



INTEGRAL  
HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

# Food Waste – A Sad Reality with No End in Sight

At Parallel Event – *“The Right to Food: Between Deprivation and Waste:  
It’s TIME to ACT”*

– Permanent Mission of the Holy See – Forum Roma

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## Facts about Food Waste and Hunger



- Along with chronic poverty, conflict and economic shocks, **food loss is one of the root [causes of hunger](#)** worldwide.
- Food loss also represents a **waste of the very resources used to produce food — such as land, water and energy.**

Here are some basic facts :

(source: [UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024](#))

1. **One-fifth of food** produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally. This amounts to **one billion meals a day.**
2. The total cost of food loss and waste for the global economy is estimated at roughly **US\$1 trillion.**
3. Food loss and waste generates **up to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions** – almost five times the total emissions compared to the aviation sector.
4. **Sixty percent** of food waste happens **at household level.**
5. Food waste is **higher in hotter countries**, both at the household level and in the post-harvest phase, with high temperatures affecting storage, processing and transportation of food.

## Stop food loss and waste. For the people. For the Planet.

- Reducing food losses and waste is essential in a world where the number of people affected by hunger has been slowly on the rise since 2014, and tons and tons of edible food are lost and/or wasted every day.
- Globally, around **13.2 percent** of food produced is lost between harvest and retail, while an estimated **19 percent** of total global food production is wasted in households, in the food service and in retail all together
- The [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste 2024](#) highlighted the **critical need for financing** to bolster efforts to reduce food loss and waste, contribute to achieving climate goals and advancing the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which achieve the reduction of food waste by 50 percent.



Caption: Food Waste in a dumpster outside a supermarket  
Credit: Shutterstock

### Did you know?????

(source: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-food-waste-day>)

- While an estimated 735 million people go hungry globally, food loss and waste generate 8 to 10 percent of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) and is a methane hotspot.
- Households waste over 1 billion meals worth of edible food every day, the equivalent of 1.3 meals every day for everyone in the world affected by hunger
- Opportunities to finance food loss and waste reduction and low-carbon diets remain untapped, with only USD 0.1 billion invested annually in 2019/20. This represents a minor fraction of annual needs, estimated at USD 48 to 50 billion.

## Addressing food waste is closely related to achieving the “right to food”

- The right to food was first recognised as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 25 provides that: *“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control”*.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) recognises *‘the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food...and to the continuous improvement of living conditions’* (Article 11, § 1) as well as *‘the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger’* (Article 11, § 2).
- In November 2004, the FAO Council adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food, which are practical tools used by States to address hunger through a human rights-based approach.
- During the 2008 global food crisis, then-UN Secretary General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon made a strong appeal to integrate the right to food more effectively in conjunction with responses to food insecurity.
- At a high-level meeting on food security in 2009, he also stated: *“We must continue to meet urgent hunger and humanitarian needs by providing food and nutrition assistance and safety nets, while focusing on improving food production and smallholder agriculture. This is the twin-track approach...We should be ready to add a third track, the right to food, as a basis for analysis, action and accountability”*.

# Judaeo-Christian Teaching on Food Access and prioritizing the poorest and excluded persons



Credit: *Jewish Word*, Winter Issue 2022

- ... the law of the “sabbatical year” was observed every seven years) and that of the “jubilee year” every fifty years “... Besides requiring fields to lie fallow, these laws call for the cancellation of debts and a general release of persons and goods: everyone is free to return to his family of origin and to regain possession of his birthright ... To eliminate the discrimination and economic inequalities caused by socio-economic changes, every seven years the memory of the Exodus and the Covenant are translated into social and juridical terms, in order to bring the concepts of property, debts, loans and goods back to their deepest meaning ... God’s Spirit, poured into the human heart, the the Prophets proclaim, will make these same these same sentiments of justice and solidarity ... take root in you (Jer 31:33 and Ezek. 36:26-27)” [based on Leviticus 25]

- The prophet Isaias communicates God’s preference for a “fast”, penance for wrongdoing and infidelity, that is enacted by “... sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh ... (Is. 58.7)”

[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html) , #24-25

- In his Gospel, St. John recounts Jesus’ Teaching and actions on the night before He died, when He said: “If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do (John 13:14-15).”
- Later, in his first Epistle, John admonishes: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God\* whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:20-21).”

