



# World Environment Day



Think before you eat and help save our environment.

## Food waste and carbon food-print challenge

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GLOBAL food production is shrinking due to climate change. Conversely, enormous quantities of food are wasted globally in all stages of the food value chain which emits green house gases into the atmosphere resulting global warming. Simultaneously, it has notable impact on natural resources because all of the agro-based countries utilise more inputs (water, fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, and energy) to produce more food. It is also notable that one's food wastage creates another hunger indirectly especially for the poor people in the least developed countries. On that note, "Think. Eat. Save" is the theme of the World Environment Day 2013. Think.Eat.Save is an anti food-waste and food-loss campaign to encourage human beings to become more aware of the impact of our food choices and to reduce food-print.

Global per capita food production has increased for the past several decennia. At the same time, large amounts of global food is lost or wasted annually in the food production and consumption systems which is equivalent to the amount of sub-Saharan Africa's production according to data released by FAO. It is also reported that from 2010 to 2012, 870 million people across the world were subject to food insecurity though about half of the 4.4 billion tons of food that is produced worldwide annually is never eaten,

while millions of people starve everyday across the world. Currently, the global food production uses a quarter of all habitable land and is responsible for 70% of fresh water consumption, and 80% of deforestation. It is the largest unique driver of biodiversity loss and land-use change. IPCC reported that agriculture is the third largest contributor to global emissions by sector, contributing to 37% of the total green house gases. Methane accounts for just under half of the total agricultural emissions.

Food wastage is to a greater extent a problem in industrialised countries. Consumers in developed countries are generally inspired to buy more food than they need. According to an article published in *The Guardian*, the average German fritters only 15 kg food/year while the British wastes nine times more. The reports further pointed that up to 30% of the UK's vegetable crop wastage occurs in the corporate end because the food does not meet aesthetic standards, e.g. size and colour. Japan also wastes about 20 million tons of food/annum which is equivalent to 30% of the country's inland production. America is one of the noticeable countries who contribute a lion's share of food waste: about 28.25 million tons/year. From food growing, processing, distributing, selling, cooking and recycling the leftover waste products, the average American has a carbon foodprint of over 12,000 pounds CO<sub>2</sub>e each year which is 21% of the total country's emission.

In developing countries, most food-wastage occurs

during production stage due to poor infrastructure, low levels of technology, and low investment in food production systems. Climate change induced disasters are also responsible for loss food production. As a whole, food losses contribute to food insecurity for the poor people in third world countries. During the food production stage, GHG emission occurs significantly, where China and India are the largest GHG emitting countries. According to US-EPA, developing countries emitted about 4800 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e/year from traditional agricultural sectors which mostly comes from the management of agricultural soil, livestock, rice production, and biomass burning.

Standpoint of food waste, Bangladesh contributes an insignificant share to the global scenario and it mostly occurs during food production stage due to poor technology and infrastructure. It is pointed that during pre and post harvesting processes almost 12% rice and 15% wheat are wasted. It is further reported that three percent of rice is wasted due to unconventional seed conservation practices. The wastage rate of perishable items like vegetables and fruits are alarmingly high at nearly 40%. In the consumption stage, the food wastage is almost zero as a quarter of populations in Bangladesh are still facing food insecurity. We have an insignificant amount of food surplus against total population demand. From agriculture, Bangladesh emits negligible percentage of GHGs. About

92.4 million kg methane from all sources of which 70% from agricultural and about 46.52 million Kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/year from all sources which is 0.16 % of world emission according to data revealed by World Bank. It is globally proved that we suffer more for climate change effect in spite of emitting less.

We need to work together for fixing aforesaid problems. Developed countries should pay attention to avoid food waste from their consumption behaviour. Developing countries need to use updated technology and infrastructure in agriculture production stages for cutting food waste. Collectively, we need to take action to reduce the foodprint by eating locally for minimising food miles, choosing organic foods, eating fewer animals and more plants, buying unprocessed foods with less packaging, cooking with efficient appliances and techniques, composting and recycling of food waste, and initiate climate change mitigation agriculture practices. Education should emphasise the need to avoid wasting food.

