
BELLAGIO STATEMENT ON POSTHARVEST MANAGEMENT

MARCH 26, 2018



Bellagio Center, Postharvest Management Workshop Participants

THE CHALLENGE

After a steady decline, world hunger is on the rise again, with 815 million people – one out of every nine on the planet – food insecure or undernourished in 2016, up from 777 million in 2015¹. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations², approximately one-third of all food produced in the world is lost or wasted. In highly food-insecure regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 20% of all grains, 44% of roots and tubers, and 52% of fruits and vegetables are lost between harvest and consumption. There is also substantial degradation in quality, affecting financial value and associated incomes, nutritive content and public health.

Given this precarious situation and an expected population increase from 7.6 to 9.8 billion by 2050, rapid resource depletion and a changing climate, food and postharvest loss reduction needs to be at the center of strategies for sustainable development. As the global community strives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030, **improved postharvest management (PHM) has the potential to avoid losses equivalent to the food and nutrition requirements of 48 million people³** in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region most at risk of food and nutrition insecurity.

Contribution of postharvest management to the Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 12.3 has a clear impact on other SDGs and is therefore central to their achievement.

The significance and scale of the issue is recognized by the African Union's Malabo Declaration

'We commit to... halve the current levels of postharvest losses by the year 2025' - Article III, Commitment to Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025, Malabo Declaration.

'By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including postharvest losses' - SDG 12.3.

and the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Postharvest losses can be significantly reduced with reasonable investments in both capacity development and technology adoption. Large-scale adoption of improved PHM practices and technologies – as seen in Central America⁴ and some parts of Africa – can make a significant difference in food and nutrition security in Sub-Saharan Africa. Several technically-proven and affordable options are available for large-scale dissemination, and can be promoted through business models and other approaches aimed at systemic changes in postharvest market systems, their large-scale adoption and sustainability. In fact, when PHM is analyzed as a market system, it is apparent that various functions are not performed, and that actors who should be performing these functions are absent from the system. Several business models that provide PHM technologies and services to farmers, aggregators, traders or retailers can flourish if the gap between supply and demand of proven technologies and related services is addressed. The importance of PHM to improve food and nutrition security has gained the attention of national policy makers and the donor community. Public actors also have a key role to play in creating an enabling environment and in providing public goods – such as postharvest training and

rural advisory services – but they often lack the strategies and resources for doing so in an effective and efficient manner.

To harness these opportunities, the following key constraints must be addressed:

1. **Awareness and communication:** The lack of education and awareness at both producer and consumer levels, teamed with inadequate communication on the importance of postharvest and food loss reduction, has led to a failure to integrate the topic into relevant policies and strategies. This has in turn resulted in inadequate investment in solutions that reduce food and postharvest losses.
2. **Private sector engagement, including access to finance:** The size and costs necessary to address the problem and the scope of needed investments are largely insufficient or unknown for PHM practices, technologies and services. This hinders the engagement of private sector actors. In addition, appropriate financial products and services tailored for boosting investments in PHM are largely absent.
3. **Coherence and coordination:** There is an urgent need for improved coordination and effectiveness. Many companies, organizations and donor-assisted PHM projects are still acting in isolation instead of harnessing their comparative advantages and fostering synergies between initiatives. There is insufficient sharing and learning.
4. **Policy dialogue and action:** Government policies do not sufficiently address PHM. To reach greater engagement of policy makers, there is an urgent need to create more awareness among them about the scope of the challenge, and to establish and institutionalize multi-stakeholder partnerships to implement PHM strategies.

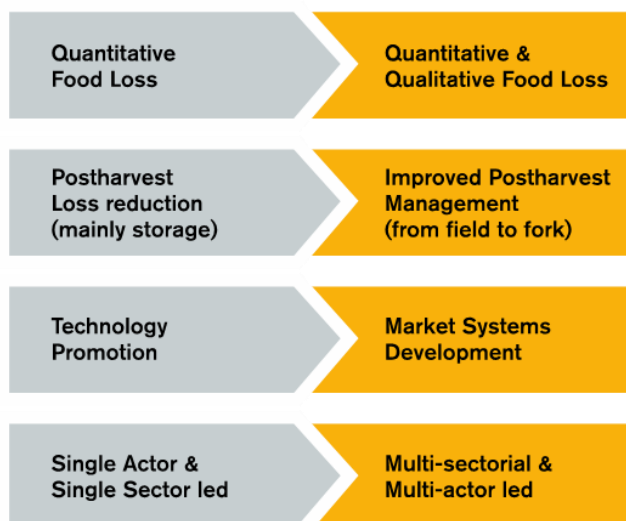
The Bellagio Meeting

From September 11-14, 2017, 22 practitioners representing government, research, academia, the private sector, NGOs and the donor community gathered at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy to share their experiences and visions for improved PHM. Between them, the participants can leverage several decades of PHM knowledge and expertise from five continents.

