

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**FINAL VERSION**

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ALL AFRICA  
POSTHARVEST CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION**

**17<sup>TH</sup> – 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019**

**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, ADDIS ABABA,  
ETHIOPIA**

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Second All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition was jointly organized by the African Union Commission, University of Nairobi, Stellenbosch University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Sasakawa Africa Association, World Food Programme, Eastern Africa Grain Council, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kenya, World Food Preservation Center, World Resources Institute and the Ethiopian Society of Postharvest Management at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 under the theme “*Postharvest Loss Reduction and Agro-Processing: Drivers of Agricultural Transformation in Africa*”.

2. The Congress was attended by over 450 participants from Member States of the African Union including the Academia, Research Institutions, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Media organizations, Regional Economic Communities, Financial Institutions, Development Partners, Farmers Organizations, Women and Youth Groups, Private Sector and representatives of various governments.

3. Besides the African Union Commission, the Congress received financial support from various organizations including Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Rockefeller Foundation, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), Global Alliance for Improved

Nutrition (GAIN), FAMSUN Group Co. Ltd, African Development Bank, Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), World Food Program (WFP), Ethiopian Airlines, BUHLER AG, SNV Netherland Development Organization and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). These sponsors were given certificates of appreciation for their contribution towards the Congress.

4. The Opening Session was presided over by His Excellency, Professor Victor Harrison, AUC Commissioner for Economic Affairs on behalf of H.E. (Amb.) Josefa Sacko AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, who welcomed participants to the African Union Commission for the Second All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition. He noted that food loss and waste is a global phenomenon, common not only in Africa but in most parts of the world. He informed participants that the AUC with the support from key stakeholders and partners has developed a Continental Postharvest Management Strategy, which seeks to reduce postharvest loss in Africa. Furthermore, the Commission is assisting individual AU member states to develop their postharvest National Strategies. He stated that the first CAADP-Malabo biennial review report identified only 5 Member States of the African Union (Togo, Mauritania, Malawi, Uganda and Rwanda) as being on track to achieving the target of 50 percent reduction in postharvest loss by 2025 as envisioned in the Malabo Declaration. He noted the AUC decision to institutionalize the postharvest congress as an AU event. He maintained that given the scale of the greenhouse

gas impact of food loss and waste, members of African Union should include measures to reduce food loss and waste in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. These measures include policies, programs, practices and technologies that reduce food losses on the farms during storage and distribution, at markets and in the homes.

5. Other high-level dignitaries who gave remarks at the opening session included Ms. Joselyn Brown-Hall (FAO's Deputy Regional Representative for Africa); Prof. Gitahi Kiama (Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi); Distinguished Prof. Umezuruike Linus Opara (representing Stellenbosch University); Ms. Betty Kibaara -Director, Rockefeller Foundation; Prof. Ruth Oniang'o (Chairperson of the Sasakawa Africa Association); Dr Damian Ihedioha-representatives of the African Development Bank and Dr Angeline Rudakubana-World Food Programme. The opening remarks were followed by a keynote address delivered by Prof. Nuhu Hatibu on behalf of the President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The opening keynote presentation was made by Dr. Craig Hanson, Vice President of the World Resources Institute and Dr. Hans Hoogeveen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Organizations. The Congress was officially opened by Mr. Zena Habtewold the Director Planning Monitoring and Evaluation from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

6. The Speakers noted that postharvest losses impede most countries from achieving self-sufficiency in food security and

called upon AU member states to give postharvest loss reduction a priority in their national agricultural policies, strategies and plans. Furthermore, they called for the scaling up of affordable postharvest technologies in Africa to enable farmers, traders and agro-processors to benefit from them. They identified the following as key in addressing postharvest loss in Africa: (a) well trained personnel, (b) collection of quantitative and qualitative data for measurement (c) adequate resource allocation, (d) proper coordination of postharvest loss reduction activities e) engagement of private sector, especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and f) Partnerships among the diverse stakeholder. They also recounted diverse approaches and interventions undertaken by various institutions towards postharvest loss reduction and management.

7. The Speakers further advocated for more pro-active action in postharvest loss reduction of various food value chains in Africa. The African Union Commission was also commended for institutionalizing the congress into the commission's continental strategy for postharvest loss reduction.

