

TALEPAPIR

Director-General, Excellences, Distinguished
Participants, ladies and gentlemen

I am proud of representing Denmark here today.

At this high-level global event on the Third
International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and
Waste.

This is a very important day for Denmark. For all of
us.

Food loss and waste of food is a major global
problem. A problem, we all have a responsibility for.
A problem, we all sadly contribute to.

When this is the case, let me remind you that all of us
are part of the solution as well. Every country. Every
citizen. Every one of us present here today.

In Denmark, more than 800.000 tons of food is lost or wasted every year. 800.000 tons! In a country of less than 6 million citizens. That is unacceptable.

We are very attentive to this on a political level.

And I am proud of participating in every debate, event or visit in schools, supermarkets, workplaces or companies, who either handle food on a professional level or experience challenges with food in other ways.

Or simply want to teach children, colleagues, employees or clients to be more attentive to what they buy. What they eat. And what they throw away.

It is always inspiring. Meaningful. Every time I am reassured that we do a lot to prevent food lost and waste. I am thankful for every step and good will.

Just to mention a few examples:

In Denmark, there has been an increasing focus on donation as an option, when reduction of food waste is not possible. In times with increasing food prices, this task is of utmost importance.

Citizens support local food banks financially. Or they do volunteer work in order to give the food to those who need it the most.

Another example is this day today. On this day, we celebrate a Danish National Food Waste Day. In order to raise more awareness among Danish consumers.

This morning I hosted the official opening event. Here, we had a focus on school children.

The Danish government has also launched a nationwide food waste campaign today. Here, focus is on consumers and families in particular.

I could go on, but my point is that we have a problem with food waste and loss in Denmark. Just like every other country. There is no point in denying it.

But with honesty comes responsibility. Commitment. And it is my firm belief that we are all working very hard and determined to make the necessary changes.

Children and families. Workplaces and organizations. Politicians.

In order to be a better example for ourselves. For you. For all.

That is our main goal: To prevent and finally stop food loss and waste. To be an inspiration for others. An example to follow.

Food loss and waste is not only about the food itself. It is also about the important green transition.

That is one of the reasons, why food waste and loss is such a high priority for the Danish government.

And why I am glad that Danish food companies and NGO's are partnering up in order to create innovative and effective solutions.

Many of Denmark's leading food businesses have joined a voluntary agreement called "Denmark against food waste".

And thereby agreed to measure and reduce their food waste and report their data to a neutral third party.

The voluntary agreement demonstrates the power of a united effort against food waste among the Danish food businesses.

A power that resonates in most restaurants and households.

To be honest: We cannot afford wasting any time!

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we keep momentum and focus on how we can learn from each other.

Last year's UN Food Systems Summit was a landmark opportunity for us to reach concrete and scalable results and progress towards such a development.

I was pleased to see a strong coalition coming together in the context of the Summit.

With the aim to elevate efforts to a global scale, the “Food is Never Waste” Coalition was established.

A coalition where every member – despite their different starting points – has agreed to focus on tackling food loss and waste as a priority.

It is vital that we agree on this. Because the world is facing a global food crisis that is getting worse every day.

With less than a decade left to achieve zero hunger as a key element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we are moving backwards on eliminating hunger and malnutrition.

Last year, as many as 828 million people were affected by hunger. An alarming trend.

Many low-income countries and vulnerable people are still struggling with the effects of the pandemic.

Lately, the Russian brutal attack on Ukraine has made their situation even worse.

The war in Ukraine has led to escalating prices on food, energy and fertilizers. We all notice this – but for these countries and people, the development is critical.

Let it be my final message today: Food loss and waste is not only about throwing out surplus food. Or buying more than you can eat.

It is also about taking away resources and possibilities of those, who are less fortunate than you are. People, who suffer from hunger. Who can benefit from what others have to spare.

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That is a simple solution. A green solution. A human solution.

Thank you for your attention – and for all of your efforts to support this vital cause, we share.