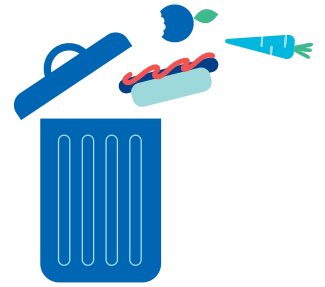


UNEP's [Food Waste Index](#) found that 931 million tonnes of food, or **17 per cent of total food available in 2019, went into the waste bins** of households, retailers, restaurants and other food services. Wastage squanders the natural and financial resources used to produce the food. Fare that ends up in landfills feeds climate change, weighs on local government budgets and forgoes an opportunity to build circular economies. COVID-19 has had profound impact on food consumption – recovery plans can thus help lock-in positive food behaviors. The Food Systems Summit is an opportunity to scale up action.



Key messages

- UNEP's Food Waste Index shows household per capita food waste is similar across country income groups, suggesting that **action on food waste is relevant in high, upper-middle and lower-middle income countries**.
- The Food Waste Index provides a common methodology for measuring food waste and tracking progress on Sustainable Development Goal 12.3, which aims to **halve food waste by 2030**. Countries and companies are adopting a Target– Measure– Act approach, with a few already achieving a 30 per cent reduction in household food waste.
- By **adding food consumption to national climate plans**, policymakers can improve mitigation and adaptation contributions from food systems by as much as 25 per cent.
- **COVID-19 has spurred positive food management behavior** and shorter food value chains, from eco-friendly individual consumption to cities making space for farmer's markets or digital solutions that connect farmers and consumers.
- **Policies that disincentivize landfilling of food waste**, and recovery packages that emphasize urban and peri-urban farming to harness benefits (lower ecological footprint in terms of packaging and transport, circularity, food security, better livelihoods for small producers) are needed to lock in positive changes.

Key data

- **931 million tonnes of food was wasted in 2019**. With 690 million people affected by hunger in 2019, and 3 billion people unable to afford a healthy diet, consumers need help to reduce food waste at home.
- **Food loss and waste generates 8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions**, yet only 11 countries address food loss in their Paris Agreement commitments and none address food waste.

Further Reading

[UNEP Food Waste Index Report](#)
[Enhancing NDCs for Food Systems](#)
[Transforming Sierra Leone's Capital](#)