Presentation by

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BACKGROUND

“A looming food crisis” – UN Food and Agriculture Organization

1. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on global food donation operations?
   • Recognizing that food donation operations enhance food security and reduce food loss & waste

2. What policies will help global food donation operations mitigate hunger and food insecurity during the pandemic?
   • Recognizing that governments owe a duty to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to food, even in times of emergency

Global FoodBanking Network “COVID Pulse Surveys” government partnerships
   • May 2020 (39 countries, 43 food banks/national networks)
   • April 2020 (45 countries, 48 food banks/national networks)
KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

1. **Issue:** Many countries do not officially recognize food banks and food recovery organizations and exclude entities as part of emergency response measures.

   - Approx. **75%** of respondent food banks reported official or direct lines of communication with government since COVID-19.
   
   - **But only 56%** of surveyed food banks had been *engaged* in local or national government response effort.

Lack of formal recognition in national legal frameworks suggests that the government is **unaware** of food donation operations or **undervalues** the potential of these operations.
United States
• Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act—liability protection
• The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)—annual allocation
• U.S. Tax Code—enhanced tax deduction

Israel
• National food donation law (2018)—liability protection

Argentina
• National food donation law (2018 amendment)—liability protection

Peru
• National food donation law (2016)—donation requirement (natural disasters/emergencies)
Before COVID-19, est. 4 million people or 55% of the global population lacked access to any form of social protection coverage (ILO)
  • Equivalent of 200 million full-time jobs will be lost in the coming year

Evidence of newly at-risk populations:
• 100% of respondent food banks reported surge in demand since COVID-19
• 50% reported at least 51% increase in people served
• 37% reported demand at food banks doubling (91-100%)
Free & reduced price meals are recognized as an essential social safety net to break inter-generational cycles of hunger and poverty.

- As of May 2020: 188 countries introduced national or localized school closures = 369 million children without access to school meals
- Est. 73 countries found alternative strategies (e.g., home delivery)

United States and Canada
- Meals-to-go
- Summer meal distribution sites
- Food distribution zones
Surveyed food banks reported shortages in funding, food, transport, cold-chain storage, personal protective equipment and volunteers.

**Funding shortages**
- **54%** reported an immediate funding shortfall
- **85%** reported an urgent need for funds simply to maintain operations

**Food shortages**
- **41%** of distributed inventories sourced from purchased food
- **88%** of food banks not purchasing food by May 2020 expected to do so in the following 90 days.
Additional funding, material, or logistics support for food banks is critical to advance immediate emergency assistance and support long-term recovery efforts (IMF)

**United States and Canada** offer direct funding
- **US$850 million** in-kind support for US food banks through TEFAP
  - CARES Act also offered an additional tax benefit for charitable donations
- **CA$50 million** to Food Banks Canada and CA$3 million to provincial food banks

**United States, China, India, & Ghana** partnered with producers to create ‘food boxes’
- US Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (fresh produce, dairy, and meat)
Which COVID-19 policies most negatively impacted food donation operations?

- **50%** of respondent food banks cited **curfews**
- **52%** of respondent food banks cited **quarantine or shelter-in place orders**
- **66%** of respondent food banks cited **transportation restrictions**
- **24%** of respondent food banks cited government **closures of local beneficiaries**

- Restrictive policies have impeded day-to-day operations and innovative methods of food recovery, such as on-farm rescue.
Designating food donation operations as “essential services” will enable continued activities during declared emergencies.

- **United States** has long integrated food banks as part of emergency response
- **Argentina and Bolivia**—food banks have continued operations by way of specific exemptions to quarantines and curfews

- Consultation with food banking networks and food recovery organizations
- Investment in innovative, alternative food banking models
Many governments are not adequately recognizing the potential value of food donation operations nor integrating food banks and food donation as part of COVID-19 emergency response measures.

As the pandemic continues, governments must afford these operations greater attention, both as (1) essential providers of humanitarian relief during the crisis and as (2) essential social safety nets in the future recovery period.
ACCESS THE FULL BRIEF https://atlas.foodbanking.org/covid.html

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