

The First Partnership Platform Meeting of PACA 7 – 9 October 2014, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia *Communique*

I. Introduction

The First Partnership Platform Meeting (PPM) of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was convened at the African Union Commission (AUC) through the PACA Secretariat on 7 to 9 October 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The PACA PPM was organized under the theme: *“Working together to accelerate actions to reduce the harmful effects of aflatoxin in Africa.”* Attended by nearly 200 participants from AU Member States and beyond, the meeting offered the first opportunity for such a broad array of experts from around the continent to gather on the issues of aflatoxin control. Participation in the meeting included senior government officials from AU Member States (government ministries from agriculture, trade and health), Regional Economic Communities representatives, farmers’ organizations, consumer associations, large and small business sector representatives, civil society, development partners, donor communities, and the African Union, among others.

The Commissioner of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AUC, H.E. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace led the delegations from the AUC. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), The West African States (ECOWAS) were represented by the senior staff of their food safety/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) coordination departments.

The Hon. Mrs. Janet Mbeni, Deputy Minister for Industry, the United Republic of Tanzania, officiated the opening session of the meeting, moderated by Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC. Others speaking in the opening session were H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner, Rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC; and Dr. Amare Ayalew, PACA Program Manager, AUC.

The ‘Formal Opening Session’ was concluded by a keynote speech rendered by Mr. Jeff Hill, Director of Policy Unit for the Bureau of Food Security, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who also represented the development partners on the PACA Steering Committee.



A Press Conference involving AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Hon. Seif Rashid, Minister for Health and Social Welfare of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. Mrs. Janet Mbeni, Deputy Minister for Industry, United Republic of Tanzania; and Mr. Jeff Hill, Director of Policy Unit for the Bureau of Food Security, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Press Conference deliberated on the extent of aflatoxin prevalence in Africa, and the challenges and opportunities in combating the vexing problem. Further, the press briefing highlighted the crucial role of PACA in coordinating and catalyzing action for aflatoxin mitigation on the African continent.

II. Meeting Program and Structure

The first PPM was organized to stimulate and facilitate sharing of experiences and lessons learned across sectors and food value chains, as well as to identify the systemic challenges to aflatoxin prevention and control and to support co-creation of sustainable solutions.

The meeting also sought to generate consensus on the most efficient and effective ways to collectively advance PACA's agenda, by reviewing and inputting on the strategies and action areas of PACA Secretariat's refined strategic areas in 2014 and beyond. Accordingly, the meeting adopted an approach that promoted participation, as a means to harnessing the knowledge and experience of all the delegates.

The PPM was structured with 18 Working Sessions over a period of three (3) days. The Sessions included a mix of a) Plenary Keynote Addresses, Presentations and Roundtable "Buzz groups" Discussions; b) Panel Discussion Sessions; c) Thematic and Country Breakout Sessions; and d) Gallery Marketplace showcasing of participant's exhibitions and activities.

The plenary sessions served as accountability platforms to highlight progress on PACA implementation at all levels, as well as to communicate the important decisions and activities. Specifically, discussions centered on the PACA Secretariat refined strategy, continent-wide information sharing and advocacy, and the country-level activities, implementation process, progress and challenges. The breakout sessions, on the other hand, were organized to provide a platform for deeper discussions on emerging sub-themes that were clustered into, namely: Practical value chain management; Incentives, policies, regulations, and markets to change behaviors; Nutrition and health; Surveillance, monitoring and testing; and Communications – creating awareness of impacts and solutions advocating for action.

The gallery marketplace offered a unique platform that allowed all stakeholders at the meeting to network, showcase aflatoxin mitigation efforts and discuss work being implemented in their respective sectors and countries/regions.

Through the participatory, interactive and transparent meeting design, the meeting encouraged full commitment from all stakeholders on PACA's strategy on tackling the aflatoxin problem; achieved concrete alignment and synergy on strategies; facilitated the sharing of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices among RECs, countries, organizations, farmers and others; and received endorsement of plans to work together and avoid duplication of efforts.

The PPM meeting was closed by Mr. Stephen Muchiri, East African Farmer's Federation, representing the PACA Steering Committee.

III. Plenary Discussions and Recommendations

Stakeholders in the plenary discussions recommended the following actions regarding PACA Pilot Countries and regional on-going activities:

A. PACA Pilot Countries and Ongoing Aflatoxin Activities



Country Focal Points and Representatives: From left to right: Dr. Martin Kimanya - NM-AIST, Tanzania; Mr. Isaac Gokah – Ministry of Trade and Industry, Malawi; Dr. Lamine Senghor – DPV, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment, Senegal; Mr. Muctar Sonko, FSQA, Gambia; Dr. Abel Atukwase, Makerere University, Uganda

A facilitated panel discussion on “Cross-Cutting Issues in Developing Country Plans and Implementing Actions” explored issues, such as: the approaches to encourage collaboration across agriculture, health, and trade sectors; how to engage public and private sector actors in planning and implementing aflatoxin control actions; aflatoxin and food safety systems; institutional structures needed to support implementation of

aflatoxin control actions; and innovative interventions that have shown promise and success. The recommendations from the panel discussions included:

1. That PACA secretariat should develop a clear strategy for engaging the private sector;
2. It was observed that in many countries, the aflatoxin agenda is moving ahead of food safety agenda. It was recommended that aflatoxin be used as a trigger to enable countries prioritize food control system. Aflatoxin mitigation and control activities should be linked to food safety so as to be integrated into the national food control systems
3. The PACA Secretariat should explore how non-pilot countries could participate in the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) portal.

