

### **An Eco-Minute: Food waste or air travel pollution – which is worse?**

Food waste contributes 8 to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter after China and the United States. Roughly 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted every year!

Air travel accounts for about 2.5 to 3% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). However, the total climate impact of aviation is higher—some studies estimate around 4 to 5% due to non-CO<sub>2</sub> effects. As other sectors decarbonize, aviation is projected to account for a larger share of global emissions.

In terms of global greenhouse gas emissions, food waste has a significantly larger footprint compared to air travel

However, the per-person carbon footprint of a single flight is much higher than that of food waste, because only a small proportion of the global population flies. The cumulative impact of wasted food is massive and more distributed because everyone consumes food.

**Addressing food waste has a larger global potential for reducing emissions but tackling both issues is vital to mitigate climate change. What can we as individual Rotarians, clubs and District do?**

