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Food Losses and Waste (FLW) work at Regional and National Level

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Governments from the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region have made concerted efforts to recognize the issue of food losses and waste (FLW), bring awareness to prevention and reduction, and commit to strategic action. A major step was the collective goal set by the Thirty-first Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC31) to reduce FLW by 50 percent over 10 years, and to request support from FAO in comprehensive studies and strategy development. A process of consultation with member countries and multiple stakeholders started in 2012 and continued through 2013 leading to a Regional Strategic Framework for Food Losses and Waste Reduction in the Near East and North Africa Region (NENA Strategic Framework)¹ that was presented to and endorsed by NERC33 in 2014. The NENA Strategic Framework is based on the region's socio-economic and natural resources context, and calls for evidence-based national action plans with clear objectives, baseline, indicators and targets.

2. Since 2014, awareness and advocacy for FLW reduction have intensified, with global policy processes strongly linking FLW reduction to food and nutrition security and sustainable food systems, such as the ICN2 Rome Declaration and Framework for Action, COP21 Lima-Paris Action Agenda, the G20 under Turkish presidency, and the 2014 CFS Plenary and High Level Panel of Experts' study on Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems².

3. Notably, the Sustainable Development Goals have set target 12.3 under Goal 12 stating that, "by 2030, halve the per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains including post-harvest losses". In this context, the NENA Strategic

¹ <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/e9589c20-5507-4eee-a965-22fc5a08f42f/>

² <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/reports/report-8-elaboration-process/en/>

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Framework continues helping NENA countries meet their goals for FLW reduction in a coherent and action-oriented manner.

4. FLW reduction and efficient, resilient food systems are a priority area for the “Regional Initiative on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition”³, and also cut across the regional initiatives on small-scale agriculture for inclusive development and water scarcity.

5. This paper will present the growing number of FLW reduction strategies and field projects being developed or implemented in the NENA region in the scope of the regional initiatives and Country Programming Frameworks.

II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

6. The NENA Regional Food Loss and Waste Reduction Network (NENA FLW Network) was launched in 2015 and will provide a multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder platform to exchange knowledge, information, and good practices on FLW reduction. It is intended to complement national efforts towards achieving 50 percent FLW reduction over 10 years through support to: data gathering and knowledge generation; awareness raising; strengthening coordination; and engaging the private sector.

III. SUB REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

7. A three-year project on Food Losses and Waste Reduction and Value Chain Development for Food Security in Egypt and Tunisia was signed in August 2015. It aims to improve the economic and environmental efficiency of the agro-food sectors in both countries, via upgraded and greened food value chains and through FLW prevention and reduction to increase availability and access in both countries to nutritious food.

8. A TCP project in Egypt, Iran, Lebanon and Jordan aims to strengthen the capacity of national leaders of producer associations, food industry managers, and extension agents on improved value chain management to prevent food loss. Project activities are underway to assess food losses in selected value chains, develop food loss prevention curricula and guidelines, and conduct tailored capacity development workshops on reducing inefficiencies in value chains.

IV. COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

9. Several countries are undertaking national-level activities with FAO assistance to reduce FLW. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a commitment to reducing FLW in 2013 and a proposed ‘Strategy and Action Plan to Reduce FLW in KSA’ has evolved into an integral component and pillar of the KSA Food and Nutrition Security Strategy currently being developed. The focus is on both food loss and food waste reduction, and on generating quantitative and qualitative evidence as a first step.

10. In Morocco, a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project is conducting a comprehensive field study of six food value chains - apples, citrus, prickly pear, dates, figs, wheat - using the Food Loss Analysis methodology developed by FAO’s Global Initiative: SAVE FOOD. The objective is to arrive at a strategy and FLW reduction plan that is actionable and aligns with Plan Maroc Vert. A FLW field study following the same methodology has begun in Lebanon, focusing on the fruit sector.

11. Other countries have shown interest and potential for future activities, such as United Arab Emirates, where a roundtable was hosted by FAO in 2014 on food waste; Sudan under the lead of the Food Security Technical Secretariat; and Oman in the context of the Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy (SARDS).

³ <http://www.fao.org/neareast/perspectives/building-resilience/en/>

V. WAY FORWARD

12. Developing coherent, evidence-based plans for FLW reduction, aligned with national strategies and agriculture sector development plans in consultation with all concerned stakeholders from production to consumption, and across disciplines (nutrition, education, health, industry, etc.) is needed. This should also include clarifying roles and responsibilities of different actors: the private sector, civil society, government, FAO and international organizations.

13. Emphasizing the need for more and better data to gauge the extent, causes and effects of FLW along the entire value chain from the farmer to the final consumer to (a) understand the potential of FLW reduction for improved food security and nutrition outcomes; (b) examine the relationships between FLW, resource footprints and sustainable resource use; (c) identify practical solutions towards reduced FLW at all stages of the value chain; and (d) set baselines and monitor progress towards FLW reduction, both at the level of overall strategies and individual projects.

14. Promoting a closer collaboration between countries, FAO and partners to develop and implement evidence-based action plans for FLW reduction, in the context of the NENA Strategic Framework, three FAO NENA regional initiatives, and related policy processes.