



## THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

### OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSION

VILNIUS, 24<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2018

The Ministers and high-ranking representatives for Agriculture from the countries Bulgaria, People's Republic of China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and United States of America, the European Commission and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) met in the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Exhibition for Agriculture and Food Industry "AgroBalt 2018" for a High-level Political Forum on Food Losses and Food Waste on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 in Vilnius, Lithuania, which followed the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.

Participants of the Forum acknowledged the paramount importance of sustainable food and agriculture, nutrition, climate action, prevention of food losses and food waste on a global scale contributing to food security, resource efficiency and environmental protection. In particular the following aspects have been underlined during the intervention:

1. Inefficiencies in the food supply chain have major economic, social, and environmental impacts and generate significant food losses and waste at global scale. Therefore, *food-systems* thinking, actions and approaches to tackle the issues are needed at all levels (global, regional, national, local) and involving all key players.
2. There is potential to improve the resource-efficiency of food systems. Several participants have successfully taken action to reduce food losses and waste across the whole food supply chain, taking into account that such losses and waste often occur as a result of complex interactions therein.
3. Food losses and waste negatively impact food security and potentially contribute to malnutrition. As a result, all actors in the food supply chain have an important role in preventing and reducing food waste without compromising food and feed safety.
4. An integrated holistic approach to policymaking fosters food system-wide actions and collaboration. All relevant actors in the public and private sectors should enhance their efforts to cooperate and use synergies in order to advance with the implementation of their respective objectives.
5. Future focus should be on enhancing efficiency and sustainability across food systems in each country aiming to prevent food losses in agriculture and to better reconcile supply and demand in order to prevent unnecessary food surplus.

6. Getting comprehensive data on food losses and waste, including from the agricultural sector, and identifying possible problems and opportunities, albeit without putting extra administrative burden on farmers, is an important first step which will offer a sound basis to develop targeted action.

7. It is crucial to reduce food losses and waste and to valorize food resources from primary production along the food supply chain including at the consumption stage. In this respect the adoption and implementation of the food use hierarchy and the waste management hierarchy are useful tools. Priorities should be on the prevention of generation of surplus; recovery, redistribution and use of safe and nutritious food suitable for human consumption that might otherwise be wasted; recovery of food resources for animal feed, where it is safe to do so; and diversion of unavoidable food losses and waste to recycling and other forms of recovery, including through use in the bio-economy, aerobic digestion and energy recovery.

8. It is important to support education and awareness-raising among different actors of food systems on sustainable and safe food production processes, the resources required, consumption-related aspects and available options to prevent and reduce food losses and waste including through strengthening of inter-sectorial cooperation across food systems.

9. Innovative approaches like Smart Agriculture and ‘smart’ management of raw materials are useful, while using progressive technologies of cultivation, production, handling and storage, strengthening research, knowledge transfer, and sharing evidence-based best practices on reduction of food losses and waste.

10. Partnerships contribute to accelerating the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets of halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses by 2030. International cooperation initiatives are essential in order to maximize the contributions of all actors towards reaching the SDGs.

Taking into account the abovementioned, the High-level Political Forum concluded that the reduction of food losses and waste is of common interest and will make a significant contribution to the global sustainable development agenda by:

- a. removing unnecessary pressure on climate, water and land;
- b. generating economic benefits for farmers, companies and households; and
- c. ensuring that more people can be fed with the food currently produced and have access to healthy and sustainable diets.

