



CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION: REDUCING FOOD WASTE AN UNDERRATED CAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING.

Summary: The climate change is a huge challenge facing the human populace now. The extreme temperature, erratic rainfall and other events associated with it is threatening life on earth. It is no doubt that this is as a result of human activities. Food waste is one of such means by which man is contributing to global warming, although little attention had been paid to this act. Food waste is a source of methane gas which is a potent greenhouse gas to the atmosphere. In this era where all nations are working towards reducing emission of greenhouse gases, it is important to reduce food waste to combat climate change.

Introduction

The Climate change events around us are a manifestation of the reality of global warming. In the recent times, there have been unusual rainfall patterns, changes in growing seasons of plants, rise in sea level, among others. All these events have direct or indirect effects on all organisms. Human beings, the main contributor to climate change

have indulged in various activities which impact the earth by increasing its average temperature. These activities include but are not limited to indiscriminate felling of trees, release of obnoxious gases into the atmosphere, and discharge of hazardous wastes. In realization of the effect of climate change, the United Nations included climate action as one of its Sustainable Development Goal in order that all nations should take individually or collectively to reduce anthropogenic activities contributing to climate change.

Towards Achieving Food Waste Reduction.

Food is an essential resource needed for survival by all living organisms. From the paleolithic age, man had been striving to ensure adequate supply of food for his survival. Despite several technological advancement to ensure supply of food to the ever-growing human population, there are still cases of food loss and waste. In 2011, the FAO reported that annually one-third of food produced globally are wasted. This, therefore, translate to the fact that unavailability of food is not the only reason for food insecurity but also poor handling of food. According to Arsand, there are two forms of food waste. Food waste due to poor technology to preserve the foods, preventing such to get to consumers, this is typical of developing countries, while in the developed countries food are waste after getting to the consumers as a result of acquiring more food than what is needed which ends up spoiling before usage. Ryan Zinn reported that about 600 million tons of food are lost annually due to poor infrastructure in developing countries and 33.5 million tons end up in landfills in the US and China.

Food wastes end up in landfills where they decompose with emission of methane a greenhouse gas which is more potent than carbon dioxide. Food waste according to the FAO generates 4.4 trillion tons of carbon dioxide which is equivalent to 8% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. This is an indication of the contribution of food waste to climate change. Mitigating food waste calls for urgency because this event has ripple effect on climate change. Besides the emission of greenhouse gas, food waste, if left uncheck will contribute to shortage. In a bid to enhance food production, more trees will

be felled which will prevent carbon sequestration by plants and result in exacerbation of global warming and climate change.

Having known the dangers of food waste, there is need for measures to help mitigate the impact of this underrated act of humans to climate change. First, there is need for massive awareness of the populace as there is little attention paid to the role of this action to climate change. The saying goes that when purpose is unknown abuse is inevitable. Creating awareness will make people understand the menace of food wastage as well as the need to imbibe other measures that will ensure food waste reduction.

To reduce food waste, several traditions should be cultivated across all food supply chains. Individually, everyone should cultivate the habit of buying only needed amount of food to avoid excesses that eventually get spoilt. This can be achieved by making list of food items that are needed and such should be adhered too strictly. Food waste is not solely a consumer thing, it also occurs in market where they are stored before consumers get them. It is necessary to put in place policies that will discourage excessive storage of food stuffs especially easily perishable foods. This will reduce spoilage at stores and homes.

Additionally, more research should be carried out on food processing which pose no health hazards to man at little cost. This food can be transformed to other forms that are palatable and readily acceptable by man. It is important to find means to prevent emission of GHG from food waste by composting food waste. In light of this, government can put in place a well manage composite facilities which will help cut down emission, and also generate nutrients for farming.

References

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