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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Performance of the programme of work and budget,  
including implementation of the resolutions of the  
Environment Assembly**

**Progress made pursuant to resolution 2/9 on the prevention,  
reduction and reuse of food waste**

**Report of the Executive Director**

*Summary*

In May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme adopted resolution 2/9 on the prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste, which is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal target 12.3 (“By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”).

Since then, the United Nations Environment Programme has developed and implemented numerous activities at the global, regional and national levels that were focused on raising awareness, building capacity, increasing access to knowledge and information tools, building partnerships and strengthening international cooperation to improve measures to prevent and reduce food waste, in line with the following expected accomplishments of the resource efficiency subprogramme: (a) science-based approaches that support the transition to sustainable development through multiple pathways, including the green economy, and the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns at all levels; and (b) public and private sectors are increasingly aware of and support the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns.

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\* UNEP/EA.3/1.

## I. Introduction

1. In May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme adopted resolution 2/9 on the prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste, which is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal target 12.3 (“By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”).
2. The present report provides information on the implementation of the resolution, together with recommendations and suggested action.

## II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/9

3. Food loss and waste is increasingly being recognized as an area in which significant resource efficiency and climate mitigation gains can be made, while also increasing food and nutrition security. Awareness-raising activities involving various stakeholder groups along the food value chain have been critical in achieving that recognition.
4. In response to paragraph 2 (a)–(f) of resolution 2/9, the Environment Programme has:
  - (a) Integrated its work to combat food waste into the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Production and Consumption Patterns, thereby catalysing international multi-stakeholder cooperation aimed at reducing food waste along the entire value chain;
  - (b) Worked closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and launched a joint sustainable food systems inter-agency umbrella, which has as one of its objectives the delivery of Sustainable Development Goal target 12.3;
  - (c) Ensured that the Food Loss and Waste Protocol, jointly developed by the Environment Programme, FAO and the World Resources Institute, is adopted in support of reduced food loss and improved waste measurement;
  - (d) Engaged with partners under the Municipal Solid Waste Initiative of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants in developing and disseminating good practices with regard to organic waste management;
  - (e) Undertaken regional capacity-building workshops to raise awareness about food waste and shared the “Think.Eat.Save” campaign guidance methodology with Governments, food sector businesses and civil society. The Environment Programme is preparing a new phase of the campaign to continue to raise awareness of ways to reduce food waste, mobilize action and promote the role of sustainable diets in the reduction and prevention of food waste.
5. In reference to expected accomplishment (a) (i) of the resource efficiency subprogramme, “Increase in the number of countries transitioning to sustainable development through multiple pathways, including through implementing inclusive green economy, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable trade policies”, the Environment Programme supported several emerging economies in developing food waste prevention programmes and piloted the campaign guidance in Colombia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.
6. Food waste prevention, reduction and reuse are integral to the work of the Environment Programme on food security, sustainable diets and nutrition, implemented with partners in the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Production and Consumption Patterns. At the international level, these include FAO, the World Resources Institute, the Waste and Resources Action Programme of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, WWF International, the Consumer Goods Forum, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and Wageningen University and Research Centre. At the country level, partners include the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia and, in South Africa, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the municipalities of Johannesburg and Tshwane, as well as a number of key private sector partners.

### III. Recommendations and suggested actions

7. Resources to implement resolution 2/9 and to strengthen the work of the Environment Programme to combat food waste have thus far been extremely limited. To further develop the activities and programmes for the long term, additional core and extrabudgetary resources will be needed.

8. Shaping action and messaging on food waste and loss in a way that addresses multiple objectives has been critical in garnering buy-in and addressing the linkages between resource efficiency and climate mitigation and between food and nutritional safety.

9. High-level support leading to increased political backing through the Champions 12.3 coalition (see <https://champions123.org/>) and the partnership platform constituted by the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns has represented a functional vehicle for increased inter-agency cooperation and scale-up. The still relatively new area of sustainable diets will provide an important opportunity to pursue the multiple benefits pathway and help to change behaviour patterns.

10. The United Nations Environment Assembly may wish:

(a) To express its support for the newly launched sustainable food systems inter-agency umbrella, which is a platform for joint programmes and projects and has the following four core initiatives:

- (i) Sustainable diets within the context of sustainable food systems;
- (ii) Delivering Sustainable Development Goal target 12.3;
- (iii) Sustainability along value chains;
- (iv) Sustainable food systems: what is in it for farmers? Innovative incentives for more sustainable food production;

(b) To express its support for a global campaign to raise awareness of and create a holistic approach to changing the behaviour of citizens and business practices by making food waste socially unacceptable, inviting countries to adapt and run such a campaign and provide for funds for the development and implementation of campaign materials and messaging.