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PRESS RELEASE

**Experts call for scaling Postharvest Management as a roadmap for achieving food security:
The 2018 Bellagio Statement on Postharvest Management**

(Zurich – March 26, 2018) – Food and agriculture experts from various sectors are calling for greater investments and partnerships around post-harvest management as a roadmap to food security and achieving the SDGs.

Twenty two practitioners representing government, research, academia, the private sector, NGOs and the donor community gathered at The Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center in Italy late last year to share their experiences and visions for improved postharvest management (PHM). Their joint “Bellagio Statement,” released today, is 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.

“Food and postharvest loss reduction needs to be at the center of strategies for sustainable development. Our joint voices on this affirms the fact that is a need to invest in and scale post-harvest management, and this will require us to work together, as well as identify champions for this cause.”
Said Rafael Flor, Director of YieldWise at The Rockefeller Foundation.

According to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, approximately one-third of all food produced in the world is lost or wasted. As the global community strives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030, improved postharvest management has the potential to avoid losses equivalent to the food and nutrition requirements of 48 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region most at risk of food and nutrition insecurity.

“Our message is clear: Effective postharvest management is an important opportunity for progress towards achieving food security – the technologies exist, there are success stories in several parts of the world, there are business opportunities. We need coherent action by multiple actors, access to finance, and policy support,” said Rupa Mukerji, Helvetas’ Management Board Member and Co-Head Advisory Services, who hosted the Bellagio workshop.

The Bellagio Statement is a commitment to create more awareness and action on postharvest management. The Statement makes four clear calls for action:

- (1) Awareness raising and communications:** Much of the knowledge, technologies, and practices needed to drastically reduce postharvest and food losses are already available. It is paramount that communication strategies clearly spell out postharvest loss as a solvable problem, with specific key messages targeting different audiences - farmers, private sector actors, governments, donors and consumers. They should also 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.

- (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.
- (3) Coherence and coordination:** Postharvest management stakeholders are called 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. An increased coordination among postharvest management stakeholders is needed, through the creation of a multi-institutional postharvest coordination facility that will promote joint strategies and become integral to the sub-national, national and regional postharvest platforms.
- (4) Policy dialogue and action:** African Governments are asked to ensure that appropriate food safety standards are enforced and that they actively support postharvest management in their agriculture interventions, creating an enabling environment conducive for investment in practices, technology and services. Postharvest management Champions at different levels should be identified, and should be equipped with evidence on impacts of improved postharvest management for effective advocacy at various levels. The African Union is called to put the spotlight on postharvest management in 2019 and to organize multiple exchanges at regional and continental levels to discuss different components of postharvest management.

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About The Rockefeller Foundation

For more than 100 years, The Rockefeller Foundation's mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Together with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot – or will not. For more information, please visit

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About HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Helvetas founded in 1955, is the largest Swiss-based and a leading European international development NGO. Our vision is a just world in which all men and women determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. For more information, please visit <http://www.helvetas.org>

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