



Partnership  
for Aflatoxin  
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour  
la lutte contre  
l'aflatoxine en Afrique

Parceria para o  
Controle da  
Aflatoxina em África

الشراكة من أجل مكافحة  
الإفلاتوكسين في أفريقيا



**Global Panel**  
on Agriculture  
and Food Systems  
for Nutrition

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### **African governments must act to address the risks of unsafe food and aflatoxins**

12 April 2016, ACCRA – Food systems are rapidly changing, bringing greater attention to issues of food safety. In 2010 alone foodborne hazards caused 600 million illnesses and 420,000 deaths across the world. 40 percent of this disease burden was among children under five years of age.

Aflatoxin contamination is one of the most pervasive food safety challenges in Africa. Aflatoxins are invisible poisons which contaminate many staple food and cash crops and animal feeds. They are produced by fungi and can occur throughout value chains making it difficult to target interventions. Pre-harvest occurrence of aflatoxin increases with crop stress caused by drought and pest attack. Postharvest accumulation spikes with poor drying, storage and handling. Aflatoxins are virtually indestructible since normal food processing practices do not affect aflatoxin levels to any appreciable extent.

It is increasingly recognised that food safety, and aflatoxins in particular, is a significant threat not only to public health but also to agriculture and food systems in sub-Saharan Africa. It affects trade, rural incomes and purchasing power, worker productivity, and consumer confidence.

The broad impacts of foodborne hazards argue for integrated solutions. Policies in agriculture and food systems need to ensure both the nutritional quality and the safety of the foods we eat.

On 12<sup>th</sup> April, the [Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems and Nutrition](#) and the African Union Commission's [Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa \(PACA\)](#) will bring together African policymakers to discuss food safety issues, and in particular aflatoxins.

*“Food systems are evolving, giving rise to new food safety challenges. Assuring a safe food supply requires the highest level of political commitment to strengthen national systems. This is especially important for Africa and other developing countries”, said **Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, Global Panel Member and President of the African Development Bank***

At the joint high level roundtable, the Global Panel will launch its policy brief [Assuring Safe Food Systems: Policy Options for a Healthier Food Supply](#), which reviews food safety issues that are critical to poor and vulnerable populations in low and middle-income countries. It sets out why governments must pay closer attention to food safety issues and invest accordingly, from production through to consumption.

The joint high level roundtable will also deliberate on the aflatoxin challenge and its impact on public health, nutrition and economic development in Africa and consider high level policy recommendations for addressing aflatoxin and

other critical food safety priorities. The event will champion the cause of food safety and promote a growing understanding and political will in the continent to mitigate the aflatoxin problem.

**H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime**, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission and member of the Global Panel stated “aflatoxins are a developmental challenge to Africa that negatively impact the economy, public health, nutrition, food security and trade of member states. Tackling aflatoxins is critical to maintain the gains made in improving child and maternal nutrition and health. This is crucial for achieving the Malabo Declaration Commitments for agricultural transformation in Africa. It is now time to deliver, to walk the talk!”

Keynote speakers include **H.E. Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime**, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission and **H.E. John Kufuor**, Former President of the Republic of Ghana. The high level roundtable will coincide with the 12<sup>th</sup> Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program Partnership Platform meeting in Accra.

The full brief with recommendations to policymakers is available here: [glopan.org/food-safety](http://glopan.org/food-safety)

For more info about the event, please visit: [glopan.org/news/high-level-roundtable-food-safety-and-aflatoxins-africa](http://glopan.org/news/high-level-roundtable-food-safety-and-aflatoxins-africa)

For more information about PACA's work, please visit: [aflatoxinpartnership.org](http://aflatoxinpartnership.org)

For media inquiries, please contact Manuela Puricelli: [manuela.puricelli@glopan.org](mailto:manuela.puricelli@glopan.org) - +44 (0) 2030738350; Carol Jilombo: [jilomboc@africa-union.org](mailto:jilomboc@africa-union.org)

**\*END\***

#### **About PACA:**

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) is a flagship program of the African Union Commission. It is established as an Innovative partnership. It is on a mission to support agricultural development, safeguard consumer health and facilitate trade by catalyzing, coordinating and increasing effective aflatoxin control along agricultural value chains in Africa. PACA is guided by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee led by the AUC. It has a Secretariat based at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PACA works with country governments directly while forging strong partnerships with diverse stakeholders to achieve systemic change in aflatoxin control in Africa. PACA invites stakeholders to collaborate toward a common vision of “an Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxins”.

#### **About the Global Panel:**

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition is an independent group of high-level, influential experts with a commitment to tackling global challenges in food and nutrition security. It works to ensure that agriculture and food systems support access to nutritious foods at every stage of life. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development, the Global Panel aims to stimulate

a stronger evidence-base for how changes in agriculture and food systems can improve nutrition and catalyse collaboration to help provide healthy and sustainable diets for all. The Panel is chaired by H.E. John Kufuor, former President of Ghana (2001-2009) and Sir John Beddington, former UK Chief Scientific Advisor, and has its headquarters in London.

**About the high level roundtable:**

The Global Panel and PACA are bringing together decision-makers from across Africa to:

- Launch the Global Panel's brief on food safety and introduce its key messages to African leaders.
- Inform and inspire high-level champions to tackle aflatoxins in African countries based on PACA's research and work of what works best.
- Promote a conversation about global food safety issues, in particular aflatoxins in the African context.

Keynote speakers include: H.E. Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission; H.E. John Kufuor, Former President of the Republic of Ghana; Prof. Sandy Thomas, Director, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition; Dr. Janet Edeme, Acting Director, Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission.

