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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Council

Subject:	Outcome of the "Food waste - 2024-2030" conference on prevention of food waste (Budapest, 1 October 2024) – <i>Information from the Presidency</i>
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Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Presidency on the above mentioned subject which will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council meeting ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 21-22 October 2024.

Conference on the Prevention of Food Waste
(Budapest, 1 October 2024)

In recent years, significant progress has been made in the European Union on reducing food loss and waste, which is essential for achieving global climate goals, enhancing food security, and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Food loss and waste occurs at all stages of the food supply chain and a systemic approach involving all stakeholders is necessary to address this issue.

Beyond the European Union, it is also recognized that enhanced communication and cooperation in Europe and Central Asia are essential to promoting initiatives in food waste prevention. In that regard, the Hungarian Presidency, in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, organized the **Conference on the Prevention of Food Waste** on October 1, 2024 for stakeholders to share their national experiences and achievements in food waste prevention. The European Commission presented the legal framework supporting food waste reduction efforts and the harmonization of measurement and reporting methodologies within the EU.

The discussions during the conference have further strengthened that in line with the endeavours of the Hungarian Presidency, a holistic approach is needed, with collaboration between the different sectors of the food value chain, incorporating policy and legislative interventions, awareness raising efforts and inter-agency collaboration, furthermore effective outreach to the public.

Delegations will find in the Annex the conclusions of the conference prepared by the Hungarian Presidency and the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

Conclusions of the Conference on Prevention of Food Waste

organized by the Hungarian Presidency, in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Strengthening stakeholder collaboration to address food loss and waste

Two days after the fifth observance of the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, representatives of the participating countries and organizations convened in Budapest, Hungary, on October 1, 2024. Recognizing the critical role of reducing food loss and waste (FLW) in achieving global climate goals, enhancing food security and nutrition, and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they acknowledged the necessity of a coordinated, systemic approach that involves all stakeholders and combines resources.

These conclusions emphasize a shared vision regarding the crucial aspects of FLW prevention and the need for strengthened coordination among stakeholders at national and regional levels to significantly reduce FLW and strengthen their collective impact at all stages of the food supply chain.

Holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), Hungary supports the ongoing and outstanding efforts of the EU Member States within the framework of the EU Platform on FLW Reduction. The October 1st Conference on Prevention of Food Waste provided an opportunity for countries in Europe and Central Asia, as well as representatives from key organizations involved in FLW reduction efforts, to reaffirm the importance of and pursue their efforts in:

1. Streamlining FLW reduction into national and regional frameworks

o Local level:

- Addressing FLW through community engagement and localized strategies. Food councils can facilitate the development of policies that promote sustainable food practices, encourage local food production, and enhance food recovery initiatives.

- Supporting local policy development that focuses on community education and awareness, support for local food systems, incentives for FLW reduction, collaboration with local stakeholders, and FLW monitoring and reporting.
- Integrating these local-level initiatives with national and regional efforts to contribute to the overarching objectives of food system transformation and sustainability.

○ **National level:**

- Prioritizing policy and legislative interventions to create conducive environments for FLW prevention and reduction actions was identified as critical by all countries during the Ministerial Panels.
- Strengthening interagency collaboration is essential to ensure that sectoral policies, including those related to agriculture, trade, food safety, nutrition and health, are aligned with FLW reduction objectives, embedding these into broader national strategies for food system transformation, including green agriculture, circular economy, and sustainable resource management.

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○ **Regional level:**

- Supporting the harmonization of country efforts to foster a cohesive intra-regional approach to FLW reduction, including measurement. This includes the development of shared guidelines, sharing best practices, and strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of FLW initiatives.
- Building capacities, political drive and actions to prevent food loss and waste throughout the food system, for more efficient and sustainable food systems.

2. Measuring and reporting FLW at all stages of the food system

- Ensuring availability of consistent, accurate, and comparable data, which is crucial for designing evidence-based policies and solutions, monitoring progress, and achieving FLW reduction targets.