## **THE CONGRESS STRUCTURE: PLENARY, WORKSTREAM SESSIONS AND SIDE EVENTS**

8. Six (6) Plenary Sessions and twelve (12) Parallel Workstreams were held during the Congress under the following sub-themes : (a) Public Sector Initiatives in Postharvest Loss Reduction and Agro-Processing: Policy, Strategies and Regulations, (b) Financing Models or Options for Agro-processing and

Postharvest Management, (c) Science, Technology and Innovation in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing, (d) Capacity Development and Outreach Programmes in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing, (e) Youth and Women Empowerment through Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing, and (f) Private Sector Initiatives and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing.

9. In addition, there were Side Events organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Sasakawa Africa Association, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the World Food Programme. There were poster presentations from students which culminated in a pitching session to identify the best three posters which were awarded certificates of recognition. There were exhibitions from 14 organizations including private sector and development organizations which showcased technologies and innovations for postharvest loss reduction.

10. The Plenary and Workstream Sessions which were led by moderators brought together lead speakers and panelists who answered questions from the floor after their presentations. The technical discussions that followed the presentations were lively, educative and informative and have contributed to the following messages.

## **GENERAL MESSAGES**

11. A clarion call was made to support AU member states to put in place systems and processes to achieve the postharvest loss reduction target set in the Malabo Declaration that will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 12.3.)

12. The importance of postharvest loss reduction in Africa and its impact on the livelihoods of many was reiterated in the course of discussions. Yet, only 5 percent of the quantum of resources that are earmarked for agriculture go into reducing postharvest losses.

13. The Second All Africa Postharvest Congress underscored the need for country postharvest policies and strategies to be broadened to include issues relating to trade and climate change. Furthermore, the focus of the interventions should be on crops and food value chains with high levels of postharvest losses.

14. It also came out strongly that to effectively tackle postharvest loss, there is the need to focus also on pre-harvest practices during production as these significantly affect the quality of the produce at harvest and thereafter.

15. A call was also made for the standardization of commodity measurements in warehouse receipt systems in Africa.

16. It was stressed that project findings and results on postharvest management should be disseminated to all member states of the African Union. Furthermore, information available in Government Institutions, Research Institutions and Universities on postharvest management should be packaged in simple and

easy-to-understand formats and be disseminated to enhance their adoption by farmers and other target groups.

17. African Union Members states and governments were called upon to strengthen the capacity of small holder farmers and consumers in postharvest loss reduction and food wastage.

18. Initiatives on credit-scoring and online money transacting institutions were appreciated during the congress as they significantly help farmers to access credit for postharvest management.

19. A call was made for increased awareness on postharvest loss in Africa using the electronic, print and social media as well as the strengthening of institutional capacity in postharvest management.

20. The meeting noted that to obtain accurate baseline information on food loss and wastage, surveys should also be conducted every five years to measure food loss and wastage.

21. Agro-processing units should be sited near market centers to help reduce postharvest losses and wastage. The delegates further called for incentives and subsidies to farmers for equipment and innovations in processing to boost their capacity to process the produce by private sector and government.

22. A call was made for the systematic assessment of postharvest management interventions and the up-scaling of the successful ones among them.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

**SUB THEME 1:** Public Sector Initiatives in Postharvest Loss Reduction and Agro-Processing: Policy, Strategies and Regulations.

23. Policies need to be developed and institutions strengthened at the national level in the efforts to address postharvest losses in Africa.

**SUB THEME 2:** Financing Models or Options for Agro-processing and Postharvest Management.

24. There is need to tailor financing models to de-risk investments including financial risk pooling on Postharvest technologies to enable smallholder farmers acquire and adapt them.

25. Innovative financing models should be developed for postharvest technologies to assist farmers and other players in the value chain in adopting them. Finances targeting small scale actors (often the riskiest investment) to be promoted through equity funding, hedge funds, matching funds etc.

**SUB THEME 3:** Science, Technology and Innovation in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing.

26. The need for baseline data on postharvest losses in Africa was stressed as it is critical to monitor progress towards realization of the set target of halving postharvest losses by 2025, under the Malabo Declaration (2014) and by 2030 under the United Nations' SDG 12.3.