# CATECHISM of the CATHOLIC CHURCH

SECOND EDITION

Revised in accordance with the official Latin text  
promulgated by Pope John Paul II

Includes revision of paragraph no. 2267  
promulgated by Pope Francis



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## **The Catechism of the Catholic Church insists on the obligation of “Love for the Poor”**

[https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_P8F.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P8F.HTM)

- ... **God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor** and rebukes those who turn away from them ... [2443]:
- "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." [2444]
- **St. John Chrysostom** vigorously recalls this: "**Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life.** the goods we possess are not ours, but theirs."  
[2446, St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Lazaro 2, 5: PG 48, 992]
- "**The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all**; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity" [2446, Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 8, #5]
- **When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours.** More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.  
[2446, St. Gregory the Great, Regula Pastoralis. 3, 21: PL 77, 87]
- **The goods of creation are destined for the entire human race.** The right to private property does not abolish the universal destination of goods. [2452]
- **The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come.** [2456]





## **Recent Papal Teaching on Right to Food and Food Waste**

### **Pope St. Paul VI:**

- “Will man, who has learned how to harness the atom and conquer space, finally succeed in conquering his selfishness? ... There is a whole economy, too often tainted by power, waste and fear, which must be transformed into an economy of service and brotherhood.”  
Paul VI, Visit to the FAO on 25th Anniversary of its Institution, 16 November 1970
- “After generously feeding the crowds, the Lord bade His disciples gather up what was left so that nothing might be lost (See Jn. 6: 12). What a splendid lesson in thrift, in the noblest and fullest sense of that word, to a wasteful age like our own! It condemns a whole conception of society according to which consumption is an end in itself ... What is lacking is that sense of solidarity which we would like to see prominent in your labours here and especially in the decisions you reach.”

Paul VI, Address to the World Food Conference, 9 November 1974

## Recent Papal Teaching on Right to Food and Food Waste

### **Pope St. John Paul II:**

- “To find an appropriate response to the tragic situations of many countries, you are responsible for studying the technical problems and for proposing reasonable solutions ... it is often difficult to find immediate solutions for improving these tragic situations [i.e., 800 million suffering from Malnutrition]. Nevertheless, we must seek them together so that we will no longer have, side by side, the starving and the wealthy, the very poor and the very rich, those who lack the necessary means and others who lavishly waste them. Such contrasts between poverty and wealth are intolerable for humanity.” Address of Pope John Paul II to the World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996
- “Hunger is the most cruel and concrete sign of poverty. Opulence and waste are no longer acceptable when the tragedy of hunger is assuming ever greater proportions ... the Catholic Church will always be concerned for efforts to defeat hunger ... [and] is committed to support, by word and deed, the action taken in solidarity – planned, responsible and regulated – to which all members of the international community are called to contribute.”

Address of Pope Benedict XVI to FAO on Occasion of the World Food Summit, 16 November 2009





## Recent Papal Teaching on Right to Food and Food Waste



### **Pope Francis:**

- “Our grandparents used to make a point of not throwing away leftover food ... Consumerism has made us accustomed to wasting food daily and we are unable to see its real value ... **Throwing away food is like stealing from the table of those who are poor and hungry**” Pope Francis, General Audience Address, 5 June 2013
- “If we wish to build a future where no one is left behind, **we must create a present that radically rejects the squandering of food ...** Together, without losing time, by pooling resources and ideas, we can introduce a lifestyle that gives food the importance it deserves ... in many places, our brothers and sisters do not have access to sufficient and healthy food, while in others, food is discarded and squandered. **Pope Saint John Paul II called this the ‘paradox of abundance, which continues to be an obstacle to resolving the problem of feeding humanity’**”. Pope Francis, Message to the World Food Programme, 18 November 2018
- “**It is the poor and needy of this world, who collect from the trash the food that others haughtily squander and for which they yearn, who are attentively watching this assembly today. It is young people who are openly calling on us to eradicate once and for all the pernicious effects that food loss and waste have on people and the planet, while at the same time asking us to raise awareness so that such harmful and damaging practices are not repeated.**” Pope Francis, Message to the General Director of FAO, International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, 29 September 2023

