

FAO partners with the IFWC to fight against food waste in the food services sector

A new effort in the fight against the global food loss and waste

Food loss and waste (FLW) constitute a huge problem for global food security and sustainable food systems and is high on the political agenda in both industrialized and developing countries. The magnitude and complexity of FLW, justify the relevance of a global, multi-disciplinary response to address it, involving all actors and stakeholders affected by the issue.

Significance of the problem

The Food and agriculture organization (FAO) has produced a major report on FLW estimating that each year, one-third of all food produced in the world for human consumption never reached the consumer's table. This not only means a missed opportunity for the economy and food security, but also a waste of all the natural resources used for growing, processing, packaging, transporting and marketing food with a negative impact on climate change. Hence we need to minimize FLW at local, national and global levels as a means to promote sustainable and efficient food systems contributing to food and nutrition security. The importance of FLW reduction in achieving sustainable development is recognized by the United Nations among the sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12.3 that aims to halve food waste and reduce food loss globally by 2030.

The International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC) as a key in the global effort to fight against FLW

FAO recognizes that the fight against hunger can only be won in partnership with governments and other non-state actors, among which the private sector and civil society organizations play a fundamental role. The Private Sector (including farmers) grows, handles, markets, prepares and serves food at a significant scale and is the main stakeholder within food systems who can reduce FLW at a significant scale. Thus collaborating with such an actor is crucial towards minimising the global food loss and waste and its negative impact on people, natural resources and the environment.

Furthermore recent FLW studies have shown that a collaborative value chain approach to addressing food waste has the potential to produce economic, environmental, and social benefits that go beyond those which can be achieved by individual businesses working in isolation.

To this end, FAO has signed, at the beginning of this year 2016, a partnership agreement with the **International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC)** aiming at reducing and preventing food loss and waste at local, national and global levels but also in all the food supply value chain, starting with a pilot project in the Education Market Segment in Europe.

The two partners' comparative advantages

The IFWC is an international not-for-profit association under Belgian law, based in Brussels, composed of seven members (Ardo, McCain, PepsiCo, SCA, Sodexo, Unilever Food Solutions and WWF). Its members represent the largest geographical footprint in the world in the food service sector and share a common vision toward a future without food waste.

With a collaborative farm to fork approach the IFWC wants to fight FLW throughout the food services value chain. The association is also convinced about the power of recreating the value of food along the food chain to reduce FLW.

FAO's three main goals are: the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and, the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

FAO's Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste (Save food)" is a coordinated mechanism to oversee and engage activities and initiatives aiming to reduce FLW at global level. This global initiative is also a key contribution to meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge together with UN partners and other committed stakeholders. FAO plays a convening role, provides a neutral platform for influencing global, regional and national policy and has direct links with member countries, through its Country and Regional Offices and links with regional and economic development organizations and other United Nations and international organizations.

Benefits

The FAO and IFWC joint effort will benefit from the complementarity strengths of each organization.

The collaboration will contribute to food and nutrition security by reducing quantitative and qualitative FLW, thus mitigating the pressure on the global agri-food systems with its already scarce natural resources for increased production demanded by the global population.

Areas of work/strategy

The partners intend implementing major actions towards FLW reduction, starting in Europe, based on a holistic, integrated food value chain and food systems approach ensuring that FLW reduction is technically, economically, environmentally and socially acceptable, feasible and cost-effective. The areas of work will consist essentially of development and implementation of awareness raising activities, information dissemination and advocacy, promoting innovative initiatives, projects or programs for reduced FLW and efficient food systems at global level starting with the Education Market Segment.