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Amid Pandemic, New Research Provides a Roadmap to Fight Hunger and Climate Change through Increased Food Donation

The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas Identifies Key Barriers and Policy Actions to Reduce Food Waste

Boston (June 10, 2020)— Today, the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic (FLPC) released a first-of-its-kind interactive resource to inspire long-term policy solutions to food waste, hunger, and climate change*: The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas.* In partnership with The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN), and with the support of the Walmart Foundation, *The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas* maps the laws and policies affecting food donation around the globe and provides recommendations to prevent unnecessary food waste and improve food distribution to those in need. The research released today focuses on Argentina, Canada, India, Mexico, and the United States, the first five of 15 countries participating in this project.

While hunger everywhere is on the rise due to the impacts of COVID-19, one-third of all food produced for human consumption goes to waste, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). There has long been a need for countries to bridge the gap between surplus food and the growing need for food for the most vulnerable; the pandemic has profoundly exacerbated that need. *The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas* provides guidance so food system actors will be more likely to distribute safe, surplus food to food insecure populations, instead of sending it to the landfill.

The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas looks at six main barriers to food recovery: food safety for donations, date labeling, liability protection for food donations, tax incentives and barriers, government grants and funding, and food waste penalties or donation requirements. It identifies several opportunities for governments to prevent unnecessary waste and to promote food donation. Examples of policy recommendations that apply across several countries include:

- Clarify national food safety guidance as to the rules that apply to donated products;
- Establish clear, federal guidelines for dual-date labeling, featuring expiration dates to convey when food is no longer safe to eat or “best by” dates for food that may safely be consumed and donated once the date has passed;
- Offer liability protection to food donors and food recovery organizations that act in good faith; and
- Remove tax barriers and provide incentives so it is less expensive to donate food than it is to dispose of it.

“It’s more important than ever for policymakers, government agencies, food donors, companies, food banks, and the public to understand the impact of unnecessary food waste in their countries and the need to change it,” said Emily Broad Leib, Faculty Director at FLPC and Clinical Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. “*The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas* is the first research study to compare food

donation policies and best practices across the world, providing us with the global perspective we need to address this complex issue," Broad Leib concluded.

Food banks worldwide depend largely on product donations to provide food to those facing hunger. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many food banks are seeing increases in demand for service. Through a combination of research and on-the-ground field work with food bank staff, food industry professionals, government officials, and food recovery organizations, FLPC researchers developed accessible country-specific legal guides and policy recommendations to outline best practices and long-term solutions for increased food donations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any situation we have ever experienced before. Food bank organizations in our network are struggling to meet demand and get food to those who need it most," said Lisa Moon, President and CEO of GFN. "The release of this project is extremely timely as it provides a roadmap for organizations and shines a light on global food system challenges for policymakers."

FLPC will release similar reports for ten additional countries in the coming year: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

"Walmart Foundation has a long-standing commitment to increasing access to healthier foods in communities around the world and we are pleased to support the Global Food Donation Policy Atlas, because of its potential to accelerate effective and sustainable solutions," said Eileen Hyde, Director of Sustainable Food Systems and Food Access for Walmart.org. "This project provides not only groundbreaking research to address the complexity of public policy relating to food donations, but it also presents clear opportunities to improve how surplus food gets to communities that need it."

Legal guides, policy recommendations, executive summaries, and an interactive map to compare food donation laws and policies across countries are available at atlas.foodbanking.org/.

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ABOUT THE HARVARD FOOD LAW AND POLICY CLINIC

The Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic (FLPC) serves partner organizations and communities by providing guidance on cutting-edge food system issues, while engaging law students in the practice of food law and policy. FLPC's work focuses on increasing access to healthy foods, supporting sustainable production and regional food systems, promoting community-led food system change, and reducing waste of healthy, wholesome food. FLPC is committed to advancing a cross-sector, multi-disciplinary and inclusive approach to its work, building partnerships with academic institutions, government agencies, private sector actors, and civil society with expertise in public health, the environment, and the economy. For more information, visit http://www.chlpi.org/flpc/.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) is an international non-profit organization that nourishes the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks in 40+ countries. GFN focuses on combating hunger and preventing food waste by providing expertise, directing resources, sharing knowledge, and

developing connections that increase efficiency, ensure food safety, and reach more people facing hunger. Last year, 943 GFN member food banks rescued over 500 million kilograms of food and grocery products and redirected it to feed 9.6 million people through a network of more than 55,000 social service and community-based organizations. For more information, please visit www.foodbanking.org.

ABOUT THE WALMART FOUNDATION

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