## Catholic Church Efforts to Reduce Food Waste



By Cardinal Tagle,  
Former President of  
Caritas Internationalis  
Address at FAO,

*The Problem of Food Loss:  
Challenges from the Catholic  
Social Teaching and  
Responses from Caritas*

- Food loss occurs in all stages of agricultural value chains development after harvest, during transport from fields to the homestead, during threshing or shelling, during storage, during transport to the market and during marketing. It is especially damaging for small-scale farmers, whose food security and capacity to earn from their work could be severely threatened.
- In 2014 Caritas Malawi (CADECOM) studied food crops such as maize, millet, sorghum, soy bean, beans, pigeon peas and groundnuts ... It revealed serious unmet needs. First, we mention the constraints experienced by farmers, like the lack of financial resources to purchase storage equipment, the lack of appropriate storage facilities, the inaccessibility of storage methods due to limited awareness, the lack of access to technologies and prohibitive acquisition costs ... The result of the research motivated Caritas Malawi to implement programs to enhance farmers' capabilities and to engage in policy advocacy.
- Catholic Charities (Caritas) in the USA has a programme called "Farm for Maine". It aims at providing nutrient-rich organic vegetables to needy people who resort to food pantries. Some of the produce is distributed right out of the field, while most of it is processed in partnership with small women-owned business for distribution over the winter months. This partnership fosters employment and cooperation. It also assures the availability of vegetables during the harsh Maine winter when the need is great.



# Laudato Si' Action Platform

The Laudato Si' Action Platform, an initiative of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, is an action-oriented program inspired by Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home. It is intended to empower institutions, communities, and individuals/families to achieve total sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform guides participants through a journey of ecological conversion, taking concrete action towards the Laudato Si' Goals.



**LAUDATO SI'**  
Action Platform



# Laudato Si' Action Platform

In Sister Lilia Jorda Frondoza's vocation as a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception (MIC), the ecological crisis and her relationship with indigenous communities as principal dialogue partners has shaped her work in the Philippines significantly.

"As a religious, there is always a call by the Church to serve the poor," Frondoza stated, expressing a sentiment that would guide her life's mission. In 1993, Frondoza's call led her to the remote communities of the Mangyan tribes in the province Occidental Mindoro.

Now back in her home convent in Manila, Frondoza continues to grow into the principles of Laudato Si' by leading seminars and promoting the recycling of materials to combat plastic pollution, as well as growing organic vegetables and herbal medicines in the MIC garden at their residence.



The Laudato Si' Organic Garden grows with the help of African Night Crawler earthworms and is nourished by fermented plant juice from kitchen waste.





# Laudato Si' Action Platform

In Nigeria, Kini Emmanuel Sale led a sensitization campaign at the Federal Science Technical College, where students planted 72 tree seedlings of various species. This effort not only beautifies the environment but also contributes to a healthier and more sustainable future for all.

From India, a variety of inspiring initiatives were undertaken, including the Auxilium Barasat community's "A March Towards a Greener Future," which included a series of events such as planting drives, waste management workshops, and the promotion of regenerative agriculture. These activities highlight the importance of ecological education and sustainable practices in daily life.

In Bangladesh, Benedict Alo D Rozario conducted an ecological education session for over 200 eighth-grade students at Holy Cross Girls' High School in Dhaka. His session emphasized the importance of reimagining, recreating, and restoring our natural environment through simple yet impactful actions, such as reducing plastic use and planting trees.



Kyakuwaire of Uganda writes that they responded to Cry of the Poor "by sharing the little we have with those in need. We also planted our vegetables in our compounds and also supported our local producers as we got our eggs from them."



# Contact

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***Thank you!***