

BIGMUN 2025  
ECOSOC 1 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

# Research Report

---

Topic 2: Implementation of national policy measures against food waste



Myanh Bui-Ligouzat Yee Ming Da

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Definition of key terms	3
Background Information	3
Major Countries and Organisations Involved	5
Relevant UN Resolutions	6
Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue	7
Bibliography	8

## Introduction

Food waste has become a growing global issue, with over 59 million tonnes of food waste generated annually in the EU when over 42 million people cannot afford a quality meal every second day. This situation contributes to hunger, environmental degradation, and economic losses. In response, many countries have started implementing national policy measures aimed at reducing food waste. These policies include food labeling regulations to incentives for businesses to donate surplus food and public awareness campaigns.

Effectively tackling food waste requires policies that align with each country's unique political, economic, and cultural contexts. For Member States of the United Nations, this situation presents a valuable opportunity to enhance food security, promote sustainability, and reduce environmental impacts. This issue highlights the importance of both domestic action and international cooperation in addressing food waste.

## Definition of key terms

**Food waste:** Food waste refers to the decrease in the quantity or quality of food resulting from decisions and actions by retailers, food service providers and consumers.

**Food access:** Access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources).

**National policy:** A set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a government.

**Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations:** Specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.

## Background Information

Food waste is a critical issue with wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social implications. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), an estimated 1.3 billion tons of food, or one-third of global food production, is wasted each year. This not only contributes to food insecurity<sup>1</sup>, especially in developing countries, but also places enormous strain on the environment. The environmental impact of food waste is significant, as wasted food in landfills produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. The causes of food waste are multifaceted and vary by region. In high-income

---

<sup>1</sup> The limited or uncertain access to nutritious food, which also includes limitations on the ability to obtain nutritious food in ways that are socially acceptable.

countries, food waste often occurs at the consumer and retail levels, where products are discarded due to over-purchasing, cosmetic imperfections, or expiration dates. In contrast, in low- and middle-income countries, food loss typically happens earlier in the supply chain, such as during production, harvesting, or transportation, due to inadequate infrastructure or lack of technology.

Addressing food waste requires coordinated efforts across all sectors of society, including government, industry, and consumers. Over the last decade, food waste has gained increasing attention as governments, international organisations, and civil society groups recognise its role in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 about ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, which is key to sustain the livelihoods of current and future generations. In response to this growing crisis, many countries have developed national policy measures to combat food waste. These measures include laws that regulate food labeling and expiration dates, incentives for businesses to donate surplus food, bans on food waste in landfills, and public awareness campaigns. The European Union, for example, has made significant strides with its "Farm to Fork Strategy"<sup>3</sup> which seeks to reduce food waste across the food supply chain. Similarly, France has enacted laws prohibiting supermarkets from throwing away unsold food, requiring them to donate it instead. While progress is being made, the implementation of national policies remains a challenge. Factors such as cultural norms, economic conditions, and political commitment can affect the success of these initiatives. Some countries struggle with policy enforcement, while others face difficulties in engaging consumers and businesses in reducing food waste.

Additionally, there is no universal definition of food waste, which complicates efforts to standardise measurements and monitor progress. Nonetheless, the growing recognition of the importance of addressing food waste has led to greater collaboration between governments, the private sector, and international organisations. For instance, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the FAO provide guidelines and frameworks to help countries design and implement effective food waste reduction strategies. Ultimately, the implementation of national policy measures against food waste is critical not only for reducing hunger and greenhouse gas emissions but also for promoting sustainable food systems. By adopting comprehensive policies, governments can play a key role in addressing this global challenge.

---

<sup>2</sup> The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls.

<sup>3</sup> At the heart of the [European Green Deal](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf), it aims to make food systems fair, healthy, environmentally-friendly and accelerates our transition to a sustainable food system. The resolution on this strategy was adopted on October 2021. [https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f\\_action-plan\\_2020\\_strategy-info\\_en.pdf](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf)

## Major Countries and Organisations Involved

**FAO:** The FAO is a key international body focused on food security and sustainability. It provides data, resources, and guidelines to support countries in reducing food waste.

**United Nations Environment Programme:** The United Nations Environment Programme wrote the Food waste Index 2024, providing useful data on food waste worldwide in order to establish new policies thanks to a better understanding of this issue. The report marked a pivotal moment in understanding global food waste across retail, food service, and household sectors as it unveiled a greater availability of food waste data than anticipated, particularly at the household level, and revealed that per capita household food waste generation was more consistent worldwide than previously thought.

**Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP):** The Waste and Resources Action Programme is a global environmental action NGO transforming broken product and food systems to create Circular Living for the benefit of climate, nature and people. For over twenty years, WRAP has delivered programmes to benefit the environment, from reducing carbon dioxide emissions and waste to restoring nature and enhancing people's lives. It is established in the UK, where the most significant part of their work is made.

**France:** In February 2016, France adopted a pioneering law on fighting food waste that meant supermarkets were forbidden to destroy unsold food products and were compelled to donate it instead. This law constituted the starting point of the fight against food waste through banning its destruction and facilitating donation. Since the adoption, its scope has been extended further, as defined through new decrees and laws. In the EU, 53% of food waste happens at the consumer level, while in France it only accounts for 33%, which includes collective catering and restaurants.

