



5TH ALL AFRICA POSTHARVEST CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

CONCEPT NOTE

16th to 19th September 2025

Venue

The African Union Headquarters,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Theme

*Securing the Harvest: Postharvest
Management Solutions for Resilient and
Inclusive Food Systems*

01 BACKGROUND

Proper postharvest management with the goal of securing and preserving food that is produced using limited production resources is critical in the efforts to achieve food security and nutrition in inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems. The desired goal to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition while promoting sustainable agriculture (SDG 2) remains elusive, with 1 in 10 (about 783 million people) of the world's population continuing to face hunger. To achieve zero hunger, there is a need for intensified efforts to transform food systems towards sustainability, resilience, and equity.

Food loss and waste (FLW) is a major hurdle in the efforts to address food and nutrition security in sustainable food systems. In 2022, 19% (or 1.05 billion tonnes) of global food was wasted, with household waste accounting for 60%. At the same time, 13.2% of the food produced is lost between harvest on farm, transport, storage, wholesale, and processing levels. Food waste generates significant greenhouse gas emissions, costing over \$1 trillion annually. These unsustainable consumption and production patterns continue to contribute to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, diversity loss and pollution.

Poor postharvest management and the FLW reflect the unsustainability of our food systems as limited and inelastic production resources, including land, water and energy, are used to produce food that is not consumed. Food Loss and waste impact food security and nutrition in three ways: 1) reduction of global and local availability of food; 2) a negative impact on food access because of income losses and increased food prices; and 3) a longer-term effect on food security results from the unsustainable use of production resources (land, water, energy) on which the future production of food depends. In addition, the disposal of food loss and waste in landfills leads to greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.

Therefore, proper postharvest management and subsequent reduction in food loss and waste is a significant lever for broader improvements of our food systems towards resilience, efficiency and sustainability. This is reflected in the newly adopted African Union's Kampala CAADP Declaration (2025) on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa. In this post-Malabo 2014 blueprint for food systems transformation, the heads of state of the African Union have committed to Intensify Sustainable Food Production, Agro-Industrialization and Trade. This commitment envisions an increase in agrifood output by 45% by the end of 2035 through the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to meet the growing African food requirements and global trade opportunities. Additionally, it prioritizes reducing post-harvest losses by 50% by 2035, tripling intra-African trade in agrifood products & inputs and raising the share of locally processed food to 35% of agrifood GDP by 2035. These targets will be achieved through various interventions, which include creation of an enabling policy and regulatory environment that fosters the development and integration of emerging technologies. There will be efforts to stimulate growth, competitiveness and sustainability of agro-industrial enterprises. Efforts will be made to enhance the integration of smallholder farmers (including women and youth) into value chains and regional markets while ensuring equity, inclusivity and sustainability. This effort will be supported by strengthening market access and facilitating trade, which requires good infrastructure, efficient movement of goods/services and less barriers to trade. Investment in postharvest infrastructure and supporting services has been identified as key to increasing trade and improving food and nutrition security across African Union Member States.

With just five years left to 2030, the SDG progress report (2024) shows that the world is severely off-track to achieve the envisioned agenda for sustainable development. The progress report shows that only 17% of the set targets are progressing as expected to be achieved by 2030. Particularly, progress towards target 12.3 (by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses) remains elusive as more food continues to be lost and wasted along the supply chain – from harvest to consumption. Reducing FLW as envisioned under SDG 12.3 has a direct and/or indirect positive impact on other SDGs, including SDG 1, 2, 3, 8,13. Overall, reduction of FLW has immense social, economic and environmental benefits.

There are concerted efforts at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels (including the private sector) towards FLW reduction. These efforts are geared towards securing the harvest to ensure resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems. Greater impact from such efforts can be realized through synergistic and complementary action by the diverse stakeholders (public and private) in the agri-food sector. Therefore, partnerships and collaboration among the various stakeholders are critical for efficient and judicious use of the limited resources to achieve the common goal.

The All-Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (AAPHCE) is a platform where the various stakeholders network while sharing knowledge, information, and experiences in proper postharvest management to reduce FLW. The biennial convening, which was conceptualized in 2017 is now in its fifth cycle and is hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC). The AAPHCE continues to serve as a unique convening platform for agri-food sector stakeholders, including governments & policymakers, private sector actors, development partners and agencies, civil society, researchers & academia, regulatory agencies, food supply chain practitioners (farmers, transporters, traders, processors and others). During the convening, the stakeholders learn, share knowledge, build networks, and strengthen partnerships aimed at addressing the pertinent issue of good postharvest management of food loss and reduction in the African context.

02 CONGRESS OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the AAPHCE is to contribute to food loss and waste reduction by providing a platform to showcase innovative, inclusive, and scalable solutions for proper postharvest management that align with Africa's agrifood systems transformation goals.

Specific objectives

1. Raise awareness about the importance and urgent need to secure and preserve harvested food (the harvest) through better postharvest management systems
2. Demonstrate the critical role of postharvest management in the efforts to realize resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems
3. Showcase effective solutions and approaches for better postharvest management towards food loss and waste reduction – innovative technologies and practices; training and capacity strengthening; community engagement and empowerment; investment and financing models, business cases, policies, strategies, governance structures
4. Showcase opportunities in postharvest management systems that have potential for inclusive development, including youth and women empowerment
5. Build and strengthen linkages and partnerships to support and drive better postharvest management initiatives that enhance equity, resilience and inclusivity

03 CONGRESS THEME AND SUBTHEMES

Theme: Securing the Harvest: Postharvest Management Solutions for Resilient and Inclusive Food Systems.

