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4TH ALL AFRICA POSTHARVEST CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

CONGRESS CONCEPT NOTE

19th to 22nd September 2023

Venue

The African Union Headquarters,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Theme

*Sustainable Postharvest Management:
Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and
Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security*

01 BACKGROUND

Food loss and waste (FLW) remains a major challenge in the efforts to address food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems. With economic development for most African Countries tied to agriculture, which is dominated by smallholder farmers, more needs to be done to ensure sustainability, equity, and profitability of food systems. This notion is anchored in Africa's Agenda 2063, which envisions a Prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development.

Recent reports on the status of postharvest food loss and waste show that the extent of food loss (FL) and food waste (FW) across the globe remains unacceptably high at 14% and 17%, respectively (FAO, 2019; UNEP, 2021). If the disaggregated figures for (FL) from FAO (2019) and FW from UNEP (2021) are summed up, the total figure of FLW (31%) shows that not much has changed from the 2011 estimate of 30% (FAO, 2011). However, contrary to earlier reports, food waste which occurs between the retail and consumption stages of the supply chain, contributes more (17%) to the total FLW.

Reducing FLW is a key part of sustainability strategies for increasing food availability without putting additional pressure on the environment and economy to produce more food. For this reason, the Heads of State of African Countries made a commitment under the Malabo Declaration (2014) to halve postharvest losses by 2025. This commitment is aligned with the sustainable development goal (SDG) 12.3, which targets to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including postharvest losses by 2030. However, with barely two years to the set target, most African countries are not on track to reduce postharvest losses. Based on the African Union's Biennial Review (BR) Report of 2021, out of the 20 Member States that reported data on

postharvest losses in priority commodities, 11 were reported to be on track to meet the 2020 milestone of reducing postharvest losses by at least 25%. Many Member States did not report the required set of data; and hence there was no means to verify progress or lack of it.

Slow progress towards achieving the set targets is partly attributed to the failure to link FLW reduction to other outcomes and benefits for the people and the planet. FLW reduction is not an end in itself, but it can contribute to the realization of other outcomes such as reduced hunger, better nutrition, better incomes/livelihoods, equitable wealth, lower greenhouse gas emissions, less pressure on the environment, among others. For example, the slogan for the United Nations International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLW) which is marked annually on 29th September, is 'Stop food loss and waste. For the people. For the planet'. To demonstrate the broader objective of FLW reduction, the focus of the 2022 IDAFLW was the contribution of FLW reduction to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Therefore,



there was a clear call to action for public and private entities across the food system and consumers to work together to cut FLW to mitigate climate change and support food security and nutrition.

Just as it has been linked to food security, nutrition and climate change mitigation, postharvest management is critical to boosting trade in food and other agricultural commodities at the local, national, regional and global levels. This is because trade demands efficient postharvest management and delivery of high-quality products to the target markets. Commitment 5 under the Malabo (2014) declaration advocates for 'Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services. The African Union's Biennial Review (BR) Report 2021 scorecard on this commitment is poor, with an overall continental score of 2.44 against a target of 5.0, indicating that the continent is not on track to achieve this target. Currently, intra-Africa trade stands low at just 14.4% of total African exports. At this pace, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) goal to triple intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services by 2025 is unachievable. In their efforts to achieve the set target, many Member States have significantly improved the overall trade environment by building infrastructure, reducing the cost of trade, and facilitating travel through visa-free/visa-on-arrival arrangements. However, there is a need for additional efforts to ensure that more intra-Africa trade takes place. The BR report recommends intensifying efforts to enhance and facilitate more trade in agricultural commodities and services among the Member States, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The AfCFTA agreement which was adopted in 2018 and came into force in 2019, is a flagship programme of the African Union Agenda 2063 aimed at creating a single African market for goods and services. The AfCFTA is facilitated by the free movement of persons, capital, and investment to deepen economic integration,

promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality, industrialization, agricultural development, food security, and structural transformation. Fuelled by high population growth, urbanization and income growth, food demand continues to outstrip domestic supply. However, formal intra-regional food trade on the continent remains low even if provisions for informal cross-border flows could double the current levels. Hence, Africa remains a net importer of agricultural products, with a food import bill of about USD 50 billion per year. With the continent's increasing demand for food, the import bill is projected to increase to USD 90 billion annually by 2030. The high food import bills can be explained by the low level of industrialization on the continent leading to huge leakages, including high postharvest losses resulting in a huge deficit on the food balance sheet and hence high importation of food on the continent.