- Identifying trends, patterns, and hotspots of waste, allowing stakeholders to tailor interventions to the unique needs of different segments of the food system. Additionally, data can help evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that strategies are adjusted based on practical outcomes.
- Investing in technical and capacity-building initiatives, which is essential for effectively measuring and reporting FLW. Building capacity within organizations ensures that stakeholders are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement FLW measurement systems effectively. By enhancing the capabilities of individuals and organizations involved in the food system, we can foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement in FLW management.

3. Fostering stronger public-private collaboration

o Multi-stakeholder platforms and dialogue:

- Supporting the establishment of regional and national multi-stakeholder platforms¹ that bring together public and private sector entities, civil society organizations, consumer organizations, academia and international organizations to identify, develop and implement actionable solutions across the food supply chain. Knowledge-sharing platforms enable countries to access and share, for example, successful strategies, technological innovations, and policy approaches.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships, which play a crucial role in FLW prevention and reduction efforts by leveraging the strengths of both sectors. Governments can provide regulatory frameworks and incentives, while private entities can offer innovative solutions and operational efficiencies. By working together, stakeholders can share resources, knowledge, and best practices, ultimately leading to more effective strategies for minimizing FLW.
- Facilitating regular dialogue sessions to allow stakeholders to share best practices, challenges, and innovative solutions for FLW reduction. These sessions will also serve as a forum for developing joint initiatives and agreements that can lead to scalable and impactful results.

¹ FAO's Regional Save Food Community of Practice may serve as a regional platform.

○ **Voluntary Agreements:**

- Promoting Voluntary Agreements in EU and non-EU countries within Europe and Central Asia, targeting industry-wide commitments to reduce FLW. These agreements will include provisions for monitoring and reporting progress, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Promoting joint investments by public and private sectors in infrastructure, research, and development for FLW reduction behaviours, technologies and strategies. This includes supporting innovation in food processing, preservation, and redistribution approaches and technologies that can significantly reduce FLW.

5. Promoting consumer awareness and facilitating behaviour change

- Designing and implementing data-driven campaigns and educational programmes targeted at specific informational needs and behavioural barriers of different audiences. Campaigns will aim to increase public awareness and knowledge about the impacts of food waste and promote responsible consumption and waste reduction at the household level.
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons why people waste food, through the collection and analysis of data to inform the design of targeted campaigns and interventions that resonate with specific audiences.
- Exploring new entry points to engage individuals, such as through nutrition and healthy diets, food literacy, and environmental sustainability. By recognizing that food waste is not a standalone problem, it will be integrated into broader strategies and actions aimed at promoting sustainable practices.
- Supporting and promoting collaborative efforts with educational institutions, media, and community organizations to integrate FLW reduction into educational curricula and public discourse, fostering a culture of sustainability from a young age.

Recommendations

- The event underscored the critical importance of adopting a holistic approach to our shared objectives, emphasizing the need for data-driven measures and targeted interventions. It highlighted the necessity for collaboration across various sectors of the food supply chain, facilitated through voluntary agreements and public-private partnerships. To enhance our collective impact, it is essential to integrate policy and legislative interventions, technical and capacity-building actions, and awareness-raising efforts. This collaborative framework requires administrations and stakeholders to work together effectively, ensuring that outreach and interagency collaboration are prioritized in our efforts to create meaningful change.
 - The Organizers encourage all countries to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, research, and best practices related to FLW reduction.
 - The Organizers invite EU Member States to actively support other countries in the Europe and Central Asia region, through capacity-building initiatives and the sharing of technical expertise and good practices. This support will be crucial in helping these countries develop and implement effective FLW reduction strategies, adapted to their specific contexts and challenges.
 - Participants from all countries emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts to significantly reduce FLW. It is recognized that coordinated and sustained action at the local, national, regional, and international levels is essential to achieving the global objective of a world without FLW.
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