

FORUM: FAO

TOPIC: WHAT IS THE ISSUE CONCERNING THE REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FOOD WASTE?

SPONSOR: JAPAN

The FAO Commission,

Recalling the 74/209 resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, in which it proclaimed the 29th of September as The international Day of Awareness of food loss and waste (IDAFLW),

Reaffirming the Commitment of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action of Member States to “ reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.” In other words, it is to ensure universal access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food for all people, and to prevent and reduce food loss and waste along the food supply chain,

Emphasizing the need to reduce food loss and waste as a means to achieve the sustainable development goals, in particular Goal 12.3 which calls for halving per capita food waste at retail and consumer level and reducing food losses along production and supply chains by 2030,

Recognizing the fundamental role that sustainable food production plays in promoting food security and nutrition, and the negative impacts of food waste such as:

- a) Environmental: Agriculture significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Food loss and waste exacerbate this issue. For instance, around 14% of globally produced food is lost between harvest and retail. Fruits and vegetables fare even worse, with over 20% loss
- b) Economic : Food loss and waste result in substantial economic losses. Farmers, retailers, and consumers bear the brunt. Efficient food systems can boost economies and create jobs.
- c) Social: Addressing food waste is essential for social justice. When food is wasted, it perpetuates inequality. By reducing waste, we can ensure that everyone has access to nourishing meals.

Acknowledging the efforts and initiatives of various countries ,NGO's and other stakeholders to address the issue of food loss and waste such as the EU Platform on food Losses and Food Waste, the champions 12.3 network, the save Food campaign, the THINK.EAT.SAVE champaign, and the Food Loss and Waste protocol.

1. Invite Member States and other relevant stakeholders to observe the International Food Loss and Waste Awareness Day and to raise public awareness of the issue of food loss and waste via:

- a) social media: to share information ,infographics, videos, and success stories related to reducing food loss and waste;
- b) Campaigns: Organize awareness campaigns at local, national and international levels. These campaigns can include educational events, workshops, and seminars;

- c) Engage in street demonstrations, marches, and rallies to draw attention to the issue. Holding public events in busy areas can help spread the message.

2. Encourage Member States to implement the Voluntary Guidelines developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2004. These guidelines focus on promoting the right to adequate food within the context of national food security. Specifically, Member States should prioritize actions that address food loss and waste, such as:

- a) improving storage facilities: Countries can invest in modern cold storage facilities to prevent spoilage and extend the shelf life of perishable foods. They can also improve dry storage conditions (for grains, pulses, etc.) which helps reduce losses due to pests, humidity, and mold.
- b) transportation systems: Member States should prioritize efficient transportation networks. This includes well-maintained roads, railways, and ports to facilitate the movement of food from production areas to markets. In addition, developing a robust cold chain (refrigerated transport) ensures that perishable goods remain fresh during transit.
- c) Optimize distribution networks: Countries can create accessible markets for farmers and producers. This involves establishing local markets, wholesale centers, and linking rural and urban areas. Furthermore, streamlining distribution channels by minimizing intermediaries can help reduce costs and prevent unnecessary food waste.

3. Urges Member States to develop and implement national strategies, policies and actions to reduce food loss and waste, taking into account local and regional specificities, and drawing on existing good practice and innovative solutions such as:

- a) Improving food storage and transportation infrastructure: Member States should invest in upgrading facilities, optimizing supply chains, and ensuring efficient handling of perishable goods. This includes adopting advanced storage technologies, improving cold chain logistics, and minimizing losses during transportation.
- b) Prioritizing Food Safety and Quality Measures: Strengthening food safety standards is critical. Measures should focus on preventing spoilage, maintaining nutritional value, and ensuring safe handling throughout the supply chain. This involves rigorous quality control, proper labeling, and adherence to hygiene protocols.
- c) Promoting Circular Economy and Valorization of Food Waste: Innovative solutions are key. Member States should explore methods to effectively utilize food waste. Examples include converting organic waste into valuable resources like compost or bioenergy. By closing the loop, we reduce waste and create sustainable alternatives.
- d) Supporting Food Distribution and Donation Programs: Ensuring surplus food reaches those in need is vital. Member States should collaborate with food banks, NGOs, and local communities. By facilitating efficient distribution channels, we simultaneously address hunger and minimize waste.
- e) Educating and Empowering Consumers and Food Businesses: Raising awareness is essential. Member States should engage in public campaigns, emphasizing responsible consumption, proper storage practices, and waste reduction. Empowering consumers and businesses with knowledge leads to more informed choices.

