

**Biofortification Pioneer, Robert Mwanga,
Among Winners of 2016 World Food Prize for Fight Against Malnutrition**



Robert Mwanga

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Dr. Robert Mwanga, a sweetpotato breeder with the International Potato Center (CIP), successfully used local farmers' sweetpotato varieties and introduced varieties from USA, China, Japan, CIP, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre to breed new varieties of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) adapted to local growing conditions and preferred by children, farmers and consumers. His varieties were used in Uganda and Western Kenya to show the feasibility and effectiveness of vitamin A-rich OFSP in increasing maternal and child vitamin A intake and status. Over 600,000 botanical sweetpotato seeds (breeding populations) have been distributed to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries from Robert's program. In SSA, 14 countries (Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Cost), Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) have received botanical seeds or cleaned varieties for evaluation; several countries are already scaling up production and are promoting use of OFSP to reduce widespread vitamin A deficiency (VAD), hence, helping to reduce the number of children going blind and dying due to VAD. Drs. Robert Mwanga, Maria Andrade and Jan Low of CIP and Dr. Howarth Bous of HarvestPlus were announced in Washington (June 28, 2016) as the winners of the 2016 World Food Prize, for their outstanding pioneer biofortification (breeding micronutrient-dense staple crops) work on OFSP for improving the health of 10 million rural poor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.