

THE EAST AFRICAN SUSWATCH E-BULLETIN

A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya

First Global Food Waste Report Calls for Action Across All Countries



Maize waste (Photo: Green Anglicans)

Food waste reduction offers multi-faceted wins for people and planet, improving food security, addressing climate change, saving money and reducing pressures on land, water, biodiversity and waste management systems. Yet this potential has until now been woefully under-exploited. According to the UN, once the scale of food waste is known, it will be easier to come up with potential solutions, such as turning waste into animal feed or fertilizer.

UNEP's first Food Waste Index report launched at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA5.1) provides insights into the scale of food waste and a methodology that enables countries to measure baselines and track progress in meeting SDG 12.3 to halve food waste and reduce food loss by 2030.

The Report estimates that food waste from households, retail establishments and the food service industry totals 931 million tonnes each year. Nearly 570 million tonnes of this waste occurs at the household level. The report also reveals that the global average of 74 kg per capita of food wasted each year is remarkably similar from lower-middle income to high-income countries, suggesting that most countries have room to improve.

It was a surprise in this Report that household food waste isn't limited solely to high-income countries. Household per capita food waste generation is found to be "broadly similar" across country income groups, which implies that "action on food waste is equally relevant in high, upper-middle and lower-middle income countries." For example, in poorer countries where refrigeration might not always be available, food waste is a growing problem.

As a result, an estimated 8 to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed (waste and loss), a similar amount to road transportation.

Similarly, in 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that one-third of the world's food was wasted or lost every year. The FAO's Food Loss Index shows that around 14% of the world's food is lost from post-harvest up to, but excluding, the retail level.

Produced by the UNEP and partner organization – The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Food Waste Index Report (2021) reveals that between food wasted in homes, restaurants and shops, 17 per cent of all food is just dumped. It looks at food waste that occurs in retail outlets, restaurants and homes -- counting both food and inedible parts like bones and shells. The report presents the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modelling to date, and offers a methodology for countries to measure food waste. 152 food waste data points were identified in 54 countries.

Read the full Food Waste Index Report from here: <https://tinyurl.com/3zrpcwk5>

SusWatch Kenya Launches Catalogue of Local Climate & Sustainable Energy Solutions



From Left to Right: Catalogues Launch Poster, sack gardening (Photos: SusWatch Kenya); biogas from water hyacinth at Dunga beach (Kisumu, Kenya (Photo: Flexi biogas solutions)

On Thursday 25th February 2021, SusWatch Kenya held a virtual national launch for the Catalogue of Local Sustainable Solutions in East Africa. Though fifty participants were invited to this launch, twenty four participants managed to physically attend it. This comprised of SusWatch Kenya partners, student volunteers, INFORSE national members and the SusWatch Kenya secretariat team.

Though Government officials from the Ministry of energy, Ministry of environment & forestry, Council of Governors, Ministry of energy Kisumu County sent in their apologies, they promised to work with SusWatch Kenya to scale up projects based on options offered by this Catalogue.

The Launch was officially opened by SusWatch Kenya national coordinator, Mr. Nobert Nyandire followed by brief presentations about the East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE-CA) project by the Project Assistant - Ms. Wendy Mitoko. EASE CA Project Coordinator - Mr. Justus Munyoki made a presentation on the Catalogue, highlighting details of the categories: (Cooking, Lighting, Cooking Fuels, Water, Growing food, oils, Transport). 'EASE CA Project Partners have good track-record on development and promotion of practical climate local solutions that solve energy, water, food insecurity for local communities. Catalogue provide details on socio-economic benefits of the technology, costs for acquiring, lifespan, challenges and limitations, motivation for success, contribution to climate effect, financing & business models and short video on construction and use', added Mr. Munyoki.

On his part, SusWatch Kenya National chairman Mr. Frank Msafiri delivered the launch statement and proposed that a possible way forward for the local solutions promotion and scale up in Kenya could involve introduction of student volunteers from universities and institutions of higher learning to local sustainable solutions, and engaging them in the dissemination of local sustainable solutions. He noted that this will strengthen engagement with the relevant ministries like the Ministry of Energy and Environment at both county and national levels.

The Catalogue of Local Climate and Sustainable Energy Solutions in East Africa has been prepared by joint efforts under the EASE CA Project that includes Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP), Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO), Sustainable Environmental Development watch (SusWatch Kenya), Nordic Folkecenter For Renewable Energy (NFRE Denmark). The Partners are also members of the International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE). The EASE CA Project and development of the Catalogue is supported by CISU, Denmark. **The catalogue is composed of more than fifty cases (and is still work in progress) available online at <http://localsolutions.inforse.org/> or www.suswatchkenya.org**

'The Value of Water is Incalculable and Limitless' - Global Water Development Report 2021

On World Water Day, 22 March, UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme launched the UN World Water Development Report (WWDR 2021) on 'Valuing Water'.

The Report notes that water means different things to different people in different settings and that valuing it appropriately is key to achieving the United Nations Global Goals / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It therefore underscores the importance of measuring and expressing water's worth, and incorporating it into decision-making, as fundamental to achieving sustainable and equitable water resources management and the SDGs.

'Values are a central aspect of power and equity in water resources governance. The failure to fully value water in all its different uses is considered a root cause, or a symptom, of the political neglect of water and its mismanagement. All too often, the value of water, or its full suite of multiple values, is not prominent in decision-making at all' – the Report's Executive Summary notes.

In East Africa, this varying understanding of water might partly explain the current challenges in its use from 'source to sink'. Development projects for example use huge quantities of water with no deliberate measures to control pollution of the very resource they depend on. Also water planners and other actors across East Africa's fast growing cities and towns have an uphill task to promote the four Dublin Water Resource Management principles of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) that is based on the perception of water as an integral part of the ecosystem, a natural resource and a social and economic good, whose quantity and quality determine the nature of its utilization.

"Many of our problems arise because we do not value water highly enough; all too often water is not valued at all"

Principle 4 of these Dublin principles notes that *water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good*. Within this principle, it is vital to recognize first the basic right of all human beings to have access to clean water and sanitation at an affordable price. Past failure to recognize the economic value of water has led to wasteful and environmentally damaging uses of the resource (Sustainable Sanitation and Water Management Toolbox, 2020).

It is therefore no doubt that the WWDR 2021 addresses the question of the value of water. It shows that waste and careless use stems from the fact we all too often think of water exclusively in terms of its cost price, without realizing its tremendous value, which is impossible to price.

"The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remind us of the importance of having access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and highlight that far too many people are still without them. Many of our problems arise because we do not value water highly enough; all too often water is not valued at all," says Gilbert F. Hounbo, Chair of UN-Water.

According to UNESCO, 'the value of water is certainly incalculable and limitless, since life cannot exist without it and it has no replacement. This is perhaps best illustrated by the widespread enthusiasm for the idea that traces of water can be found on Mars'. [Read the full UN World Water Development Report \(WWDR 2021\) on 'Valuing Water' from here: https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2021/](https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2021/)