

BACKGROUND NOTE



The international conference *NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE – Global action to stop food losses and food waste* will be held in The Hague, The Netherlands from the 16th to 19th of June 2015. The conference will include a High Level Session on the 18th of June.

This conference is hosted by the Government of the Netherlands, in close cooperation with the Government of Viet Nam, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Union Commission (AUC). *NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE – Global action to stop food losses and food waste* will bring together global leaders from international agencies, business, investment groups, research institutions and civil society to share their experiences and partner to reduce food loss and waste (FLW) throughout the supply chain while improving the sustainability of the food system. This conference is part of a global movement to decrease FLW and offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to actively get involved.

FLW occurs across all segments of the food supply chain and is often the result of the complex interactions within the supply chain. Action to mitigate FLW in one segments likely impacts the chain downstream and upstream – it is therefore critical to foster partnerships and collaborative action throughout the food supply chain.

NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE – Global action to stop food losses and food waste will highlight the need for integrated approaches from public private partnerships with the goal of launching cross-sectoral alliances and establishing concrete commitments to reduce food loss and waste throughout the food supply chain.

Food loss in the production and distribution segments of the food supply chain is mainly caused by the functioning of the food production and supply system or its institutional and legal framework.

Food waste refers to the removal from the food supply chain which is fit for consumption, or which has been spoiled or expired, mainly due to by economic behaviour, poor stock management or neglect.

Source: Definitional Framework of Food Loss, FAO 2014, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-at144e.pdf>.

1. Background

Potential Gains

Mitigating food loss and waste can make an enormous contribution to food security. Though rates of global hunger are shrinking, with a growing population and changing demographics there is tremendous pressure on our food system.¹ Two billion people suffer from 'hidden hunger': lack of nutrients due to unbalanced diets.² More than 805 million people still suffer from hunger every day, particularly in low and middle-income countries.³ Meanwhile, the world's population is expected to grow by over a third, an additional 2.3 billion people, between 2009 and 2050. By 2050 around 70 percent of the world population will live in urban areas and (mega) cities. The growth of an affluent middle class will lead to increased demand for animal protein, fresh products, and increased quality standards, further straining the earth's natural resources increases. To meet the global food demand of 9 billion people in 2050, it is estimated that 60 percent more food is needed. When approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption is either lost or wasted, reducing FLW can efficiently and economically help close the hunger gap. Building on last year's recommendations, the Committee on World Food Security calls for all stakeholders to collectively address FLW, identifying direct and indirect causes of FLW "hotspots" to target.⁴

Furthermore FAO and the World Bank have shown that investing in agriculture is an engine for economic growth: every dollar invested in the agricultural sector has two to three times as much impact on poverty reduction as one dollar invested in other economic sectors.⁵ A WRAP study in the United Kingdom shows that the costs of decreasing food waste are relatively low, but the potential economic gains are substantial. They calculated the gains of food waste actions: 'While food waste is currently valued at more than US\$400 billion per year, as the global middle class expands the cost could rise to US\$600 billion within 15 years. By 2030, a 20-50% reduction in consumer food waste could save an estimated US\$120-300 billion per year.⁶ FLW cause economic loss and reduce return on investments; it impedes development and hinders social progress.⁷ FLW evidence tremendous inefficiency, squandering resources both to produce the food lost and wasted, and from the local and global environmental impacts of treating food waste.

Less food waste leads to more efficiency, more economic productivity and reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.⁸ Reducing food waste has clear benefits for climate change mitigation. An astonishing 7% of all global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), or 3.3 billion tonnes

¹ <http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

² FAO, 2014.

³ <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/cfs41/en/>

⁵ World Bank 2008, World Development Report, Agriculture for Development.

⁶ WRAP, 2015, Banbury, Strategies to achieve economic and environmental gains by reducing food waste.

⁷ HLPE, 2014. Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems.

