With more than 4 million ha harvested, Tanzania is the second largest country, after Nigeria, in area occupied by maize in SSA. Maize production outstrips all cereals and other staples in Tanzania. In general, production showed upward trends starting in the early 2000s but there have been significant fluctuations. The area grew at the rate of 9.4% per annum between 2000 and 2013 whereas the yield declined at 3.6%.

Drought is the most important abiotic constraint to maize production in Tanzania. The 2009 drought resulted in a 39% production decline in comparison with the previous year. The appearance of MLN in 2012 is also adding more pressure on maize in Tanzania. Variety turnover has been slow, with hybrids and OPVs being 14 years and 22 years old, respectively. The most widely grown OPV, Staha, was released in 1983.

Private-public partnerships have helped develop and deliver choices of new drought tolerant maize varieties with a range of options.

Available seed has helped accelerate the process of variety development in Tanzania.

Farmers prefer varieties with multiple cobbing and large cobs.

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