BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Africa has remained the most food insecure continent in the world, with approximately one in four people undernourished. Over the years, most African governments have focused on increasing production to meet the food and nutrition needs of the ever rising population which is estimated to reach 2.5 billion by the year 2050. Indeed, most of the strategies for food and nutrition security (FNS) have been focused more on extensification (putting more land to production) and intensification (increased use of agro-inputs). However, these approaches to FNS are challenged by the limited and inelastic production resources (including land, water, energy, agro-inputs). Current food production systems are unsustainable and climate change poses additional challenge to sustainable agriculture in Africa.

Historical over-emphasis on increased agricultural production without complementary interventions to ensure proper utilization of the food produced has contributed to the reported increase in postharvest food loss and waste over the years. Global food losses and waste is estimated at 1.3 billion metric tonnes (MT), equivalent to over 30% of the total food produced for human consumption, and it is estimated that global food wastage could feed up to 1.6 billion people annually. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the total quantitative food loss has been estimated to be over 100 million MT/year. For grains alone, the value of postharvest losses is equivalent to approximately USD 4 billion/year (at 2007 prices), which could meet the annual food requirements of about 48 million people. The value of food loss exceeds the annual value of grain imports into Africa. These losses exacerbate food insecurity and have negative impacts on the environment through wasting precious land, water, farm inputs and energy used in producing food that is not consumed. In addition, postharvest losses reduce income to farmers and contribute to higher food prices.

In recognition of these challenges and opportunities, the African Union Heads of State and Government included in the 2014 Malabo Declaration a call to reduce postharvest losses in Africa by 50 percent by year 2025. In 2015 at the United Nations General Assembly, governments around the world approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes SDG 12.3 that calls for halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains (including postharvest losses) by 2030. Thus, the Malabo Declaration is supportive of SDG Target 12.3.

Acknowledging the urgent need to address this global challenge, the University of Nairobi and a consortium of partners led by the Rockefeller Foundation, in conjunction with the World Food Preservation Center® LLC (WFPC) organized the 1st All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition (AAPHCE) from 28th to 31st March 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya. The Congress, whose theme was ‘Reducing Food Losses and Waste: Sustainable Solutions for Africa’, sought to contribute to the
continental and global agenda of reducing postharvest food loss and waste (FLW). Following recommendations of the 1st AAPHCE presented at AU-FAO Regional Postharvest Loss Reduction Workshop held on 26th July 2018 and consultation with stakeholders, it was agreed that the AAPHCE event be continued on biennial basis. It was also agreed that the Postharvest Congress be institutionalized within the African Union structures to ensure the continuity and mainstreaming into existing continental programs on postharvest loss reduction.

It is in this context that the AUC has taken the lead to host the 2nd All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition. The congress secretariat hosted by the AUC is working in partnership with the University of Nairobi, Stellenbosch University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, the UN-Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) and Rockefeller Foundation, among other partners. The AUC is calling upon other development partners, universities, research institutions, private sector, civil society, farmer organizations and others to join hands in this initiative to contribute to the continental and global agenda of postharvest loss reduction.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ALL AFRICA POSTHARVEST CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION**

The overall objective of this action by the AUC is to institutionalize the All Africa Postharvest Congress and Exhibition as a biennial event that brings together diverse stakeholders including policy makers, private sector actors, development agencies, civil society, researchers, academics, farmers, processors to learn, share information, build networks and partnerships aimed at addressing the pertinent issue of postharvest loss reduction in the African context.

**Specific objectives**

1. Raise awareness on food losses and waste through data and information sharing
2. Showcase effective strategies, technologies, practices, initiatives for postharvest loss reduction
3. Monitor and review progress on postharvest loss reduction initiatives against set targets
4. Build and strengthen linkages and partnerships (including private sector engagement) for resource mobilization and other activities geared towards postharvest loss reduction

**CONGRESS THEME AND SUBTHEMES**

**Theme:** *Postharvest Loss Reduction and Agro-processing: Drivers of Agricultural Transformation in Africa.* The theme is informed by the potential of postharvest management and value addition of agricultural produce to drive the desired agricultural transformation and industrialization agendas in Africa. Intra-Africa and global trade demands efficiency in postharvest management and delivery of high quality products. This cannot be realized with the current trend that overemphasizes increased production at the expense of downstream activities including value addition.

**Subthemes**

1. Public sector initiatives in postharvest loss reduction and agro-processing: policy, strategies and regulations
2. Financing models and options in postharvest management
3. Science, technology and innovation in postharvest management and agro-processing
4. Capacity development and outreach programs in postharvest management
5. Youth and women empowerment through postharvest management and Agro-processing
6. Private sector initiatives and public-private-partnerships (PPP) in postharvest management

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The congress will have a five-day program where research and policy papers will be presented in joint sessions. The interactive sessions will feature lead papers from sector leaders, research papers, panel discussions and open plenary discussions. There will be dedicated interactive sessions for poster presentations where presenters will be allocated time to share their findings with participants. Exhibitions by companies, organizations, institutions and individuals will run throughout the conference period with dedicated space for business-to-business discussions. A half-day excursion and field visit has been organized on the final day of the congress for participants to experience ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing postharvest losses and waste in the host country, Ethiopia.

PARTICIPANTS

Congress participants will be drawn from a diversity of stakeholders across Africa and beyond. These include farmers, traders, researchers, academia, innovators, policy makers, development partners, government departments, private sector/investors, civil society among others. We invite industry and agencies to partners with us as Congress Sponsors.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Awareness created about the extent of postharvest losses and applicable technologies, practices and strategies. Lessons and experience shared from other regions will contribute individual country strategies for postharvest loss reduction.
- Progress made on efforts by national, private sector, development partners and other actors on postharvest loss reduction towards the set targets of halving postharvest losses by 2025 documented and successes rewarded
- Linkages and partnerships established among the various stakeholders including technology developers and vendors, the end users of the technologies, policy makers, development agencies and investors. The linkages among the stakeholders are expected to facilitate and enhance up-scaling opportunities with the ultimate goal of reducing postharvest losses in Africa
- A communiqué (Call to Action) towards postharvest loss reduction and agro-processing – what needs to be done, who should do it and by when
- A policy brief on requisite actions various actors – private and public towards postharvest loss reduction and agro-processing
- An edited book on the congress proceedings and peer-reviewed journal articles.