



## HarvestPlus, Sasakawa Africa Association Form Partnership to Scale Up Nutrient-Enriched Crops

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(Dec. 6, 2021)—[HarvestPlus](#) and the [Sasakawa Africa Association](#) (SAA) announced today a new partnership to expand the reach and impact of nutrient-enriched staple crops in Africa, as part of sustainable, climate-smart agricultural strategies that benefit smallholder farming families.

The partnership—launched during an official side event of the **Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021**—is targeting nine African countries\* in which one or both partners currently have a presence, but with a view toward expanding to several more countries on the continent over time. HarvestPlus and SAA will work with a range of local partners to scale up “ready-to-deploy” biofortified crop varieties with high potential for farmer adoption and for addressing micronutrient malnutrition. Collaboration between HarvestPlus and SAA will include:

- Improving the accessibility of biofortified planting material for smallholders;
- Training farming communities on biofortified crops, and conducting crop demonstrations;
- Promoting value addition of biofortified crops through agro-processing enterprises;
- Improving farmers’ access to finance, input markets, and output markets;
- Expanding public and private partnerships;
- Supporting policy advocacy to improve enabling environments for biofortification;
- Conducting joint resource mobilization to support expansion of these activities.

Makoto Kitanaka, President of SAA, said: “In SAA’s new strategic plan, we will put more emphasis on improving nutrition in rural Africa. The partnership with HarvestPlus is a good opportunity to integrate biofortified crops into SAA’s nutrition-sensitive agriculture approaches, and to help expand the production and consumption of biofortified crops in Africa.”

The partnership will leverage the partners’ respective areas of expertise in mission-driven agricultural development. HarvestPlus is the global leader in all aspects of staple crop biofortification, while SAA has decades of experience supporting smallholder farmers along the agricultural value chain in close collaboration with national agricultural extension services. Both partners are committed to food systems approaches to engaging and empowering smallholder farming families, with the goal of generating sustainable improvements in their food and nutrition security, as well as their livelihoods.

“We share SAA’s objective of fostering resilient, regenerative, and nutritious food systems that are tailored to the needs and priorities of smallholder farmers,” said Arun Baral, CEO of HarvestPlus. “We are excited about SAA’s commitment to integrating biofortified crops and foods in its strategy, and the

opportunity through this partnership to accelerate scale-up and expand the reach of biofortification in Africa.”

SAA adopted a new [five-year strategic plan](#) in 2021 which adds a nutrition-sensitive agriculture element to a longstanding focus on agricultural development that is sustainable, resilient, regenerative, and market-oriented. Specifically, SAA has committed to increasing cultivation of biofortified crops and nutrient-dense indigenous vegetables by farming families.

For HarvestPlus, the partnership also aligns with its biofortification scaling strategy based on nurturing and leveraging partnerships—more than 600 globally to date—to sustainably embed biofortified products along seed and food value chains, with smallholder farmers at the center. The partnerships’ policy advocacy activities also align with the HarvestPlus strategic objective of creating strong enabling environments for biofortification.

### **About Sasakawa Africa Association**

SAA is dedicated to helping Africa build resilient and sustainable food systems, an aspiration that underlines its new vision, “Africa feeding Africa.” SAA’s overarching aim is that Africa’s smallholder farmers fully achieve a state of food, income, and nutrition security. SAA employs an extension approach focused on four dimensions of food security (affordability, accessibility, utilization, and stability), to provide households with sustainable access to nutritious food.

### **About HarvestPlus**

HarvestPlus improves nutrition and health by working with partners to develop and promote biofortified food crops that are rich in vitamins and minerals, and providing global leadership on biofortification evidence and technology. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR and is based at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Through the work of HarvestPlus and its many partners, nearly 400 varieties of biofortified crops have been released in 40 countries around the world.

*\*HarvestPlus and/or SAA are currently present in these African countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.*