

Launch of the Global UNEP/FAO Campaign to Cut Food Waste

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22 January 2013

Balexert, Geneva

UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum  
(GC/GMEF) 27<sup>th</sup> Session  
& Launch of Food Waste Campaign

- Excellencies, Dear colleagues,
- FAO is pleased to partner with UNEP, "WRAP", "Feeding the 5000" and many others to reduce food waste.
- 'Worldwide, about 1/3 of all food products – equivalent to 1.3 billion tons – are lost or wasted in food production and consumption systems every year.
- There is significant difference between the way in which food is lost/wasted in higher-income countries, and what is happening in developing countries.
- In industrialized countries, about ½ of the food that is lost/wasted can be described as "food waste." Almost ½ of the food squandered - 300 million tons – is wasted because producers, retailers and consumers discard food that is still fit for consumption. This is more than the total, net food production of Sub-Saharan Africa, and would be sufficient to feed the estimated 870 million hungry people in the world.
- According to FAO roughly 95% of food loss and waste in developing countries are unintentional losses at early stages of the food supply chain due to financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques; storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions; infrastructure; packaging and marketing systems.

- If internationally traded commodities like cereals are squandered at large scale, this may have an effect on food prices everywhere. By reducing losses we will have lower food costs.
- FAO has been analyzing how food is produced, and how resources that can help to strengthen people's livelihoods are used. When we waste food - when we squander energy, land, water, and other resources - we also lose opportunities to improve lives.
- Food loss and waste have a very negative impact on food and nutrition security of poor people. With high losses in fresh fruits and vegetables it becomes difficult for those people to get access to nutritious food.
- This campaign complements the overall SAVE FOOD initiative launched by the FAO and trade fair organizer Messe Düsseldorf, a public private partnership, which aims to work together to find and implement solutions for food loss and waste.
- The Think.Eat.Save campaign launched today also contributes in a significant way to the SG's ZHC, which lists "zero loss or waste of food," as an instrumental component to eradicating hunger in our lifetimes. More concretely, the ZHC seeks to minimize food losses and the waste of food by retailers and consumers; to empower consumer choice; and to galvanize commitment by producers, retailers and consumers internationally.

- It is key to conduct field studies on a national/regional basis, combining a food chain approach to loss assessments to determine which food loss reduction interventions provide the best returns on investment
  
- FAO is very pleased to partner with UNEP on the issue of food waste; the two organizations perfectly complement each other's expertise. Thus, I can also mention the joint FAO-UNEP work on 'Sustainable Production & Consumption':
  - In 2010 FAO and UNEP have formed a joint Sustainable Food Systems Programme to improve resource use efficiency and reduce the pollution intensity of food systems from production to consumption, while at the same time addressing issues of food and nutrition security.
  
  - The programme brings together a broad coalition of concerned stakeholders, including governments, food and fish producers, agro-industry, retailers and consumers.
  
  - Only the private sector, can make significant investments to reduce food losses whereas the public sector can provide guidance, policies and the enabling environment

- To conclude, food losses are indicative of inefficient food systems and the inability to appropriately meet the demands of populations the world round. There is the need to make profound and lasting changes in the way people consume food to have a healthier and hunger-free world. In a world with increasingly pressing natural resource concerns, reducing food losses must be an absolute priority for all of us.
- Thank you for your attention.