

To the EU Member States: now is the time to address food loss and waste as part of your Nationally Determined Contributions!

COP27 just kicked off with a clear statement: "Together For Implementation." In the next two weeks, global leaders will have a chance to meet in Sharm El Sheikh to discuss the climate actions necessary to collectively meet Paris Agreement targets. This year is also the very first time food takes center stage at a UN Climate Change Conference, with several pavilions and a number of events focused on food and agriculture. However, beyond events and dialogues, we need to put food at the heart of climate action. Why and how can we achieve this?

The amount of land currently used to grow food which is later wasted is larger than the surface of China and India combined. Food losses and waste (FLW) are responsible for 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The harmful effects of such waste include lower food security, food price inflation, biodiversity loss, and pressure on freshwater resources - not to mention the use of fertilizers and pesticides. It is more than "just" a climate problem.

Yet, this issue has largely been absent in the discussions at the annual COP conferences and in most Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). FLW reduction targets and measures are, with few exceptions, not on the radar. Why is that?

In many countries, the lack of knowledge and robust data presents a significant challenge for considering FLW in mitigation plans. Filling the data gaps where information on FLW is missing is an important step towards enabling the development of effective mitigation measures. EU-funded projects such as ZeroW and SISTERS offer concrete, innovative and sustainable solutions to this issue.

The EU has been measuring baseline data on FLW since 2020. It is now time - more than ever - to take collective action. The mitigation potential throughout the food value chain is too high to justify continuing to overlook it in countries' NDCs. FLW globally generates 4.4 Gt CO₂ equivalents per year and the co-benefits of fighting it are overwhelmingly positive. By acting now, we have an opportunity to create a much broader movement towards zero FLW and climate neutrality.

Therefore we, the undersigned 62 partner organizations, working on FLW reduction within the framework of the EU-funded projects SISTERS and ZeroW, are asking you to make FLW reduction measures an integral part of your NDCs!

A LinkedIn poll done in connection with this letter showed 100% support and commitment from stakeholders. Wasting less of the food we produce should be common sense - and may be one the most effective and least controversial levers to pull to meet the Paris Agreement targets.

After all, who could disagree?

Sincerely,

The partners behind ZeroW & SISTERS