



## Editorial

# “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”: the innovative thematic approach of Expo Milano 2015”



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NUTRIRE IL PIANETA  
ENERGIA PER LA VITA  
NOURRIER LA PLANETE  
ENERGIE POUR LA VIE  
FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE

“Everything is the theme. The theme is everything”. This declaration, presented in Expo Milano 2015 Participants’ Guide, enshrines the spirit of an Expo that aimed at proposing a new model for Universal Expositions in the 21st century, through an innovative thematic approach pervading every aspects of the Expo, from the physical structures of the Exhibition Spaces to the multifaceted experience offered to visitors by both the Participants and the Organizer. From these very premises, since the times of the bid to host the World Expo in 2015, the theme “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life” and its centrality in the approach proposed by the Italian candidacy engaged all Countries, convincing them that this project could be realized in Italy for its particularly profound link with nutrition, and at the same time offering such a wide range of possible interpretations and declinations to be embraced by every Participant.

The first step towards the development of this thematic approach has been the publication of a series of documents designed to provide participants in Expo Milano 2015 with guidance in their own interpretation of the aspects of the theme they in-

tended to present as part of their participation in the Universal Exposition. Among these documents, special mention should be made of the Theme Guide and the Sustainable Solutions Guidelines. The Theme Guide, is a document preliminary to the Participation and presents a detailed description of the theme of Expo Milano 2015, starting from a question which is at the heart of the concept of this Exposition : “is it possible to ensure sufficient, good, healthy and sustainable food for all mankind?”. Through thinking on sustainable behaviors to feed the mankind and the planet Earth itself, Expo Milano 2015 presented itself as a place where all Countries of the World and the various international community’s stakeholders can come together around the same table to enhance their dialogue and active collaboration in addressing the main challenges that must be faced by humanity. The areas which have been identified to represent the main theme of Expo Milano 2015 range from architecture and technology to performance content and food services. With reference to architecture, the Sustainable Solutions Guidelines were published in 2013 with the purpose to share knowledge



on best solutions and practices and to provide guidance to designers with the aim of improving the performance of temporary buildings and Exhibition Spaces in Expo Milano 2015 by reducing the consumption of energy, water and materials, and by preventing potential environmental impacts. Along with architecture, in the physical determination of the Exhibition Spaces, the interrelated concepts of technology and sustainability have always been considered as fundamental for both the Organizer and the Participants in the design and creation of their own spaces.

The general structure of the Expo 2015 Site itself has been designed to be permeated by the theme in a harmonious way. First of all, because the Expo Site was conceived as an ecosystem and created around the concept of a landscape in which human needs are in harmony with nature. Secondly, because the Organizer and the Participants have strived their best efforts to ensure internal coherence around the main theme of the Universal Exposition, by harmonizing several different scientific, cultural and entertainment proposals made available on the Expo Site. In light of this, the "Vie d'Acqua" project – the hydric system encircling the Expo Site – not only contributes to the creation of a landscape of natural beauty in Milan (recalling Leonardo's navigable canals of Milan), but it is also a real component of the theme evoking environmental sustainability: as a matter of facts, the Canal of Expo Milano 2015 collects rainwater in a wet park and return clean irrigation water to the surrounding countryside, utilize a system of water phyto-purification, and creates differentiated micro-climates for visitors' comfort. The Thematic Areas – such as Pavilion Zero, the Biodiversity Park and the Future Food District – have perhaps been the places where the theme as unifying code of communication was developed most. Just to give an idea, Pavilion Zero, developed in collaboration with the United Nations, has been the first area visited by the majority of visitors when entering the Expo Site, and it had the role to stimulate their curiosity about the themes of the Exposition. It was also the visitors' first contact with the Best Practices, which are selected innovative solutions developed in specific contexts to the challenges posed by feeding the planet. Moreover, the theme has been made the unifying thread crossing the entire Expo Site also through

the nine Thematic Clusters, a key innovation of Expo Milano 2015, consisting of Exhibition Spaces grouping within the same architectural project a number of Countries sharing a representative theme, like a thematic identity (Agriculture and Nutrition in Arid Zones, Bio-Mediterraneum, Islands, Sea and Food) or a food chain (Rice, Cocoa, Coffee, Fruits and Legumes, Cereals and Tubers, the World of Spices). The Thematic Cluster model is not only an innovative way to overcome the limited space bound, but it adds also considerable value to the participation of the Countries, both overcoming the concept of the Joint Pavilions, which in previous Expos gathered Countries according to exclusively geographical criteria, and helping the extensive diffusion of the theme.

