The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Nigeria Roundtable Discussions - Communique
08-09 June 2015
Abuja, Nigeria

Background

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) is a flagship program of CAADP at the African Union Commission. Nigeria has been selected as the six focus country of PACA using multi-criteria based pilot country selection process that was carried out in consultation with RECs and other stakeholders in 2014. Nigerian government has confirmed to jointly work with the AU Commission as one of the sixth PACA focus countries. The initial situation analysis conducted by Abt Associates Inc. on behalf of PACA demonstrated the significant extent of the aflatoxin problem in Nigeria. In addition, one-in-two ECOWAS inhabitants live in Nigeria. Thus, the engagement of Nigeria as focus country is strategic. As the PACA Secretariat focuses on building capacity of country governments, the readiness for action on combatting aflatoxins by country governments is deemed critical. Nigeria demonstrated this readiness, further concretizing its position as the sixth potential PACA pilot country.

The PACA Secretariat works closely with ECOWAS and local country stakeholders to support the preparation, execution, and oversight of government-led, and stakeholder aligned country plan. A round table meeting was held between the AUC, ECOWAS and Nigeria Government and other stake holders on 8-9 June 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria to launch the country process and build consensus on approaches and timelines as well as roles and responsibilities.

8 June 2015

The meeting commenced with a welcoming remark by the ECOWAS commission represented by Mr. Ernest Aubee who congratulated Nigeria for becoming the sixth Pilot country and commended Nigeria for its already ongoing efforts in addressing the aflatoxin problem in the country. ECOWAS emphasized the importance of Nigeria's engagement as PACA's sixth Pilot country to address aflatoxin issues because of its major importance to the region as an exporting country of many commodities as well as its strategic placement within the region. Nigeria's leadership and full engagement was deemed critical by ECOWAS in the effective reduction of aflatoxin in the country as well as the region. It is very critical to address the aflatoxin problem says ECOWAS, " as this presents very serious challenges in the food security, health and trade sectors of our region. The challenges of aflatoxin are not limited to agriculture, but must be seen from a wider developmental context in which we all must collaborate across sectors to terminate its harmful effects in an increasing population that is striving to increase agricultural production and productivity."

The African Union Commission represented by Dr. Amare Ayalew followed ECOWAS in delivering an opening statement. The AUC congratulated Nigeria for becoming PACA's sixth pilot country and emphasized the importance of mitigating the aflatoxin issue in order to contribute to the continent's food security as well as improved human health. Aflatoxins are an impediment to international trade as well as developmental efforts on the continent. The African Union Commission confirmed its commitment to this process and Nigeria, through PACA, in all its efforts for mitigating the aflatoxin problem.

The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development Mr. Sonny S.T. Echono, opened the meeting by thanking PACA for selecting Nigeria as its pilot country. The PS inaugurated an inter-ministerial committee on mycotoxins that will oversee all the activities regarding mycotoxins and especially aflatoxin control activities. The PS emphasized that Nigerians and all other stakeholders are expecting great things from this committee. He says "Nigerians will want to see the realization of dividends of implementing the committee in the very shortest time. I therefore charge members of the Inter-Ministerial Mycotoxin committee to adequately utilize the platform to set the ball rolling in the desired direction of achieving the aims and objectives of the committee." He assured the committee that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is fully committed to the work and implementation of activities of this inter-ministerial committee and partners. The PS thanked PACA and other partners for assisting the countries in implementing critical activities in combatting aflatoxin in Nigeria and elsewhere. The meeting was officially opened.

Session I: Background Discussions

Presentation I: The PACA program manager presented the overview of PACA and its current activities within the pilot countries and explained the rationale for PACA to focus on country governments. Dr. Amare emphasized the importance of Governments being key to addressing aflatoxin issues in Africa due to their wide sphere of influence and creation of an enabling environment. However, there is little support given to governments to play this role. PACA will work closely with governments to support and build capacity to enable them to effectively tackle the aflatoxin problem in the country. He also emphasized the need for forging strong partnerships and working together with all stakeholders.

Presentation II: Mr. Aubin Fafeh followed with a presentation on the CAADP framework and its relation to the PACA initiative.

