

REDUCING FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

As we have seen in the previous post, this year the theme of World Environment Day (June 5) is ‘Think.Eat.Save’. The theme connects to the “Think.Eat.Save – Reduce Your Foodprint’ campaign. Accordingly, a new working paper has been released yesterday (June 5). The title of this working paper is ‘*Reducing Food Loss and Waste*’. It was produced by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and draws on research from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The “Think.Eat.Save – Reduce Your Foodprint’ campaign harnesses the expertise of organizations such as FAO, WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), Feeding the 5,000 and other partners, including national governments, who have considerable experience targeting and changing wasteful practices. It aims to accelerate action and provide a global vision and information-sharing portal for the many initiatives currently underway around the world that aim to reduce food waste and food loss.

According to the Reducing Food Loss and Waste paper, one out of every four calories produced by the global agricultural system is being lost or wasted.

The global pattern of food loss and waste needs to be reversed, as it is estimated that our planet will need about 60 percent more food calories in 2050 compared to 2006 because of the rapidly-expanding global population.

Food loss refers to food that is spilled or spoiled after harvest and during transit, storage and packaging, whereas wasted food is food that is fit for human consumption but is thrown away before it can be eaten. More than half of lost and wasted food in Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia occurs close to the fork, at the consumption stage. However, in developing countries, about two thirds occurs close to the farm, after harvest and storage.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said:

“It is an extraordinary fact that in the 21st century, close to 25 per cent of all the calories linked with growing and producing food are lost or wasted between the farm and the fork—food that could feed the hungry, food that has required energy, water and soils in a world of increasing natural resource scarcities and environmental concerns including climate change.”

It is important to think of the natural resources that are used to produce food that is lost and wasted. For example, the working paper tells us that water used to produce lost or wasted food around the world each year could fill 70 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, while the amount of cropland used to produce wasted food is equivalent to the size of Mexico.

Some 28 million tons of fertilizer are used annually to grow this lost and wasted food. The inefficient use of fertilizers is linked to the growth of 'dead' coastal zones around the globe and to climate change.

Therefore, food loss and waste has a major global environmental impact and should be considered a problem in need of urgent solutions.



Source: <http://theglobalfool.com/reducing-food-loss-and-waste-a-new-working-paper/>