Africa (like the rest of the world) is recovering from the impact of COVID-19, which disrupted operations in food supply chains and exposed their vulnerabilities and inefficiencies. Large volumes of food were lost or wasted as food distribution systems were disrupted due to movement restrictions and poor postharvest infrastructure. Similarly, the Ukraine-Russia conflict has significantly disrupted food systems worldwide, resulting in sharp increases in commodity prices that have had a significant negative economic impact in many countries. These and other emerging challenges and threats to the food systems will require transformation driven by the modernization of agricultural production and post-production operations. Key to this transformation is postharvest management which encompasses all the operations/activities involved in the safe and efficient handling and movement of food commodities from the point of production to the point of consumption locally, regionally and internationally. These activities include harvesting, packaging, preservation, drying, storage, value addition (including processing), transport/distribution, quality control logistics,



marketing, communication and other services. To achieve the desired transformation, it is imperative that agriculture in Africa is viewed beyond just the production of food, feed and raw materials, most of which are exported and imported back as value-added products from the developed economies.

The transformation of Africa's agriculture will require a major shift in focus from production and other farm level (less profitable activities) to the more profitable downstream activities. The downstream activities should be geared towards securing the harvest (what is produced) and the development of value-added products and services that enhance food and nutrition security and promote access to markets while creating more and rewarding employment opportunities. This vision is anchored in the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Africa Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, which was adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Malabo in June 2014. This declaration seeks to strengthen the CAADP objectives.

Congress Theme and Rationale

The All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (AAPHCE) was muted as a pan-African platform where diverse stakeholders in the agri-food sector convene to share information and experiences and build partnerships that are required for sustainable postharvest management and FLW reduction in the African context. The 4th AAPHCE is coming at a time when the world is grappling with unprecedented levels of hunger and malnutrition globally, but more rampant in Sub-Saharan Africa. The situation has been aggravated by other factors, including the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine-Russia conflict and climate change. The theme for the 4th AAPHCE had been conceptualized as 'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security'. This theme recognizes the

critical role of postharvest management not only to achieve food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems but also to boost intra-African trade. According to the FAO's (2022) report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, between 702 and 828 million people faced hunger in 2021. This figure includes 278 million people in Africa, 425 million in Asia and 56.5 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. The report also indicates that around 2.3 billion people worldwide lacked access to adequate food in 2021, while almost 3.1 billion people could not afford a healthy diet. The report shows that while most of the world's undernourished people live in Asia, Africa has the highest prevalence. The factors contributing to hunger, food security and nutrition require a paradigm shift in the food and agriculture sectors at the national, regional and global levels. Sustainable and efficient postharvest management to reduce FLW can contribute to the realization of the six dimensions of food and nutrition security, including availability, access, utilization, stability, agency and sustainability.

Acknowledging the declaration of 2023 as the year of AfCFTA, by the AU, the congress theme recognizes postharvest management as a key catalyst in the intra-African trade. Postharvest management operations, including storage; transportation/distribution and the associated logistics; preservation; packaging; value addition (including agro-processing), quality control and other operations, are critical and essential for intra-African trade. Proper postharvest handling ensures better quality and storage life of produce, especially in perishables such as horticulture commodities, milk, meat and fish, thereby expanding the market. Enabled by the AfCFTA, it is envisaged that the projected \$3 trillion borderless market in Africa could be instrumental in reversing current trends in poverty, inequality and growth on the continent and help place Africa on an inclusive and sustainable growth path.



02 CONGRESS OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the congress is to contribute the efforts towards boosting trade in agricultural commodities and realization of food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems through efficient postharvest management. This is envisioned in the commitments of the Malabo Declaration (2014) on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Livelihoods to end hunger by 2025.

The African heads of state committed to supporting efforts to reduce postharvest losses by 50% (of the 2014 levels) by 2025 as part of the efforts to end hunger and improve nutrition. The Malabo 2014 target is also aligned with the global target under the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 12.3 to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including postharvest losses by 2030. The objective is also aligned and will contribute to continental efforts in advancing the AfCFTA implementation. This is also in line with the declaration by the AU of 2023 as the year of AfCFTA.

Building from the previous convenings of the biennial congress in 2017, 2019 and 2021, the 4th AAPHCE presents an important platform to create awareness about FLW and showcase sustainable solutions in the African context. The AAPHCE is also a platform to network and establish partnerships for research, outreach and investment initiatives towards FLW reduction.



03 CONGRESS THEME AND SUBTHEMES

THEME

'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security'.

