

The Future of Human Civilization Depends on Cutting Food Waste

by Selina Juul, Founder of Stop Wasting Food movement Denmark and Winner of Nordic Council Nature and Environment Prize



The debate on food losses and waste is beginning to replace the debate about climate change. The latest IPCC report recently launched in Yokohama, Japan, revealed some rather upsetting details about the future prospects of humanity. Not only the growing climate change, escalating world population growth and lack of resources, but also the growing food scarcity may rewrite the course of our civilization – unless we start acting now.

Global warming contributes to climate change, which makes it more and more difficult to grow food for billions of hungry mouths. Today, the world's population human counts 7 billion people. In 2050, we will grow to 9 billion and according to recent numbers from UN, in 2100 the human population will reach 11 billion people. FAO estimates, that already in 2050, we need to produce 70% more food comparing to today, in order to be able to feed the entire human population.

The most upsetting part is that we already have all the food that we need — in fact event more than enough.

While the amount of hungry mouths on Earth is growing, the numbers from UNEP reveal that 40% of this planet's agricultural land is used to produce the food which no one eats. Every hungry child, man and woman in the world can be potentially fed with the enormous food losses and waste being produced on this planet!

In the future, we cannot afford to produce the food to feed our garbage bins. In the future, the very survival of human civilization will depend on cutting the food losses and waste.

IPCC report reveals that as the Earth's climate gets warmer and warmer, it will affect the global production of food – from farm to sea. The new climate will also

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require more intensive production of food, which will affect the planet's nature and biodiversity. And while 1/3 of the world's food is wasted or lost, it adds up to the global resource scarcity. Not to forget the pressing demand for food from the growing population.

This is not a science fiction scenario - fight against food waste is vital for ensuring the food supply and thus ensuring the future survival of our species.

Soon, I will be speaking at the United Nations FAO's SAVE FOOD Congress in Düsseldorf - and I am honored to be a speaker among world's esteemed top politicians and experts on food. When I was speaking at SAVE FOOD Congress back in 2011, everybody was focusing on the problems and numbers of food losses and waste. This year, the focus is on the solutions.

Food waste is not a new issue on the agenda of media and public debate. More and more reports, projects, conferences and assemblies are being held to target the problems of food losses and food waste. The focus generates action, which is positive, yet we must remember to take action - and not just talk about it.

Fortunately, more and more solutions against food losses and waste are being developed - and solutions are indeed the next solid step in the fight against food waste.

There is no One Miracle Solution - we must be all united against food waste, in the entire value chain from farm to fork. Also, we must focus on new green growth: less food waste needs to create new jobs - not cut jobs. I am pleased to see the many good initiatives against food losses and waste in Denmark, Europe and the other parts of the world - initiatives which not only save the enormous amounts of food waste, but also generate new businesses for the industry.

We must be creative, think out of the box and dare to dream the ultimate dream: a food waste free world.

And well, our final goal is simple: to put ourselves out of jobs - when the world finally stops wasting food.

I believe that we can change our future.

I believe that we can change rewrite the course of our civilization.

I believe that food waste free world can become a reality.

Now, it's time to act!

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[1] <http://thinkeatsave.org/>

[2] <http://www.save-food.org/>