**Germany:** The "Too Good for Throwing Away" campaign educates German citizens about the environmental and economic impacts of food waste, and provides tips on how to reduce food waste at the household level. The German government has also introduced policies and regulations to incentivise food businesses, such as supermarkets and restaurants, to donate their surplus food to charitable organisations or food banks, rather than disposing of it. These initiatives are part of Germany's broader efforts to address the issue of food waste, which is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions<sup>4</sup> and a wasteful use of resources.

**South Korea:** Households across the globe generate around 79 kg or more of food waste per person. Compared to this, South Korea has successfully reduced food waste through its "pay as you throw" policy. On average, households in South Korea generate only 33 kg of food waste per person per year.

---

<sup>4</sup> The gases in the atmosphere that raise the surface temperature of planets such as the Earth. What distinguishes them from other gases is that they absorb the wavelengths of radiation that a planet emits, resulting in the greenhouse effect.

## Relevant UN Resolutions

1. The Sustainable Development Goals, a collection of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>5</sup>.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 12.3: Halve global per capita food waste. By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

2. United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme<sup>6</sup>.

Second session, May 2016.

*Concerned* that roughly one third of food produced globally for human consumption is wasted or lost, as is the vast quantity of scarce resources such as land, energy and water that are used to produce food that is later lost or wasted,

*Recognising* the negative environmental, social and economic impact of food that is lost or wasted, including the vast quantities of scarce resources – such as land, energy, and water – that are used to produce and transport food that is later lost or wasted, and that food waste enters often over-burdened waste management systems,

*Recognising also* the international community's fundamental priority of achieving food security and nutrition and ending hunger caused inter alia by the adverse environmental effects of climate change and desertification,

*Recognising further* that in developing countries food waste and losses occur mainly, but not exclusively, at early stages of the food value chain,

*Recognising* the waste management hierarchy, which addresses both organic and inorganic components of solid waste, and prioritises in rank order prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and other recovery, including energy recovery, and final disposal,

*Recognising also* that effective management of food waste would prioritise source reduction to reduce volume by prevention and minimisation of food lost and wasted, reuse of safe and nutritious food suitable for human consumption that otherwise might be wasted, recovery of lost and wasted food residues for animal feed, where safe to do so, and diversion of food loss and waste from landfill disposal to beneficial use in industry, including energy recovery,

*Recognising further* the role that market-based incentives may play in reducing food loss and waste, taking into account differing national circumstances,

*Noting* the particular roles and opportunities of relevant governmental institutions, including environment ministries, national institutions with environmental responsibilities, international organisations, agricultural ministries and other relevant ministries and their partners with responsibility for food security, in contributing to solving food loss and waste problems, with their particular orientation towards addressing socioeconomic, environmental and public health problems, while promoting sustainable-development-oriented solutions and opportunities.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/> The SDGs were adopted by the ONU in 2015.

<sup>6</sup> <https://open.unep.org/resolution/> Took place in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### **Loi Garrot:**

- Adopted by the French assembly in 2016. The law introduced a hierarchy of the actions to adopt in the fight against food waste by giving the priority to prevention, then to donation or transformation. Destruction is taken in consideration as a last resort.
- The main measure of this legislation is an obligation for supermarkets or grocery retailers with a surface area of more than 400 square meters to donate their surplus food to charity organisations instead of destroying it.
- France also introduced campaigns to educate consumers about portion sizes and how to reduce food waste at home. The government has supported schools and other public institutions in implementing food waste reduction measures.

### **US EPA Food recovery Hierarchy (2015):**

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the Food Recovery Hierarchy, a guide that prioritises actions to prevent and reduce food waste. The hierarchy encourages food waste prevention at the top, followed by food recovery, recycling, and composting as lower-priority options.
- Helping understand better that prevention, or keeping food from going to waste in the first place, is still the best way to reduce the climate and other environmental impacts of wasted food.

### **South Korea: Mandatory Food Waste Recycling (2005):**

- One of the world's most successful food waste recycling programs, which requires citizens to separate food waste for recycling or composting. The country also introduced a "pay-as-you-throw" system, where households are charged based on the weight of food waste they generate.
- The program has been successful in reducing food waste by encouraging citizens to be more mindful of their consumption and disposal habits. South Korea has become a leader in food waste management, with a recycling rate of nearly 95%.

## Bibliography

Food and Agriculture Organisation's articles on "food Waste: a triple win opportunity":  
<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/FAO-UNEP-agriculture-environment-food-loss-waste-day-2022/en>

Food and Agriculture Organisation's article on the nutrition dimension of food loss and waste:

<https://www.fao.org/nutrition/capacity-development/food-loss-and-waste/en/>

Article on the Loi Garrot:

<https://blog.secondharvest.ca/2024/01/09/how-france-is-fighting-food-waste/>

Article on the South Korea's recycling system:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/08/09/south-korea-food-waste-composting/>

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP):

<https://www.wrap.ngo/>

Definitions : <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

European Green Deal: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/green-deal/>