

Communiqué

3rd PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM MEETING of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)

Theme: “Scaling-out Country-led Approaches for Sustainable Aflatoxin Mitigation in Africa”

2-4 October 2018

Dakar, Senegal



INTRODUCTION

1. The 3rd PACA Partnership Platform Meeting (PPM) was convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Republic of Senegal from 2 to 4 October 2018 at King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar, Senegal.
2. The PACA PPM was organized under the theme: “Scaling-out Country-led Approaches for Sustainable Aflatoxin Mitigation in Africa”. The meeting was attended by over 200 participants including representatives of the government of the Republic of Senegal, the AUC, the NEPAD Agency, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), farmers’ organizations, AU member states, public and private institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), media organizations, development partners, academia, research institutions and interested parties in aflatoxin mitigation across Africa and beyond. The

official opening of the PACA PPM was graced by the presence of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Prime Minister of Senegal H.E. Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne; the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko; Ministers and senior government officials from AU Member States and heads of international organizations.

3. The 3rd PACA PPM sought to provide a learning and experience sharing platform on the PACA Country-Led Approach and identify best practices for implementation of the approach across Africa. The Country-Led Approach for aflatoxin mitigation has been implemented in Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, The Gambia and Uganda and has effected positive changes in aflatoxin control at country level and drives continental efforts on food safety. The PPM therefore focused on scaling out this effective aflatoxin control approach and exploring feasible ways of implementation. The country planning approach is executed in 5 stages: i) generating locally relevant data; ii) developing, validating and finalizing country plans; iii) mainstreaming the country plans in major national frameworks such as National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs); iv) building government capacity while providing catalytic support to implement the plan and; v) monitoring progress and advocating for implementation.
4. The 3rd PACA PPM expected to deliver five main outputs: i) country planning approach and national findings shared/presented; ii) experiences, results and impacts of the pilot project shared and assessed; iii) scaling out of the PACA approach promoted; iv) implementation progress in pilot countries and RECs reviewed; and v) champions of change recognized and celebrated.
5. The opening remarks highlighted the extent of the aflatoxin problem and how the widespread occurrence of aflatoxins is currently undermining the achievement of continental commitments including ending hunger, tripling intra African trade in agricultural commodities and services, as well as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The importance of addressing aflatoxins in order to attain the Malabo Declaration was emphasized by the African Union Commission leadership. The PACA Country-Led Approach – a coordinated approach for addressing aflatoxins – was recommended for scaling up to all 55 AU Member States.
6. The Partnership Platform opening session also marked the launch of the Africa Food Safety Index, a project that will institutionalize food safety tracking and capacity building in Africa through the Malabo Biennial Review Mechanism. This project will be implemented by the African Union, through PACA with the support from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and other partners.

7. Several side events were organized in the afternoon of 2nd October 2018. The side events provided fora for diverse partners and discussed emerging issues that would contribute to aflatoxin mitigation and enrich the theme of the PACA PPM. The six side events included: i) The Africa Food Safety Index, convened by African Union Commission-PACA, CTA and partners; ii) Scaling aflatoxin mitigation technologies and practices: lessons from the field, convened by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA); iii) Non-State Actors – role in scaling aflatoxin control approaches, convened by the CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition (CNC); iv) Communicating effectively for enhanced aflatoxin control and mitigation of impacts, convened by the CAADP Journalist Network; v) Policy sensitization on food safety and aflatoxin control, convened by PACA Secretariat; and vi) Post-harvest mitigation strategies for aflatoxin reduction, for the Reduction of Post-Harvest Loss, convened by Feed the Future Innovation Lab for the Reduction of Postharvest Loss.
8. The technical sessions of the meeting began on the second day with scene setting presentations in a plenary and breakout group discussions. The sessions focused on the state of PACA, its achievements and challenges over the last two years; understanding scaling, looking at the concept, principles and practices of scaling; and an in-depth look at the PACA model, scaling-out and implementation. Breakout sessions were also organized to explore scaling opportunities in key technologies and management practices and sectors. Following intensive technical sessions on the second day, the third day focused on developing a continental roadmap for scaling aflatoxin mitigation.
9. The participants deliberated on the successes and challenges of the country-led planning and aflatoxin mitigation process in the six pilot countries and identified potentially feasible ways to scale up this approach to other African countries and monitor progress. Participants also drew on lessons of on-going projects and proven technologies and recommended means of scaling up good practices at national, regional and continental levels.
10. During the PPM, PACA celebrated “Agents of Change,” exceptional individuals and institutions that take it upon themselves to make an impact in the area of aflatoxin mitigation. The Agents of Change were nominated by the PACA Community under the following categories i) Research and Technology; ii) Policy and creation of an enabling environment iii) Advocacy and communication; iv) Resource Mobilization; and v) Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs). The winners of these categories were (in respective order) i) Prof. Archileo Kaaya, School of Food Technology and Nutrition, Makerere University; ii) Mr. Ernest Aube, ECOWAS Commission; iii) Mr. Tandong Calistus Jong, CAADP Journalists Network; iv) The Government of Tanzania; and v) Mrs. Odette Bahati, Agrifood Business Consulting Ltd.

11. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), in collaboration with Sight & Life, Mars Inc. and PACA organized an Aflatoxin-Control Challenge Award for students and researchers in Africa. The Challenge provided seed funds in the amount of USD 15,000 for each winning innovative research project that has the potential to reduce or eliminate exposure to aflatoxin-contaminated foods and feeds in Africa. Two winners, Mr. Nishimwe Kizito, who worked on assessing the efficacy of cold plasma in degrading aflatoxins and Mr. Sammy Kiplagat, who investigated the Capacity of Solanum villosum (black nightshade) to Eliminate or Reduce the Toxicity of Aflatoxin in Kenyan Indigenous Chicken Ecotypes Fed with Contaminated Feed: Implication for Utilization of Indigenous Vegetables to Eliminate or Reduce Exposure to Aflatoxin in Feed and Foods, each received a prize of USD 15,000 as seed funding.

KEY MESSAGES

12. Participants noted that the PACA Country-Led Approach is proving successful in coordinating stakeholders, facilitating coherent country level plans which result in systemic change for aflatoxin mitigation, and increased resource commitment to aflatoxin control efforts.
13. The meeting reaffirmed that the PACA approach in addressing aflatoxins has triggered efforts in addressing food safety throughout the continent. Participants called for food safety to be a priority pillar in various relevant sectoral policies and regulations.
14. Delegates also appreciated the role the private sector plays in aflatoxin mitigation and therefore called for the public sector to create an enabling policy environment that will allow for the private sector to invest in technologies for aflatoxin control. Furthermore, the public sector should provide incentives such as strategic subsidies to farmers for technologies like Aflasafe. And, public and private sector partners should create policy and institutional changes that would drive premium market prices for aflatoxin safe food.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. On policies and regulations: The African Union Commission should heighten efforts in institutionalizing food safety tracking with the Biennial Review Mechanism where Member States will prioritize reporting against the African Food Safety Index.
16. The African Union Commission through PACA should facilitate harmonization of aflatoxin standards, moving beyond country level to regional and continental levels.

17. On research and technology: socially acceptable technologies should be developed and promoted; proven technologies that are in use should be commercialized through the establishments of manufacturing plants for in-country production of the technologies with the active participation of the private sector (e.g. the Aflasafe model in Senegal).
18. Evidence should be generated to demonstrate that technologies work to control aflatoxins and the use of the technologies has value for money; incentives for aflatoxin safe produce should be promoted to increase willingness of end-users to adopt proven technologies.
19. On communication and awareness: Member States should develop communication plans in line with the PACA Communication Strategy; and PACA should strengthen partnerships with media networks such as the African Association of Agricultural Journalists/Health Journalists.
20. The capacity of the media should be enhanced and the media should be more involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of food safety programs in Africa.
21. On institutional arrangements: the multi sectoral and multidisciplinary approach in aflatoxin mitigation (e.g. having in place Steering Committees/Aflatoxin Technical Working Groups), should be strengthened in PACA Pilot Countries and promoted/scaled out to all AU Member States. Aflatoxin mitigation should not end at national policy level, instead coordination with local governance structures should be promoted in Member States in order to address the problem at the grassroots level.
22. PACA Secretariat should establish mentorship programs and promote systematic capacity building at all levels and ensure the inclusion of youth and women in these efforts.
23. The PACA Secretariat should develop strategies for aflatoxin mitigation including nutrition strategies, communications strategies and tools as well as trade related strategies which will enhance the work of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.
24. On financing for aflatoxin mitigation: Member States should ensure the integration of food safety in NAIPS so as to attract public and development partner funding to implement aflatoxin control activities. Aggressive, systematic and innovative resource mobilization efforts should be put in place including expenditure analysis of NAIPS to enable governments and development partners to tailor resource allocation to support the food safety pillar within the NAIPs.

NEXT STEPS

25. The PACA Secretariat should develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ Guidelines for scaling up the country-led approach which should be shared with all AU Member States accompanied by a policy instrument (a letter from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission) to trigger action in the implementation of the SOPs in all AU Member States.
26. The AUC should strengthen partnerships with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and identify REC focal points who will be assigned to address aflatoxin mitigation efforts at regional level.
27. The PACA Secretariat should work with partners to advocate for the critical roles of women and youth, as well as, integrating them into aflatoxin mitigation programs.
28. Forums for lesson sharing on aflatoxin mitigation, including country visits and/ or learning exchanges should be created or promoted where they already exist.
29. PACA Secretariat, with partners, should continue efforts of developing the Africa Food Safety Index and embed it into the Malabo Biennial Review Mechanism which will trigger Member States to start addressing food safety more intensively at national level.