



HAMBRE CERO

BARCELONA, 2-4 OCTUBRE 2024

V CUMBRE MUNDIAL DE LAS REGIONES
SOBRE SEGURIDAD Y SOBERANÍA ALIMENTARIA



CATALUÑA, DONDE LA COMIDA ES CULTURA

Concept note 4

PREVENTING FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

AIM

Every year more than one million tonnes of food is lost or wasted throughout the world, which is equivalent to a third of global production. This means that between 30% and 50% of edible food becomes waste in one of the links of the food chain. Considering that, despite well-intentioned declarations, by 2030 we will be very far from SDG 2 'Zero Hunger', as well as goal 12.3 of SDG 12 'Sustainable consumption and production'¹, food loss and waste is an ethical and environmental nonsense. With this space, the aim is to provide tools to regional governments on how to avoid food loss and waste, sharing best practices and exchanging common challenges and solutions with experts from the sector.

CONCEPTUALISATION

At the IV Temuco Summit, the space dedicated to policies to prevent food loss and waste aroused great interest. After that, ORU Fogar continued to spread best practices and, together with the Basque Country and Catalonia, has become a benchmark in this field. ORU Fogar was a significant guest at the event 'Food loss and waste reduction strategies' co-organised by the World Centre for Sustainable Urban Food (CEMAS) and the European Food Information Council (EUFIC) in October 2022 in Valencia. ORU Fogar also participated in the presentation, in the Spanish Parliament, of the study "The perception of food waste" carried out by Too Good To Go.

At this Barcelona summit, taking into account the accumulated experience, this will be one of the areas with the greatest prominence and much attention will be paid to best practices and success stories that are already being implemented. It is necessary to distinguish clearly between food loss and waste to better focus the approach to solutions. Food loss occurs in the initial stages, i.e. in production, just before entering the marketing circuit. The causes are mainly due to marketing standards, price fluctuations in the market and the dynamics of supply and demand for products, as well as agroclimatic incidents (weather phenomena) or biological events (pest incidence). The problem is especially serious in countries with food systems that are highly dependent on international markets. Food waste, on the other hand, occurs in the post-production stages, from the processing of raw materials to consumption, and the causes are mainly due to lack of infrastructure, incidents during transportation, storage, handling and logistics, and to a lack of awareness among the different stakeholders in the value chain.

Food loss

A first key element to avoid food loss is to improve the connection between production spaces, mostly in rural areas, and consumption spaces, which are mostly in urban areas. On many occasions, the lack of infrastructure that connects production and consumption

¹ By 2030, this means halving global per capita food waste at retail and consumer level and reducing food loss in production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses



HAMBRE CERO

BARCELONA, 2-4 OCTUBRE 2024

V CUMBRE MUNDIAL DE LAS REGIONES
SOBRE SEGURIDAD Y SOBERANÍA ALIMENTARIA



CATALUÑA, DONDE LA COMIDA ES CULTURA

centres is what prevents products from reaching consumers in good condition or from being left on the farm itself without the possibility of being sold.

It is also important to promote more territorialised food systems, with a good network of distribution centres (with support from the regional government) and markets (with support from municipalities) at a local level to ensure local consumption in which dependence on demands of the global market has less importance. In addition, these companies can work in the packaging or production of processed foods, with the aim of reducing losses in the production stage. Packaging can maintain the quality, safety and nutritional value of products, thereby reducing food loss and waste. This allows us to reduce the cost of food and have a longer distribution chain. With food processing, perishable raw materials can be transformed into appetising products with a long shelf life, helping to compensate for seasonality and also reducing loss. On the other hand, the availability of adequate product preservation infrastructure allows the maintenance of the quality of perishable products such as fruit and vegetables, dairy products, meat and aquatic foods, the maintaining of nutritional quality, facilitating access to markets and reducing losses.

In developed countries, an initial challenge is to minimise waste generated during production or because the products do not have the requisite quality (sometimes appearance) they need to be marketed and sold.

Food waste

While food loss occurs due to inefficient operations at some point in the food chain or due to the dynamics of the market itself, food waste is related to handling practices also at any point in the chain. This means that food is thrown away or spoiled when it is still suitable for human consumption.

According to FAO's definition, "food waste" refers to those safe and nutritious foods initially intended for human consumption that are rejected or used in an alternative (non-food) way throughout the food supply chains, from primary production to the final consumer. Food waste is recognised as a differentiated part of food loss, since the causes that generate it are different from those that generate food loss.

Some regions with advanced policies are already avoiding throwing away these products, giving them a new value. For example, the leftover whey from cheese production can be reused for animal feed, the generation of fertilisers or biogas. Also, fruit and vegetables that do not meet the aesthetic standards can have a second life, generating new products such as jams, juices, purees or broths. With consumer awareness, an alternative purchasing circuit for these "ugly"-looking fruits and vegetables can be generated. Ultimately, it is about replacing the traditional concept of "end of life" of a product with the prevention of waste and revaluation of by-products and co-products generated throughout the food chain, prioritising their use for human nutrition.

It is about seeing food waste not as a problem to be gotten rid of, but as an opportunity to find new ways to give a new life to a product and the promotion of new business models and innovative initiatives that address the challenge to reduce global food waste and contribute to guaranteeing the right to food for the entire population. In this food-



HAMBRE CERO

BARCELONA, 2-4 OCTUBRE 2024

V CUMBRE MUNDIAL DE LAS REGIONES
SOBRE SEGURIDAD Y SOBERANÍA ALIMENTARIA



CATALUÑA, DONDE LA COMIDA ES CULTURA

related field, it is also about assuming the principles of the circular economy, discarding the linear economy and thus incorporating options to make the most of all available resources.

Another of the main lines of action must be the prevention of food waste in households and consumption spaces. Every day around the world, tonnes of food end up in waste due to its expiry date, from fresh products such as fruits and vegetables, meat or fish, to refrigerated dairy products, to bakery products that need to be replaced daily. Some supermarkets and stores are already reducing prices when the expiry date approaches. Platforms and start-ups are putting products that are close to their expiry date into the hands of the most conscientious consumers, preventing them from going to the trash every day. Another line of work, promoted by NGOs and local and regional governments, is to create circuits that rescue these foods so that they can be used by social entities that channel them to sectors of vulnerable sectors of the population.

Legislation needs to provide a framework for all these actions to prevent food waste, discouraging the generation of waste and offering tools to companies and social entities to carry out actions that can improve the use of food items.

Public administrations can play a fundamental role in raising awareness among the population of the serious problem posed by food loss and waste. Advertising campaigns, but also actions in schools, can create strong levels of awareness in this regard, similar to what was done with waste recycling policies a few years ago. A good example of this is the campaigns carried out with renowned chefs in geographies as diverse as Peru, with the Optimal Kitchen initiative promoted by Palmiro Ocampo, the Basque Country, with the campaigns with Basque chefs recommending menus with food reuse, or Catalonia, with the Gastrorecup meals, in which more than 40 restaurants have already participated up until 2023.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- What are the main causes of food loss and waste? What are the main differences between regions?
- What are the main obstacles to facing the challenge? What aspects should we focus on from the regions to be successful in this company?
- To what extent can regional governments influence these policies? What is their role in meeting the SDGs in this area?
- How should regions help companies to prevent food waste?
- In what regard can food loss and waste prevention policies contribute to achieving the Zero Hunger objective? What elements should they emphasise?