Starting from the programmatic documents and the master plan of the Expo 2015 Site, the theme of Expo Milano 2015 was finally made live and vibrant during the six months of the Event, through a rich program of events, conferences and seminars focused on the importance of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". Among them, it is particularly worth mentioning the Thematic Days that have been celebrated throughout the Event, such as the Bread Day, celebrated on July 19th 2015 to show the fundamental value of this basic food and bring together all Participants at Expo Milano 2015 in a symbolic moment that for many friends also marked the end of Ramadan. Another unique opportunity for reflection and dialogue on the important theme of Expo Milano 2015 was represented by the international event "It begins with me: how the world can end hunger in our lifetime", held on September 6th in the Expo Site. This event, co-organized by the Governments of Italy and Ireland in collaboration with the World Food Program, consisted of a public discussion aimed at increasing awareness on food-related emergencies and the global effort necessary to face them, which involved the highest level institutional representatives of Ireland and Italy, including the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, the Irish Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Executive Director of World Food Programme. A crucial event for Expo Milano 2015, moreover, has been "The After Expo: the Legacy of Milan 2015", held on October 10th as culmination of the reflections that arose on the occasion of the event "The Ideas of Expo" of February 7th. Thanks to the inclu-



sive and participatory model of the working tables, which gathered not only representatives from the Countries taking part in the Universal Exposition but also the leading players involved in different ways in Expo 2015 and its theme, this initiative offered the opportunity to take a closer look at the global challenges linked to the Expo 2015 theme, from the battle against food waste to the goal of Zero Hunger by 2030, from support for family farming to boosting research and innovation, and from the safeguarding of biodiversity to food and wine culture. The importance of this event lies essentially in the fact that it was a unique occasion to share everything that has been developed during previous years and months on the theme of Expo Milano 2015, trying to find responses and solutions, but also paving the way for new challenges presented in the Milan Charter and which will be included in the post-Expo 2015 activities.

The Milan Charter has been conceived as the cultural legacy of Expo Milano 2015, representing another fundamental innovation relatively to Expo Milano 2015 and its theme. As a matter of fact, in the months preceding the beginning of this major international Event, an intense debate involving the scientific community, civil society organization and several institutions' contributions on the theme of Expo Milano 2015 led to the drafting of the Milan Charter, a participatory and shared document that calls on every citizen, association, company and institution to assume their responsibility in ensuring that future generations can enjoy the right to food. In particular, the Milan Charter addresses four major issues: what economic and production models can ensure sustainable development in economic and social areas? Which of the different types of existing agriculture are able to produce sufficient quantities of healthy food without damaging water resources and biodiversity? What are the best practices and technologies to reduce inequalities within cities, where the majority of the human population is concentrated? How can we think about food not only as a mere source of nutrition, but also as something that provides a socio-cultural identity? As conclusive moment of this process, and at the same time as the beginning of its new life, the Milan Charter was handed over to the United Nations Secretary-General on October 16th 2015 in the culmination of the celebrations for the 2015 World Food

Day, which this year were significantly held in the premises of the Expo 2015 Site.

This is how the Expo 2015 theme has permeated each component and aspect of this global Event and has become a fundamental part of its legacy, which aims to be not only a material legacy characterized by innovative architecture or new monuments, but most of all a conceptual one, encouraging everyone to take on the challenge of the achievement of the important and tangible goals of feeding the planet and mankind in a sustainable way.

We are glad to contribute this editorial to Volume 4 Issue 1 of the "Future of Food: Journal on Food, Agriculture and Society", on the theme of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". The selected research papers presented in this volume will provide innovative insights of the thematic area with research-based experiences in regional and global perspectives. Furthermore, this edition is enriched with a documentary that was produced by the Future of Food Journal to bring a critical review on Expo 2015. The book and film review section bring the description and an evaluation of actual publication on the thematic area.

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