Considering the growing global population and the risk of climate change and food crisis, we need to reduce food wastage and carbon foot-print for minimising humanity's impact on our planet. So think before you eat and help save our environment!

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## Let the children take over

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HUMAN induced changes in the global climate and associated sea level rise are widely accepted with policy makers and scientists. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate." The exact magnitude of the changes in the global climate is still uncertain and subject to worldwide scientific studies but it is broadly recognised that Bangladesh is very vulnerable to these changes. Indeed, it has internationally been argued that Bangladesh, as a country, may suffer the most severe impacts from climate change.

Climate change is not only an "environmental" concern but really a "development" concern for Bangladesh. Because of its dense population and low-lying land. Even though it is particularly vulnerable to climate change in its coastal zone, covering about 30% of the country the impact of coastal problems due to climate change and environment pollution is getting worse day by day due to behavioural patterns and human practices. As the people living in the city are not directly affected they do not feel so deeply about the problems.

These are all man made and is done by the people living in non-coastal area especially people living in the cities as they are totally unaware about what they are doing, what is the impact of this and how it is affecting them and the children. The main contributor to Climate Change is the use of fossil fuels (e.g. gas and coal) to generate electricity and power our machinery (e.g. cars, lights, air conditioners). When we burn fossil fuels we release carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. And the city dwellers consume and misuse more of these resources (gas electricity) not that they do it willingly but mostly without knowing the impact of it.

Climate change directly affects the lives of young children both now and in the future. While children are among the most vulnerable to climate change, they should not be considered passive or helpless victims. It would be irresponsible for us not to share this information with children, to give them the opportunity to learn how their actions impact on the health of the planet. This kind of knowledge enables children to learn how to be part of the climate change solution and teaches them that they can make a difference.

The skills, knowledge and attitude they will gain from any awareness programme will be required to live in a sustainable world, now and in the future. We all want

different things for our children, and early childhood services have a long-standing practice of respecting different cultures and family values. Environmental sustainability is not a lifestyle choice, but a way of living.

Children are powerful agents of change, and studies have found that many children can be extraordinarily resilient in the face of significant challenges. Providing children with relevant education on disasters and climate change in a child-friendly school environment and empowering them can reduce their vulnerability to risk while contributing to sustainable development for their communities. School students and teachers are one of the most critical segments to educate about their immediate environment and impart knowledge about the eco-systems, their interdependence and their need for survival. Targeting this group of children for any awareness programme will give opportunity to sustain the awareness programme among these children and to reduce the environmental pollution. Moreover children can only make the adult aware about these issues once they fully understand their position and be the Change Agent. The very term "sustainability" is not just about caring for the environment or beautification of their school environment or make the school buildings more green by planting trees.

It takes into account social structures and economic considerations. And the learning about sustainability starts with everyday practices of limiting waste, and reducing energy and water use by collecting rainwater; minimising the use of heating and cooling; turning off lights and power switches when not needed; close the water tap when not in use or while brushing or doing other work or putting food scraps in a compost bin.

Studies found that the children and women will be among those most affected by a changing climate through environment pollution and waste of resources. It is estimated that 65% of those who will be affected by climate-related disasters every year in the next decade will be women and children. What can we do to help combat climate change and environment pollution and reduce waste? In a simpler way change our personal habits and teach children to help save our money and reduce our ecological foot print as Education for sustainable development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitude and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. We all have the right to survive in this beautiful world without being slow poisoned by self created environment pollution!

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FOOD waste or food loss is food material that is discarded. As of 2011, 1.3 billion tons of foods, about one third of the global food production, had been lost or wasted annually.

Both loss and wastage occur on various levels in the food supply chain -- where in low-income countries, most loss occurs during production, in developed nations much of the food -- about 100 kilograms (220 lb) per person and year -- is found wasted at the consumption stage.

