

## Waste not, want not

Simple actions by consumers and food retailers can dramatically cut the 1.3 billion tons of food lost or wasted each year, says a new global campaign to cut food waste launched in January 2013 by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and partners.

Worldwide, about one-third of all food produced, worth about \$1 trillion, is lost or wasted in food production and consumption systems, according to data released by the FAO. Food loss occurs mostly at the production stages—

harvesting, processing, and distribution—whereas food waste typically takes place at the retail and consumer end of the food-supply chain.

The “Think, Act, Save: Reduce Your Foodprint” campaign aims to coordinate action and provide a global vision for the smaller

initiatives of this type around the world. The new campaign specifically targets food wasted by consumers, retailers, and the hospitality industry.

“In a world of 7 billion people, set to grow to 9 billion by 2050, wasting food makes no sense—economically, environmentally, or ethically,” said UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

The global food system has profound implications for the environment, and producing more food than is consumed only exacerbates the pressure. The report notes the following:

- More than 20 percent of all cultivated land, 30 percent of forests, and 10 percent of grasslands are undergoing degradation.
- Agriculture and land use changes, such as deforestation, contribute to more than 30 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Some 30 percent of marine fish stocks are now considered overexploited.



Devastation from the March 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan.

## Managing disaster risk

Disaster losses in Asia and the Pacific have risen faster than the region's economy has expanded, says a new report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

*Investing in Resilience—Ensuring a Disaster-Resistant Future* recommends that regional governments offer disaster risk financing instruments such as calamity funds, tax credits, and catastrophe bonds to strengthen disaster resilience.

“Asia's economic gain is being eroded by disasters, often hitting the poorest hardest,” said Bindu Lohani, the ADB's Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development.

Significant investments to strengthen disaster resilience can reverse this trend, says the report, but it notes that a range of obstacles underlie the rising disaster losses, such as inadequate risk data, weak and misaligned incentives, poor legislative and regulatory frameworks, limited funding, and power disparities.

Disaster risk financing instruments are particularly crucial for Asia and the Pacific, which lags other regions in the development of innovative financial solutions for disaster resilience. Less than 5 percent of disaster losses in developing Asia are insured, compared with 40 percent in developed economies.

Disaster losses are expanding at a faster pace in Asia because of environmental degradation, climate change, demographic pressures, and widespread failure to consider disaster risk when designing and locating many important development investment projects.

## Paying dearly to send money home

Reducing the average cost of sending remittances to 5 percent from the current 12.4 percent would put \$4 billion more in the pockets of Africa's migrants and their families who rely on remittances for survival.

Africa's overseas workers, who sent nearly \$60 billion in remittances in 2012, pay more to send money home than any other migrant group. According to the World Bank's Send Money Africa database, sub-Saharan Africa is the most expensive destination for remittances. The average cost of sending money to Africa is higher than the global average of 8.96 percent and almost double the cost of sending



money to south Asia, which has the world's lowest price tag for moving money (6.54 percent).

Receiving remittances is often a person's first exposure to financial services and makes the recipient more likely to use other financial services, such as bank accounts. Lowering the cost of remittances can thus advance financial inclusion on the continent. (See “Inclusive Africa,” in this issue of *F&D*.)

Remittance prices are even higher between African nations. South Africa, Tanzania, and Ghana are the most expensive sending countries in Africa, with prices averaging 20.7 percent, 19.7 percent, and 19.0 percent, respectively, partly because of limited competition.

## Events in 2013

### March 14–17, Panama City, Panama

Inter-American Development Bank Annual Meeting

### April 19–21, Washington, D.C.

Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF

### May 2–5, New Delhi, India

Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting

### May 10–11, Istanbul, Turkey

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Annual Meeting

### May 30–31, Marrakech, Morocco

African Development Bank Annual Meeting

### June 17–18, Fermanagh, United Kingdom

Group of Eight Summit

### October 11–13, Washington, D.C.

Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF

## Dropout crisis

The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) is launching an initiative that seeks to raise public awareness of the high school dropout crisis in Latin America and generate solutions to keep more young people in school. Through social media, film, and interactive online forums, GRADUATE XXI aims to involve Latin Americans from all walks of life in efforts to improve education systems and increase the number of high school graduates.

In recent years, access to education has improved significantly in Latin America. Primary education is virtually universal throughout the region. However, nearly half of the students in Latin America do not finish secondary school. Gaps in access to education persist among socioeconomic and ethnic groups, as well as between urban and rural communities.

The IADB has found that

- over half of young people in rural areas do not complete nine years of school;
- more than 40 percent of indigenous youths between the ages of 12 and 17 are not in school; and
- only 20 percent to 30 percent of all children and youth with disabilities in the region attend school; most of them never finish.



Student in Peru: gaps in access to education persist in Latin America.



Waterfront in Fushun, China, a city set to experience rapid growth.

## Building sustainable cities

Rapid urbanization holds long-term economic, social, and environmental promise for developing economies if current investments in infrastructure, housing, and public services are efficient and sustainable, the World Bank says in a new report, *Planning, Connecting, and Financing Cities Now: Priorities for City Leaders*.

“With many urban centers in the developing world still taking shape, we face an historic but narrow opportunity to build smart cities that encourage inclusive green growth and improve people’s lives,” said Zoubida Allaoua, Director of Urban and Disaster Risk Management at the World Bank.

In the next two decades, cities are expected to expand by another 2 billion residents, as people move in unprecedented numbers from rural areas to pursue their aspirations in cities. More than 90 percent of this urban population growth is expected to occur in the developing world, where many cities are already struggling to provide basic needs such as water, electricity, transportation, health services, and education.

Launched at the Global Energy Basel Conference in January, the report provides a policy guide that local officials can use to create the jobs, housing, and infrastructure needed to turn their cities into hubs of prosperity for current and future residents.

The report notes that most new urban growth will not take place in megacities such as Rio de Janeiro, Jakarta, and New Delhi but in less commonly recognized “secondary” cities— places like Huambo in Angola, Fushun in China, and Surat in India.