



Opening speech by Mustapha M. SINACEUR

17 January 2014

Excellency, Minister of Food Agriculture and Livestock, Mr.
Mehmet Mehdi Eker,

Distinguished Undersecretary and Deputy Undersecretaries,
General Director of Turkish Grain Board (TMO), and
General Directors,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia
and FAO Representation in Turkey, I extend to all of you a
warm welcome to this event. I would also like to thank you
for inviting FAO to be part of this important celebration.



We are here today for the anniversary of the big campaign on bread waste and loss which was launched as a social responsibility project by TMO last year on 17th January, with the strong support of Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN and Minister Mr. Mehmet Mehdi Eker.

(Ekmeđini İsrâf Etme!)

It is not a surprise that policy makers in many countries and representatives of international organizations are discussing the topic of food loses and waste intensively over the last few years. The public interest in the topic is also reflected in the public media over the last two years. There are articles in the daily press, weekly journals and magazines on TV in reports and talk shows.



According to the FAO studies, every year 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted. This is equivalent to the same amount produced in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, 1 in every 8 people in the world go to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children die daily from hunger. Even if just one-fourth of the food currently lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed the 840 million hungry people in the world.

While the planet is struggling to provide us with enough resources to sustain its 7 billion people, FAO estimates that a third of global food production is either wasted or lost. Food waste is an enormous drain on natural resources and a contributor to negative environmental impacts.



Improving our knowledge on where food losses occur and what are the causes is indispensable in taking remedial action. A food losses and waste virtual information network system could be set up to provide estimates and causes of losses along the supply chain as well as tested approaches to reduce them.

Distinguished guests,

As FAO, we have a large number of projects, at national and regional levels, covering all aspects of food security.

Overall, FAO work on Food Losses and Waste is outlined in ‘The global initiative on food loss and waste reduction’. The priority action areas include:



- Detailed food loss assessments and solution finding, focusing on selected food supply chains in developing regions;
- A world-wide media campaign for awareness creation on food losses and waste, and information dissemination;
- Organization of Regional Save Food Congresses.

In addition to personal awareness and individual action, FAO gives utmost emphasis to the strengthened institutional capacity at government and private sector level which is also a crucial issue that would help to decrease the food losses and waste.

In this regard, a toolkit has been designed to raise awareness and provide options for contributing to the reduction of food losses.



In Europe and Central Asia region FAO has within the framework of the FAO flagship programme on agrarian structures, initiated the work on regional assessment of food losses and waste and identification of policy options for reduction of food losses and waste. Final results of that work will be presented at the next FAO Regional Conference in April 2014.

Preliminary findings indicate that there are notable differences in the patterns of food losses and waste among the countries and sub-regions. Most of the losses in the developed countries occur at the consumption stage, (up to 24 per cent of cereals is wasted), while in the middle and low income countries the largest losses occur at the production and post-harvest stages of the value chain.



In middle and low income countries the most frequently mentioned causes of food losses are inadequate infrastructure and technology as well as the lack of education and skills, in particular at the farm level. Mitigation measures such as educating and providing technical assistance to farmers in the process of harvesting and improvement of rural infrastructure (roads, communication technology) can be addressed with direct involvement of governments.

The public sector has also a role to play in improving knowledge and access to new technologies and supporting local initiatives that adapt such technologies to the realities on the ground. Promotion of appropriate technologies would ensure good harvesting and handling practices and the prompt transformation and processing of crops, thus adding value and minimizing losses and waste.



In developed countries of the region consumer preferences are the main reason for food waste. Many of awareness rising and food waste reduction campaigns in those countries are launched to address specific local circumstances that contribute to wasting of the food. On the consumption side, regulations on how food is handled in public eating places could also be considered among the options in reducing waste. These options may include limiting “all you can eat” options and encouraging “pay by weight”. Beyond avoiding food waste, such measures are also effective in containing overweight and obesity. At the same time, countries should put in place structures to ensure that good use is made of excess food.



Initiatives to reduce food waste are implemented by several international, supra-national and national organizations. This reflects the fact that the loss and waste of food has evolved into a high-profile public issue. However, on the national level such initiatives are predominantly concentrated most developed part of the region.

One issue would be to streamlining the responsibilities of the number of agencies/bodies dealing with the matter. This should also include improving partnerships, coordination and collaboration among government line ministries, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

By reducing food waste, we can save money and resources, minimize environmental impacts and, most importantly, move towards a world where everyone has enough to eat.



With losses of 5% for cereals to 15% for oilseeds and pulses, findings of FAO country study for Turkey indicate moderate level of losses in the early post production stage.

Although the findings of FAO country study for Turkey indicate that maximum up to 5% of food is wasted at the consumption and household level, Turkey has also launched this campaign on prevention of bread waste to raise awareness and sensitivity about the importance of food.

This indicates the commitment of Turkey to join the forefront of the countries which recognized the importance of combating food losses and waste at all stages of the supply chain, as a pathway to improve food security, supply chain efficiency and competitiveness of its agricultural sector.



I would like to also mention that the statement made on the “Ekmek Kampanya” by the representatives of Turkey at the Informal Consultation held in Moldova last December were widely appreciated by the participants.

During the twenty-ninth FAO European Regional Conference (ERC) which will be held in Romania, in March 2014, there will be a Ministerial Round Table organized around this important topic of Food Wastage. There could be a good opportunity for Turkey to introduce this important initiative with adequate media material. As FAO, we give importance to this initiative conducting by TMO. This initiative could be considered as best practice and we suggest this to the countries as a good example.



We are grateful to the all the stakeholders from public institutions, NGOs, private sector, universities and individuals supporting this campaign and contributing to the joint fight against hunger and food waste in the world.

Additionally, I would like to thank the Government of Turkey, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in giving us an opportunity to help to the Central Asian countries in achieving food security and to reach to one ultimate goal: Food For All through FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme.

Turkey is a major resource partner for FAO for the region. We are at the process of renewing and enlarging our partnership agreement and to further continue our close collaboration.



I would like to also express my sincere thanks to the Ministry, especially H.E. Mr. Mehmet Mehdi Eker and all his staff for the excellent collaboration and the extensive support which is given to our Organization in general, to the Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia and to myself, in particular.

Finally, please allow me to pay tribute to TMO and its staff for their strong efforts on bringing this important subject to the attention of the Turkish public.

I want to thank all of you in advance, for your efforts in organising and participating to this event; and am convinced that this will produce real progress towards ensuring that everyone in the world has access to safe and enough food.



I thank you for your attention.