



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

Keynote Address by H.E. Minister of health of Tanzania

PACA Partnership Platform Meeting

October 07-09, 2014

African Union Commission

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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

COURTESIES

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Representatives of the African Union Commission,

Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is a remarkable day for the Partnership for Aflatoxin control in Africa (PACA) which has brought together stakeholders from different sectors to engage in discussions to bring sustainable solutions for the fight against aflatoxins on the African continent.

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I stand before you representing the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania - from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. I would like to express my appreciation to the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, the Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture, and the PACA Secretariat for inviting me to deliver this keynote address. I am honoured to be part of this great workshop which marks the beginning of great partnerships across sectors, institutions, countries and organizations. I commend PACA for bringing all stakeholders together to engage in meaningful discussions on aflatoxin mitigation and management for a healthier Africa. This partnership across all sectors and institutions is what we need to achieve sustainable change in improving the health, agriculture and trade sectors.

As you all know, aflatoxins not only affect food security and trade but human and animal health. Indeed, aflatoxins are highly toxic compounds that cause liver diseases, cancer and suppression of the immune system. Chronic exposure to aflatoxins over a significant period has been confirmed to increase the risk of developing liver cancer. Acute exposure to these toxins can also result in fatal liver failure. Millions of our people are exposed to this dangerous toxin everyday through consumption of contaminated crops. Most of our staple crops like maize and groundnuts are highly susceptible to aflatoxins.

Among other causes, aflatoxin exposure is also believed to contribute to childhood stunting. According to WHO, over 170 million children under the age of five are stunted. The majority of these children are in developing countries such as Africa and Asia. It is therefore clear that



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

Africa's development and future generation is highly compromised. Our children are at risk of having delays in cognitive development, lower school achievement and even lower earning in adulthood.

Excellencies, Distinguished guest, this is an alarming situation! Our countries must be highly concerned with the problem of aflatoxins and its effect on their people's health. In many African countries, health systems are already burdened and overstretched and are unable to provide the necessary care. Managing aflatoxin exposure therefore becomes one of the most critical actions that governments, private sector, health professionals, farmers, civil society and other stakeholders will have to take to protect human health in Africa. Our collective effort against aflatoxin on the continent is critical.

One of the most important components of the fight against aflatoxin is awareness creation at all levels and among all populations. Lack of awareness and its effect on human health, economies and food security is delaying reaction to the problem. Initiatives like PACA are instruments that can create awareness across all levels. Civil society groups, governments, private sectors and farmer organizations should also take the burden of educating our people. Our health professionals should be alerted on aflatoxins and the various symptoms associated with its exposure in order to adequately respond to needs of the people.

PACA is currently working with pilot countries in coordinating all efforts in the management and mitigation of aflatoxins. PACA's current work is highly commendable and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to PACA and its community. I would also like to acknowledge the African Union Commission for leading this effort on the continent. PACA is now giving us the opportunity to come together to fight against the treat that aflatoxins pose to the health of our populations. It is time to seize this opportunity and run with it! Our efforts have to be coordinated, complimentary and impactful. It is absolutely clear and compulsory that we reduce the negative impact of aflatoxins in Africa.

I urge all our partners in Africa and internationally to support current efforts to mitigate aflatoxins on the continent.

Excellencies, Distinguished guest, Ladies and Gentlemen, the government of Tanzania fully supports PACA and its partners' in their efforts to mitigate aflatoxins on our continent. I believe that in a few years, with our collective actions, we will see change in our countries. However, I would like to emphasize that this change will not be realized unless we put all our hands together and fight this threat against our people's health. I therefore urge all of us to work together by complimenting each other in our fight against aflatoxins. We are working against



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

one enemy and that is aflatoxin. Let us make it our priority to protect our people from the harmful effects of this toxin.

I thank you for your kind attention and pledge Tanzania's full support to PACA and the African Union Commission's leadership in this endeavor.