Presentation III: Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, who is leading the Aflasafe program of IITA, presented on the aflatoxin issue in Nigeria where he described the nature of aflatoxin and its effect on human and animal health in Nigeria. Dr. Bandyopadhyay confirmed the increased levels of aflatoxin in groundnut and maize in various regions of Nigeria. Aflatoxins are known to cause liver cancer and are also associated with child stunting. He confirmed that the majority of the population is highly affected as consumption of contaminated crops is high. Consequently, the high level of contamination of key crops is costing the Nigerian economy tremendously.

Presentation IV: Mr. Adebowale Akande, AgResults manager IITA, presented on the current engagement of AgResults with farmers in Nigeria. AgResults is a pull mechanism where aflasafe is one of the first three pilots. Through this project and in collaboration with others, 40,000 farmers in Nigeria have been trained in aflatoxin management. Through this

intervention, it is also expected that the total production of aflatoxin reduced maize, through aflasafe treatment, will exceed 260,000 tons in four years. This is equivalent to nearly 3 percent of current maize production in the country. It has been recorded that farmers have been able to negotiate a premium price for aflasafe treated quality maize.

Presentation V: The PACA Program Officer gave an overview of the PACA Country Activities Inception workshop that was held on 10-11 June 2014 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She explained the various steps and methodologies that were agreed upon with pilot country delegates, AUC and RECs for implementing PACA Pilot Country Activities. She also presented the proposed timeline for implementation of activities in Nigeria.

Meeting Recommendations and Consensus

Representatives of the Government of The Republic of Nigeria, Africa Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Community for West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) having met to engage in Roundtable Discussions on Support towards the Abatement of the Health, Food and Nutrition Security, and Economic Impacts of aflatoxins on 8 June 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria:

TAKING NOTE of the progress that Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) of the African Union Commission has made since its establishment in 2011

ALSO TAKING NOTE of the PACA pilot country inception workshop which was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 10-11 June 2014 to sensitize pilot countries on the activities planned for in 2014 and kick-start the implementation process; agree on the methodology or the implementation of AfricaAIMS; and agree on a timeline for the implementation of all three Pilot-Country activities,

COMMENDING that aflatoxin mitigation should address across the three sectors of health, trade and agriculture

RECOGNISING the efforts that Nigeria has made in establishing the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration (NAFDAC) as well as a National Food Safety management Committee

RECOGNISING that the proposed PACA activities are in are in line with and contributing to the implementation of the Malabo Declaration adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Heads of State and Government in June 2014 and

RECOGNISING that at the country level, the PACA Secretariat will work closely with RECs and local country stakeholders through a Country Steering Committee to support the preparation, execution, and oversight of ***country government-led, and stakeholder aligned country plans.***

UNDERTAKE TO:

Implement the country plans that are being executed through the following four stage process:

- Stage One: Gather evidence to inform the plan
- Stage Two: Develop, validate and finalize the country plan
- Stage Three: Build government capacity to implement the plan
- Stage Four: Monitor progress and advocate

Agreed to implement the above activities through the following steps and timelines:

1. Establishment of AfricaAIMS

i) Gauge Pilot Country laboratory capacity gap through questionnaire;
ii) Fill lab capacity gap through PACA support; and
iii) Conduct PACA supported trainings in data analysis and submission on AfricaAIMS through the ARIS II interface

2. Country-Led aflatoxin and Food Safety Situation Analysis and Action Planning:

- Nigerian government officials from the three sectors (health, trade, agriculture) as well as the country aflatoxin Steering Committee to identify firms or individuals qualified to conduct the Country-Led aflatoxin and Food Safety Situation Analysis and Action Planning
- Invite expressions of interest (EOI) from qualified firms/individuals
- Select best firm to conduct the work
- Outcomes of the country-led situation analysis should propose an action plan that will be mainstreamed into the NAFSIP

3. NAFSIP Reviews

- Roundtable Discussions to get consensus and commitments on the country activities.
- Engage national consultants to facilitate in NAFSIP reviews including stakeholder mapping and consultations
- Convene NAFSIP Review Workshop
- Costing Exercise of priority areas/ activities to be mainstreamed into the NAFSIP
- Convene a Business Meeting with Nigerian Government, Development Partners, private sector and other relevant stakeholders to agree on priority areas and commit funding
- Implementation tracked through the CAADP Results Framework; Country M&E Systems; and PACA M&E and AfricaAIMS

