

Integrating Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato into Government Policy & Creating an Enabling Environment in Tanzania

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9th Annual Technical SPHI Meeting
Concord Hotel and Suites, Nairobi, Kenya

24-27 September, 2018

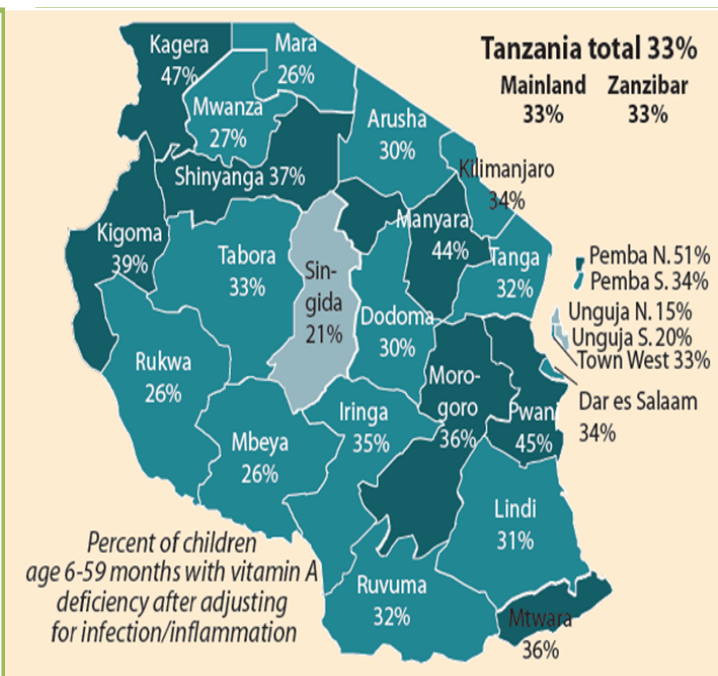


Outline

- Background
- National multi-stakeholder policy platform
- Integrating sweetpotato into Government policies, strategies and plans
- Engaging private sector
- Raising new investment
- Key challenges
- The way forward

Background

- Tanzania recorded the fastest reduction rate of stunting from 42.5% in 2010 to 34.4% in 2016 (WHO)
- However, **over 2.7 million under five children are stunted**
- Vitamin A deficiency is still a public health concern – calling for a holistic approach to address vitamin A deficiency (VAD)



Prevalence of vitamin A deficiency among 6 - 59 months of age by region

Highest prevalence rates are found in Pemba N. (51%), Kagera (47%), Pwani (45%) Manyara (44%), Kigoma (39%), Shinyanga (37%) and Mtwaru (36%) (TDHS 2010).

Vitamin A deficiency - 33% (THDS 2010)

... Background - holistic approach to addressing vitamin A deficiency

○ Holistic approach to addressing VAD

- Supplementation
- Industrial fortification
- Dietary diversification
- Biofortification – orange-fleshed sweet potato and other nutritious crops

○ The success of these interventions require:

- Enhanced infrastructure
- Access to a diverse diet and supplements
- A vibrant manufacturing sector and
- Access to markets and health systems
- Concerted effort from multiple sectors and partners

Holistic approach



... Background

- Sweetpotato is the second most important root crop in Tanzania
 - More than 760 hectares of sweetpotato
 - Average production annually of 3.8 million tons
 - About 18 sweetpotato varieties officially released
- Orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) is high in Beta-carotene and helps reduce vitamin A deficiency

Creating an enabling environment

Public sector engagement

- **National Multisectoral Policy Platform – coordinated by the Prime Minister’s Office**
 - Ensures that government activities are implemented in a coherent manner by bringing together key actors with cross-sectoral complementarities – agriculture, health, nutrition, education, finance and planning, environment, Local Government Authorities and Parliamentary Group on Nutrition
 - Convenes Government, development partners, UN agencies, private sector and civil society organizations – in planning, coordination and implementation
 - Discusses nutrition issues that need Government intervention
 - Plays an advisory role to the Government for increased investment in nutrition (including biofortification)

