



## **4<sup>TH</sup> ALL AFRICA POSTHARVEST CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION**

### **CONGRESS CONCEPT NOTE**

**19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 FLW 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). Reducing FLW is one of the 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.

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, and less pressure on the environment, among others. Postharvest management is also 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. Postharvest management encompasses all the operations/activities involved in the safe and efficient handling and movement of food commodities from production to consumption. 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 of Africa's agriculture, there is a need for a major shift in focus from production and other farm level (upstream) 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 rewarding employment opportunities.

The All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (AAPHCE) was conceptualized 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.

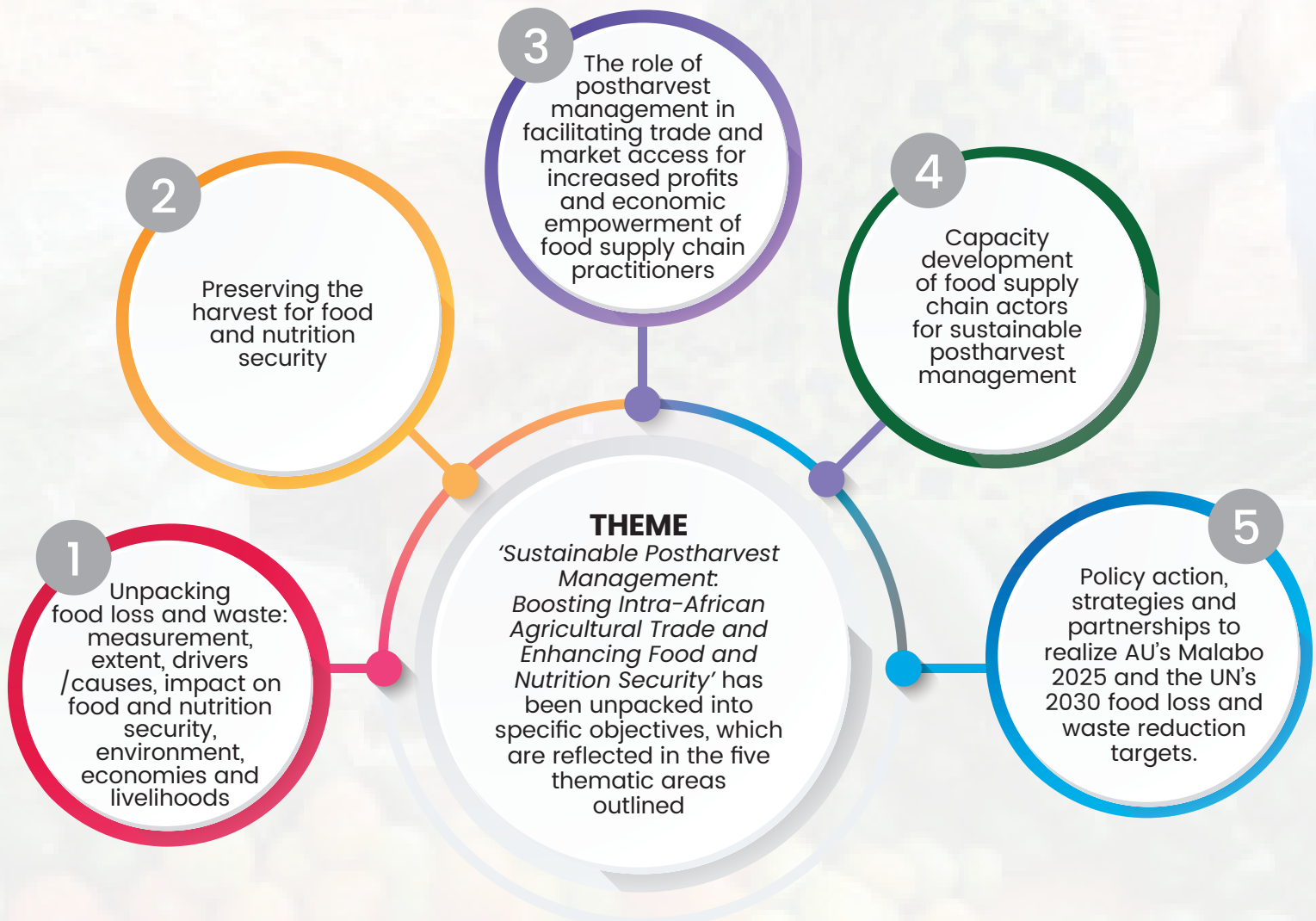
Against the above background, the theme for the 4th AAPHCE had been framed as 'Sustainable Postharvest Management: Boosting Intra-African Agricultural Trade and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security'. This theme recognizes the critical role of postharvest management not only to achieve food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems but also to boost intra-African trade. The theme acknowledges the declaration of 2023 as the year of AfCFTA by the AU and recognizes postharvest management as a key catalyst in the intra-African trade.



## 02 CONGRESS OBJECTIVES, THEME AND SUBTHEMES

### OBJECTIVE

Contribute the efforts towards boosting trade in agricultural commodities and realization of food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems through efficient postharvest management.



## 03 CONGRESS STRUCTURE, DELIVERY AND PARTICIPANTS

The four-day congress is scheduled for 19th to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023. The congress will be hosted physically at the 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.

It is expected that about 450 participants will attend the congress in-person (physically) at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. 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, policy-makers, development partners, government departments, private sector/investors, civil society, media etc.

## 04 EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- i Awareness created about the problem of food loss and waste and applicable solutions in the African context.
- ii The role of efficient postharvest management in boosting intra-African trade and realization of food and nutrition security sustainably demonstrated.
- iii Progress by member countries towards set targets of halving postharvest losses by 2025 under the Malabo Declaration showcased and champions rewarded.
- iv 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.
- v 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.
- vi Congress Book of Abstracts
- vii Publication of selected papers in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal

## 05 CONGRESS BUDGET

The estimated budget for the physical event hosting about 450 participants 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.