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Paper Title **Food Science and Technology in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities**

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ABSTRACT

The paper looks into various definitions and scope of food processing. The levels of poverty in Nigeria and its effect on food environment are discussed. Also, the state of the Nigerian Agriculture and Food Industries and the business environment; raising various deterministic factors like physical, cultural, socio-political, legal, technological and even psychological are highlighted. Various opportunities such as changes in food consumption patterns, human population, income growth, increase in the demand for variety of products (like low calorie foods, fortified foods, nutraceuticals etc) and innovative processes are highlighted. Current challenges such as globalization, export earnings, improving rural household incomes, changing consumer taste, raw material sourcing, appropriate technology, food information management, cash flow, food policy and marketing as well as extension strategy are discussed. The level of food safety practices in Nigeria and various roles played by government, regulatory bodies, private organization, the consumers, and the food technologists are discussed. Issues on non-implementation of previous regulatory strategy are highlighted and suggestions on how to attain the ideals of food safety are enumerated. The contributions of the food technologists as exemplified by the current roles (such as stakeholders meetings, seminars, symposia, training and workshops on food processing and preservation) of the Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology in Nigeria towards adequate food processing practices are discussed. Various institutional innovations in ensuring effective and safe food processing practices in Nigeria are highlighted. In conclusion, the paper suggests various strategies (such as review of academic curricula, research networking, capacity building, consumer education and awareness, infrastructural facilities, access to credits, government policies for viable business environment) towards ensuring adequate food processing practices in Nigeria.