... Creating an enabling environment

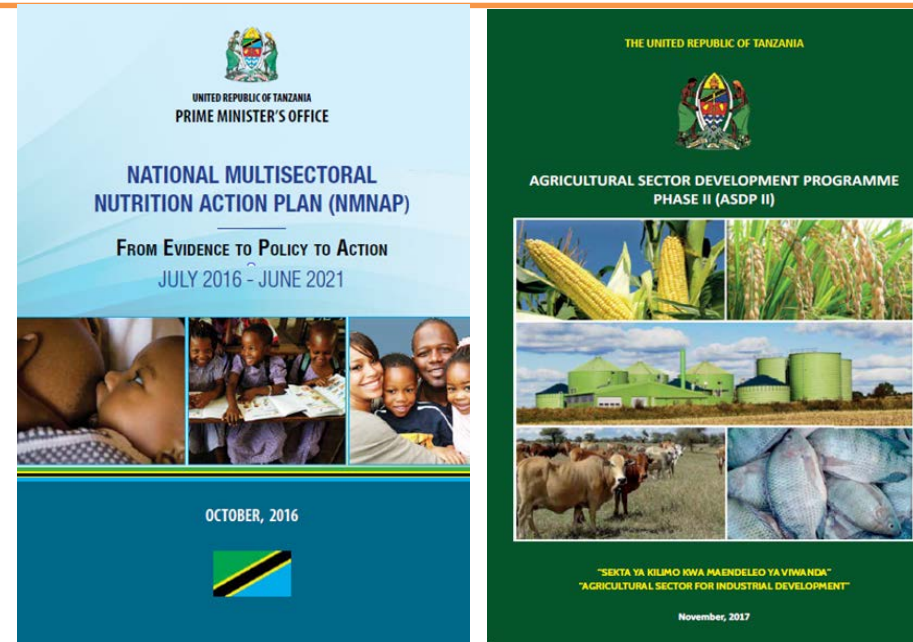
... *Public sector engagement*

- Strengthens the capacity of a cadre of policy makers, leaders, advocates and champions at different levels to influence the inclusion / prioritization of nutrition / biofortification / OFSP in policy documents
- Formed the High Level Steering Committee on Nutrition (HLSCN) to ensure participation of key nutrition stakeholders in developing and tracking progress of multi-sectoral approaches to address malnutrition
- The HLSCN convenes the Joint Multisectoral Nutrition Review Meeting - an annual event that brings together all key actors in nutrition

....Creating an enabling environment

Public sector engagement – policy formulation and implementation
(statements on biofortification / OFSP)

- The National Agricultural Policy of 2013
- Agriculture Sector Development Strategy II (ASDS-II) of 2014
- The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Policy (1992) *now under review*
- The 5-year strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (2016-2020)
- The Agriculture Sector Development Programme II (ASDP-II) of 2017, and
- The National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (NMNAP) (July 2016- June 2021)



- Examples of key policy documents that prioritize biofortification: NMNAP, ASDP II

... Creating an enabling environment

... Public sector engagement

- Strengthening national technical platforms across sectors to foster partnerships for the creation of a conducive policy implementation environment – hosted by Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC)
 - National Food Fortification Alliance – Biofortification was mainstreamed in the National Food Fortification Alliance terms of reference – and appears on the agenda of all of its meetings
- OFSP Platform :
 - The OFSP platform was launched on 29th September 2017.
 - A WhatsApp group was established to facilitate communication and sharing information for value chain actors

...Creating an enabling environment

- **Private sector engagement**

- The Government:

- Recognizes the role of the private sector in addressing nutrition issues such as vitamin A deficiency
- Encourages increased private sector investments in production, marketing and processing of OFSP



