lancet, one of the world's most prestigious peer-reviewed general medical journals published weekly since 1823; the EAT-Lancet Commission's report, for the first time ever, proposes scientific targets for what constitutes a healthy diet derived from a sustainable food system.

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), a global initiative launched by the United Nations in 2012 to make nutritious food more affordable, and Tasting India, an international platform for food policy advocacy, partnered with the FSSAI to present the event and share the key takeaways with their respective social media audiences.

"The programme has been planned in a way to create a nationwide conversation around the document," Mr. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI said. *"A video report will also be prepared for distribution among key stakeholders, via FSSAI's Network of Professionals of Health and Nutrition (NetProFan), so that they in turn hold workshops to prepare action plans based on the recommendations of the report."* He added, the strategy was an expression of the FSSAI's belief that "consumer empowerment is the key element" of its strategy to create a market-demand for safe food and healthy diets.

In his welcome address, he said *"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 our ecology and environment is going to be the most important challenge for us in the coming decades. Therefore, the framework provided in this report is very, very important to us in India."*

Presenting the report, Dr Brent Loken, Director, Science Translation, EAT, remarked, *"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."* Dr Loken was followed by Dr K. Srinath Reddy, one of the two Indian Commissioners on the EAT-Lancet Commission, and President, Public Health Foundation of India. In a video-recorded message, Dr Reddy said, *"We need to find a safe space to provide nutrition security to everyone by 2050."*

Dr. Lawrence Haddad, World Food Prize Winner and Executive Director, GAIN, in his keynote address presented some key steps required for the 'Great Food Transformation' such as taxes on unhealthy foods, subsidies for healthier food options, soft policies, leaderships in the public and private sectors and strong civil society movements. Highlighting the importance of food safety, he also cautioned *"As food systems become more formal and organized, food safety threats increase, not decrease. FSSAI has brought the world's of food safety and healthy eating together. You can have safe food that is not nutritious but you cannot have nutritious food that is not safe."* Furthermore, he urged the need for more data on malnutrition, dietary patterns etc. because "If you cannot measure it, you cannot monitor it and thus cannot change it." Finally, he remarked, "If we can make this happen in India, we can make this happen anywhere in the world. This country is important because the world looks to India for leadership."

The other highlight of the day was the Executive Director, FSSAI, Madhavi Das's presentation on the Government Action on Five Strategies for the Great Food Transformation. Spelling out the strategies, Das said *"The key word is commitment. We need commitment from the Government, industry and all key stakeholders, including citizens to being about a change towards healthy and sustainable diets."*

Dr Nafees Meah, South Asia Representative, International Rice Research Institute spoke about the importance and methods of promoting healthy and sustainable diets through rice-based systems in South Asia because it has the highest consumption of rice per capita.

Ambassador Banashree Bose Harrison, Honorary Executive Director, Tasting India, pointed out, *"India is one of the leading food producers of the world in several sectors, so this report is critical for India in particular. India can be beacon for the rest of the world because traditionally we have incorporated plant-based food in delicious way."* She urged young chefs to create healthy recipes which are both affordable, diverse and healthy since *"both the palette and the purse matter."*

Ms Chandrika Bahadur, President, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, who concluded the deliberations of the day saying *"This food transformation cannot be brought about by the Government alone but through partnerships of all stakeholders towards healthy and environmentally sustainable diets. This movement has to be a consume-led movement to create demand for such food. It is important to contextualize this report for India because it has the power to become a showcase for the entire world."*

For media queries, contact:

Ruchika Sharma
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
E: sharmaruchika.21@gmail.com