

# Halving food waste and raising climate ambition: SDG 12.3 and the Paris Agreement

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Food loss and waste generate an estimated 8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions while using land and water resources needlessly and increasing pressure on biodiversity. Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 calls for a halving of food waste at retail and household level, and a reduction of food loss across the supply chain. Champions 12.3, a high-level coalition formed to deliver this strategic target, counts United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) US Board Member Yolanda Kakabadse among its Champions, and signatories of its September 2020 Global Call to Action on Food Loss and Waste.

As we celebrate the first International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste on September 29th, UNEP talks to Yolanda, former President of WWF International, and former Ecuadorian Minister of Environment, about integrating food loss and waste in national climate strategies and the role of the youth in a shift towards sustainable food consumption.

A new report developed by UNEP, WWF, EAT and Climate Focus, focuses on how food system interventions should be better integrated into national climate strategies, highlighting the 12.5 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>eq opportunity to tackle food waste and sustainable diets, which have been largely overlooked in previous Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement. How are Latin American governments considering this opportunity and how can they be supported?

There are initiatives sponsored through the private sector, like Sin Desperdicio. These initiatives are important because they are encouraging public and private sector collaboration and showing value in better transparency and food loss waste target setting. Ultimately, each government needs to make the reduction of food loss and waste part of their NDC. It's then imperative to see that the private sector and civil society are engaged and agreeing to publicly report food waste levels and set targets for reduction.

What role does youth play in the fight against food waste? UNEP is developing lesson plans on food waste education with the Edible Schoolyard project in the context of International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste. What are the best ways, in your experience, to inspire youth to develop sustainable food consumption behaviours?

Strongly agree that we need to build environmental awareness into school curriculum planning with the youth. WWF-US has developed a Food Waste Warrior program which seeks to educate students on the connection between the food on their plate and the planet. The Food Waste Warrior program helps students understand the environmental impact of their food by conducting a food waste audit and experiment with ways to reduce food waste in their school. Most adults don't contemplate the connection our food has on the planet and the impact it has on biodiversity. By making this connection in educational programs, we create a positive impact on the next generation of adults and accelerate change.

COVID-19 has emphasized the need to build resilience in our food systems. How does WWF's work to reduce food waste support a green recovery and a more resilient food future?

COVID-19 has caused massive disruptions to national and global food systems. The reconfiguration in demand for commercial food service businesses has amplified inefficiencies in our supply chain. We also know that food insecurity is going to be a major problem globally, while some countries are sending edible food to landfill. We must declare 2020 the “Year of No Food Left Behind”. This can be done by improving transparency and by creating digital food inventories. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of real-time data has led to an inability to locate and transport food from where it is, to where it is most needed. We must also expand our investments in developing countries on food banking and cold chain technologies.

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