

FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE (ERC)**Thirty-first Session****Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018****Food Loss and Waste Reduction and the Zero Hunger Challenge****Side Event 1****Wednesday, 16 May 2018****12.30 – 14.00 hours****DIAMOND meeting room (main plenary)****Background/objective**

FAO is committed to global and regional efforts to end poverty, hunger and malnutrition by 2030. Together with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, FAO's aim to achieve Zero Hunger is undertaken in the context of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 to eliminate hunger and malnutrition by 2030. It is complemented by FAO's work on SDG 1 to eliminate rural poverty. With more than 800 million people still suffering from hunger, which is closely linked to extreme poverty, and with almost 80 percent of the extreme poor living in rural areas, it is necessary to raise agriculture and rural incomes to achieve those two key Sustainable Development Goals. This requires a bolder investment approach including social protection investments by the public sector and rural agriculture investments by both public and private partnerships.

The Secretary General of the United Nations launched his vision of the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) at the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, reflecting five key elements from the Sustainable Development Goals. The ZHC promotes an integrated approach that responds to the multiple and interconnected causes of hunger and malnutrition and provides a platform for governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system, and others to collectively achieve food security, nutrition and sustainable food systems.

The ZHC is based on five elements, to be integrated into nationally led SDG implementation strategies:

- all Food Systems to be Sustainable: From production to consumption, sustainable food systems deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases for generating food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. The effects of climate change will require sustainable and climate-compatible agriculture practices, including the diversification of production;
- an End to Rural Poverty: Doubling small-scale producer incomes and productivity and ending rural poverty will require a determined effort to increase the income of small-scale producers, who also hold the key to sustainably feeding a growing global population;
- access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for all People, all Year Round;
- an End to Malnutrition in all its forms: Malnutrition is both a driver and an outcome of poverty and inequality. Undernutrition can also lead to hidden hunger, wasting and stunting, which cause irreversible damage to both individuals and society. Obesity in childhood is a growing problem in all regions. This demands a multisectoral approach, including nutrition-sensitive health care, water, sanitation, education, agriculture, social protection and specific nutrition interventions, coupled with initiatives that enable the empowerment of women;

- adapt All Food Systems to Eliminate Loss or Waste of Food: Commitments from producers, retailers and consumers within all nations will be required to minimize food losses during production, storage and transport and reduce the waste of food by retailers and consumers while empowering consumer choice.

In September 2017 at the UN General Assembly a high-level event “*Championing 12.3 as a Pathway to Zero Hunger*” was organized. The heads of FAO, IFAD and WFP participating in this event urged the international community to renew its commitment towards reducing food loss and waste. The event underlined the linkages between food waste, sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) and achieving zero hunger (SDG 2), and other benefits such as reduced energy use.

The Europe and Central Asia region has experienced rapid economic growth and urbanization, however malnutrition in various forms persists and co-exists, with noticeable differences among countries in the region. While overweight and obesity are prevalent across the region, millions are suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. Undernutrition in children under the age of five persists among low-income groups. FAO considers poor diet quality as a common denominator of all forms of malnutrition and has called for stepping up nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems-wide responses to make available to all, the adequate, diverse, balanced and safe food that is required for healthy diets.

Reducing food loss and waste is an integral part of the ZHC, as it has various impacts on food security and nutrition. “Adapt All Food Systems to Eliminate Loss or Waste of Food” is an important element of ZHC that aims to minimize food losses during production, harvesting, handling, storage, transportation, processing and packaging, retail and consumption.

In the Europe and Central Asia region, food loss and waste has major implications for food security and nutrition, both of which can be affected by inefficiencies in food systems, the reduced availability of micronutrient-rich foods (e.g. vegetables and fruits, animal source foods), and reduced incomes of smallholder farmers, who are major food producers and at the same time constitute a majority in food-insecure populations.

The Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction - SAVE FOOD - was launched in 2011 by FAO and Messe Düsseldorf – the organizer of the world’s largest trade fare of the packaging industry – following which United Nations Environment joined the Initiative. In 2013, FAO and UN Environment, were assigned as co-leaders of the fifth element of the ZHC - Zero Loss and Waste of Food.

The SAVE FOOD initiative has four components:

1. Raising awareness about the extent of, impact of and solutions for food loss and waste among institutional policy-makers and the general public.
2. Collaboration and partnerships: the SAVE FOOD network has a membership of 1 000 members globally, public and private, big and small, working on the reduction of food loss and waste.
3. Research to formulate policies and strategies and to develop tools for food loss and waste reduction.
4. Projects to implement the reduction of food loss and waste.

The objective of this side event is to inform the ERC about the programme to support member states in developing and implementing national strategies for food loss and waste reduction as an integral part of promoting Zero Hunger.

Key messages/expected outcomes

- The reduction of food loss and waste is one of the most direct and cost-effective ways to improve food and nutrition security, income and economic development, the environment, and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Food loss and waste constitutes a vast, persistent and complicated problem that directly relates to national and corporate policies, natural resources, climate change, economies and markets, people’s behaviour and culture, social conditions, technology, infrastructure, and investments.

- Only the private sector (farmers, traders, processors, and retailers) and consumers in the food systems can reduce food loss and waste on any significant scale; the role of the public sector is to provide guidance and create an enabling environment for the private sector to invest and act.

Language: The Side Event will be interpreted in English and Russian language.