

## Donate excess food, says Health Ministry

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### Action needed 'at every level'; 'zero food wastage' campaign for restaurants

What should restaurants do with their extra food? The Union Health Ministry suggests “donating excess food and turning wet waste into compost” as the way forward to sustainable development.

The Ministry is now advocating and promoting a “zero food wastage” campaign in restaurants. “Display a clear message, which conveys this to all customers and staff members. Excess food must be distributed among the poor and kitchen wet waste must be turned into compost,” says the Ministry.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that, every year, a third of food produced does not even reach the table.

The UN estimates nearly 40% of the food produced in India is wasted or lost, and adds that food wastage in India is happening at every level — from harvesting, transporting and processing to packaging and consuming.

“Weddings, events, restaurants, hostels and houses are a major source of wastage of cooked food,” said a senior Health Ministry official.

“Doing this successfully requires action at every level As individuals, we can fight food waste by cooking less, sharing with neighbours, buying ugly produce, composting, and raising awareness among our communities. But systematic changes across major industries are also necessary to tackle the global issue of food waste,” it said.

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan advocating for the recently launched ‘Eat Right’ campaign noted that food is everyone’s responsibility. “Let us not waste even one grain of food, and ensure that in our own personal

capacities and in our institutions, we contribute towards food security. This will help eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition,” said the Minister.