B. Activities in the Region



REC representatives – From left to right Mr. Ernest Aube, ECOWAS; Ms. Martha Byanyima, COMESA; Mr. William Olaho-Mukani, EAC

A panel discussion on “Activities in the Regions” provided an opportunity for representatives from three RECs, namely COMESA, EAC and ECOWAS, to share their experiences in regions in supporting countries in aflatoxin mitigation activities. The panel and plenary discussions resulted in recognition of important REC initiatives, emphasis of the importance of the multi-sectoral approach of PACA (agriculture, trade and health), and identification of key issues in each of the pilot countries: development of a food safety control system (Uganda), capacity building including strengthening laboratory (The Gambia) and training on aflatoxin control (Senegal), building a food

safety system using aflatoxin as an entry point (Malawi), and raising awareness in terms of the available value chain management options (Tanzania).

IV. Financing of Aflatoxin Mitigation Initiatives on the Continent

A facilitated panel discussion on Financing of Aflatoxin Mitigation Initiatives on the Continent addressed the specific challenges, opportunities, and innovative ideas to fund actions to reduce harmful effects of aflatoxin provided perspectives from the private sector, public sector and philanthropy. The recommendations from the panel discussions included the request for financing of research, marketing and quality control, and the need for alignment between the commercial sector and informal markets, which are key to address in aflatoxin control. Development partners are seeking integrated, multi-sector funding opportunities, and PACA Secretariat provide countries with support to align stakeholders, raise awareness on aflatoxin, and develop clear plans and resource mobilization strategies.

V. Role of Parliament in Developing and Implementing Solutions for Aflatoxin Control



From left to right: Hon. Janet Zebedayo Mbene, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade, Tanzania ; Hon. Judith Pareno, EALA member from Kenya and member of the Committee on Agriculture Natural Resources and Tourism, AWEPA, Kenya

A facilitated panel discussion on Role of Parliament in Developing and Implementing Solutions for Aflatoxin Control allowed participants to exchange ideas about the role of Parliamentarians on issues such as, public awareness, policy review, policy

harmonization, regulations and standards for control of food safety at national and regional levels. The panel discussion included that the functions of the regional and national parliaments are the same: to represent people, ensure oversight for and on behalf of the people, and enact legislations. The difference is that the national parliament deals with national issues while regional parliament deals with regional issues. The two Parliaments (regional and national) communicate through the relevant committees of parliament. PACA Secretariat should develop a Parliamentary Engagement Plan starting with two issues; a) identifying and supporting parliamentary Champions in all the Regions; and b) coordinating regional training for parliamentarians.

VI. “Diving Deep” Group Discussions, Recommendations and Actions



Participants at the 1st PACA PPM

A. Action for PACA Secretariat

It was noted that the PACA Secretariat Strategic Direction includes continental, regional, and country level activities. Although country level activities will focus on pilot countries, the Secretariat will implement many activities that support other countries, which are not involved in the pilot projects. The three action areas for the PACA Secretariat included the following:

1. *Convenings and mainstreaming*: Organize continental, inter-regional and regional convenings
2. *Information sharing and Knowledge Management*: Identify, document, and disseminate and support aflatoxin communications



Partnership
for Aflatoxin
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour
lutter contre
l'aflatoxine en Afrique

Parceria para o
Controle da
Aflatoxina em África

الشراكة من أجل مكافحة
الافلاتوكسين في أفريقيا



3. *Support to Countries*: support PACA Pilot Countries to generate evidence to inform government-led stakeholder aligned plans.

B. Actions for PACA Community

During the PPM, the participants worked in five groups in two sessions, to discuss “State of Knowledge, Technologies, and Best Practices” within 5 emerging thematic areas, namely: Practical value chain management; Incentives, policies, regulations, and markets to change behaviors; Nutrition and health; Surveillance and testing; and Communications – creating awareness of impacts and solutions advocating for action. Within each thematic area, actions were identified to be implemented by various stakeholders.

Action Areas

Practical Value Chain Management	Incentives policies, regulations, and markets to change behaviours	Nutrition and Health	Surveillance and Testing	Communications – Creating Awareness of Impacts and Solutions Advocating for Action
Develop packages of existing technologies and practices that effectively and efficiently manage aflatoxin levels in food chains	Develop and improve Food Control system in all countries.	Develop lab testing for aflatoxin in blood serum and urine on the African continent in the next 2-4 years.	Develop rapid mobile and cheap testing	Build capacities at PACA Secretariat, national and RECS levels to develop a responsible and targeted communications and awareness strategy on the aflatoxin challenge.
Work with African small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to identify value chain models that have worked well for engaging farmers and managing aflatoxin levels.	Conduct food safety situation analysis	Create a major communication strategy for all sectors on the health effects of aflatoxin exposure in the next year.	Create cross-border harmonization	Develop the inclusive country and REC communications and Awareness Strategy highlighting health, food safety, trade impacts and food security challenge of aflatoxin. Monitor and Evaluate Progress on Communications and Awareness Interventions
Raise awareness and train/build capacity stakeholders that play key roles along supply chains.	Develop a food control policy and integrate aflatoxin. Enforce existing food safety laws	Work with EAC to develop lessons learned from hepatitis b vaccination program and scale it to continental level in the next 1-3 years.	Establish local aggregate labs at community/ village level which will provide training materials for sampling and extraction procedures and assays;	Develop communications guidelines.
	Develop legal framework to integrate aflatoxin legislation - Develop awareness and capacity of parliamentarians on aflatoxin issues as part of the proposed legislation	Increase active engagement with the private sector to advance aflatoxin on the global agenda immediately.	Build human and lab capacity at country and regional levels	Build Country and REC communications and awareness teams - Build capacities of communication teams