

THE INTERNATIONAL POTATO CENTER (CIP) IN TANZANIA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Tanzania was among the first East African countries where CIP had physical staff presence and activities by 1976. With financial support from the Government of Finland, CIP introduced hundred of potato clones for evaluation and adaptation and initiated development of a seed potato system. In 1992, CIP ceased to have physical staff presence in Tanzania but kept active collaboration with potato and sweetpotato national research scientists. CIP posted resident staff to Tanzania once again in 2012 and reopened the office in Mbeya at the heartland of potato research. Since 2009, at least four potato and seven sweetpotato varieties have been released and registered in Tanzania. A further four potato varieties were released in 2013. By 2015, Tanzania had the largest area in East Africa under potato cultivation and yield had improved from 5 to 8.7 t/ha between 2009 and 2014. Similarly, there has been tremendous growth in sweetpotato and by 2014, Tanzania was the leading producer in Africa overtaking Uganda and Nigeria, low yields at 4.5 t/ha notwithstanding. The low yield scenario in both crops needs to be addressed to enhance crops profitability preferably by solving the bottlenecks in their seed systems with improved investment in value addition and processing.