The Bellagio Statement is first and foremost a collective commitment to collaborate and scale-up effective actions. It is also a call for large-scale, sustained, coordinated and mutually supportive actions from all stakeholders across agri-food systems, including farmers, aggregators, traders, retailers, PHM technology and service providers, financial institutions, governments, donor agencies, research and academic institutions, and the media.

Key Principles

The Bellagio Workshop participants subscribe to the following shifts in focus:



BELLAGIO POSTHARVEST ACTION POINTS

The Bellagio Workshop participants are committed to the following action points and call upon other actors to join us.

1. Awareness Raising and Effective Communication

We call for the development and implementation of comprehensive communication strategies and plans that clearly spell out postharvest loss as **a solvable problem**, with specific key messages targeting different audiences, including farmers, private sector actors, governments, donors and consumers. Much of the knowledge, technologies, and practices needed to drastically reduce postharvest and food losses are already available. Loss reduction has a triple bottom line for people, planet and profit.

Campaigns and other mass media communication strategies should utilize real stories to demonstrate the risks and benefits of food and nutrition security, including the resulting health impacts, in order to raise awareness of the challenges associated with postharvest management. This would create increased willingness and incentives throughout the agri-food system to invest in measures that reduce postharvest losses.

We are cognizant of the group of Champions for SDG 12.3⁵ and understand their current focus to be directed towards food waste reduction. We call upon the Champions to **focus equal attention on postharvest management throughout the entire agri-food system**, highlighting opportunities and promoting investments. We also call upon the Champions to encourage companies to report on their commitments to reducing food losses throughout their supply chains. The Champions should also provide a platform to amplify the issue, gain understanding and momentum, and inform consumers of corporate positions and efforts related to PHM.

2. Private Sector Engagement – Including Access to Finance

A number of proven and affordable postharvest technologies already exist, and new ones are emerging, such as various types of hermetic bags and storage devices. The focus needs to be on the understanding and promotion of these technologies within a market systems development (MSD) approach, identifying and addressing key constraints to private sector business models. A well-facilitated MSD approach aims to achieve systemic change, scale and sustainability within the market system. We **encourage entrepreneurship** (small and growing businesses) to move PHM practices, technologies, and services closer to the farm gate.

To ensure systemic and sustainable market systems changes, we encourage the **subsidization of activities aimed at creating demand** – such as public awareness campaigns and sustained training opportunities – as opposed to a more isolated subsidization of products and technologies themselves. Where needed, we call for innovative incentives to create demand for these technologies and practices.

We call for **fostering vertical integration in PHM market systems** by promoting positive recognition for companies that invest in responsible and safe food supplies, including postharvest management.

There is also a dire **need to improve access to finance and information for financing** at multiple levels. We call on all actors involved in the promotion of postharvest management to clearly demonstrate tangible benefits from investments in PHM to farmers and other market actors. We also call on the financial sector to complement their products for boosting agricultural production and agro-processing with tailor-made products that trigger investments in PHM.

3. Coherence and Coordination

We call on PHM stakeholders to **better align often diverging approaches** – to harness comparative advantages between initiatives and to foster increased sharing and learning – and to **define non-negotiables for concerted action**, such as abolishing the indiscriminate use of subsidies.

We call for **increased coordination** among PHM stakeholders. We encourage the creation of a multi-institutional postharvest coordination facility that will promote joint strategies and become integral to the sub-national, national and regional (e.g. SADC, ECCAS, EAC, CENSAD, SAHEL, COMESA, ECOWAS) postharvest platforms.

