

Ezra Cooper

WFP: Topic #1 - Reduction of Food Waste

YUNMUN XXXIV

In the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 20 verses, 19-20, the Torah teaches a foundational principle regarding the ethics of man's relationship with the Earth around him.¹ That is, in times of war, when laying siege to a city, the Torah teaches that one should refrain from any destruction of fruit bearing trees. This, says the Talmud, is not just about harming the environment, but about wasting our resources.²

Considering the number of people who are hungry and suffering from malnutrition in our world today, it is unthinkable that our society could waste so much food. Furthermore, with the advances and technology and the supposed ease in producing food, it is even more astonishing that so many people remain hungry today. As it stands, more than 783 million people do not have enough food, and 40 million people across 51 countries are in a state of emergency because of their levels of hunger.³ On the other hand, in high income countries more than 40% of food is wasted. And on a global scale, roughly 33% of the world's food supply is wasted or lost.⁴ These numbers are truly staggering.

As part of the WFP's initiative to put an end to world hunger by 2030, reducing the amount of food waste will be a breaking point in defining its success. In fact, reducing food waste itself may solve many other pressing issues, as reversing current food waste trends could theoretically preserve enough food for 2 billion people, which is more than enough to feed the number of hungry individuals in our world today.⁵

¹ <https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.20.19?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>

² Talmud Shabbath 67b, Tractate Hullin 7b, Kiddushin 32a

³ <https://www.wfp.org/ending-hunger>

⁴ <https://www.wfpusa.org/drivers-of-hunger/food-waste/#:~:text=WFP%20provides%20family%20farmers%20with,%2C%20rodents%2C%20mold%20and%20moisture.>

⁵ <https://www.wfpusa.org/drivers-of-hunger/food-waste/#:~:text=WFP%20provides%20family%20farmers%20with,%2C%20rodents%2C%20mold%20and%20moisture.>

In recent years, the WFP has launched initiatives that target the issue of food waste. This has included providing farmers with air-tight containers to store their food, as well as other types of innovative technologies to allow for longer storage periods.⁶ But still more can be done.

While conducting your research here are a few questions to keep in mind:

- What other strategies can be implemented to reduce food waste?
- How much emphasis should we place on curbing high income countries from overspending on their food?
- What role should more affluent and developed countries be playing in supplying less developed countries with food?
- How should we allocate our resources?

While our goal is undoubtedly to cure world hunger, we are also trying to help those in need in the present moment in time. It is worth reiterating that there are nearly 1 billion people who do not have enough food and nearly 50 million people whose level of hunger is considered dire. We must act now.

I hope these questions are helpful to you in your research, but do not feel limited to these specific points. Please remember that you are representing your country's perspective, not your own, so consider which questions might be most relevant to your country, which issues would they prioritize and care most about. Lastly, try to use and cite reliable sources, and remember that plagiarism is unacceptable (and only for dweebs). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me at ecooper1@mail.yu.edu. Best of luck and looking forward to reading and hearing from each and every one of you.

Ezra Cooper
Chair, WFP
YUNMUN XXXIV

⁶ <https://www.wfpusa.org/drivers-of-hunger/food-waste/#:~:text=WFP%20provides%20family%20farmers%20with,%2C%20rodents%2C%20mold%20and%20moisture.>