RECOMMENDING that mainstreaming should also consider other frameworks like the National Policy on Food Safety and Implementation Strategy

RECOMMENDING the Ministry of Agriculture to house a PACA focal point due to its broad mandates, this will allow for better coordination along the three sectors of health, trade and agriculture

RECOMMENDING that the NAIP should be the framework to mainstream the aflatoxin action plan and strategy

AGREE TO implement activities according the following timelines:

	Timeline for implementing PACA Activities in Nigeria																															
	Jun-15				July				Aug				Sep				Oct				Nov				Dec				Jan-16			
	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4
1. Roundtable Discussions																																
June 8-9																																
2. Country led situation analysis																																
2.1 Engage Country-led situation analysis consultant in country																																
Third Week of July -Third week of October																																
2.2 In-Country situation analysis validation of report																																
First week of November																																
3. AfricaAIMS in-country training																																
First Week of August																																
4. NAFSIP Review process																																
4.1 Engage NAFSIP Review Consultant to lead the consultative process in country																																
Second Week of October																																
4.2 NAFSIP Review Workshop																																
First Week of December																																
4.3 Business Meeting																																
End of DDEcember-Beginning of January																																

09 June 2015

The PACA secretariat, ECCOWAS, IITA went to the ministry of Agriculture for a courtesy visit and well as to discuss ways forward based on the roundtable meeting.
All Directors from the ministry of Agriculture, delegates from the ministry of Health, delegates from the ministry of Trade, delegates from NAFDAC, and the Nigeria Mycotoxin Society were also present at the meeting. The PS represented by the Deputy PS welcomed all participants to the meeting and thanked everyone for the efforts in addressing the aflatoxin problem in Nigeria.

Discussions and outcomes of the meeting

- Nigeria is strategically placed in the region to effectively address the aflatoxin issue and support the implementation of standards and regulations across the region as a major exporter regionally
- Nigeria has a great potential to become a major exporter of groundnut, maize and other commodities again
- PACA will not create parallel structure in implementing activities
- In the last four years, the Nigerian agricultural sector has seen a major increase in production and unprecedented growth with the Agriculture Transformation agenda. Production of many crops has increased significantly.
- It is therefore the most appropriate time for PACA to be involved in Nigeria and help Nigeria achieve its potential to produce quality crop commodities for internal consumption as well as trade purposes
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development fully supports PACA and its activities in Nigeria

All present ministries and other stakeholders agreed on the following:

- The Nigerian stakeholders will form a country aflatoxin Steering Committee (8-10 Members) to oversee and give guidance to the activities implemented by PACA and other government bodies.
- This Steering Committee will include the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Trade, Environment, NAFDAC, IITA, Maize Association of Nigeria, Groundnut Association of Nigeria, poultry association of Nigeria, and Development Partner and private sector representatives
- The Nigerian Stakeholders will form the Nigerian Aflatoxin Technical Working Group (ATWG) that will act as a sub-committee working on the technical aspect of activities in Nigeria
- The ATWG will include various stakeholders from the various ministries, sectors across Nigeria
- The Ministry of Agriculture has been identified as the focal institution for PACA activities in Nigeria

- A PACA Country Officer will be placed in the focal institution for implementation of day to day PACA activities in Nigeria and coordination of activities between the three major ministries and sectors
- The PACA secretariat will advertise the post of country officer as soon as possible
- The PACA commissioned Situation Analysis study will commence as soon as national consultants have been identified
- The Ministry of Agriculture will inform all relevant ministries to delegate a member for the PACA Steering Committee
- The Director of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Eniaiyeju, will send PACA the list of ATWG members and County SC members
- The stakeholders also recommended that PACA supports the establishment of a regional office in aflatoxin control in Nigeria
- Stakeholders also identified the three major crops to be investigated and focused on for PACA activities: Groundnut, Maize and Sesame

The Director of Agriculture and Rural Development closed the meeting by thanking PACA, ECOWAS, IITA, present ministries and all stakeholders for their commitment and continuous efforts in addressing the aflatoxin issue on the continent and particularly in Nigeria.
He emphasized the need for all stakeholders to work as one and achieve the mission. The Ministry will make sure that the mission of the project will achieved in Nigeria.

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08/06/2015

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