SUBTHEMES

The congress theme, 'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security', has been unpacked into four sub-themes as follows:

1. Unpacking food loss and waste: measurement, extent, drivers/causes, impact on food and nutrition security, environment, economies and livelihoods
2. Preserving the harvest for food and nutrition security
 - Innovations/technologies, practices and tools (including ICTs) to reduce losses, and preserve the nutrition and safety of harvested food commodities.
3. The role of postharvest management in facilitating trade and market access for increased profits and economic empowerment of food supply chain practitioners
 - Efficient postharvest management as an enabler and key to the realization of the objectives of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)
4. Capacity development of food supply chain actors for sustainable postharvest management
 - Training at various levels, research capacity, extension and outreach capacity, data collection capacity, research translation capacity, communication capacity etc.
5. Policy action, strategies and partnerships to realize AU's Malabo 2025 and the UN's 2030 food loss and waste reduction targets

04 CONGRESS STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

The four-day congress is scheduled for 19th to 22nd September 2023 at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The four-day programme will include plenary and breakaway sessions for the various thematic areas. The interactive sessions will feature renowned subject matter experts providing lead/keynote presentations in the plenary sessions and panel discussions. The breakaway sessions will be dedicated to sharing and discussing research findings from students and researchers. Digital and physical posters will be displayed throughout the four days of the congress. In addition, there will be a dedicated interactive plenary session where poster presenters will pitch their research and development ideas/findings. Exhibitions of innovative technologies, practices, and tools for postharvest food loss/waste reduction will be on display (physical and virtual) throughout the four days.

05



05 CONGRESS COMMITTEES

The organization of the congress will be spearheaded by the African Union Commission (AUC) in partnership with diverse regional and global partners, including research and academic institutions, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and private sector actors, among others.

The congress organization will be achieved through three sub-committees described below:

a) Resource Mobilization Sub-committee

- This committee is tasked with the mobilization of resources required for congress execution. The resources include finances, technical support, in-kind support and any other support that will contribute to the success of the congress.
- The members will develop a resource mobilization strategy/plan and prepare value propositions for potential partners and sponsors.
- The committee members will include representatives from the organizations that supported the previous AAPHCE and are available to support the 4th AAPHCE. These include the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA); World Food Programme (WFP); African Development Bank (AfDB); Mission of the People's Republic of China to the Africa Union; Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); Buhler Group; Rockefeller Foundation; United States Agency for International Development (USAID) directly and through the Feed the Future Innovation Labs; the Postharvest Education Foundation (PEF); Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality – the Netherlands; Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN); and Consortium for Innovation in Postharvest Loss and Food Waste Reduction.
- The committee will be Chaired by Mr. Komla Bissi (AUC) and Dr. Mel Oluoch (SAA) as the Co-Chair.

b) Technical Sub-Committee

- This committee will drive the technical/scientific agenda of the congress.
- Membership to this committee includes technical experts from academic and research institutions and select non-governmental and development partners.
- The committee will be Chaired by Prof. Jane Ambuko (University of Nairobi) and Prof. Fawole Olaniyi (University of Johannesburg) as the Co-Chair

c) Publicity, Communication and Logistics Sub-committee

- The sub-committee will be tasked with overall coordination of the congress secretariat and related logistics, including hospitality, catering, security, transportation, protocol, registration, bags, stationery, gifts, accreditation, interpretation & translations, exhibition, side events, etc.
- The committee will be Chaired by the Event Organizer, Ms Samrawit Tekele and supported by the Publicity and Communication Department of the AUC and other partners.

06 CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS

It is expected that about 450 participants will attend the congress. The expected participants include a diversity of stakeholders across Africa and beyond who work (directly or indirectly) in the agri-food sector. These include farmers, extension agents, traders, researchers, academia, students, innovators, policymakers, development partners, government departments, private sector/investors, civil society, media, etc.



07 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Awareness created about the problem of food loss and waste and applicable solutions in the African context
- 2 The role of efficient postharvest management in boosting intra-African trade and realization of food and nutrition security sustainably demonstrated
- 3 Progress by member countries towards set targets of halving postharvest losses by 2025 under the Malabo Declaration showcased and champions rewarded
- 4 Linkages and partnerships established among the various stakeholders, including technology developers and vendors, the end users of technologies and practices, policymakers, development agencies and investors.
- 5 A congress communiqué (Call to Action) on 'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Food Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security' – outlining who should do what and by when
- 6 Congress Book of Abstracts
- 7 Publication of selected papers in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal

08 CONGRESS BUDGET

The estimated budget for hosting about 450 participants for the physical event is approximately USD 800,000. This amount will cover various cost items, including food and drinks for four days, the congress materials (notebooks, pens, bags), translation of all the congress documents and sessions into at least four official AU languages, preparation and publication of congress documents, air tickets and DSA for invited speakers, support for student participation and awards.

The budget will be raised from direct and indirect funding by the congress partners and sponsors; sponsorship of selected cost items in the budget; fees for hosting side events; exhibition and participation fees. In-kind support from the partners is also encouraged.