4. Policy Dialogue and Action

We call on African Governments to ensure that **appropriate food safety standards are enforced** and that they actively support PHM in their agriculture interventions, creating an **enabling environment conducive for investment** in PHM practices, technology and services. We call upon national governments to support and prioritize **PHM solutions** building on the work of AGRA, FANRPAN, HELVETAS, Purdue University, Rome-based agencies (IFAD, FAO and WFP) and other partners.

We call for the identification of **PHM Champions at different levels**, representing various stakeholder groups. They must be equipped with **evidence on impacts of improved postharvest** management for effective advocacy at various levels.

We call on the African Union to put the **spotlight on PHM in 2019**, focusing on “Promoting postharvest management and market opportunities” as the theme for the year, and to organize multiple exchanges at regional and continental levels to discuss different components of PHM.

A New Way of Thinking

Finally, we call for a **new thinking** around the topic of postharvest based on the principle: *it is easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking, than it is to think yourself into a new way of acting*. In traditional agriculture, expectations are determined by behaviors and outcomes are learned over decades. Therefore, although essential, simply providing educational materials to smallholder farmers is unlikely to lead to sustained change in practices that determine the level of post-harvest loss. Programs that actively engage diverse stakeholders within the market system in collective learning, application and refinement of improved practices to effectively meet local loss reduction needs are necessary.

A Call for Action

Workshop participants are committed to applying and advocating for the principles and action points formulated in the Bellagio Statement within their daily work and through their broader networks. The Bellagio Statement seeks to inspire postharvest actors to rethink effective approaches to address the postharvest and food loss issue. **Above all, the Bellagio Statement is meant to galvanize action.**

THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

- HANS BALLYAMUJURA, CEO, **ZED Group** – South Africa
- DIEUDONNÉ BARIBUTSA, Associate Professor of Stored Products/Postharvest Pest Management at the Department of Entomology of **Purdue University** – U.S.
- VICTORIA CAVANAGH, Head of Sustainable Development and Communications, **Amatheon Agri** – Germany
- SIMON COSTA, Director/Coordinator, Farmer to Market Alliance, **UN World Food Programme** – Tanzania
- RAPHAEL DISCHL, Senior Advisor, Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security, **HELVETAS** – Switzerland
- MARTIN FISCHLER, Programme Coordinator Eastern Africa and Senior Advisor Sustainable Agriculture, **HELVETAS** – Switzerland
- RAFAEL FLOR, Director, YieldWise, **Rockefeller Foundation** – Kenya/ U.S.
- RIFF FULLAN, Team Leader, Knowledge and Learning, **HELVETAS** – Switzerland
- GISELA KELLER, Managing Director, **HELVETAS USA** – U.S.
- AVIVA KUTNIK, Agriculture Development Officer, Office of Market and Partnership Innovation, **USAID** Bureau for Food Security – U.S.
- GERALD MASILA, CEO, **East African Grain Council** – Kenya
- ANNE MBAABU, Head of Markets and Postharvest Management, **AGRA** -- Kenya
- RUPA MUKERJI, Co-Head Advisory Services, Member Management Board, **HELVETAS** – Switzerland
- RAKESH MUNANKAMI, Project Advisor, Grain Postharvest Loss Prevention Project (GPLP) Tanzania, **HELVETAS** – Tanzania
- SITHEMBILE MWAMAKAMBA, Climate Smart Agriculture Programmes Manager, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (**FANRPAN**) – South Africa
- STEVEN SONKA, Professor, Agricultural and Consumer Economics, **University of Illinois** – U.S.
- TANYA STATHERS, Food and Markets Department, **Natural Resources Institute (NRI)**, University of Greenwich – UK
- CEPHAS TARUVINGA, Technical Advisor to the African Union on Food Losses and Waste, **FAO** – Ethiopia

- MIREILLE TOTOBESOLA, Project Manager, **FAO** – Italy
- SOPHIE WALKER, Chief of Party for the Kenya-based AflaSTOP program, **ACDI VOCA** – Kenya
- DEIRDRE WHITE, CEO, **Pyxera Global** – U.S.
- SIMON ZBINDEN, Co-Head, Global Programme Food Security, **SDC** – Switzerland

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR: HELVETAS

In light of its proven track record in effective international PHM programs, partly in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation was invited by The Rockefeller Foundation to organize this workshop.

We would like to thank The Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center for opening its doors and thereby creating a unique environment that encouraged fresh thinking on how to accelerate action on postharvest management.



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- ⁵ <https://champions123.org/>