A Practical Guide for National Governments

Closing the Food Waste Action Gap

Five Priority Actions + Twelve Country Examples

November 2026

Who is behind this guide

This guide has been prepared by members of The Global Action Drive (GAD). The GAD brings together several internationally active non-governmental organizations around a shared agenda to accelerate regional and national action on food loss and waste.

Key activities include:

- Engaging critical stakeholders
- Advancing evidence-based policies
- Catalyzing targeted global projects
- Increasing awareness through coordinated communications campaigns
- Monitoring, assessing and publicizing global progress

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5 actions countries should take

Reducing food loss and waste offers one of the most immediate, cost-effective and impactful opportunities to mitigate methane and other greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening food security, protecting nature, and supporting resilient communities.

***SDG 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.



Endorse the COP31 Declaration on Reducing Food Loss and Waste for Climate Action, Food Security and Resilient Food Systems, to be launched at COP31 with support from the host governments of Türkiye and Australia, the Climate High-Level Champions and the Zero Waste Foundation. It will be open for endorsement toward COP32, where progress will be reviewed.



Commit to delivering UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3* and include this commitment in new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and related strategies on food systems and resilience.



Translate existing global and national commitments on food loss and waste into action through concrete policies with implementation plans and reduction targets, as well as an emphasis on cross-sectoral, whole-of-society approaches.



Dedicate public resources and climate finance to accelerate reductions in food waste, improve food security, cut methane emissions, and build resilient communities. These financial resources should prioritize existing solutions frameworks and must reach national and sub-national actors that are delivering progress on the ground.



Measure and report on progress (including through Biennial Transparency Reports) through the development of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to enhance transparency, evaluate effectiveness of policies, and share emerging best practices.

40%

The estimated amount of the world's food supply that is wasted from farm to plate (WWF-UK 2021)

Reducing food loss and waste can generate a triple win:

(1) Feed more people;

(2) Increase savings for farmers, businesses, and households; and

(3) Reduce the food system's pressure on the environment, helping to mitigate climate change.



The case for action on food loss and waste

Food security

Food loss is most common during either production or post-harvest handling and storage. This can affect the livelihoods of farmers and their families. Food waste occurring near the end of the food supply chain impacts household nutrition and food-related costs. Food loss and waste reduction, as well as redistributing surplus food to those in need, will play a key role in addressing growing food security concerns.

Environment

Food loss and waste generate about 8–10% of global greenhouse gas emissions each year (IPCC 2019). Meaning, if food loss and waste were a country, it would be the second-largest greenhouse gas emitter on the planet—surpassed only by China. When food is lost or wasted, the resources used to produce that food, including land, water, and fertilizer, also go to waste. As food systems become increasingly fragile and volatile due to climate change, it is even more crucial to address this issue and improve their resilience.

Economy

The cost of food loss and waste is significant – resulting in more than $1 trillion in economic losses globally per year (UNEP 2024). These costs affect the entire food system: farmers, food companies, families, and more. Investing in food loss and waste reduction can therefore yield significant economic value by maximizing the return of every resource and dollar that goes into food production, as well as ensuring families aren't spending money on food that goes to waste.

Methane

Methane contributes around 0.5°C of current warming. The UNEP report *Limiting Overshoot* (2026) finds that urgent methane reductions, including through low-cost reductions in food loss and waste, can significantly lower peak warming. Reducing food loss and waste keeps food out of landfills and other disposal streams, where it generates methane.

Nationally Determined Contribution 3.0 Analysis

38 countries* included food loss and/or food waste measures in their NDC 3.0. This is an increase from 24 countries that included it in the previous round of NDCs.

Commitments are a first step. To report progress in Biennial Transparency Reports and access climate finance, countries will need robust and transparent data on the emissions avoided through food loss and waste measures.

NDC 3.0 COMMITMENT TYPE	COUNTRIES
Food Loss and Waste Reduction	Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, UAE, Uruguay
Food Loss Reduction (only)	Armenia, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Micronesia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Suriname, Zambia
Food Waste Reduction (only)	Burundi, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Paraguay, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

As of November 6, 2026

Moving from commitment to action

Implementation is already underway– actors that implement food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain, including food recovery and redistribution organizations, deliver climate and food security outcomes at the same time.

At COP30, the Global Action Drive committed to the Plan to Accelerate Solutions (PAS) on Advancing Food Security and Nutrition through Food Recovery and FLW Reduction, which brings together food loss and waste efforts across more than 50 countries.

The following case studies provide strong examples of how countries are moving from commitment to action.*



Please note, this is a non-exhaustive list.