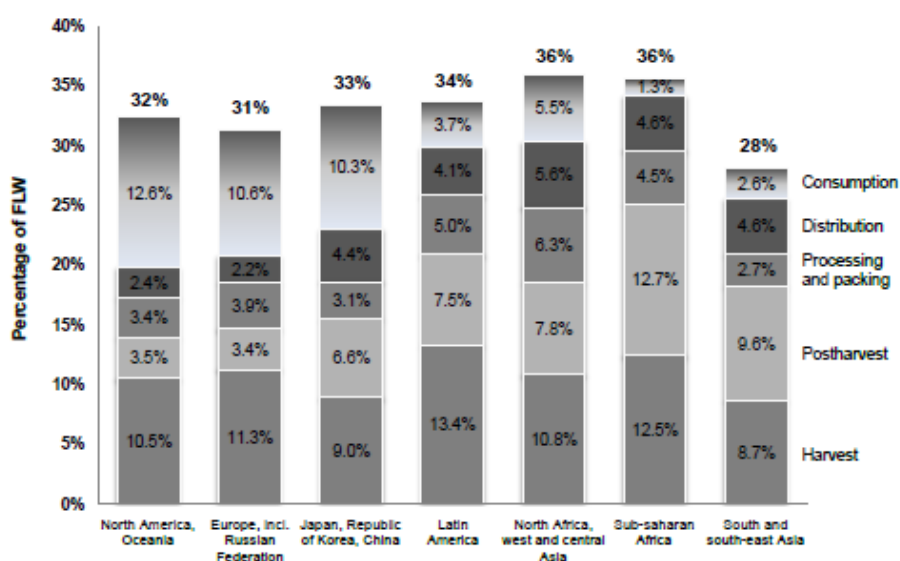
⁸ WRAP, 2015.

per year, are due to food waste. By 2030 GHGs could be lowered by at least 0.2 and possibly as much as 1 billion tonnes per year through food waste reductions.⁹

The Scope of the Challenge

FLW is a consequence of the way the food supply chain functions: culturally, economically, and technically. FLW vary by region and product. Industrialised and developing countries dissipate roughly the same quantities of food.¹⁰ However, developing or low income countries show relatively large food losses in the early stages of the food supply chain, with decreasing loss levels in consecutive stages; more than 40% of the food losses occur at post-harvest and processing levels. This is mostly due to poor infrastructure and undeveloped production. In Sub-Saharan Africa and South/Southeast Asia the per capita food loss is 120-170 kg/year, while food wasted is estimated to be only 6-11 kg/year. In developed or high-income countries a reverse trend is observed: relatively large waste occurs at the downstream end of the chain, primarily during manufacturing and at the household level.

Figure 3 Distribution of FLW along the food chain in the different world regions



The bars represent the percentages lost or wasted at each step of the chain, expressed in percentage of the initial production (edible part originally intended for human consumption, see Figure. 1). Source: elaborated from Gustavsson et al. (FAO, 2011a).

Source: HLPE, 2014. Food Losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome 2014.

⁹ WRAP, 2015.

¹⁰ FAO, 2011; WRI, 2013

Global Initiatives to Tackle Food Loss & Waste

To achieve global food security while protecting our natural resources, we must improve the sustainability of the food system. Reducing FLW is crucial to achieving these goals and is increasingly garnering international attention.

FAO and its partners Messe Düsseldorf, UNEP, IFAD and WFP have established the 'Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction' – SAVE FOOD – to support, coordinate and promote them.¹¹ Zero loss and waste of food is also included in the Zero Hunger Challenge, launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20.¹² The High Level Panel of Experts of the Committee on World Food Security state that FLW should be systematically addressed to improve agricultural and food systems efficiency and sustainability. In its forty-first session, in 2014, 'Making a difference in Food Security and Nutrition', the Committee on World Food Security adopted the four key recommendations from the High Level Panel of Experts:

- 1) Improve data collection and knowledge sharing on food loss and waste.
- 2) Develop effective strategies to reduce food loss and waste, at the appropriate levels.
- 3) Take effective steps to reduce food loss and waste.
- 4) Improve coordination of policies, strategies, and actions in order to reduce food loss and waste.¹³

There is currently a proposal before the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations General Assembly to include a specific target on FLW in the post-2015 development agenda. The proposed target is to "halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains including post-harvest losses" by 2030. Several other initiatives and processes have been launched globally, regionally and nationally. *NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE – Global action to stop food losses and food waste* will build on this momentum and provide a platform for further action.