4. Calls on member states to strengthen cooperation and partnerships in order to share knowledge, experience and resources to reduce food loss and waste; it is possible by:

- a) Establishing national or regional public-private platforms,
- b) Participating in global networks and initiatives
- c) Facilitating data collection and reporting, involving multiple actors like academic and research institutions , government agencies, private sector and civil society organizations
- d) Mobilizing financial and technical support by involving international organizations, private sectors and government funding.

5. Requests the Director-General of FAO to continue to support Member States in their efforts to reduce food loss and waste, in particular by:

- a) Facilitating Knowledge Exchange: The FAO can actively promote the exchange of information and best practices among Member States. This includes sharing successful strategies, case studies, and innovative approaches to minimize food loss and waste.
- b) Providing Technical Assistance: The FAO should offer technical expertise and guidance to Member States. This could involve capacity-building workshops, training sessions, and access to relevant resources. For instance, assisting in implementing efficient post-harvest handling techniques or improving storage facilities.
- c) Capacity Building: The FAO can collaborate with Member States to enhance their capacity in tackling food loss and waste. This might include training local experts, supporting research initiatives, and fostering partnerships with relevant institutions.
- d) Programs for Sustainable Practices: The FAO should develop and promote programs that encourage sustainable practices throughout the food supply chain. These programs could focus on reducing losses during production, transportation, and distribution. For example, promoting better packaging, transportation logistics, and cold chain management.
- e) Advocacy and Policy Support: The FAO can advocate for policies that incentivize food loss reduction. This involves working closely with governments to create supportive regulatory frameworks, financial incentives, and awareness campaigns.
- f) Collaboration with Stakeholders: The FAO should engage with various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, private sector, and civil society. Collaborative efforts can lead to more effective solutions and greater impact.

6. Encourage Member States to enhance awareness and utilization of date labeling on food products, including ‘use by’ and ‘best before’ dates. Effective management of date labeling can significantly reduce unnecessary food waste by ensuring consumers comprehend when food remains safe for consumption and when it should be discarded. However, it’s essential to recognize that date markings may not be universally applicable to all food items. Some products inherently have longer shelf lives or are less sensitive to spoilage, rendering date labels less critical. Therefore, we recommend a nuanced approach, considering the specific characteristics of each food category

7. Advocate for the establishment of streamlined and effective systems like facilitate connections between potential food donors (such as restaurants, supermarkets, and food producers) and hunger relief organizations like food banks and pantries. These systems should ensure that surplus food, which cannot be prevented at the source, is efficiently redistributed for human consumption where it is safe to do so.

8. Encourage Member States to enhance their food waste measurement practices. Robust data collection and reporting are essential for informed decision-making and sharing best practices.

The data collection process should fall under the purview of relevant government agencies, statistical offices, or designated bodies. These entities are responsible for gathering accurate and comprehensive data on food waste levels. Additionally, organizations involved in food production, distribution, and consumption may also play a role in data collection.

By quantifying food waste levels accurately, countries can identify areas for improvement and track progress in reducing waste.

9. Calls on member states to set ambitious targets for food waste reduction within their national contexts. These targets should align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aim to halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer levels by 2030.

- a) Encourages Member states to collaborate, share best practices, and actively engage in data collection and reporting to track progress.

If progress toward reducing food waste does not occur, and the targets set by member states are not achieved, several implications may arise:

- a) It could exacerbate environmental issues related to food waste, such as increased greenhouse gas emissions, land use, and resource depletion.
- b) vulnerable populations may continue to face challenges related to hunger and malnutrition.
- c) Not achieving targets may result in continued economic losses like including lost value along the supply chain, increased disposal costs, and inefficient resource utilization.
- d) Failing to reduce food waste aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Member states committed to these global goals, and not achieving food waste reduction targets may hinder overall progress.
- e) If progress stalls, member states should reevaluate their strategies, identify barriers, and adapt their approaches. Collaboration, sharing best practices, and active engagement in data collection remain crucial even when facing challenges.

10. Decides to review the issue of food waste reduction and management at its next session.