We need to be oriented to food -- the earth is decaying its utility to exist that started millions of years ago. This year's theme for World Environment Day 'Think.Eat.Save' is an anti-food waste and food loss campaign that encourages people to reduce their footprint.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "every year 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted. This is equivalent to the same amount produced in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, 1 in every 7 people in the world go to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 die daily from hunger. Given this enormous imbalance in lifestyles and the resultant devastating effects on the environment, this year's theme encourages you to become more aware of the environmental impact of the food choices you make and empowers you to make informed decisions."

The recent floods and seasonal storms have

damaged tanks, and authorities need to take precautionary measures to prevent a disastrous situation arising in the country. The action plan comprising short and long-term solutions should be implemented to overcome the current situation.

Bangladesh needs to have in place post-harvest technology to reduce waste. It is necessary to implement this technology as an immediate remedial action for loss in food production due to floods. The country should focus on food

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preservation as a long-term solution to ensure continuous supply of food items. The recent extreme weather is an unusual condition and needs to be taken in isolation. The changes in global weather conditions have adversely impacted Bangladesh and in future we could expect this condition more often. We need to be prepared.

The country needs to increase the storage capacity and increasing productivity while ensuring food security. It needs to re-monitor the water management systems for effective resource allocation.

Managing waste is not an attractive business. Waste is dirty, smelly and unhygienic to handle, therefore even the authorities whose duty is to manage waste give it a low place in their list of priorities. Management of waste if not given its due respect will lead to environmental pollution and will cause serious harm to human health.

Today the waste management technology has improved and there are plenty of commercial benefits to be had from a properly managed system.

What is required is more investment on waste so that better methods can be introduced along with better-trained operatives to manage the systems. This in turn will result in having a cleaner environment for all.

What if we all took control of the waste surrounding our food choices? Imagine the impact if everyone cut back on food packaging and made an effort to reduce the amount of food that hits their trash bins each week? Not only is reducing waste good for the planet and for people, it's easy on the wallet! You can save a lot of cash by wasting less.

Cutting back on food waste is one of the best ways that you can save money and help the planet at the same time. When we send food waste to the landfill, it breaks down to produce methane, a harmful greenhouse gas.

UNEP ends its WED-2013-campaign cover story by endorsing "so think before you eat and help save our environment!"