Commitments in Action



Brazil

Brasil Sem Desperdicio is supporting The Alimenta Cidades (Feeding Cities) journey, a transformative national public policy launched in Brazil to construct resilient, equitable, and sustainable urban food systems.

It will allow up to 250 municipalities to integrate the food loss and waste agenda into local public policies through technical content, practical tools, case studies, training workshops, mentoring and interventions.



Chile

Chile committed to food loss and waste reduction in its NDC 3.0 and has started working on a National Strategy on Food Loss and Waste Prevention by 2040. As part of that process, it has conducted stakeholder engagements, a national survey on citizen's consumption habits and food waste, and produced educational materials.

This work involves a Strategic Committee of 69 representatives from academia, civil society, the private sector, public entities, and international organizations to ensure an inclusive and representative approach.

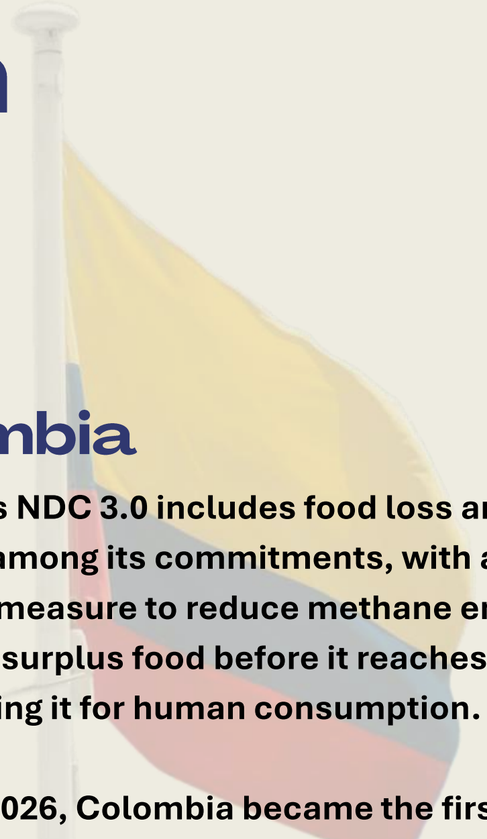
Commitments in Action



China

Henan Province, China's third-most-populous province, published an implementation plan to reduce food waste and improve grain conservation. The strategy is aligned to support the 2024 National Action Plan on Food Conservation and Anti-Food Waste.

Its approach includes: creating a behavioral campaign aimed at food-service industries; strengthening grain conservation at various stages of the value chain (storage, transportation, and processing); building awareness of the impact of food waste; and conducting surveys to measure food loss and waste at the sub-national level.



Colombia

Colombia's NDC 3.0 includes food loss and waste reduction among its commitments, with a dedicated mitigation measure to reduce methane emissions by recovering surplus food before it reaches landfills and redistributing it for human consumption.

In August 2026, Colombia became the first country to submit its Second Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), which describes food recovery as part of the national Integrated Solid Waste Management mitigation measure and recognizes the national food recovery network ABACO as a supporting implementing entity (Colombia BTR2/NC4, 2026).

The next step is building the measurement systems needed to quantify and report its contribution to emission reductions in future BTRs.

Commitments in Action

Ecuador

In its second NDC, Ecuador’s Ministry of Environment formalized the inclusion of Banco de Alimentos Quito’s food recovery initiative in the waste sector as part of the national mitigation target. The formalization established implementation commitments (including annual reporting through 2035), the mobilization of climate finance, and alignment with national regulations on cooperative approaches under the Paris Agreement.

Through the Ministry, Banco de Alimentos Quito has since received UNIDO support to upgrade its cold chain and refrigeration systems, reducing losses of perishable food during storage and redistribution.

In 2026, Ecuador approved a national framework for the authorization and registration of mitigation outcomes under Article 6, opening a further potential pathway to finance for initiatives like this one.

The Gambia

Food loss and waste reduction is increasingly embedded within The Gambia's climate agenda. The country's climate commitments identify waste management and agriculture as priority sectors for emissions reduction and resilience-building. In 2026, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources launched a project to reduce post-harvest losses across the agriculture, fisheries, and poultry sectors. The initiative aims to improve food preservation, reduce spoilage, strengthen market access, and build resilience in food systems.

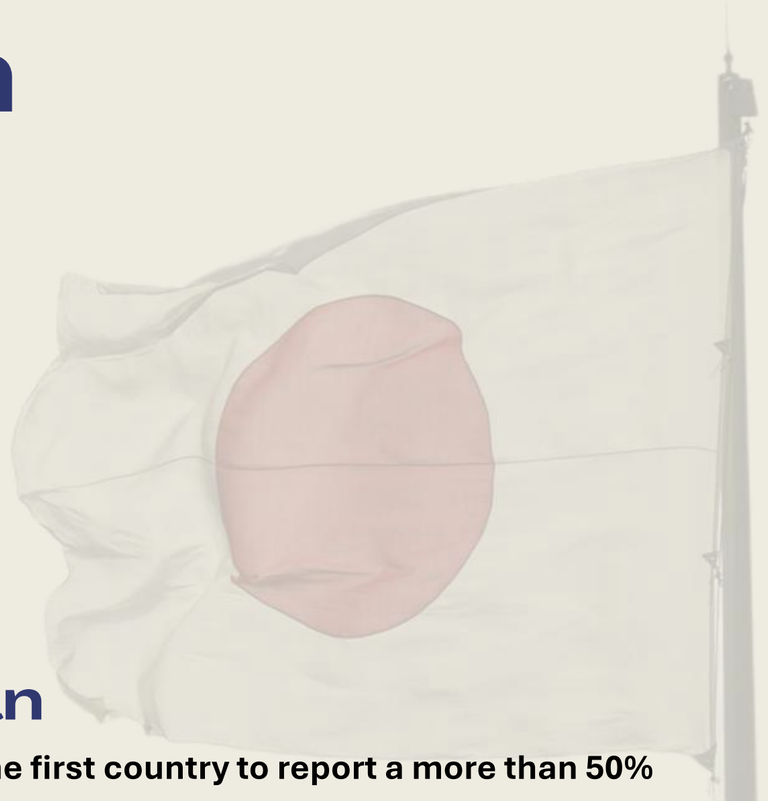
The Gambia has also submitted an NDC Implementation Plan which details specific targets on food loss and waste reduction, identifies the primary institution and focal point for implementation, and provides a five-year cost estimate.

Commitments in Action



Indonesia

To scale up food rescue actions and address systemic hurdles, GRASP 2030 (Gotong Royong Atasi Susut & Sisa Pangan di Tahun 2030) established a multi-stakeholder Policy Working Group. This group brings together representatives from the private sector, food banks, civil society, and government bodies to create a safe framework for donating surplus food. Collaboration culminated in the development of practical guidance for national adoption.



Japan

Japan is the first country to report a more than 50% reduction in national levels of food loss and waste from 2000-2022.

Around 200 local governments collect food loss and waste data through statistical surveys, private sector reporting, and garbage composition surveys to inform national rates of food loss and waste. Using this data, Japan adjusted their 2030 food loss and waste targets to be more ambitious and to better reflect the progress made so far.

Commitments in Action



Paraguay

Paraguay's NDC 3.0 addresses food security and climate together by including food waste prevention, recovery, and redistribution with quantified expected GHG emission reductions of 0.85 kt CO2eq by 2030 and 1.49 kt CO_2e by 2035. It also designates Fundación Banco de Alimentos de Paraguay as an official data provider to the National Climate Change Directorate (DNCC/MADES), reporting through the national Environmental Information System (SIAM).

By pairing a quantified target with a defined data flow from the outset, Paraguay offers a practical model for building monitoring into food loss and waste commitments.



South Africa

South Africa's NDC 3.0 identifies food loss and waste as an emerging area of concern, citing its environmental and food security implications.

The Just Energy Transition (JET) Funding Platform, housed within South Africa's Presidency, approved FoodForward South Africa's food loss and waste management project, aimed at reducing methane emissions, for inclusion on its registry, recognizing it as a potential contributor to the country's JET objectives and making it eligible for matching with funders.

Additionally, the South Africa Food Loss and Waste Initiative has convened multi-stakeholder meetings with government ministries. These dialogues have resulted in updated Food Donation Guidelines (informing a new official Food Donation Standard), development of an Animal Feed Guidelines and engagement on date labelling regulatory reform.

Commitments in Action



United Arab Emirates

As part of its National Food Loss and Waste Initiative, the agency ne'ma has launched the United Arab Emirates' first national baseline study to measure the country's food loss and waste. It will involve 3,000 participants within the food value chain, including households, businesses, and public-sector entities. The study will last 18 months and will measure food loss and waste across the entire value chain.

Results will inform national interventions to support the country in achieving SDG Target 12.3.



Uruguay

Uruguay's NDC 3.0 included the development of a National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Food Losses and Food Waste, as well as an Action Plan prioritizing sectors. They've since established a National Committee for Food Loss and Waste Prevention and adopted regulations for implementing food donation laws.

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Questions?

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