

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2013 AT NARC

1.3bn tonnes food is wasted per year globally: PARC chairman

ISLAMABAD: Roughly one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tonnes per year.

Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Chairman Dr Iftikhar Ahmad stated this while speaking on the occasion of World Environment Day 2013 at National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad.

This inevitably also means that huge amounts of the resources used in food production are used in vain, and that the greenhouse gas emissions caused by production of food that gets lost or wasted are also emissions in vain. The issue of food losses is of high importance in the efforts to combat hunger, raise income and improve food security in the world's poorest countries.

Food losses have an impact on food security for resource poor people, on food quality and safety, on economic development and on the environment. Food losses represent a waste of resources used in production such as land, water, energy and inputs. Producing food that will not be consumed leads to unnecessary CO₂ emissions in addition to loss of economic value of the food produced.

The Ministry of Climate Change, PARC, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) celebrated the World Environment Day in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, Pakistan Water Partnership, UNESCO and Pakistan Science Foundation at the NARC, Islamabad. The theme for this year is 'Think. Save-Reduce Your Food Print'. The theme is very important for food deficit countries of the world as the idea is to minimise the food wastage. The celebrations, events, activities including tableau by school students, competition for minimum wastage in food consumption and environmental quiz.

Federal Ministry of Climate Change Secretary Muhammad Ali Gardezi as chief guest at the event said that Pakistan is celebrating the World Environment Day with an aim to foster the national commitment towards addressing the environmental problems. The theme of this year 'Think, Eat, Save' urges us to make concrete efforts to think and save the food which we grow, consume and dispose in our daily routine. This purpose is also to inform and warn the people about the huge impact on the human beings and their environment due to wastage of the food at the large scale throughout the world. It is an anti-food waste and food loss campaign that encourages us to reduce our food-prints.

Dr Ghulam Akbar said WWF-Pakistan is part of the WWF global network that aims at conserving world's biodiversity while reducing the negative impacts of human footprints. We conserve natural resources by promoting their sustainable use and minimising the wasteful use of renewable resources. We believe in reducing pollution and wasteful consumption of natural wealth to keep environment clean and maintain the ecological

balance for efficient functioning of ecosystems. WWF creates a harmony with nature where both humans and nature are equally benefited by enhancing environmental awareness, promoting ecotourism and reducing human-nature conflicts. WWF-Pakistan celebrates the World Environment Day with enthusiasm to show our commitment in protecting the world's nature and keeping the environment healthier for us and for the generations to come. It gives us an excellent opportunity to creating awareness about environmental issues and sharing with partners and stakeholders the solutions to better contribute in saving and protecting the planet earth. In current scenario of climatic change, the country is facing various disastrous threats that are detrimental to environment and are posing challenges to the agricultural sector ultimately leading to food insecurity. This situation demands us to take serious initiatives for securing the available food while minimising its wastage and reducing the impacts of food prints by its sustainable production.

ICIMOD DG David Molden message was read on this occasion that stories of climate change, glaciers melting, landslides, and water scarcity overload our every day lives. The stories of environmental degradation are so overwhelming that there is a sense that we cannot really do anything about it. Yet, there are many things that each of us can do, and one that we might not think about so much is the consequences of our food habits. ICIMOD also does considerable work documenting environmental problems in the HKH and finding solutions. ICIMOD is celebrating World Environment Day this year with many activities, but the Centre is starting by looking into its own backyard- and at our own food footprint. We hope that this day will inspire people across the region to be more mindful of their food choices, home food management, and ecological implications of their consumption in order to decrease pressures on resources and the poor.

UNESCO Country Director Dr Kozue Kay Nagata said the focus of this year's campaign is 'Think, Eat, Save', that encourages every human being to be conscious of food waste, so that we could reduce our food-print. According to UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), every year 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted. This is equivalent to the amount produced in sub-Saharan Africa. Ironically, one in every seven people in the world go to bed hungry, while more than 20,000 children under the age of five die of hunger every day.

NARC DG Dr Muhammad Azeem welcomed the honourable guests and participants at NARC and said the day is being celebrated with a view to promote awareness, on the importance of preserving biodiversity, highlighting the issue related to the natural environment, and ways to take corrective actions. It was on this day, in the year 1972, which the United Nations Conference on Human Environment Day also popularly known as Environment Day was held. It is a mean to tackle, environmental challenges, which include; climate change, global warming, disasters and conflicts, harmful substances, environmental governance, ecosystem management and resource efficiency.