2. About the Conference NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE

The *Global Conference NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE* aims to reduce food loss and waste and improve sustainability through collaborative action across the supply chain. It will provide the opportunity to actualize the business case for reducing FLW and create a platform to share experiences, unite disparate initiatives, scale up best practices and launch alliances.

The conference will then focus on how to use the shared understanding to develop action oriented partnerships, frameworks for existing and new financing mechanisms, and models for good governance.

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/save-food/en/>

¹² <http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/cfs41/en/>

Three Thematic Areas

NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE will emphasize three thematic areas with a view towards breaking down silos to promote an integrated and comprehensive approach to reduce FLW in the supply chain.

Theme 1- Information Gaps and Data Collection

There are numerous studies on FLW with different scopes and methodologies. Without uniform standards for data collection and measurement protocols it is difficult to assess the causes and extent of the problem. There is a real need for better data. How can we measure hotspots in FLW? What can different stakeholders do to gathering sound data? How can we facilitate knowledge-sharing and monitor progress? The Conference will address data gaps and highlight new and existing resources to improve the collection, transparency and sharing of data.

Theme 2 - Actions at Strategic Level

Appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks can create an enabling environment to facilitate stake-holder action. From improving infrastructure on the ground to revising food labelling and packaging regulations, governments must act to reduce FLW. Doing so requires collaboration with the private sector and a wide range of actors, including national, regional, and local authorities. While governments can reform public food procurements policies to mitigate FLW and address waste management to incentivize waste prevention, the development and implementation of corporate policies must go hand in hand.

There are numerous strategic initiatives in place around the world. To tackle the challenge of FLW, we must learn from one another and improve coordination among key-stakeholders across the supply chain. This Conference will consider how to take effective steps to improve public and private policy by scaling up regulatory frameworks, voluntary agreements and inclusive processes to team up for action.

Theme 3 - Actions on the Ground ('best practices')

The wide range of reasons for FLW call for a wide range of solutions. There are ample opportunities for practical solutions to post harvest FLW, including investment in storage and conservation and technical innovation in transport, processing and packaging. The food service industry - hospitality and retail - can implement technical and behaviour-driven solutions to reduce FLW. When adapted to the local context and coupled with capacity development, these solutions can bring about significant change.

However, actions on the ground only work when they create shared value across the supply chain. This may begin with extension services and carry through to the household level. The *Global Conference NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE* will focus on the business cases for reducing FLW, lowering barriers to implementation and ensuring stakeholder engagement to implement concrete change. However, we do not have to re-invent the wheel. We will bring relevant stakeholders together to discuss best-practices and co-design solutions that can achieve the reduction of FLW at the speed and scale necessary to meet this global challenge.

Key objectives

The key objectives of *NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE* are to:

- Identify areas with potential to trigger action;
- Scale up solutions based on lessons learned and best practices to reduce FLW;
- Highlight innovative approaches for cross-sectoral investment/collaborative financing;
- Champion active partnerships working to minimize FLW throughout the food supply chain.

3. Conference Logistics

Timing, program and venue

The Government of the Netherlands will host the *Conference NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE - Global action to stop food losses and food waste* from 16th - 19th of June at The World Forum in The Hague, The Netherlands. A High Level Segment will be convened on Thursday June 18th.

The program will include solution-oriented working group sessions. The High Level Segment will leverage the recommendations of each working group and focuses on action-oriented engagement amongst stakeholders, including Ministers and CEOs.

Participation

Participants are invited from governments, private sector, the scientific and academic community, local community, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic foundations.

More information

The program and further information on the global conference will be available and frequently updated on the website: www.nomorefoodtowaste.nl