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Other News

The Pontifical Swiss Guard to participate in the Central Swiss Education Fair (ZEBI)

For the first time, the Pontifical Swiss Guard will participate in the Central Swiss Education Fair (ZEBI) in Lucerne, dedicated to the presentation of professions and trades, and advice on the subject. This year, from Thursday 7 to Sunday 10 November 2019, two Guards in traditional uniforms – in booth D 2099 in Pavilion 2, next to the Lucerne Police – will speak about the profession of the Pontifical Swiss Guard and answer visitors' questions.

Reduction of Food Waste and Loss: International Conference at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

From 11 to 12 November the Pontifical Academy of Sciences will host in the Vatican's Casina Pio IV an international conferences dedicated to the reduction of food waste and loss, to be attended by more than 57 experts from all over the world, representing intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and various religious confessions.

The conference originates from two motives. First, reducing the amount of nutritious food that is lost in the production, processing and distribution processes or wasted is a global priority, enshrined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 (see box). Second, in the Encyclical *Laudato si'* Pope Francis calls for changes globally to overcome the "throwaway culture". The waste and loss of food is a moral issue. It is detrimental to the planet due to greenhouse gas emissions and the wasting of the water and land used as inputs, and to people – the poor in particular – whose labour is squandered and whose livelihoods are compromised when FLW occurs.

Through this conference, the Pontifical Academy for Sciences aims to reach different but complementary communities that can broaden the alliance needed to address the challenge of food loss and waste.

The key objectives of the conference are to:

- 1) Share the latest scientific evidence on how to reduce food loss and waste (FLW) and thereby contribute to global food security;
- 2) Provide recommendations for expanded global and national actions, including public and private investments and initiatives by citizens, corporations, governments, and international organizations; and to
- 3) Broaden the alliance of actors needed to make more significant improvements globally in reducing FLW.

To fulfil these objectives, the conference focuses first on clearly defining food loss and waste, while adopting a value-chain approach. When considering the magnitude of the food loss and waste challenge, summing up the tonnage of different foods is not appropriate; not only weights but the economic and environmental cost of wasted and lost food must be considered. The conference invites senior leaders across sectors to explore the latest approaches to measurement in economic, caloric, or quality-adjusted weight terms.

Further, food loss and waste reduction has huge benefits but also costs and these costs must not be ignored when aiming for efficient solutions. The benefits and costs must consider environmental and food security effects. It is also necessary to remember that these phenomena are embedded within a broader food systems context. To this end, the Inter-Academy Partnership highlights to improve the understanding of food systems change as a priority in its recent global study, “Opportunities and challenges for research on food and nutrition security and agriculture” (2018), and proposes priorities for institutional and technological research on FLW reduction.

Success of meeting Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 requires approaches that foster education and awareness, behavioural change, a renewed global dialogue, and coordinated global action. Ultimately, we need to create incentives that will strengthen the business case to tackle food loss and waste and move to more sustainable consumption patterns. The conference offers a chance for global leaders to explore emerging opportunities post- and pre-harvest and other innovations available and yet to be developed to curb the food loss and waste challenge. The time to act is now.

Actions to reduce food loss and waste are already planned or in place in many countries, but so far they do not add up to sufficient global impact and joint learning. The most promising actions can and must be enhanced.

By bringing together a group of prominent leaders, actively engaged with this issue from academia, religious communities, private sector, government, civil society, and the United Nations (UN), the Pontifical Academy aims to create an inter-disciplinary space for analysis and sharing of knowledge and focused solutions. This Conference will deepen commitment to action toward halving food loss and waste by 2030. These actions shall contribute to improving the wellbeing of people and planet.

The intended outputs of the conference are:

1. A statement that calls for joint public policy and private sector action to set priorities at the global, regional, country, and corporate level; commit to measure and report on FLW metrics; and increase, align, and coordinate investments.
 2. A coordinated communication effort to raise the profile of the FLW issue in the media and mobilize civil society and the Churches and faith communities to embed FLW reduction efforts with their followers; and
 3. A pathway toward a global action plan and key commitments to address existing knowledge and research gaps and promote practical solutions and investments for the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.
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