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## PRESS RELEASE

### Sustainable Rice Platform Calls upon Rice Industry to Halve Rice Loss and Waste Worldwide

#### Food loss and waste is a global problem of epic proportions

**NEW YORK, 24 September 2019:** The Sustainable Rice Platform, a global multi-stakeholder alliance including some of the world's leading rice producers and buyers, including Olam, Mars Food, Ebro Foods, SunRice, LT Foods and Phoenix Global– has called upon its members and the wider industry to commit to halving postharvest rice loss and waste by 2030.

The call to action was announced at the Champions 12.3 event on the sidelines of the UN Climate Action Summit and UN General Assembly in New York. The announcements are outlined in the newly launched Champions 12.3 2019 report [<https://champions123.org/2019-progress-report/>], which assesses global progress to meet SDG Target 12.3. The report finds that more than two-thirds of the world's 50 largest food companies have set targets in line with Target 12.3, more than 40% are measuring their food loss and waste, and one-third are pursuing actions at scale to reduce waste in their own operations.

Announcing the SRP initiative, Matthias Bickel, SRP's Board Chair said, "More than half of the world population consumes rice three times a day. SRP promotes broad-scale application of the world's first rice sustainability standard, which leads to more efficient farming systems and the availability of 'better rice'. This means higher farm incomes, a safer environment and reduced GHG emissions. We look forward to working with WRI and our value chain partners to implement practical programmes to prevent food loss and waste in rice value chains, raise consumer consciousness and catalyze behavioural change."

Speaking in New York at the Champions 12.3 event, Sunny Verghese, CEO of Olam International, said, "This is a landmark moment for food loss and waste. It is the first time that the spotlight has focused upon FLW in rice, and we hope all rice industry players will commit to follow this Call to Action under the Champions 12.3 Target-Measure-Act framework."

Commenting on the SRP initiative, Mark Radka, Chief of UNEP's Climate and Energy Branch said, "Reducing food loss and waste can help meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, contribute to the Paris Agreement on climate change, and sustainably feed the planet. Reducing loss and waste offers a triple win. It boosts farmer livelihoods, benefits the environment by alleviating pressure on water and land resources, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions for every ton of rice grown. But ultimately, reducing food loss and waste is simply the right thing to do- wasting less can mean feeding more. UNEP is therefore proud to host the Secretariat of the Sustainable Rice Platform, and strongly supports SRP's call for action on SDG 12.3. We will be working together to support development of loss and waste measurement tools and capacity building, a reporting platform, guidance on implementation, consumer awareness, and periodic assessments of progress."

#### A third of all food produced is wasted

Approximately 1.3 billion tons of food – a third of all food produced is lost or wasted each year. This huge level of inefficiency results in economic losses of up to \$940 billion per year and contributes to food insecurity in a world where one in nine people are undernourished. If food loss and waste were a country, it would be the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Emissions result mainly from land clearing, fertilizers, rice paddies and machinery used to grow food that is ultimately not consumed, and from methane emitted as food decays in fields or landfills.

## Rice industry call to action

In addition to setting a reduction target of 50% by 2030, SRP will work with its member institutions and the World Resources Institute through a task force that will identify hotspots, develop a roadmap to improve farming methods, tackle rice loss and waste across the supply chain, identify strategies to accelerate change and monitor industry actions to work towards achieving the 50% reduction target.

This initiative will make a significant difference to many of the 144 million small farmers whose livelihoods depend upon rice, as well as mitigate GHG emissions from the rice sector. As rice generates approximately 16% of all greenhouse gas emissions originating from agriculture, reducing rice loss and waste can shrink the industry's climate change footprint while enhancing food and nutritional security.

## The Sustainable Rice Platform can make a significant contribution

SRP will promote adoption by its members of a “Target-Measure-Act” approach to SDG Target 12.3. The Target-Measure-Act approach involves:

- *Target:* Adopt the voluntary target of reducing food loss and waste by 50% by 2030.
- *Measure:* Estimate how much rice is being lost, and later quantify again after interventions to see what reductions have been achieved.
- *Act:* Based on hotspots of loss and waste, implement interventions designed to reduce rice losses and waste. Interventions could include improved harvesting techniques, low-cost on-farm and off-farm storage technologies, changes in handling practices, secondary markets for rice that otherwise would be discarded, improved training, and more.

## About the Sustainable Rice Platform

SRP is a global multi-stakeholder alliance launched in 2011, led by UNEP, IRRI and GIZ, together with private sector partners and hosted by UNEP. The alliance, which includes Olam International and Mars Food as members of the Board, has over 100 institutional members including public and private sector stakeholders, research, financial institutions and development partners. SRP promotes resource-use efficiency and climate change resilience in rice systems—both on-farm and throughout value chains—and pursues voluntary market transformation initiatives by developing sustainable production standards, indicators, incentive mechanisms, and outreach mechanisms to boost wide-scale adoption of sustainable best practices throughout rice value chains.

In 2015 SRP launched the world's first and only Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, together with a set of Performance Indicators. Both tools are now in their second version. The tools provide a working definition of sustainable rice production as well as practical indicators to monitor and incentivize progress towards achieving sustainability and meeting SDG targets. The Standard and Indicators are designed for both as a basis for supply chain assurance and to support national policy goals, e.g. for climate change, water, livelihoods and food security.

## About Champions 12.3

Champions 12.3 is a coalition of leaders across government, business and civil society dedicated to inspiring ambition, mobilizing action, and accelerating progress toward achieving Target 12.3 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Target 12.3 calls on the world to “halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses” by 2030. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the World Resources Institute serve as co-secretariats of Champions 12.3. For more information, visit [www.Champions123.org](http://www.Champions123.org)

## Contact details

For further details contact Dr Wyn Ellis, SRP Coordinator:

Email: [Secretariat@sustainablerice.org](mailto:Secretariat@sustainablerice.org)

Web: [www.sustainablerice.org](http://www.sustainablerice.org)