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PACA strategy development consultation workshop kicks off

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania 10 April 2013- The African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the government of Tanzania, today 10 April 2013 opened a strategy development stakeholders consultation workshop on the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.



The three day PACA stakeholders' strategy development workshop was officially opened by Dr. Hussein A. Mwinyi, Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Tanzania. The Workshop aims to identify challenges, opportunities, criteria and potential priority intervention areas; to bring continent-wide technical knowledge and expertise on aflatoxin; to develop key result areas for action as well as create awareness and connection to the PACA community.

Opening the workshop Dr. Mwinyi addressed the issue of aflatoxin and said that success in control of aflatoxin and any mycotoxins requires a comprehensive and participatory approach, with multiple partners and joint strategies by governments, the private sector, farmers and consumers.

The Minister also expressed his hope regarding the critical role to be played by key stakeholders gathered from different counties and institutions to deal with mycotoxin control in Africa. "The role that will be played by each one of you here is very important for the success of the needed transformation, which is intended to make the aflatoxins control a reality and therefore help to protect human health, improve food security, and facilitate trade in Africa", he added.

"According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 25% of world food crops are affected, and tropical countries are most at risk. Over 5 billion people in developing counties are at risk of chronic aflatoxin exposure", said Dr. Yemi

Akinbamijo, Head of Agriculture and Food Security Division, AU Commission. He further expressed his concern that aflatoxin poses a threat to international trade, health, food security and many other international development efforts.

Dr. Akinbamijo underlined that control of aflatoxin is needed to achieve greater agricultural development, food security and improve health, particularly in Africa where contamination is widespread and often acute. *(the complete speech is available on www.au.int).*

The PACA workshop, which will end on 12 April 2013, is expected to develop key results areas and specific action recommendations for each area. It will also deliberate on better understanding of PACA vision, mission, objectives and thematic areas for action.

Participants at the PACA meeting are gathered from the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, ministers, UN agencies, farmers' organization, business associations, women's organizations, private companies, research and academic institutions, international organizations, and funding agencies.

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