MEETING:
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The Waste and the Italian “Zero Starvation” challenge

Conversation

by Liliana Mosca
SI UN REPRESENTATIVE TO FAO-ROMA
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1. Sustainable Development Goals SDG 2 “Zero Starvation” and SDG 12 “to guarantee sustainable models of production and consumption”

The United Nations Assembly in September 2015 approved Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals SDG and a series of other universal goals. The objectives of these goals were the abolition of poverty, the fight against the inequities and injustices, and the reduction of climate mutation.

The abolition of chronic undernourishment within the year 2030 was a key element of the Sustainable Development Goals 2 in the 2015 New Agenda. It also represents the key point of the “Zero Starvation” challenge promoted by the General Secretary of the United Nations.

The FAO General Director, José Graziano da Silva has joined the call for a world renewed commitment of zero tolerance against the loss and the waste of food. This has become necessary in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 2 “Zero Starvation”.

Among the new Sustainable Development Goals, apart from the above-mentioned “Zero Starvation”, we can also mention another one strictly connected, the number 12 also merits a mention as this aims to “To guarantee sustainable models of production and consumption”. Of importance is also the number 12.3 which reads: within the 2030 global per capita food waste must be cut by half. The loss of food in the chain of production and distribution, including the loss of the harvest must be reduced.

The reduction of 50% both of food waste in the consumption chain and in the retail price is desirable by 2030. Moreover, the afore-mentioned goal also aims at a general reduction of food loss along the supply chains.

Da Silva declared “Zero tolerance towards food loss and waste has a value also from an economic perspective. It has been proven that a single dollar invested by a society to reduce waste and loss provides a saving of 14 dollars”.

According to da Silva it is necessary “to invest in planning to prevent food loss and waste which also means investing in favour of the poor, thereby promoting food sustainable systems for a zero starvation world”.

Every year one third of food production for human consumption is lost or wasted. This waste can be seen within the entire production chain, from ‘farm to table’. In addition the waste concerns also labour, water, electric energy, land, and other means of production.

The world-wide problems of famine and drinkable water supply affected 923 million people in 2017. The majority of these live in the rural areas of developing countries, and are peasants, shepherds, fishermen. Moreover, according to OMS every year 600 million people contract illnesses from contaminated food, and 420,000 die.

If the waste of food is reduced in the entire food process industry, a healthy food system can contribute towards promoting climate adaptation and mitigation. In this way natural resources can be saved and means of rural support can be strengthened.
2. Italian Government measures to prevent loss and waste

The Gadda or the Antiwaste Law (nr.166/2016) came into effect in Italy in 2016. This provides bureaucratic reductions and tax concessions in favour of people who give food to charity. The variety of products which can be donated, including medicines, has been increased. Moreover those who donate have tax reductions. The Gadda Law recognized the importance of the value of this donation scheme to help combat waste, and it has been decided to widen the number of subjects who deal with social activities.

Some facilities have been granted in favour of all companies. The difference between food “preservation” (termine minimo di conservazione Tmc) and “expiry date” has been defined, so it is at last possible to donate the Tmc products free of charge and safely. Moreover, the Local Councils have been allowed to reduce the Tari tax for Companies which can prove that donations have been made.

Significant improvements have been recorded in fighting food waste. In 2016 food waste was ranked at approximately 145 kilos per family and about 63 kilos per person. Figures have currently decreased to about 84 kilos per family and 36 kilos per person.

In Italy The National Strategy for Sustainable Development was approved by the Council of Ministers on 2nd October 2017. This relates the 12.3 goal of the 2030 Agenda regarding food waste to the strategic goal “to guarantee agricultural and forest management sustainability” along the whole productive process within the strategic decision “to assert sustainable production and consumption models”.

3. Conclusion

It should be remembered that that food waste amounts to more than 8 billion euros a year. In Italy, “National day to Prevent Food Waste” is now into its fifth year. This campaign was launched by the Ministry of the Environment working closely with the campaign “Zero Waste” and Bologna University.

In the 2018 Balance Law two amendments were added to the Gadda Law. These amendments increased the number of products which can be donated for social aims. Some procedures and some tax relief have made this easier, so that it is much more affordable now either to donate or to receive the food surplus.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Supply and Forestry, last 30th March, made available 700 thousand euros for innovative projects which were able to prove that they were indeed aiming at the reduction of waste and at a better distribution of food surplus.

The National President has been informed of this funding opportunity and hopes that the Union and the single clubs, in the Soroptimist philosophy, will give the proposal serious consideration and take part.