EDITORIAL

Food Crisis in Africa

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Guest Editor

The food crisis in Africa was discussed and documented in detail in the 1990s. In this documentation it was clearly shown that the population growth outpaced agricultural growth. To date the situation has not improved and instead it has worsened. There are so many reasons but one of the leading has been climate change. This has made urbanization rocket. The main reason of this rocketing has been searching for better livelihoods, especially for the rural and peri-urban poor. The youths in particular are seen all over not to show concern on this problem, while it is clearly admitted they are the ones who will be required by circumstances to take measures in future.

In the causes of the food crisis, the question of postharvest losses has been given a deaf ear. Whatever efforts are made, if this issue is not addressed we may be able to produce more than we have currently, but still avail more food to the causes of the mentioned losses, especially to the pests (insects and rodents) that are never grateful and instead make us suffer more and more. This will always frustrate the efforts of our poor farmers, consequently causing further decline in agricultural production making the poor poorer than before. This will elevate malnutrition that seems housed in our continent. It is through food science, for example looking for promising crops like soybean that contains almost everything we need but has remained underexploited in the continent, or potential underutilized crops like sorghum and millet in places suited to them.

Then, what should we do to contribute to improved livelihoods and thus good health for fellow Africans and others in the developing world?? There are so many answers to this question but one obvious answer should be to do problem-oriented research that will address this postharvest problem. A lot of agronomic research has been done but relatively little research has been conducted in postharvest issues, especially those of value addition and associated safety issues applicable to our real situation. Exploitation of promising plant foods that are affordable on a sustainable basis to majority of residents of Africa is a promising measure. The soybean case in particular needs a lot of food and nutritional sciences