

ECOSOC

Working together against food waste

Forum: ECOSOC

Issue: Working together against food waste

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Introduction

One of the biggest worldwide issues of the twenty-first century is food waste, which have had a massive negative effect on the environment, the economy, and society. Although there is enough food being produced worldwide to reach everyone's nutritional needs, a significant amount of edible food is lost or wasted every year. Widespread food insecurity and malnutrition happen at the same time with inefficiency in food systems, this emphasizes how urgent it is to address food waste on a national and worldwide scale.

Food waste occurs at all stages of the food supply chain, from agricultural production to household consumption. To address this issue, there is need for clear coordinated action from governments, international organisations, the private sector and consumers.

This research report strives to investigate the cause and effects of food waste while highlighting the importance of teamwork in lowering food waste. This report aims to identify practical steps that can help reduce food waste and promote sustainability by analysing current data, policies, and strategies, to create a long-term solution.

Definition of Key Terms

Food insecurity

The condition in which individuals or communities lack reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.

Food waste

The disposal of food that is still suitable for human consumption, often occurring at the retail and consumer levels.

Food Supply Chain

The system of processes involved in the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food.

General Overview

Food waste is a global issue that effects economy, environment and social equality. Despite that production is sufficient to feed the whole population there is a 40% waste/loss of food along every stage of the production process such as production, a large amount of the raw material is left on the fields, processing and distribution. This leads to 1 in 3 people that face food insecurity, increases pressure on natural resources such as land and water, and intensifies climate change through the emission of greenhouse gases. The consequences of



this food waste, even at the lower end of the estimates, are huge. It means that an amount of land larger than China is used every year to produce food that no one will eat.

Food waste occurs along the food chain supply, a large amount the raw material is left on the fields, processing and distribution, in higher-income countries the retail of food generates more food waste than in household, mainly due to result of overproduction, aesthetic standards, improper storage and misinterpretation of food date labels. While middle- or low-income countries experience higher levels of food loss earlier in the supply chain, largely due to inadequate infrastructure, limited access to technology, and inefficient distribution systems. These differences demonstrate that food waste is a complex issue that varies across regions and requires context-specific solutions.

The impact of food waste exceeds the loss of food itself. Environmentally, wasted food represents a misuse of natural resources such as water, land, and energy, all of which are required for food production, the more production needed the more habitats are converted to farmland and less left for nature. When food waste is disposed of in landfills, it decomposes and releases methane, contributing to 8-10% the greenhouse gas that effects climate change. Economically, food waste put a loss of profit of producers, 19% of food available to consumers was wasted at retailers, and consumers. Socially, food waste heightens the inequality by reducing the availability that could otherwise be redistributed to disadvantaged population.

Coordinated action from a variety of stakeholders, including governments, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and consumers, is necessary to address food waste. Governments are the key player in creating laws and policies that promote sustainable food systems and reduce waste. Companies can support food donation programs, implement ethical production methods, and increase the effectiveness of their supply chains. At the same time, it is the duty of consumers to adopt more sustainable consumption practices through thoughtful consumption, appropriate storage, and informed purchasing.

Major Parties Involved

Waste and Resource Action Program (WRAP), Food and Agriculture organization (FOA) united nation Programme (UNEP)

They are central players in a global effort to reduce food waste. They promote cooperators global targets such as halving food loss and waste by 2030, and support countries through research, policy guidance, and data collection.

Major Parties Involved

Governments

Food industry Stakeholders- They are directly involved with the issue due to their influence over the production, distribution and consumers actions. Their primary interest lies in reducing economic losses while maintaining food safety and meeting regulatory requirements.



The United States

They play an important role because of its large-scale food production and consumption. Due to their federal agencies and partnership with the private sector, the United States strives on improving the supply chains efficiency while promoting food donation and consumer awareness about food waste reduction.

The European Union (EU)

The EU is a significant player in combating food waste through its sustainability and circular economy initiatives. As part of its larger environmental and climate goals, the EU

Timeline of Events

[1974]

[World Forum Conference that was organized by the United Nations to address the rising issue of global hunger and food security. The conference highlighted inefficiencies in food distribution and marked one of the first international discussions related to food loss and waste.]

[2011]

[FAO released a Report on Global Food Losses and Food Waste which identifies causes of food losses, possible ways on preventing them and reported that one-third of food produced is being lost or wasted. This report was very important for key data and is still being used to inform UN policy and international debate]

[2015]

[The Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where the UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are committed to the 17 integrated goals and 169 specific targets. It also included the SDG 12.3 target which aims to halve per capita global food waste and reduce the food lost in production and supply chain.]



encourages member states to support food redistribution programs, enhance food labelling, and decrease food waste throughout the supply chain.



[2018]

[UN Environment Programme Food Waste Index Development where the UNPE began to develop tool that can measure food waste more accurately at the national level. Improved data collection allowed Member states to better track progress and design targeted policies.]

[2020]

[COVID-19 Pandemic caused a global food supply chain disruption which led to the increase of food waste in some regions and food shortage in others. This emphasised the vulnerability of food systems and the need for stronger international coordination.]

[2030]

[SDG Target 12.3 Deadline where the United Nations set 20230 as the target date for halving global food waste and significantly reducing food loss. This target remains a central focus of international cooperation and national commitments.]



Previous attempts to solve the issue

A major attempt to combating food waste has been the adoption of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3. which aims to halve global food waste by 2030. While this target has decreased awareness and encouraged national strategies, real progress has been uneven due to limited enforces mechanism and inconsistent data collection among Member States. Many countries lack the resources or infrastructure needed to accurately measure food waste, making it difficult to track progress.

Introducing food donation and redistribution programs has been another strategy, especially in high-income nations. Governments and non-governmental organizations have encouraged supermarkets and food producers to donate surplus food to food banks. Although, these initiatives face difficulties such as liability concerns, strict food safety regulations, and logical problems which often discouraged businesses from donating surplus food.

Public awareness campaigns have been used frequently to reduce food waste at the consumer level. These campaigns focus on educating individuals about the importance of responsible purchasing, proper storage and food labelling. This action had some positive response; their overall impact has been limited. Behavioural change is slow and the campaigns often fail to reach the whole population, particularly in low-income or rural areas.

Possible Solutions

Strengthening National and International Policies

Member states could adopt regulation and motives that are clearer and that encourage food waste reduction such as standardised food labelling and legal protection for food donation.

Improving Food Redistribution Systems infrastructure, technology, and collaborations that enable the secure redistribution of excess food could be funded by governments and international organizations. This would help solve food insecurity and cut waste at the same time.

Enhancing Data Collection and Public Education

Enhancing food waste measurement at a global size that would allow for more accurate data and assist in a more effective policy design. At the same time, improve educational campaigns could promote a long-term change the behaviour of consumers and businesses.

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