27. There is need to strengthen African Institutions' capacity for research to fund homegrown solutions (technologies and innovations) to address postharvest losses in the African context.

28. A multi-disciplinary approach and collaboration among researchers and institutions is very key in addressing PH management and in strengthening research institutions.

29. Robust Communication strategies on postharvest loss should be developed and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) used to raise awareness on postharvest loss and popularize Postharvest Management Solutions to address post-harvest losses in Africa.

30. The congress noted China's wiliness to collaborate and partner with Africa to transfer technologies in PH management especially with equipment and bulk based warehouse storage of grains.

31. It was noted that Government Policies have given incentives and support for smallholder grain farmers to reduce postharvest losses in large scale grain storage as evidenced in China. Such policies can be used to address postharvest losses and implement informed decisions and interventions based on data and technology developed by researchers.

**SUB THEME 4:** Capacity Development and Outreach Programmes in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing.

32. There are glaring capacity gaps in the food chains that must be addressed in order to have the requisite human and infrastructural

capacity to address postharvest loss in Africa. African governments should work with the private sector, global institutions and development partners to address these capacity gaps.

33. Training curricula in universities and other tertiary institutions need to be reviewed to strengthen the postharvest management component in order to impart the requisite skills for complex challenges in postharvest management. There is also the need for technical and vocational training for middle level practitioners, training for extension officers or extension service providers.

34. Tailor-made training modules targeting small-scale farmers should be made available proposing turn key application methodologies in postharvest management.

35. Capacity building and training of experts, especially in postharvest science and management should address postharvest challenges in Africa as a priority. Likewise, research work done at universities and research organization should reach the end user especially those that are accessible and affordable.

#### **SUB THEME 5: Youth and Women Empowerment through Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing,**

36. African governments should ensure that the youth and women are at the centre of postharvest management in Africa, by ensuring a supportive policy environment and availing adequate youth and women friendly financing models.

37. The congress recognized that Youth and Women engaged in agro-processing enterprises require mentorship through incubation centers and other novel models to navigate the difficult business terrain, including those involved in trade.

38. More investment should be made to help youth and women in Agro-processing to access finances to help them start-up or scale up innovations and technologies on postharvest management (include tax reliefs for start-ups).

39. Youth and women entrepreneurs in postharvest management should explore possibilities of satisfying the local market before progressively partnering with local partners in the countries where you want to export to.

**SUB THEME 6: Private Sector Initiatives and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Postharvest Management and Agro-Processing.**

40. In developing effective postharvest management strategies, all stakeholders should be involved and consultations should be done at all levels.

41. It was noted that accessing markets internationally with products can be difficult for traders and agro-processors, as trade tariffs and non-tariff barriers can hinder them from doing so. A way out of this challenge is to partner with local representatives in the country they want to do business in. African governments were also called upon to assist entrepreneurs, especially those that deal in perishable goods or products.

## NOTABLE QUOTES

- “We all appreciate that we have a huge problem on our hands and we cannot hand over to the next generation and we need to address the PHL challenge urgently”
- “Stop proposing 'cave-man technology' to our youth - put ICT into innovations in our universities and training institutions!”
- “Africa needs to take ownership of the PH challenge and address PH loss. We are facing major challenges and increased set of interventions and many successful interventions are induced by market orientation”
- “How do we use the outcome of this Congress to make a difference to people on the ground-what changes lives”
- “Put the right PHL technologies in the hands of SMEs and smallholder farmers and they will be able to compete with the rest of the world”
- “We need to be honest to ourselves, farmers go for what makes sense for them”
- “Get innovative concrete idea from this Congress and bring it to the AfDB and we shall resource it”

## **ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ AND WAY FORWARD**

42. The 2<sup>nd</sup> AAPHCE Delegates and Partners present during the four-day Congress and Exhibition hereby adopt this Communiqué.

43. The Congress called upon the AU Commission to present this Communiqué and the outcomes thereof to the AU Specialised Technical Committee Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at their sitting in October 2019.

**Done on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**