Promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste*

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Appreciating the focus of UNEA 4 on innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production,

Deeply concerned that around one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year which is equivalent to approximately 1.3 billion tones to a value of around USD 990 billion gets lost or wasted while nearly 821 million\(^1\) of people suffer from under nourishment,

Recognizing the international community’s priority of sustainably achieving food security and nutrition and ending hunger,

Recognizing also that producing food that is lost and wasted requires significant resources including water, land, energy, labor and capital and frequently uses inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and results in greenhouse gas emissions,

Recalling resolution 2/9 “Prevention, Reduction and Reuse of Food Waste” that promoted food loss and waste reduction across the whole supply chain,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, adopting the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Recognizing that in developing countries food losses occur mainly, but not exclusively, at early stages of the food value chain,

Recognizing also that food losses during harvest and in storage translate into lost income for many small farmers and into higher prices for many poor consumers,

Noting the scarcity of specific research and/or data related to food loss and waste including the impacts of poor or limited infrastructure and diverse climatic conditions including high ambient temperatures and high relative humidity,

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Recognizing the Sustainable Food Systems Program of the 10YFP on sustainable consumption and production patterns, an inclusive initiative to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda and efforts of Member States to by 2030, half per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and to reduce food losses along the production and supply chains including post-harvest losses,

Recognizing the negative impact of Food Losses and Waste on a number of goals of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development,

Realizing that there are challenges associated with selection of sustainable cooling technologies, including by small/medium size farmers and producers,

Noting the roles and opportunities of relevant governmental institutions, including environment ministries, international organizations, technology providers and end-users, in contributing to introducing innovation and concepts towards sustainable practices and technologies that can curb food losses and waste,

Acknowledging the progress made by some member states in implementing innovative solutions, technologies and engagement of local constituents to reduce food loss and waste,

Recalling that the Ministerial Declaration of the 2018 High Level Political Forum on sustainable development called upon all stakeholders to adopt a sustainable food systems approach and to develop effective strategies and innovations to reduce food losses and waste,

1. Invites Member States, taking into account different national circumstances, within available resources, and working with relevant stakeholders, to provide the necessary enabling environments to:

(a) Support measures to address issues related to food loss and waste at all stages of supply chain from producer to end user including handling, storage, packaging, transport, and to work towards sustainable consumption and production including through collaboration with relevant stakeholders;

(b) Develop or share best practices on integrated energy efficient and safe cold chain solutions that bring value to farmers/producers and introduce innovative post-harvest technologies consistent with international commitments in sustainable cooling technologies and logistics and transportation of food products that can secure extended shelf-life of sensitive products;

(c) Develop or share best practices on relevant food preservation innovations for enhancing food products cooling and preservation during the processes of manufacturing, packaging, transportation and handling in a way that minimizes the impact of diverse environmental conditions, such as high ambient temperature countries, on the life of food products taking into account energy efficiency and safety considerations;

(d) Encourage and/or share best practices on, as feasible, sustainable cooling technologies suitable to deploy in a wide variety of environmental conditions including in high ambient temperature countries and among all elements of the supply chain including small and medium enterprises, farmers and producers;

(e) Promote applied research on the impacts of climate conditions on the production, storage and transport leading to food loss and waste in a wide variety of environmental conditions, including in high ambient temperature countries, and innovative solutions to avoid losses and minimize the impacts identified in the product chain, and industry engagement to introduce appropriate energy efficient refrigeration and other cold chain solutions for small/medium enterprises, farmers and producers including on post-harvest and processing facilities and transportation;

(f) Set national strategies to reduce food loss and waste in line with SDG 12.3;

2. Urges member states to establish mechanisms to measure food loss and waste including data management, monitoring and verification;

3. Invites member states to use or repurpose excess production using sustainable practices and innovative technologies;

4. Also invites Member States to take appropriate measures for the reduction of food loss and waste, including through adequate policy measures as well as education and awareness raising;

5. Recommends that member states promote a broad-based dialogue between private and public spheres, across the whole value chain and including all stakeholders, to cooperate on reasonable
means to further reducing food loss and waste. Bearing in mind that food loss and waste should not be moved from one part of the food chain to another, and the importance of including consumers in the process;

6. Encourages member states in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to prioritize actions that prevent and reduce food loss and waste along the food supply chain that have the greatest environmental benefits in line with UNEP/FAO food loss and waste prevention guidance i.e. prevention, food recovery, and redistribution of safe and nutritious food to people;

7. Requests the Executive Director, within the UNEP programme of work and budget, and the 10 Year Framework Programme’s Sustainable Food Systems Program, and in cooperation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and other relevant partners, to:

(a) Provide technical support to assist member states in implementing this resolution;

(b) Foster regional and global cooperation, facilitate exchange of experiences and knowledge, research and best practices amongst member states and other food system stakeholders;

(c) Continue to participate in ongoing international initiatives to support transfer of innovative solutions and practices that can curb food loss and waste;

8. Requests the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its next session on progress made in implementing the relevant provisions of the present resolution;

9. Also requests the Executive Director within the mandate, programme of work and budget and available resources, to promote food loss and waste reduction and support countries, especially developing countries, upon their request, to explore opportunities to collaborate with UN organizations and international financial institutions in line with their existing mandates and budgets.