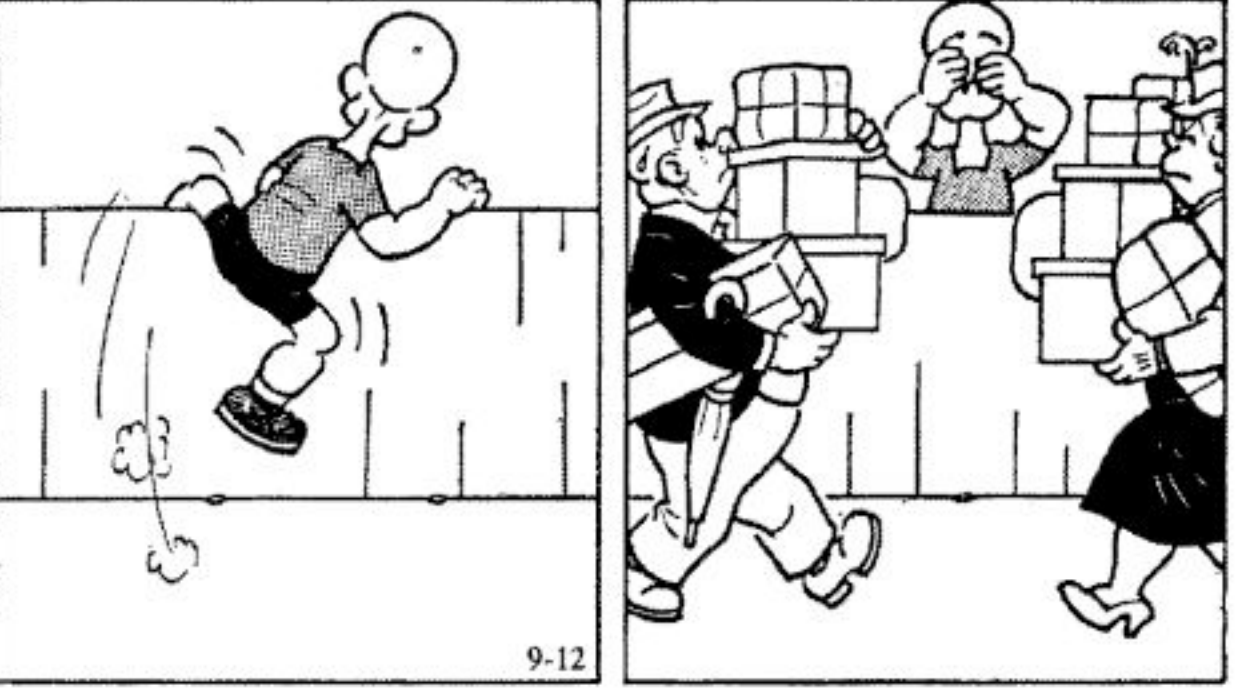
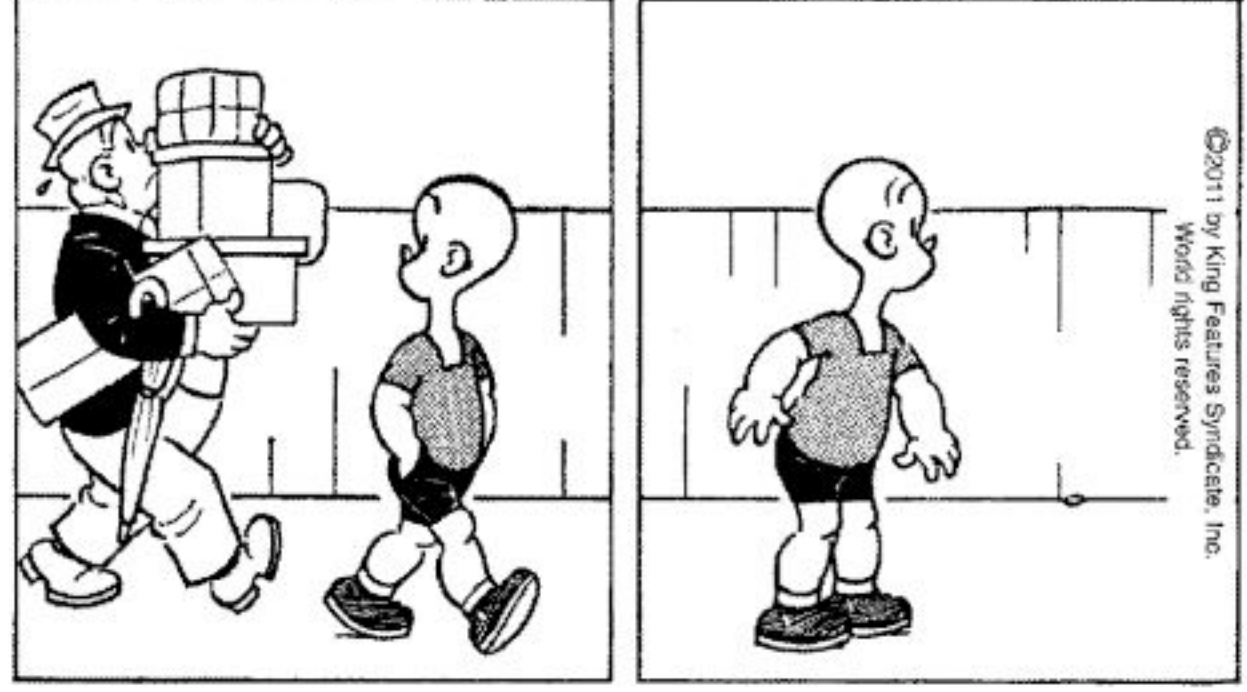
The writer works in the tourism sector.

BEETLE BAILY



by Mort Walker

HENRY



by Don Trachte

### QUOTABLE Quotes

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill