



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  
الافلاتوكسين في أفريقيا



# The Fourth PACA Partnership Platform Meeting

**6-7 December 2023**  
NAIROBI, KENYA

## Synthesis Report of Proceedings

December 2023

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The African Union Commission (AUC) through its program, the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) convened the 4<sup>th</sup> PACA Partnership Platform Meeting (PPM) from 6-7 December 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme "A decade of Partnership for Aflatoxin Control – Looking back to define the future of aflatoxin control in Africa." The 4<sup>th</sup> PACA Partnership Platform Meeting marked a significant gathering of global experts and stakeholders. The meeting was attended by 81 participants both physically and virtually.

The meeting's agenda focused on reflecting the last decade of aflatoxin mitigation through the PACA program, evaluating current strategies, sharing best practices, identifying challenges in aflatoxin management, exchange experiences of piloting in six countries and scaling in additional 12 countries and identify ways of sustaining the momentum in these countries beyond PACA's direct support.

The opening remarks were delivered by the key figures, including Dr. Aggrey Agumya, Executive Director of The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Ms. Jennifer Maurer, Resilience Coordinator, USAID; Ms. Kefilwe Moalosi, Nutrition Project Manager, AUDA-NEPAD; Ms. Lucy Muchoki, CEO of the African Agribusiness and Agroindustry Consortium (PanAAC); and Prof. Afeikhena Jerome, the Special Advisor to the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE). The speakers recognized the negative impacts of aflatoxins on health, trade and food security which hinder Africa's development efforts, in their remarks, they set a progressive tone for the meeting and called for holistic approaches in addressing aflatoxins, the most pervasive food safety challenge in Africa. The official opening was done by Dr. Collins Marangu, Director Crop Development and Food Safety at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, on behalf of Hon. Mithika Linturi, Cabinet Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock Development, representing the Kenyan Government, who underscored Kenya's commitment to agricultural development and aflatoxin control.

The meeting was divided into a number of Technical sessions as follows: 1) Setting the Scene, 2) Evidence generation and scaling up Aflatoxin Control in AU MS, 3) 4) Food Safety for Food Systems Transformation, 5) Sustaining the Momentum on Aflatoxin Control in AU MS, 6) Harmonized efforts for aflatoxin control – best practice, lessons and emerging issues to consider in the next decade. The sessions included a mix of presentations, panel discussions and

breakout group discussion.

Participants engaged in robust discussions about the latest research, technological advancements, and the effectiveness of existing policies, setting the stage for collaborative solutions. Central to the meeting was the emphasis on multi-sectoral collaboration. Representatives from government, academia, international organizations, and local communities highlighted the importance of integrated approaches. Discussions underscored the need for harmonizing policies across nations, enhancing capacity building at local levels, and leveraging technological innovations. These collaborative efforts aimed at ensuring food safety and protecting public health from the detrimental effects of aflatoxins.

The meeting concluded with a strong commitment to actionable steps and the establishment of a roadmap for future initiatives. Key resolutions included the development of region-specific strategies, fostering partnerships for research and development, enhancing public awareness campaigns, harmonization of standards across Africa, Research on economical alternative use of contaminated grains and implementation of gender sensitive approach in aflatoxin control. This meeting set a precedent for ongoing and future efforts, embodying a collective resolve to mitigate aflatoxin impact and ensure a healthier, more secure food supply in Africa.



## 1.0 BACKGROUND, CONTEXT, AND RATIONALE

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In Africa, the scourge of aflatoxin contamination presents a critical challenge, not just to food safety but to economic stability and public health. Aflatoxins, produced by certain fungi, are found in crops like maize and groundnuts, staples in African diets. The health impacts are severe, notably causing liver cancer and exacerbating malnutrition. Economically, the contamination undermines crop value, affecting farmers' livelihoods and national exports, particularly in the international market where stringent safety standards prevail. The establishment of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) underscores a continental commitment to tackling this menace. The 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting was convened to galvanize efforts, share innovative solutions, and foster multisectoral collaboration, crucial for effective aflatoxin management and the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food security in Africa.

### 1.1 Theme and Objectives

The theme "**A Decade of Partnership for Aflatoxin Control – Looking back to define the future of aflatoxin control in Africa,**" captured the essence of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting. It reflected on a decade-long journey of concerted efforts and set the stage for future endeavors. The 4<sup>th</sup> PPM objectives were multifaceted as follows;

- (i) To take stock of successes and challenges in implementing the 10-year PACA strategy and in managing aflatoxins on the continent in the past decade;
- (ii) To share lessons and good practices among Member States and stakeholders on aflatoxin control;
- (iii) To take stock of the current continental aflatoxin control situation and how to define the new continental strategy of aflatoxin control beyond (2023-2032);
- (iv) To exchange the experience of piloting in Six countries and scaling in additional 12 countries and identify ways of sustaining the momentum in these countries beyond PACA's direct support;
- (v) To reach a consensus on how to accelerate the mainstreaming of aflatoxin control and food safety in national strategies; and
- (vi) To develop regional roadmaps on domesticating the Strategic Framework for Scaling Holistic Country-Led Model for Aflatoxin Control in Africa.

The meeting aimed to catalyze action that aligns with broader continental priorities, such as public health improvement, agricultural productivity enhancement, and alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Area's (AfCFTA) objectives.

## **1.2 Nature, Structure, and Approach of the Meeting**

The 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting, embodying a hybrid format, set a new standard for inclusivity and adaptability in international conferences. This assembly, boasting 55 in-person participants alongside 26 virtual attendees, forged a rich tapestry of perspectives across various sectors. It brought together a cadre of 81 experts—African Union and member government officials, policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, and civil society members—from across the African continent and beyond. Their collective expertise and insights infused the meeting with a vibrant energy, fostering a fertile ground for dynamic exchanges and collaborative problem-solving. The structured agenda, interspersed with keynote addresses, insightful panel discussions, and engaging breakout sessions, created an interactive milieu. This environment was not just conducive to but actively encouraged the sharing of diverse ideas and strategies, crucial for the formulation of a comprehensive and unified approach to aflatoxin management.

This report is a vital document that encapsulates the discussions, insights, and resolutions of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting. Its essence lies in providing a comprehensive record of the collaborative efforts and strategies discussed for aflatoxin control in Africa. It serves as a reference point for stakeholders, guiding future actions and policies. The report also ensures accountability and transparency, documenting commitments and planned actions. Importantly, it acts as a knowledge repository, sharing best practices and innovative approaches that can be adapted and implemented across different contexts for effective aflatoxin management.

## **1.3 Process Summary of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting**

### **1.3.1 Day 1: "Laying the Foundations"**

The first day of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting was a crescendo of insights and strategic discussions spearheaded by key figures, including Dr. Aggrey Agumya, Executive Director of FARA; Ms. Jennifer Maurer, Resilience Coordinator at USAID; Kefwile Fifie Moalosi, Project Manager for Nutrition and

Food safety at AUDA-NEPAD; Ms. Lucy Muchoki, CEO of Pan African Agribusiness Consortium and Chair of CAADP Non-State Actors Governing Council; and Prof. Afeikhen Jerome, Special Advisor to the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Development. These experts set a collaborative and urgent tone for the meeting.



Dr. Collins Marangu, on behalf of Hon. Mithika Linturi, further elevated the session with his opening remarks, paving the way for a deep dive into the day's agenda. Dr. Amare Ayalew, the PACA Program Manager, in his keynote presentation, provided a comprehensive overview of the state of PACA, highlighting the achievements and challenges in aflatoxin control. This was followed by Dr. Blaise Outtara, who introduced the FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment tool, offering a tool being used by countries to evaluate their current food systems and inform food safety interventions.

The day's sessions were further enriched by engaging panel discussions, facilitated by Dr. Happy Magoha, former PACA Country Officer, Tanzania (Meeting Facilitator). These discussions were not just an exchange of ideas but a melting pot of experiences, bringing to light various regional and country-specific strategies in aflatoxin control.

Following Ms. Wezi Chunga-Sambo's, PACA Senior Program Officer's enlightening Keynote Presentation on "The Next Decade of Aflatoxin Control in Africa," a pivotal breakout session, led by Stanley Felix Kulapani (Meeting Facilitator) and Happy Magoha, unfolded on Day 1 of the 4th PACA PPM. This session was a dynamic fusion of retrospection and planning. Participants, grouped to encourage diverse collaboration, first identified three significant strategies that effectively marked the past decade in aflatoxin control. They then shifted their focus to the future, brainstorming five innovative actions vital for shaping the next ten years of aflatoxin management in Africa. This session stood out as a beacon of participative strategy-making, melding past



experiences with future aspirations.

### **1.3.2 Day 2: "Scaling Innovations and Sharing Experiences"**

The second and final day of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting, themed "Scaling Innovations and Sharing Experiences," commenced with Jane Kamau's enlightening presentation on Scaling food safety innovations – the experience of Aflasafe . This was followed by panel discussions led by Dr. Happy Magoha and featuring experts like Dr. George Mahuku, Plant Pathologist - IITA and Mr. Bhubhinder Singh from Aflasafe manufacturing industry in Tanzania – A to Z, who delved into the complexities of aflatoxin control and shared innovative solutions. Technical sessions allowed countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, and Ghana to present their unique strategies in combating aflatoxins. The day culminated with the presentation of a strategic communiqué and roadmap, outlining the vision for the next decade of aflatoxin control.

The meeting drew to a close with poignant closing remarks from key figures, encapsulating the spirit of collaboration and determination that characterized the entire event. These remarks were not just a conclusion but a clarion call for continued action and commitment in the fight against aflatoxins.

This detailed summary of the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting captures the essence of the event – a hub of knowledge, experience, and collaborative resolve, all geared towards a common goal: the effective control of aflatoxins in Africa.

## 2.0 DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 2.1 Session 1: Setting the Scene

This session included two presentations that were followed by plenary discussions

#### 2.1.1 1st Keynote Presentation by Dr. Amare Ayalew, the Program Manager of the PACA Secretariat at AUC



**Reflecting on Achievements:** Dr. Amare Ayalew, the Program Manager of the PACA Secretariat at AUC, commenced Session 1 with a keynote presentation titled "State of PACA 2023." He delved into the significant strides made in the past decade, emphasizing the successful application of the country-led development model for aflatoxin control and broader food safety. Dr. Ayalew

highlighted the development of evidence-based national and regional aflatoxin control plans, and their integration into long-term national frameworks. This strategy was underscored as a critical step towards sustainability and a notable achievement of PACA.

**Looking Towards the Future:** The presentation further explored the data generation of homegrown, credible evidence through key initiatives like the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) which will be expanded into the Africa Food Safety Database. Dr. Ayalew emphasized the importance of premium continental and regional food safety control platforms, and the role of PACA in global advocacy on food safety. He touched upon the progress in establishing the African Union Africa Food Safety Agency, underscoring its potential to institutionalize food safety for long-term prioritization and action in the continent.

In Dr. Amare Ayalew's presentation "State of PACA 2023," he addressed the critical challenges and complexity of aflatoxin control. Emphasizing the impacts of aflatoxins on staple foods like maize, groundnuts, and sorghum, Dr. Ayalew illustrated the significant economic and health implications in Africa.

He highlighted how aflatoxins affect both regional value chains and export markets, with substantial repercussions on public health and trade. The presentation underscored the need for a systemic approach to aflatoxin management, recognizing its intricacy and the necessity of multi-sector collaboration for effective control.

**Discussion from Dr. Amare's Presentation:** Following Dr. Amare Ayalew's presentation on the "State of PACA 2023," the ensuing discussion addressed several key topics:

- (i) **Sustainability of National Steering Committees:** Questions were raised about innovative ways to sustain these committees, especially considering the involvement of various stakeholders like the private sector, youth and development partners.
- (ii) **Funding and Resource Mobilization:** The discussion highlighted challenges related to securing sustainable funding and resources for aflatoxin control initiatives.
- (iii) **Government Involvement:** Emphasis was placed on the pivotal role of governments in ensuring the longevity and effectiveness of aflatoxin control measures.
- (iv) **Technical Capacity and Data Sharing:** Challenges in technical capacity development and the complexities of data sharing, including confidentiality concerns affecting trade, were discussed.

### **2.1.2 Input Presentation 2: FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment tool – Dr. Blaise Outtara, FAO**

Dr. Blaise Outtara's presentation on the FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment tool was a deep dive into the strategic approaches for enhancing food safety. He outlined the purpose and process of the assessment, emphasizing its role in evaluating the effectiveness of food control systems, regardless of their maturity level. The tool, unique in its systemic approach as opposed to sector-specific assessments, incorporates international commitments like SPS and food safety IHR. Dr. Outtara underscored the tool's benefits at both national and regional levels, noting its capacity to provide evidence-based results, integrate a coherent vision for food control, and support strategic improvements. The presentation highlighted the tool's alignment with Codex Alimentarius guidelines and its role in facilitating the implementation of Codex principles within food control activities. Dr. Outtara's insights emphasized the importance of systematic, coordinated efforts in food safety management, and the tool's potential to advance these objectives on the African continent.

## **2.2 Session 2: Technical Discussions – Evidence Generation and Scaling Up Aflatoxin Control in AU MS**

Session 2, focused on 'Technical Discussions – Evidence Generation and Scaling Up Aflatoxin Control in AU Member States', presented a comprehensive exploration into innovative strategies and empirical methodologies crucial for advancing aflatoxin control across the continent. This session, featuring key experts and practitioners, provided insights into effective models, challenges, and progress in the fight against aflatoxins, highlighting the significant strides made and the path ahead for African Union member states.

### **2.2.1 Input Presentation 3: Experience from domesticating PACA's country-led model for aflatoxins control: lessons and tools – Ms. Mweene Kambombi, Plant Health Inspector, Zambia**

Ms. Mweene Kambombi's presentation, titled 'Experience from Domesticating PACA's Country-Led Model for Aflatoxins Control: Lessons and Tools,' offered a deep dive into Zambia's journey in implementing PACA's strategic model. Her insights provided a real-world perspective on the successes, challenges, and innovative tools developed in this critical fight against aflatoxins. Ms. Kambombi's presentation also highlighted key outcomes from a workshop conducted in Lusaka, Zambia in October 2023, on "*Domesticating the AU Strategic Framework for Holistic Aflatoxin Control in Africa.*"

On implementation of PACA's Model: Ms. Kambombi discussed Zambia's experience in adopting PACA's country-led model for aflatoxin control. She emphasized the model's effectiveness in creating systematic change at the grassroots level. This approach led to the development of country-specific, stakeholder-aligned plans, which garnered significant government and stakeholder buy-in and facilitated capacity building, advocacy, and communication efforts.

Achievements and Impact: The presentation highlighted the achievements in various pilot countries, including Zambia, in integrating national aflatoxin control plans into their national strategies. This integration enhanced sustainability and effectiveness. Ms. Kambombi underscored the success of this model in securing financing and implementation, noting the significant investments in aflatoxin prevention and control measures.

Challenges and Future Directions: Despite the successes, Ms. Kambombi acknowledged challenges such as resource mobilization and weak data collection capacity. She suggested that the PACA model led to broader continental efforts in food safety and emphasized the importance of continued commitment and capacity building at the country level to maintain momentum in aflatoxin control.

### 2.2.2 Panel Discussion



The panel discussion following Ms. Mweene Kambombi's presentation, facilitated by Dr. Happy Magoha and involving panelists Mr. Wendafrash Abera (Food safety and Nutrition Advisor, EFDA, Ethiopia), Dr. Léopold S. NANEMA (Secrétaire Exécutif du CNSA, Ministère de l'agriculture, des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso), Mrs. Roukiyatou

Boukari (Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (MAEP), Benin), and Dr. Ashagrie Zewdu (Senior Food Safety Expert and Consultant, Ethiopia), delved into various aspects of aflatoxin control. The discussion encompassed diverse experiences from different countries, focusing on successful strategies, challenges faced, and the importance of tailored approaches to aflatoxin control. The panelists' insights highlighted the necessity of country-specific solutions, the role of governmental and private sector involvement, and the importance of community engagement in effectively managing aflatoxin risks.

#### **Key themes and recommendations emerged:**

- (i) **Collaborative Strategies and National Initiatives:** Panelists, including Mr. Wendafrash Abera and Mrs. Roukiyatou Boukari, discussed their respective country's efforts in aflatoxin control, emphasizing the importance of collaborative strategies involving various stakeholders and sector ministries. They highlighted initiatives such as market assessments, interventions targeting specific contaminated products,

and the formation of national steering committees for more comprehensive aflatoxin management.

- (ii) **Capacity Building and Data Utilization:** Dr. Ashagrie Zewdu and Dr. Léopold S. NANEMA stressed the need for capacity building in technical aspects of aflatoxin control, particularly in data collection and analysis. They discussed how the effective use of tools like the FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment and PACA's model could significantly impact public health and food safety, underscoring the importance of customization to meet specific country needs.
- (iii) **Future Plans and Policy Implementation:** The discussion also delved into future plans and priorities for controlling aflatoxin contamination. Panelists shared insights into the challenges and opportunities in implementing national strategies, emphasizing the need for policy development and alignment with broader food safety and health goals.

## 2.3 Setting the Scene: Keynote Presentation 4

Charting the Course for Aflatoxin Control in Africa, Ms. Wezi Chunga-Sambo, Senior Program Officer at the PACA Secretariat, AUC, offered a visionary roadmap for the future of aflatoxin management in Africa. This session was pivotal in setting the stage for strategic planning, innovative approaches, and collaborative efforts essential for mitigating aflatoxin impact over the next decade. Ms. Chunga-Sambo's insights provided a crucial blueprint for advancing this critical agenda. She elucidated on the following;

- (i) **Reflecting on the Past, Planning for the Future:** Ms. Chunga-Sambo's presentation focused on evaluating the PACA strategy from 2013 to 2022, considering achievements and areas for improvement. She proposed a reflective approach, urging participants to consider the effectiveness of past strategies in generating evidence and influencing interventions. This backward glance was intended to shape a more targeted and impactful strategy for the next decade.
- (ii) **Strategic Interventions and Institutionalization:** Emphasizing the importance of sustainable implementation, Ms. Chunga-Sambo highlighted the need for integrating aflatoxin control into continental frameworks and programs. She advocated for aligning efforts within key frameworks like the Africa Food Safety Agency, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), ensuring aflatoxin control remains a priority within broader food safety agendas.
- (iii) **Inclusive Approach and Practical Actions:** The presentation concluded with a call for greater inclusivity and practical action in aflatoxin control. Ms. Chunga-Sambo stressed the importance of genuinely involving diverse groups like women, youth, and the private sector, moving beyond mere lip service to actual participation. She underscored the need for concrete steps in implementing national action plans and adapting strategies to the unique challenges of each country.

## 2.4 Breakout Session/Table Top Discussion

The breakout session at the PACA PPM, steered by Stanley Felix Kulapani and Happy Magoha, was a pivotal moment of collaborative reflection and forward-thinking. This session was designed to tap into the collective expertise of the participants, evaluating the achievements in aflatoxin control over the past decade and formulating a strategic roadmap for the coming ten years.

In total there were seven groups, the groups were tasked to identify three successful strategies from the past and propose five key initiatives for the future. This process culminated in a comprehensive set of insights and recommendations, charting a course for continued progress in aflatoxin control across Africa as follows;

### 2.4.1 Group 1

#### **Past Achievements:**

- (i) **Country-Led Implementation:** Recognized the empowerment of individual countries to take the lead in aflatoxin control, allowing for tailored solutions that meet local needs.
- (ii) **Development of Implementation Tools:** Lauded the synergy created through the creation of practical tools, which streamlined efforts and increased intervention effectiveness.
- (iii) **Continent-Wide Guidelines:** Celebrated the establishment of continent-wide guidelines, marking a transition from pilot projects to a broader, continental approach.



#### **Future Initiatives:**

- i) **Knowledge Management Platform:** Advocated for the establishment of a centralized PACA website to consolidate and disseminate information, enhancing collaboration and learning.
- (ii) **Engagement of Primary Actors:** Stressed the need to involve all stakeholders in the agricultural value chain, including farmers, retailers, and SMEs, recognizing that policy engagement must extend to ground-level participants.
- (iii) **Adoption of Best Practices:** Encouraged the replication of successful strategies from pilot programs in different contexts, leveraging lessons learned for broader application.
- (iv) **Standardization of Techniques:** Proposed harmonizing sampling and testing methods to ensure consistency and reliability across participating countries.
- (v) **Risk Assessment Framework:** Suggested developing a comprehensive approach to risk management that includes alternative applications for



aflatoxin-contaminated produce, improved communication strategies, and effective mitigation measures.

#### 2.4.2 Group 2

##### **Past Achievements:**

- (i) **Consistent Advocacy and Knowledge Management:** Highlighted the importance of ongoing communication and knowledge dissemination regarding aflatoxin contamination in agricultural products.
- (ii) **Multi-Sectoral Approach:** Emphasized the success of PACA's multi-sectoral approach at national levels, involving researchers, farmers, and other key stakeholders in creating effective models.
- (iii) **Practical and Functional Structures:** Acknowledged the creation of efficient structures that facilitated practical aflatoxin control measures.

##### **Future Initiatives:**

- (i) **Expansion to AU Member States:** Suggested extending PACA's influence to cover more AU member states, aiming for at least half of the AU MS.
- (ii) **Development of PACA Standards:** Recommended that PACA develop its own code of standards and inspection models to further solidify its role and effectiveness.
- (iii) **Certification and Labeling:** Proposed testing and certifying products for aflatoxin safety, allowing institutions to label their products as "Aflatoxin Safe."
- (iv) **Innovative and Sustainable Models:** Urged the development of innovative and sustainable models to ensure the project's continuity.
- (v) **Strengthening Research:** Called for enhanced research and development on aflatoxin at the country level, increasing evidence-based understanding of aflatoxin contamination in various agricultural products.

#### 2.4.3 Group 3

##### **Past Achievements:**

- (i) **Capacity Building for Aflatoxin Testing:** Applauded PACA's efforts in helping countries build laboratories and collect samples for aflatoxin testing.
- (ii) **Government Collaboration:** Noted the success of working with governments, which led to increased awareness and readiness to address aflatoxin challenges.
- (iii) **Stakeholder Engagement:** Praised the role of PACA in facilitating forums

for stakeholder engagement at both continental and country levels.

#### **Future Initiatives:**

- (i) **Deepen Partnerships:** Recommended deepening partnerships with regional economic communities for more effective implementation and addressing existing gaps.
- (ii) **Policy and Legislation Review:** Suggested working with countries to review food safety policies, identifying gaps, and enforcing legislation where necessary.
- (iii) **Holistic Food Safety Approach:** Advised PACA to broaden its focus beyond aflatoxin and look at food safety challenges more holistically.
- (iv) **Harmonization of Efforts:** Called for the harmonization of efforts across organizations working on food safety to prevent duplication of work.
- (v) **Resource Mobilization:** Emphasized the need for resources, suggesting that PACA work within existing structures for resource mobilization.

#### **2.4.4 Group 4**



#### **Past Achievements:**

- i) **Advancements in Research and Technology:** Commended interventions in research and technology, such as the development of Aflasafe, and encouraged further progress in this area.
- (ii) **Policy, Legislation, and Standards:** Identified the need to address policy gaps despite advancements in some regional economic communities towards harmonization of standards.
- (iii) **Data on Commerce and Trade:** Recognized the lack of data to measure the impact of aflatoxin control on trade and commerce, stressing the need for continued data collection.

#### **Future Initiatives:**

- (i) **Continued Research and Technology Development:** Encouraged ongoing advancements in research and technology to address emerging challenges including alternative use of contaminated grains and decontamination mechanisms wherever possible.
- (ii) **Addressing Policy Gaps:** Highlighted the necessity to bridge policy gaps and continue efforts in harmonizing standards across countries.

- (iii) **Data Collection for Informed Interventions:** Stressed the importance of gathering data to guide both short-term and long-term interventions.
- (iv) **Expansion of Capacity Building:** Emphasized the need for continued capacity building, focusing on human resources and infrastructure.
- (v) **Mainstreaming Aflatoxin in Food Safety Systems:** Proposed integrating aflatoxin management into national food safety control systems to ensure a comprehensive approach.

#### 2.4.5 Group 5

##### Past Achievements:

- (i) **Development of Management Strategies:** Celebrated the development of strategies for aflatoxin management, which paved the way for funding support and implementation.
- (ii) **Evidence-Based Data Impact:** Acknowledged the availability of data demonstrating the health and economic impacts of aflatoxin.
- (iii) **Funding and Resource Mobilization:** Recognized the successful mobilization of resources and funding, exemplified by significant financial support from organizations like GIZ, as a result of the credibility and effectiveness of the strategies developed under PACA's guidance. This achievement highlights the importance of securing external funding to support aflatoxin management initiatives.

##### Future Initiatives:

- (i) **Institutionalize Interventions:** Urged the need to ensure the sustainability of interventions and strategies beyond meetings and boardrooms.
- (ii) **Raise Awareness on Toxins:** Suggested creating more awareness about aflatoxin and other toxins, and about PACA's initiatives, to reach a broader audience.
- (iii) **Engagement of Primary Actors:** Highlighted the necessity of involving the private sector and farmers more actively in aflatoxin management.
- (iv) **Government Prioritization:** Called for governments to prioritize aflatoxin management and implementation.
- (v) **Sustainability of Strategies:** Emphasized the need to consider the longevity of strategies and interventions post-conference.

#### 2.4.6 Group 6

##### Past Achievements:

- (i) **Stakeholder Identification:** Applauded PACA's success in involving a wide range of stakeholders in the fight against aflatoxin.

- (ii) **Awareness Creation:** Praised the awareness efforts within the PACA-led model countries.
- (iii) **Government Involvement:** Noted the success of involving governments as main drivers in the aflatoxin control process.

### **Future Initiatives:**

- (i) **Maintain Aflatoxin Focus:** Recommended that PACA continue its focused efforts on aflatoxin control.
- (ii) **Resource Allocation by Governments:** Advised that governments increase resource allocation for aflatoxin control.
- (iii) **Implementation Strategies in New Countries:** Encouraged the application of successful strategies in the 12 new member countries.
- (iv) **Continue Stakeholder Engagement:** Emphasized the importance of ongoing stakeholder involvement and engagement.
- (v) **Funding Enhancement:** Stressed the need for enhanced funding efforts for aflatoxin control.

### **2.4.7 Group 7**

### **Past Achievements:**

- (i) **Identification of Key Actors:** Recognized PACA's involvement of key stakeholders in the fight against aflatoxin.
- (ii) **Focused Fight Against Aflatoxin:** Commended PACA for maintaining a dedicated focus on aflatoxin and creating awareness among stakeholders.
- (iii) **Government as Main Drivers:** Celebrated the successful involvement of governments as principal drivers in the aflatoxin control process.

### **Future Initiatives:**

- (i) **Sustained Focus on Aflatoxin:** Suggested that PACA should continue its concentrated efforts on aflatoxin control.
- (ii) **Enhanced Governmental Resource Allocation:** Recommended that individual countries allocate more resources for aflatoxin control.
- (iii) **Strategy Implementation in New Member Countries:** Proposed applying successful strategies in the 12 new PACA member countries.
- (iv) **Continued Stakeholder Engagement:** Emphasized the need for ongoing stakeholder involvement in aflatoxin control initiatives.
- (v) **Focus on Funding and Capacity Building:** Highlighted the necessity for a mechanism of sustainable funding sources and capacity building in member countries.

## **2.5 Summary of the Group Discussions**

### **2.5.1 Past Achievements in Aflatoxin Control**

Over the past decade, significant strides have been made in the fight against aflatoxin contamination in Africa. A key achievement has been the empowerment of individual countries to lead and tailor the implementation of aflatoxin control measures. This country-led approach, complemented by the development of practical tools and continental guidelines, has marked a shift towards more effective, localized management strategies.

Furthermore, the success of multi-sectoral collaboration cannot be overstated. The inclusive engagement of diverse stakeholders, including governments, researchers, and communities, has fostered a collaborative environment essential for addressing this complex issue. This approach has been instrumental in increasing awareness and building a shared understanding of the aflatoxin challenge.

Advancements in research and technology have also been remarkable. The development of innovative solutions like Aflasafe and the use of evidence-based data have significantly contributed to understanding and mitigating the health and economic impacts of aflatoxin. Additionally, efforts in capacity building and infrastructure development, particularly in enhancing aflatoxin testing capabilities in partner countries, have laid a strong foundation for ongoing and future initiatives.

### **2.5.2 Future Initiatives for Aflatoxin Control**

Looking ahead, the roadmap for aflatoxin control in the next decade is defined by several key initiatives. A paramount focus will be on integrated knowledge management and communication. Establishing a centralized platform for knowledge exchange, such as a dedicated PACA website, alongside enhanced public awareness and advocacy campaigns, will be critical in consolidating and disseminating information related to aflatoxin control.

The role of inclusive stakeholder involvement will continue to be a cornerstone of aflatoxin management strategies. Engaging primary actors across the agricultural value chain, especially those at the grassroots level like farmers, retailers, and SMEs, will ensure a comprehensive and practical approach.

Additionally, increasing the participation of the private sector and stakeholders from the bottom of the pyramid is crucial for a holistic and effective strategy.

Policy harmonization and standardization across countries will also be a focus. Developing and aligning policies, legislation, and standards will facilitate a cohesive framework for aflatoxin control efforts across the continent. This includes the standardization of sampling, testing techniques, and the establishment of robust risk assessment frameworks.

Strategic expansion and the development of sustainable models will be vital for ensuring the longevity and effectiveness of aflatoxin control programs. Expanding PACA's influence to more member states and regions and developing innovative models for project continuity will be key to maintaining momentum in the fight against aflatoxin.

The issue of research and innovation was found to be important in looking for solutions regarding aflatoxin contamination. Looking for economical decontamination mechanisms and alternative use of contaminated grains. This has to be in mind since incineration of contaminated grains is way expensive.

Lastly, resource mobilization and capacity enhancement will be essential components of future strategies. Securing adequate resources and enhancing funding efforts, alongside continued capacity building focusing on human resources, infrastructure, and government prioritization, will provide the necessary support for sustained aflatoxin control efforts.

These initiatives, born from a decade of experience and collaboration, set a comprehensive and strategic direction for the future of aflatoxin control in Africa, embodying a collective resolve to mitigate its impact and ensure a healthier, more secure food supply.

## **2.6 Session 4: Food Safety for Food Systems Transformation**

This session included two presentations that were followed by panel discussions.

### 2.6.1 Presentation 5: Harmonizing aflatoxin Sampling and Testing Protocol – Prof. Limbikani Matumba, LUANAR

In Session 4 of the PACA PPM, titled "Food Safety for Food Systems Transformation," Prof. Limbikani Matumba delivered a presentation on "Harmonizing Aflatoxin Sampling and Testing Protocol." This session explored the complexities and advancements in aflatoxin sampling and testing, which are critical components in the effective management of aflatoxins. His presentation can be summarized as follows;

- (i) **Challenges in Sampling and Testing:** Prof. Matumba discussed the variability and challenges inherent in aflatoxin sampling and testing, emphasizing that the heterogeneity of aflatoxin distribution in crops leads to significant variability in test results. He highlighted that the largest variability arises from sample collection due to the uneven distribution of contaminants.
- (ii) **Technological Advancements and Standardization Needs:** The presentation underscored the importance of technological advancements in reducing errors in aflatoxin analysis. Prof. Matumba pointed out the need for validated methods and standardized procedures in sample preparation and analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- (iii) **Looking Towards Harmonized Protocols:** The need for harmonized aflatoxin sampling and testing protocols, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), was a key focus. Such harmonization is vital for mutual recognition of test results across countries, crucial for facilitating trade and ensuring food safety.

Prof. Matumba's presentation was a significant contribution to the understanding of aflatoxin control, underscoring the importance of precise, standardized, and harmonized approaches in aflatoxin sampling and testing for the future of food system transformation.

### 2.6.2 Presentation 6: The Importance of Food Safety for Food Systems Transformation – Mr. Isaac Ghokah, AGRA

Session 4 of the PACA PPM, titled "Food Safety for Food Systems Transformation," included a key presentation by Mr. Isaac Ghokah from AGRA, focusing on the crucial role of food safety in transforming food systems. His Presentation can be summarized as follows;





i) **The Stakes of Food Safety:** Mr. Ghokah emphasized the critical role of food safety in addressing hunger, malnutrition, and aflatoxin contamination. He highlighted the challenges in ensuring food safety from farm to fork, considering the impacts of climate change and the need for sustainable food systems in Africa.

i) **Strategic Approaches to Food Safety:** The presentation underscored the need for significant political commitment, robust regulatory frameworks, and infrastructure development to support food safety

measures. Ghokah advocated for comprehensive strategies that encompass the entire food value chain to ensure safety and quality.

(iii) **Future Directions and AGRA's Role:** Mr. Ghokah also outlined AGRA's initiatives and future plans to enhance food safety in Africa. He stressed the importance of collaborative efforts and strategic investments to address the food safety challenges facing the continent.

These insights from Mr. Ghokah's presentation underscore the interconnectedness of food safety and system transformation, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to ensure a sustainable and secure food future in Africa.2.6.3 Panel Discussions

Food systems transformation and food safety interventions – reflections over the past 10 years and aspirations for the next decade –facilitated by Mr. Tayani Vincent Banda, Senior Development Planning Specialist (Macro & Real Sector), and CALA Food Systems Champion

### **The Discussions and Recommendations**

The panel discussion, led by Mr. Tayani Vincent Banda, focused on food systems transformation and food safety interventions, reflecting on the past decade and looking forward to the next. The panel included Prof. Paul Kachapulula (UNZA), Mr. Ernest Aubee (PACA Advocacy Champion and former Senior Officer, ECOWAS), Dr. Chris Muyunda (Principal Business Mentor

within the Africa Incubation Network, AAIN), Ms. Kefilwe Moalosi (AUDA-NEPAD), and Dr. Adebowale Akande (IITA). The discussion covered a range of topics, including the need for evidence-based approaches to aflatoxin management, the importance of finance and political buy-in, and the necessity for multi-sectoral collaboration and capacity building at various levels, from policymakers to farmers. The panelists emphasized the critical role of food safety in agricultural policies and practices, highlighting the need for adaptive technologies and policy harmonization across the continent.

### **Recommendations and Key Messages**

Based on the panel discussion facilitated by Mr. Tayani Vincent Banda, the key recommendations and messages can be summarized as follows:

- (i) **Enhanced Multi-Sector Collaboration:** There's a need for stronger cooperation among various sectors, including governments, private sector, and regional bodies, to address food safety challenges effectively.
- (ii) **Policy Harmonization and Financing:** Emphasis on harmonizing policies across nations and securing adequate financing for food safety interventions.
- (iii) **Capacity Building and Technology Adoption:** Focus on building capacity at all levels and adopting adaptive technologies for better management of food safety risks.
- (iv) **Evidence-Based Policy Making:** Advocate for policies grounded in robust research to effectively manage aflatoxin risks and food safety challenges.
- (v) **Strengthened Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage closer collaboration between governments and private entities to leverage resources and expertise in food safety.
- (vi) **Community Engagement and Education:** Intensify efforts to educate and engage local communities, emphasizing the importance of food safety from farm to fork.
- (vii) **Leveraging Technology for Monitoring and Compliance:** Utilize advanced technologies for regular monitoring and ensuring compliance with food safety standards.
- (viii) **Sustainable Agricultural Practices:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices that reduce the risk of aflatoxin contamination and other food safety hazards.
- (ix) **Regional Integration and Policy Convergence:** Foster regional integration and policy convergence to facilitate trade and ensure uniform standards across borders.

These recommendations aim to create a more unified, effective approach to food safety and aflatoxin control, underpinning the transformation of food systems across Africa.

The second day of the PACA Partnership Platform Meeting commenced with renewed vigor, building on the foundational discussions and insights of the previous day. This day was dedicated to delving deeper into the strategies and innovations for aflatoxin control, with an emphasis on practical solutions and collaborative efforts. The sessions were designed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in aflatoxin management, fostering a dynamic environment for knowledge sharing and strategic planning.

## 2.7 Scaling Food Safety Innovations



Jane Kamau's presentation, "Scaling Food Safety Innovations," delivered at the PACA PPM, was a deep dive into the practicalities and challenges of implementing Aflasafe, a groundbreaking biocontrol product targeting aflatoxin contamination. Her presentation underscored the critical role of such innovations in

ensuring food safety and contributing to the overall transformation of food systems in Africa.

Kamau highlighted the journey of Aflasafe from conception to its current status, emphasizing the successes achieved and the lessons learned. She particularly focused on the effectiveness of Aflasafe in significantly reducing aflatoxin levels in crops, thus enhancing food safety and market access for African farmers. The success stories from various African countries where Aflasafe has been implemented served as a testament to its potential impact. The presentation also delved into the challenges of scaling such innovations. Kamau discussed the hurdles in widespread adoption, including logistical challenges, the need for policy support, and the importance of public-private partnerships. She stressed the necessity of integrating innovative solutions into broader national and regional food safety strategies, calling for increased investment, collaboration, and commitment from all stakeholders to fully

realize the potential of such food safety innovations.

### 2.7.1 Panel Discussion and Recommendations



The panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Happy Magoha, featuring panelists Dr. George Mahuku (IITA), Mr. Bhubhinder Singh (AtoZ), Dr. Guole Gueye (Senegal), and Mr. Clepin Josephat (TANIPAC),

offered diverse perspectives on scaling aflatoxin control strategies. The discussion highlighted the effectiveness of Aflasafe, a biocontrol product, in managing aflatoxin contamination, particularly for smallholder farmers. Panelists also discussed challenges in implementation and distribution, emphasizing the need for increased awareness and behavior change among farmers. The critical role of regulatory authorities in implementing standards and the importance of public-private partnerships in driving aflatoxin control efforts were also underscored.

### 2.7.2 Key Recommendations from the Panel Discussion

- (i) **Promotion and Market Accessibility of Aflasafe:** The panel highlighted the need for a concerted effort to promote wider use of Aflasafe. They emphasized the role of the private sector in expanding market access and ensuring the availability of Aflasafe to farmers. The discussion suggested incentivizing actors in the value chain and conducting on-the-spot monitoring and evaluation of Aflasafe's impact on aflatoxin control.
- (ii) **Collaboration and Technology Adoption:** Panelists underscored the importance of collaboration between organizations like PACA and technology providers like IITA. They highlighted the necessity of adopting technologies that can make a tangible difference at the grassroots level and the role of the PACA community in supporting policy advocacy across the continent for effective technology implementation.
- (iii) **Policy-Level Engagement and Success Stories Sharing:** A significant point raised was the importance of policy-level engagement. The panelists encouraged sharing success stories, like the Gambia's

regained market access in Europe, to inform and inspire policy actions in other African countries. This recommendation underscores the need for cross-country communication and learning in the realm of aflatoxin control.

- (iv) **Integration into National Strategies and Policies:** The panelists advocated for the integration of aflatoxin control measures, such as the use of Aflasafe, into national agricultural strategies and policies. This integration is vital for creating a systemic approach that addresses aflatoxin issues at the national level.
- (v) **Enhancing Local Production and Distribution:** Emphasizing the role of local production, the panel discussed the need for establishing local facilities for Aflasafe production to ensure its accessibility and affordability. This approach would also support local economies and create job opportunities.
- (vi) **Research and Development Focus:** Another key recommendation involved focusing on research and development, particularly in understanding the dynamics of aflatoxin contamination and control.
- (vii) The panelists stressed the importance of continuous innovation and adaptation of technologies like Aflasafe to meet the evolving challenges in aflatoxin management.

## **2.8 Session 5: Technical Discussions on Sustaining the Momentum on Aflatoxin Control in AU Member States**

This session included four presentations that were followed by Questions and Answer.

### **2.8.1 Sustaining aflatoxin control in countries after PACA's initial support**

#### **Ghana**

In Session 5 of the PACA PPM, "Technical Discussions on Sustaining the Momentum on Aflatoxin Control in AU MS," Ghana's presentation stood out as a highlight. Led by Mrs. Faustina Atupra, the session delved into Ghana's strategic and proactive measures in combating aflatoxin contamination. This presentation offered an in-depth look at the nation's efforts and successes in implementing the National Aflatoxin Control Policy, showcasing Ghana's commitment to ensuring food safety and improving public health. The Presentation elucidates the following:

- (i) **National Aflatoxin Control Policy and Strategic Objectives:** Ghana's presentation, spearheaded by Mrs. Faustina Atupra, focused on the country's National Aflatoxin Control Policy. This policy reflects a concerted effort to mitigate aflatoxin contamination in food and feed, underlining the government's commitment to ensuring food safety and enhancing trade competitiveness. The policy's strategic objectives center on promoting public awareness, facilitating policy development, and reinforcing research and surveillance systems to manage aflatoxin challenges effectively.
- (ii) **Policy Formulation and Stakeholder Engagement:** The formulation of this policy involved a thorough situational analysis, spearheaded by The CSIR-Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (CSIR-STEPRI), to assess the aflatoxin landscape in Ghana. This process was marked by extensive stakeholder consultations, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The collaboration across various sectors resulted in a well-rounded policy, validated by stakeholders and equipped with prioritized investment options. This inclusive process highlights Ghana's dedication to a multi-sectoral approach in tackling aflatoxin-related issues.
- (iii) **Implementation and Impact of the Policy:** The presentation concluded with insights into the implementation phase of the policy, focusing on mobilizing resources and enhancing public awareness about aflatoxin risks. This phase is crucial for translating policy objectives into actionable results, ultimately aiming to reduce aflatoxin contamination in the food supply. The proactive measures taken by Ghana, as presented, demonstrate a significant step towards improving food safety standards and protecting public health against aflatoxin risks.

### Tanzania

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The Tanzania report at the PACA PPM, presented by Mr. Clepin Josephat Mbekomize, provided comprehensive update on the Tanzania Initiatives for Preventing Aflatoxin Contamination (TANIPAC). This crucial project embodies a multi-faceted approach towards aflatoxin

control, encompassing infrastructure development, awareness creation, and

institutional strengthening. The TANIPAC is one of the major successes the PACA Country-Led Model. Through PACA's support, the Government of Tanzania which has mainstreamed aflatoxin control in its CAADP aligned national agriculture investment program, qualified to apply for the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and was awarded USD 20,000,000 from GAFSP and the Government with support from AfDB secured further funding of 15,320,000 for the project. The Government of Tanzania has been implementing the TANIPAC for the past 4 years. Despite facing challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shifts, the project demonstrates resilience and adaptability in its ongoing efforts to combat aflatoxin contamination. The presentation from Tanzania at the PACA PPM focused on the initiatives for preventing aflatoxin contamination (TANIPAC). Key aspects include:

- (i) **Project Overview and Goals:** The TANIPAC project, launched in March 2019 with a projected completion by May 2025, targets both the Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. It has a comprehensive budget of USD 35.32 million and aims to enhance food and nutritional security by controlling aflatoxin problems, increasing public awareness, and improving institutional capacity for aflatoxin control in food value chains.
- (ii) **Project Progress and Impact:** The presentation detailed the progress of various project components, such as infrastructure development, public awareness, education, and institutional strengthening. The project has significantly benefited numerous stakeholders including farmers, traders, processors, SMEs, youth artisans, journalists, and leaders at all levels. This broad impact demonstrates the project's commitment to a multi-faceted approach to aflatoxin control.
- (iii) **Challenges and Future Directions:** The presentation also highlighted the challenges faced, like the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on awareness creation, and the escalation of building material prices due to global economic conditions. Steps taken to mitigate these challenges include engagement with relevant parties and adopting digital strategies for awareness creation.

## Senegal

The Senegal report at the PACA PPM, presented by Dr. Guole Gueye, provided a comprehensive view of the nation's progress and strategies in aflatoxin management. Focusing on the implementation and success of Aflasafe, the presentation showcased Senegal's commitment to improving food safety

standards and reducing aflatoxin contamination, setting a benchmark for future initiatives in the region. The Senegal presentation at the PACA PPM, led by Goule Gueye, provided an insightful overview of the nation's efforts in managing aflatoxin contamination.

- (i) **Introduction to Senegal's Aflatoxin Control Efforts:** The session introduced Senegal's strategic approach to controlling aflatoxin contamination. Gueye outlined the country's initiatives, focusing on enhancing food safety and public health through innovative solutions and collaborative efforts.
- (ii) **Progress and Challenges in Aflatoxin Management:** The presentation detailed the progress made in Senegal's fight against aflatoxin. It highlighted the successful implementation of various control measures, while also acknowledging the ongoing challenges faced in fully eradicating aflatoxin risks.
- (iii) **Future Strategies and Commitment:** The presentation concluded with an overview of Senegal's future strategies for aflatoxin management. It underscored the country's commitment to continued innovation and collaboration in combating aflatoxin contamination, ensuring food safety and security for its citizens.

## Uganda

The Uganda report at the PACA PPM, delivered by Prof. Archileo N. Kaaya, offered a comprehensive look into the country's dynamic and multi-layered approach to aflatoxin management. Highlighting both the strides and challenges, the presentation underscored Uganda's commitment to enhancing food safety and its pivotal role in achieving



national development objectives. Key elements included:

- (i) **National Strategy and Policy Frameworks:** Uganda's strategy involves various policies and frameworks addressing post-harvest loss reduction and aflatoxin management. This includes integrating aflatoxin control into national agricultural and industrialization programs, showcasing a multi-sectoral commitment to tackling aflatoxin issues.
- (ii) **On-ground Activities and Challenges:** Uganda has undertaken various on-ground activities, including capacity building and establishment of decontamination equipment. However, challenges like commodity rejections, low awareness among value chain actors, and inadequate



infrastructure persist.

- (iii) **Future Direction and Multi-sectoral Approach:** The presentation concluded with a focus on the necessity of a multi-sectoral approach to address the broader issues in the food control system and the country's increasing concern about food safety as a barrier to achieving its developmental goals.

## **2.9 Session 6: Harmonized Efforts for Aflatoxin Control – Best Practice, Lessons and Emerging Issues to Consider in the Next Decade**

This session included three presentations that were followed by panel discussions.

### **2.9.1 Presentation 12: Harmonized Gender Sensitive Food Safety Policies – IGNITE/TANAGER**

In their presentation "Harmonized Gender Sensitive Food Safety Policies," Ms. Winnie Osulah and Dr. Sam Oando from IGNITE/TANAGER highlighted the critical need for integrating gender perspectives into food safety policies. Their focus was on the distinct roles and challenges faced by men and women in the food safety value chain, emphasizing how these differences impact aflatoxin control efforts. They argued for policies and interventions that are not only gender-sensitive but also inclusive, ensuring equitable participation and benefit for both genders.

The presentation underscored the importance of understanding and addressing gender-specific risks and impacts in food safety issues. Osulah and Oando illustrated how women's significant involvement in agricultural production and processing, coupled with their household food safety responsibilities, places them at a unique nexus of aflatoxin exposure and control. Therefore, gender-responsive strategies are vital for effective and sustainable food safety solutions.

Lastly, they advocated for research and development initiatives that consider gender dynamics, highlighting the necessity of tailored approaches in policy formation and implementation. They gave examples of the collaborative work between IGNITE/TANAGER and the African Union Commission through PACA on integrating gender in AU Member States. This approach would ensure that gender considerations are central to food safety efforts, ultimately leading to

more effective and equitable outcomes in aflatoxin management and broader food safety initiatives.

### **2.9.2 Presentation 13: Emerging risks to food safety: Conflicts, Climate Change and external shocks**



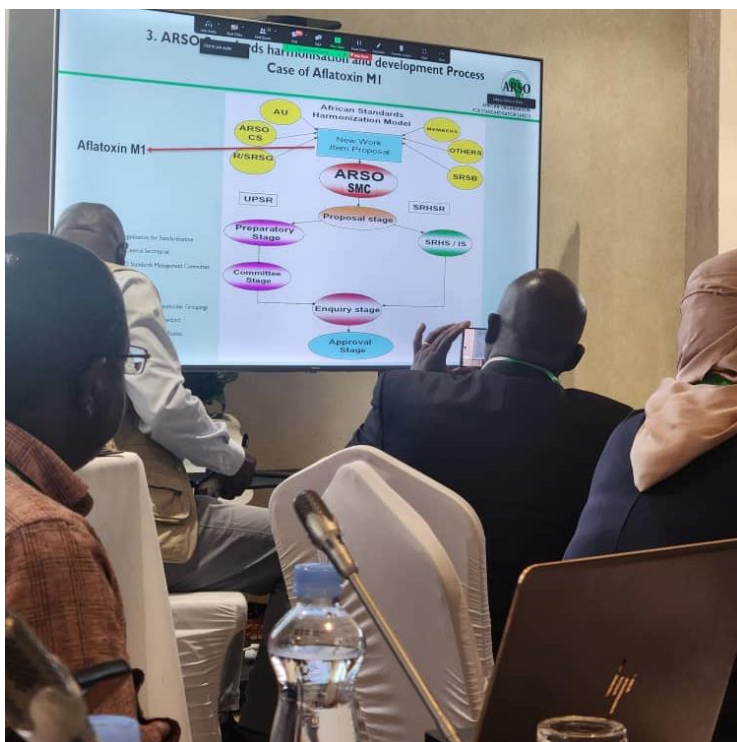
The presentation by Dr. Alejandro Ortega-Beltran, Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, and Dr. George Mahuku from IITA explored the emerging risks to food safety, focusing on conflicts, climate change, and external

shocks. They outlined how these factors exacerbate the challenges in managing aflatoxin contamination, a critical food safety issue. The team emphasized the interconnected nature of these risks, noting that conflicts and climate change can disrupt agricultural practices and food distribution, leading to increased vulnerability to aflatoxin contamination.

The presentation delved into the need for adaptive strategies to combat these emerging risks. It highlighted the importance of technological advancements, such as improved detection methods and resilient crop varieties, to mitigate the impact of aflatoxins. Furthermore, the speakers underscored the role of institutional support and policy frameworks that can accommodate and respond to the dynamic nature of these challenges.

Finally, the IITA team advocated for a holistic approach to address these complex and interrelated risks. This approach includes integrating cross-sectoral efforts, enhancing collaboration between stakeholders, and investing in research and development. By adopting such comprehensive strategies, the presentation concluded, there can be a significant reduction in aflatoxin contamination, contributing to safer food systems amidst the challenges of conflicts and climate change.

### **2.9.3 Presentation 14: Harmonizing Aflatoxin Standards across Africa – the case of Aflatoxin M1**



Ms. Nadine Umutoni's presentation on behalf of Dr. Hermogene Nsengimana, the Secretary General of ARSO, "Harmonizing Aflatoxin Standards across Africa – the case of Aflatoxin M1," underscored the necessity of standardized aflatoxin control measures across Africa. The presentation emphasized the importance of harmonized standards in facilitating trade and ensuring food safety. Ms. Umutoni highlighted ARSO's initiatives in aligning with

international standards and the development process for Aflatoxin M1 standards.

The presentation delved into the technical aspects of standardization and the challenges of achieving continent-wide consistency in aflatoxin regulation. The role of ARSO in bridging the gap between different national standards and international benchmarks was discussed, highlighting the ongoing efforts to create a unified approach to aflatoxin control in Africa.

Ms. Umutoni concluded by advocating for stronger regulatory cooperation among African nations and emphasizing the need for widespread education and awareness about food safety standards. She stressed the importance of engaging with national mirror committees and other technical bodies to ensure effective participation in standardization processes, essential for enhancing food safety and quality control in the continent. Key recommendations from Ms. Nadine's presentation are;

- (i) Fast-track the African standard harmonization work through providing Technical expertise and Financial means as a follow up on the submitted New Work Item proposal (NWIP) to ARSO.
- (ii) Urges Member States to adopt international and African Standards on Aflatoxin in food products and withdraw Conflicting National Standards to facilitate cross-border trade of safe products.

- (iii) Jointly work with ARSO in creating awareness and carrying out capacity building activities for relevant stakeholders including farmers as to promote quality culture in Africa.

## **3.0 CLOSING SESSION**

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### **3.1 Closing Session: Next Steps**

The culmination of the two-day meeting in Nairobi was marked by Ms. Wezi Chunga's presentation of the Communique. This critical document masterfully captured the collective insights and agreed-upon resolutions, outlining the strategic next steps in the ongoing battle against aflatoxin in Africa. It symbolized a unified commitment and a forward-thinking approach, charting a clear path for concerted efforts in enhancing aflatoxin control across the continent. The communique outlined key themes and recommendations, highlighting the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, the success of country-led approaches, and the role of innovation in aflatoxin control. It emphasized integrating gender considerations, enhancing public awareness, and strengthening research and development. The document also underscored the need for resilience in food systems against aflatoxin contamination and the criticality of policy integration and enforcement. This communique serves as a guidepost for future actions and strategies in the continued fight against aflatoxin contamination in Africa.

### **3.2 Key Outcomes from 4th PACA PPM**

As we conclude the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting, this section presents the key recommendations that emerged from our comprehensive discussions. These recommendations encapsulate the collective wisdom and strategic direction agreed upon by all participants. They serve as a guide for future actions, aiming to strengthen our joint efforts in combating aflatoxin contamination across Africa. These actionable steps, born from a shared commitment to public health and food safety, pave the way for a coordinated, impactful approach in our ongoing battle against aflatoxins.

Integration into National Strategies: Urges countries to embed aflatoxin control within their national agricultural and health policies, ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Key Recommendations were;

- (i) **Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourages collaboration between government entities and private sectors for pooling resources and expertise, essential for large-scale aflatoxin mitigation efforts.
- (ii) **Innovative Technologies for Detection and Control:** Recommends the adoption of cutting-edge technologies for more effective detection, monitoring, and control of aflatoxin levels in crops and food products.
- (iii) **Comprehensive Education and Awareness Programs:** Highlights the need for widespread education initiatives to raise awareness about aflatoxin risks and preventive measures among farmers, traders, and consumers.
- (iv) **Regional Cooperation for Harmonized Standards:** Suggests regional collaboration to develop and implement standardized policies and regulations, facilitating more effective cross-border aflatoxin control.
- (v) **Community-based Initiatives:** Advocates for grassroots efforts, empowering local communities to implement practical aflatoxin management strategies.
- (vi) **Support for Research in Aflatoxin-Resistant Varieties:** Emphasizes the importance of investing in research to develop and disseminate crop varieties resistant to aflatoxin contamination.
- (vii) **Enhancing Food Safety Monitoring and Regulatory Frameworks:** Calls for improved food safety surveillance systems and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance and protect public health.
- (viii) **Value Chain Approaches to Mitigate Exposure:** Recommends adopting comprehensive value chain approaches to reduce aflatoxin exposure from farm to table.
- (ix) **Market Access for Aflatoxin-Safe Products:** Encourages the promotion and facilitation of market access for products certified as aflatoxin-safe, incentivizing quality and safety standards in food production.

### 3.3 Closing Session: Closing Remarks

In the closing remarks of the PACA PPM, Honourable Assistant Professor Michael Roberto Kenyi and Dr. Amare presented their perspectives:

**Honourable Assistant Professor Michael Roberto Kenyi:** He emphasized the



importance of continuing the fight against aflatoxin and converting challenges into opportunities. He highlighted the need for capacity building, not just through training but also in planning and policy development. He stressed the importance of strengthening institutions and fostering

collaborations among member states for effective aflatoxin control.

**Dr. Amare (African Union Commission):** Dr. Amare on behalf of Prof. Afeikhena Jerome reflected on the productive discussions of the past two days. He spoke about the need to implement the strategies and recommendations discussed at the meeting and stressed the importance of the PACA community's role in this implementation. Dr. Amare also highlighted the African Union's efforts to institutionalize food safety and the significance of PACA's work in this context.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, the 4th PACA Partnership Platform Meeting marked a significant stride in the collective efforts to combat aflatoxin contamination in Africa. This gathering underscored the necessity of a united, multi-sectoral approach encompassing governments, international organizations, local communities, and private entities. The discussions and resolutions from this meeting highlight the ongoing commitment to advance research, policy harmonization, technological innovation, and community education for effective aflatoxin management. As we move forward, the continued collaboration and dedication of all stakeholders are imperative to safeguard food security, enhance public health, and bolster economic growth across the continent. This unified path forward sets a precedent for future initiatives in the realm of food safety and public health in Africa.



## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Participant List

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي

UMOJA WA AFRIKA



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

UNIÓN AFRICANA

The 4 <sup>th</sup> PACA Partnership Platform Meeting, 6-7 December 2023, Nairobi, Kenya (Day 1)					
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UNIÃO AFRICANA

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The 4<sup>th</sup> PACA Partnership Platform Meeting, 6-7 December 2023, Nairobi, Kenya (Day 1)

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