

27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Item 2.9: Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction

Introduction notes

Following the request of the 26th Session of COAG, FAO has developed a Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction (hereinafter abbreviated as “CoC”). Framed through a food systems lens and aligned with the interconnected SDGs, the CoC addresses food loss and food waste within the same document.

The CoC closely follows the format of other FAO voluntary instruments in which principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices are set out. The introductory section explains the trends in global food systems, the causes, magnitude and impact of food loss and waste (FLW), the COAG request and the process followed in developing the CoC. This is followed by the objectives, nature, scope and target audience of the CoC (Article 1), definitions of key terms (Article 2), and guiding principles that should be followed in applying the actions and measures for FLW reduction (Article 3).

Article 4 and Article 5 lay out actions and measures that countries, national and sub-national authorities, supply chain actors, the private sector, producer organizations, civil society organisations and other stakeholders should take or put in place to contribute to FLW reduction. These are grouped as follows:

- Developing the evidence base (assessing and measuring FLW), identifying the strategic direction, setting targets and monitoring progress. This is covered in Article 4.4 and Article 4.5.
- Addressing the systemic causes of FLW by providing public goods and improving the institutional, policy and regulatory framework to facilitate the coordination of actors, enable investments, support and incentivize improvement of practices, and facilitate adoption of good practices. This is covered in Article 4.6, Article 4.7 and Article 4.8.
- Addressing secondary or structural causes of FLW through: improving coordination and collaboration among supply chain actors; research and development; awareness-raising, education and training; strengthening industry associations and multi-stakeholder platforms. This is covered in Article 4.9, Article 4.10, Article 4.11, Article 4.12, and Article 4.13.
- Article 5 covers good practices, technical innovations and private investments by food supply chain actors to address the direct, immediate causes of FLW at each stage along the food supply chain from production to consumption.

A concluding section (Article 6) outlines the role that FAO and other stakeholders will be expected to play in supporting implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CoC.

The CoC provides an overarching generic framework. As such, it should inform the preparation of, and should be supplemented by, context-specific voluntary codes of good practice and technical guidelines to permit practical application in particular situations.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the proposed CoC, note its importance and the role it can play in contributing to sustainable food systems and achieving the SDGs, and encourage countries to apply it;

- endorse the proposed follow-up actions for FAO to use the CoC as a generic framework to inform the preparation of codes of good practice for FLW reduction in the main food commodity sectors and technical guidelines to permit practical application in particular situations.

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