The theme underpins the critical role of ensuring that the food produced using limited production resources is secured in a bid to achieve food security and nutrition in resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems. It reflects the urgent need to reduce postharvest food loss and waste, which directly contribute to global challenges such as hunger, malnutrition, and climate change. The theme is anchored on the African Union's Agenda 2063, the blueprint for Africa's inclusive and sustainable development. Implementation of the blueprint has been guided by the Malabo Declaration (2014) on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Livelihoods to end hunger by 2025. The Malabo Declaration has been replaced by the newly adopted Kampala CAADP Declaration (2025) on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa. The blueprint has set ambitious targets, including a 50% reduction in postharvest losses, tripling intra-African trade in agrifood products, and an increase in the share of locally processed foods to 35% of agrifood GDP by 2035. All these targets are anchored on proper postharvest management, which requires targeted investment in the requisite infrastructure, innovative technologies and practices, capacity strengthening and better coordination in an enabling policy environment.

Subthemes

The congress theme has been unpacked into five sub-themes as follows:

1. Food loss and waste in numbers - extent, drivers/causes and impact (social, economic, environmental)
2. Innovative solutions (technologies, practices, strategies) for better postharvest management towards food loss and food waste reduction
3. Training, capacity strengthening and community engagement/outreach approaches and opportunities in postharvest management towards inclusive and resilient food systems
4. Governance, institutional frameworks, policy interventions, strategies and partnerships for achieving food loss and waste reduction targets – with a focus on SDG 12.3 and the Kampala CAADP Declaration (2025)
5. Innovative and effective strategies for communication, awareness creation and knowledge sharing (including digital platforms) on postharvest management towards food loss and waste reduction

04 CONGRESS STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

The four-day congress is scheduled for 16th to 19th September 2025. The four-day programme will feature interactive sessions aligned to the five thematic areas. The interactive sessions will include sponsored plenary sessions structured to showcase food loss and waste reduction activities and initiatives by AAPHCE partners. Discussions in these sessions will feature the progress made towards the regional and global targets for food loss and waste (FLW) reduction. The actions, partnerships and investments needed to accelerate FLW reduction will be discussed. One of the plenary sessions will be dedicated to showcasing the progress made by African Union member states towards the Malabo 2014 target of halving postharvest losses by 2025. In this session, success stories will be showcased as well as challenges faced by member states in their efforts to realize the set targets. One of the four days will be dedicated to side events, which will be convened separately by the congress partners and other interested organizations. Side events will allow for in-depth discussions and engagements tailored to specific audiences of interest to the hosts. Research papers from students (and other researchers) will be presented in dedicated sessions including lightning rounds for oral presentations and a poster gallery (physical and digital) complemented by pitching sessions. The presentations by students (oral/poster) will be judged by experts and the best presentations awarded during the closing session. Exhibitions of innovative technologies, practices, and tools for postharvest management towards food loss and waste reduction will be displayed throughout the four days of the congress. To foster closer networking and exchange of ideas, there will be dedicated rooms for business-to-business sessions where partners can engage directly to discuss potential collaborations and partnerships in FLW reduction activities and initiatives.

05 CONGRESS COMMITTEES

The congress organization will be achieved through three inclusive committees with membership from research, academic and non-academic institutions/organization in Africa and beyond. The three committees include:

1. Resource Mobilization Committee

- This committee is tasked with mobilization of resources required for a successful congress. 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.
- The members of the committee will include representatives from the organizations who have a stake in the subject of postharvest management towards food loss and waste reduction. They include the past partners of the AAPHCE and new partners
- Resource mobilization will be spearheaded by the African Union Commission team

2. Technical Committee

- This committee will drive the technical/scientific agenda of the congress.
- Membership of this committee will include subject matter experts from the academic and research institutions, select non-governmental organizations and development partners and interns (graduate students) identified from participating institutions
- The activities of the committee will be spearheaded by a chairperson who will be supported by a co-chairperson

3. Publicity, Communication and Logistics 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.
- Membership of the committee will include the event manager (CEO, Romhay Travel and Event Organizer Ltd), a representative of the AUC communication team, the Chairs of the resource mobilization and technical sub-committees
- The event manager will coordinate the activities of the committee

06 CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS

Congress participants will be drawn from 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

- Awareness created about food loss and waste, the impact (social, economic and environment) and the urgent need for action
- Effective and context appropriate solutions (technologies, tools, practices, strategies, enabling policies) for good postharvest management towards food loss and waste reduction showcased and promoted for greater adoption.
- Opportunities in postharvest management systems for inclusive development, including youth and women empowerment showcased
- Linkages and partnerships established and/strengthened among the agri-food sector stakeholders to enhance collaboration, synergies and complementary efforts in food loss and waste reduction initiatives
- Technical outputs
 - A communiqué (Call to Action) highlighting the pathway to Securing the Harvest: Postharvest Management Solutions for Resilient and Inclusive Food Systems (what needs to be done, who should do it and by when)
 - A special publication showcasing AAPHCE Partners' ongoing activities and initiatives towards food loss and waste reduction
 - A peer-reviewed book of abstracts
 - A special issue of the congress papers published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal

08 CONGRESS BUDGET

Budgetary support is requested to host the physical event with about 400 participants. The cost items to be covered include:

- Food and drinks for four days
- Congress materials (notebooks, pens, bags)
- Translation of key congress documents and live sessions into at least four official AU languages
- Preparation and publication of congress documents
- Air tickets and subsistence for invited speakers
- Support for student participation and awards
- Publicity and engagement with international media and communication channels

The required funds 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 dedicated sessions and side events, and exhibition and participation fees. In-kind support from the partners is also encouraged