



POTRAVINOVÉ
BANKY



HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

6 May 2021

Liz Goodwin – Senior Fellow and Director, World Resource Institute

Full speech

Moderator: *What is your view on the need for the food systems transformation and the role that food waste plays in it?*

Thank you, Laura. Thank you very much for the invitation to be here today and thank you to everybody who is out there watching this and for all you are doing, because I know the last year in particular has been very tough on everybody. Thinking about your question, there is increasing agreement that the food system that we currently have is not sustainable. We know, and it has been mentioned several times this morning, about the amount of food that is wasted and lost, you know around a third of all food. It costs the global economy a trillion dollars every year. It represents 8% of greenhouse gas emissions. We waste a quarter of the water used in agriculture. We have got biodiversity loss, deforestation, massive use of land. So, all of these issues mean that the food system is not working and it needs to be changed and transformed. And on the other side, you have also got millions of people who go to bed hungry every day.

So, if we accept that we need to do something about the food system, which I think we do, you also need to look at it through some other lenses. We are facing a climate emergency and increasing numbers of countries are declaring climate emergencies. All the analysis suggests that we are not going to manage to meet the Paris Agreement targets without tackling food loss and waste. So, food loss and waste are a very important part of the food system that needs to be transformed.

And there have been some questions and comments today about the Food Systems Summit coming up in September. I am co-leading the piece of work to prepare for that Summit on food loss and waste. We have been spending some time thinking



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social.easi>. The information expressed during this event does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

With the support of





POTRAVINOVÉ
BANKY



about what are the 'gamechangers' in the food loss and waste space.

And I think I should make a comment initially just based on what Roberta was saying. I completely agree that everything is interconnected. You can look at things through different lenses and try to make sure you see all the pieces. If we focus solely on food loss and waste and just sort out that bit of the jigsaw, that is not good enough. You have got to think about the whole system and make sure you recognise those interconnectivities. But we are looking at food loss and waste and we have been thinking about what are the things that are really going to transform this system and basing it around a framework of public/private partnerships, recognising the role that governments have, the role that businesses have, the role that civil society plays and all of us as individuals. And trying to make sure that we have got better understanding and better, more mature approaches to thinking about accountability and governance across that system.

And then within that overall framing, we have got a number of things we are calling 'gamechangers'. The first one is around public/private partnerships, so it is about really focusing on that link between government and businesses and getting businesses to work down their supply chains to adopt a target-measure-act approach. And you know, this is the sort of thing that has been going on across Europe and there is some fantastic leadership being shown by Europe and European countries, which in fact have been informing quite a lot of the work we have been doing.

So, say you take a big retailer, and they work with their 20 suppliers and then those 20 suppliers will have their 20 suppliers and eventually, you get back to the farm level. And you start to build the connections and the communications and collaboration up and down those supply chains and they are all working together to try to come up with the best solution for that supply chain, not just looking at this little bit of the supply chain and optimising that. So, that is one element.

There are some other elements to this. There is this massive issue we have got with household consumer food waste. And I think it was mentioned that in Europe, more than half of food waste is in the household, and I think in some countries it is much higher than that. In the UK it is around 70%, which is just appalling. So, what can we do about consumers and household behaviour change? And can we develop a network of grassroots organisations who will collaborate and share information, who are working at the grassroots level to help consumers to reduce food waste and help them understand their food and help them understand the date labels, help them understand how to use the food, how to store it? And that actually comes back a little bit to what Roberta was saying about the role of Food Banks. Food Banks are a community hub and maybe Food Banks have a role in helping consumers make better use of their food as well. So, helping address the whole consumer piece.

And then the third one is something we are calling: Food is Never Waste. Nature does not have waste, why do we have waste? So, can we close the loop? Can we make sure that all inedible parts and any food waste that is created goes back into the nutrient cycle? So, it is either used



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. The information expressed during this event does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

With the support of





POTRAVINOVÉ
BANKY



for fertilizer, animal feed or ideally, it is used for human consumption.

And again, this is where Food Banks have a big role to play in helping to make those linkages happen, you know making sure that food that might go to waste from retailers and from businesses actually goes back into beneficial use.

And then there are some cross-cutting themes. So there is quite a lot of exciting stuff happening and I think Food Banks have a core part to play in helping to address all the issues across the food system.

Moderator: *What are the main challenges and opportunities of this period but also thinking about this period and connecting the role of the Food Banks?*

I still think one of the main challenges is actually getting this on the agenda. Food waste is getting more airtime now but it is still, it is still pretty woeful really. You know, I think we are seeing far more engagement by businesses but partly because actually they are starting to see there is a clear financial business case for reducing food loss and waste because actually it goes straight to their bottom line. But getting governments to actually prioritise this and put this high up the agenda is very difficult. If you just look across the nationally determined contributions that governments have been working on to address the climate change targets as part of the Paris Agreement. There are a few countries that mention food loss, there is no country that actually says we have got to tackle food waste. I mean that is ridiculous. You are not going to achieve the targets without tackling food loss and waste, so we need governments to actually recognise this is important. I think raising awareness is still a really important piece.

And then there is a question about funding and there are clearly some parts of the world where you do need more investment in addressing some of the issues in supply chains. There are still many countries that do not have proper storage, they do not have good infrastructure. And so, some of those investment things are required and that then illustrates another problem. Sometimes the investment is required by someone who is not going to get the benefit directly. So, when you have got a business and you are thinking about your own operations, generally when the business makes an investment, the benefit will go to the bottom line. If you have got something which is a bit more disconnected, why would a company invest in something that is going to benefit another organisation or a farmer? So there is a lack of joint ownership across the supply chain. I think that is another challenge.

Opportunities? Well, they are probably the same. Food loss and waste costs a ridiculous amount across the world. It's an opportunity to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And making sure that we do not waste all this valuable food, which is a scandal. So, we could do so much better if we all valued food much more.

Moderator: *We are used to looking at COVID-19 as an accelerator for change, but in your opinion, in your perspective, what does that concretely mean?*

I think COVID-19 really demonstrated the fragility of some of the food system and that the food system was just not able to adapt quickly enough. And it has led to the creation of the phrase 'build back better'. As such, it provides a point in time that we can say, okay, it does not have to be like this. So, I think that is, that is one benefit.



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social.easi>. The information expressed during this event does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

With the support of





POTRAVINOVÉ
BANKY



I also think it has brought the role of Food Banks to the fore. People are far more aware of Food Banks because there has been such a massive growth in Food Banks being used globally. And so, I think that that is also quite helpful because it helps put Food Banks more on the agenda and to be more recognised globally for the role that they can play, both in helping to address the poverty and lack of food that some people have but also, more widely as local hubs and helping communities.



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social.easi>. The information expressed during this event does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

With the support of

