

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

H.E. DR. JAKAYA KIKWETE

Former President of the United Republic of TANZANIA

AT THE

2nd PACA Partnership Platform Meeting

11-13 October 2016

Entebbe, Uganda

H.E Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of UGANDA

H.E Commissioner Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Rural Economy and Agriculture, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Hon. Alioune Sarr, Minister for Commerce, Informal sector, Consumption, Promotion of local products and SMEs, SENEGAL

Hon. Dr. Cleopa Mailu, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health, KENYA

Hon. Ssempijja Vincent Bamulangaki, Cabinet Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, UGANDA

Representatives of the PACA Steering Committee

Development Partner Representatives

Representative of the Private Sector

Representatives of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning!

Your Excellency President Museveni,

Before I present my speech, allow me to convey to you and the people of Uganda warm greetings from Her Excellency Dr. Dlamini Nkosazana Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. We thank you for the good leadership that has resulted in a very strong relationship between Uganda and African Union Commission.

May I also join the delegates in this conference in thanking you for hosting this monumental PACA partnership platform workshop. Your hospitality in hosting this conference and your keen interest in ensuring that the people of this continent can feed themselves with safe and nutritious food is greatly appreciated. Thank you for finding time in your very busy schedule to attend this conference and share your words of wisdom with the delegates

We all agree that food security and nutrition is one of the most basic rights of humankind. Nevertheless, we still live in a continent that is greatly challenged by hunger and malnutrition. Studies have shown that 20% of the entire continent's population is undernourished. 16.6% of the children in Africa are underweight while 41% of the children under the age of five in rural Sub-Saharan Africa are stunted.

It gives great courage to see stakeholders from different countries and professions in this room today coming together to discuss the aflatoxin challenge, a challenge that has been linked with profound health effects including growth impairment in children. Aflatoxin contamination is a big challenge in our food chain, taking into consideration that the foods that constitute a large part of our daily diets are the same foods that are most susceptible to aflatoxin contamination. A good example is maize. Maize which is very susceptible to aflatoxin contamination still remains an important staple to 1.2 billion people in Sub-Sahara Africa and Latin America. It accounts for 30 – 50% of low income household expenditures in Eastern and Southern Africa. Africa still uses 95% of its maize production as food while some 132 million people across East Africa are dependent on maize as a staple. The mycotoxins challenge therefore constitutes a significant threat to food safety, public health, food security and undermines poverty eradication initiatives in the continent

Your Excellency, Ladies and gentlemen;

Please allow me to share with you a recent case of an outbreak of acute aflatoxin poisoning in Dodoma and Manyara regions of Tanzania. The outbreak occurred between June and mid-September this year. 65 cases were reported out of which 18 lost their lives. I commend the stakeholders in Tanzania who joined efforts and worked rapidly to prevent further fatalities. In a rural set up where sharing is one of the most upheld values, it is possible that the poisoning would have claimed more lives had you not moved in rapidly.

The recent case in Tanzania is a good example of how real the challenge of aflatoxins is to our countries especially the rural populations. It is now high time for each stakeholder to effectively play the required role in order to mitigate the risks of aflatoxins. I call upon the public and private sectors, health, agriculture and trade sectors, development partners and consumers to join hands in the fight against aflatoxins in our food chain and protect public health while promoting agriculture and trade.

I commend African leaders who have recognized the need to institute the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) at the African Union Commission. I wish to restate my commitment to Uganda, one of PACA's Pilot Countries and to all African Countries of the AUC's support to work closely with all the stakeholders in your countries in making sure that collective aflatoxin control action plans are developed and validated for implementation of meaningful aflatoxin control activities.

I am aware that the stakeholders who have come together in this workshop since yesterday, are experts from different African Countries, development partners, research institutions, universities and partners working on the aflatoxin challenge in Africa and beyond. I am also aware that the stakeholders intend to use these three days to assess the attained success and record challenges, for the development of a clear roadmap for the next two years of implementation of PACA activities at continental, regional and national levels. It is indeed my expectation that by the end of this workshop we shall be able to meet the desired outcome of the meeting.

Let the time spent here in Uganda mark a significant stage in our journey towards attaining a healthy and well-nourished continent, an Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxin!

Thank you very much for your attention!