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Press

Further progress made in the fight against food losses and food waste

- ***Second international SAVE FOOD Congress concludes successfully***
- ***FAO, UNEP and industry speakers, high-profile guests and a variety of approaches and alliances demonstrate the broad spectrum of possibilities for solving the problem***

The second international SAVE FOOD Congress comes to an end today. Even more so than the inaugural edition three years ago, this two-day event impressively showed ways to combat food losses and food waste along the entire value chain. High-profile guests and participants – including FAO and UNEP officials, the Senegalese minister and musician Youssou N’Dour and former German minister Renate Künast – contributed greatly, while an array of lectures and workshops served to identify practical problem-solving approaches and options.

The presentation of the recent baseline study conducted by the SAVE FOOD Initiative, which lays out the causes of and concrete approaches to solving the food loss problem in Kenya, was central to the event. It consists of case studies looking at smallholder agricultural operations and fisheries in Kenya intended to illustrate the causes of and possible solutions to food losses. Resulting approaches could be applied to other African markets, as well. These include the development of capacities along the supply chain and the targeted use of technology as well as an increase in training opportunities for growers, the establishment of local warehouses and distribution centres, and raising awareness regarding efficiency and sustainability improvements in general. Specifically, the study deals with the issue of improving yields for milk, fish and maize in Kenya.

Another project exemplifying the Initiative’s targeted measures was introduced, the SAVE FOOD Mango Project in Kenya. Its central first step is the deployment of effective processing and packaging

equipment in order to generate greater added value within the country and reduce mango losses. Partly the issue is also about the processing of fruit that's no longer fit for immediate consumption. In addition to the improved handling of rising domestic demand, the goal is a sharp export ratio increase. Altogether, these enhancements aim to reduce losses along the supply chain by 30,000 tonnes initially.

Last but not least, the Innovationparc Packaging – held on the same days as interpack and thus extending past the two-day Congress – presents best practices from the industry and current projects aimed at minimising food losses both in the producing countries and on the retail and consumer level. UNEP and FAO are among those presenting comprehensive case studies here, which serve as the basis for specific advanced measures.

The Congress was hosted by the SAVE FOOD Initiative, a collaboration of Messe Düsseldorf, FAO and UNEP. It took place immediately before the start of interpack, the leading global trade fair for packaging technology and related process technology. Packaging technology, in particular, can make a major contribution to the elimination of the food loss and food waste problem through the development of smart solutions.

Each day, the second international SAVE FOOD Congress emphasised a different set of issues. The first day, 7 May, focussed on big-picture political and civil-society approaches, while the second day, 8 May, predominantly covered private-sector topics. And yet, an overarching theme linked both days of the Congress: Everything revolved around building and strengthening alliances, a joining together of all involved actors covering the entire length of the food value chain in an effort to use a wide range of capabilities and resources to unlock new possibilities.

At the conclusion of the second international SAVE FOOD Congress, the presenters signed a declaration codifying their continued collaboration toward the development of innovative solutions. In doing so, they expressed their commitment to using consistent strategies and constructive measures across the corporate, institutional and national levels.

Over the course of the two event days, Tristram Stuart from the "Feeding the 5000" campaign proved how tasty food can be, even when it's no longer fit for sale in stores. He prepared the dishes that made up the catering menu served to Congress participants.



"The Save Food conference has clearly shown that we need to address the problem of food waste and losses at all levels of the food chain," said FAO Assistant Director-General Ren Wang. "We simply should not continue to waste and lose food that nobody eats. This is a non-productive use of scarce resources like energy, land and water and contributes to climate change. Governments, the private sector and civil society need to cooperate closely to develop better policies, affordable and sustainable technological innovations and promote behaviour change to ensure that food is being consumed in a more efficient way", said FAO Assistant Director-General Ren Wang.

"I'm very satisfied with the second international SAVE FOOD Congress and with its outcome. Once more, it impressively demonstrated that a broad alliance reaching across sectors and across nations can make a difference and have a real impact. Our goal is and will remain a reduction of food losses and food waste and along with that the eradication of hunger in the world – and this Congress has brought us a big step closer to our goal," said Werner M. Dornscheidt, President and CEO of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH.

About SAVE FOOD:

The SAVE FOOD Initiative is a cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, FAO, and Messe Düsseldorf GmbH to combat global food losses and food waste. Since early 2013, the Initiative has also been supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP. SAVE FOOD aims to network actors from business, politics and research, stimulate dialogue and help to work out solutions along the food value chain. SAVE FOOD also intends to launch and promote its own projects with the support of the industry. SAVE FOOD started in May 2011 with an international congress and an exhibition as part of interpack, the world's leading trade fair for the packaging industry and all related process industries. Once again, experts from business, politics and research will meet in Düsseldorf during interpack 2014 on 7 and 8 May to discuss food losses and food waste. For more information, please visit www.save-food.org.

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