Further engagement with the private sector will hasten investment in production and consumption of OFSP to help address vitamin A deficiency

... Creating an enabling environment

- *Increased investment to tackle VAD through a holistic approach*

The Government:

- is working with communities to provide access to a diverse range of nutritious foods through promotion of OFSP and other high nutrient value food varieties
- has employed other strategies such as nutrition education to promote consumption of a diversified diet, supplementation, and industrial fortification of maize flour, wheat flour and cooking oil
- Has provided tax exemption for the fortificants starting for those for wheat and flour

Creating an Enabling Environment for Capacity and Resources

- Research is on-going to release improved OFSP varieties
- Information and knowledge on the OFSP value chain - with support from various partners – including CIP
- Tanzania has developed strong institutions that continue to train others on how to design and implement programmes and projects on OFSP along the value chain
- Investment National level
 - The government through ASDPII has allocated resources for AR4D and nutrition with sweetpotato earmarked among the priority crops
- Investment Local level
 - Local Government Authorities have made commitment to allocate at least TZS 1,000 per child for health and nutrition interventions

Steps the Government is Taking to Implement Policies on Biofortification

Four key steps

- **1. Pre-implementation:** unpack and communicate the policy statement on biofortification e.g. NMNAP
 - The complex NMNAP document has been simplified to **unpack what it means and how to actualize** (shorter version of NMNAP and policy briefs developed)
 - **Multisectoral meetings** organized by the **High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition** for key actors to sensitize; strengthen the capacity of members of the committee and key parliamentary committees (nutrition, agriculture, education, health, social and community development and budget and planning to influence resource allocation); target parliamentarians and investors; explain the problem and what it takes; plan implementation strategies; establish whose role and responsibility; and communicate the policy statements widely
 - **Budgeting and allocation of resources** through national / ministry development plans; private sector entities to fund elements of the initiative of interest to them
 - **Compacts signed** between the **Vice President and Regional Commissioners** to ensure all nutrition issues, including biofortification are followed up at regional and Local Government Authority levels
 - **District nutrition committees meetings** to discuss and implement NMNAP issues - biofortification included

... Steps the Government is Taking to Implement Policies on Biofortification

... Four key steps

- **2. Implementation** - delivery of policy statements by the various actors
 - Rolling out of essential actions by Government - different line ministries
 - Rolling out of essential actions by other development partners
 - Targeted investment and action by other investors - private sector
- **3. Sustainability**
 - Institutionalization of the programs – various actors play their role
- **4. Monitoring, learning and evaluation (MLE)** – measure implementation
 - Measure and assess progress and outcomes; success factors; challenges; cost gaps etc. - to guide decision making

Key Challenges

- Inadequate resources for awareness creation, sensitization and nutrition education
- Inadequate resources for investment in OFSP for Tanzania
- Access to high quality vines – especially during the dry period
- Access to regular supply of high quality roots in the market (throughout the year)
- Postharvest handling losses
- Micronutrient interventions have a funding gap estimated to be USD 43.81 million
- Absence of standards, protocols and infrastructure for micronutrient analysis for large-scale processors
- Resources to implement new standards for the production of disease-free planting materials

Way Forward

- Heighten promotion and evidence-based advocacy at all levels for increased production and consumption of OFSP
- Support implementation of policies, strategies and plans that help fight VAD through a holistic approach
- Finalize standards and guidelines on micronutrients such as vitamin A
- Improve vine dissemination to reach more rural households through multiple channels (Decentralised vine multipliers, schools, local Government) and boost productivity and utilization of OFSP and other nutritious crops
- Increased investment from Government (central and local), private sector and development partners to support breeding, capacity development, vine dissemination, and agro-processing
- Engage the private sector to play a more active role along the value chain of OFSP to drive demand



The enabling environment is substantially improved...

Now is the time to turn policy into action...

Once again, I thank the SPHI leadership for inviting me and
I thank you all for your attention!