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SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL OF CASSAVA DISEASES IN AFRICA

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Objectives

More than 40 scientists from African national and regional institutions and international agricultural research centers met in La Réunion Island from 10 to 13 June 2014, to contribute to the surveillance and control of cassava diseases and pests that threaten the food security and livelihoods of millions Africans.
The main action was to consolidate and develop a global alliance against cassava diseases in Africa and a strategic action plan with several international initiatives for the coming years.

1. Establishment of a Pan-African Cassava Surveillance Network (PACSUN)

- **Comprise members of existing networks and organizations, extension services, NGOs and policy makers in Africa,**
- **Create synergies between existing initiatives,**
- **Provide harmonized intervention approaches and tools for monitoring of cassava diseases and pests in Africa,**
- **Coordinate appropriate responses in each country to stop the spread of diseases such as CBSD,**
- **Development of a Website that will provide the cassava community with information on PACSUN members and updated information about the geographical distribution of all cassava viral and bacterial diseases,**
- **Development of diagnostic technologies to better identifying viruses and bacteria infecting cassava and the whitefly vectors responsible for the rapid spread of viral diseases throughout the continent,**
- **Development of a comprehensive educational and training plan to support the activities of PACSUN: organization of technical and scientific training courses to ensure the transfer of diagnostic technologies to each country in the network.**

2. Establishment of an International Cassava Transit Site (ICTS) in La Réunion

The exchange of cassava material between countries in Africa or other continents is currently banned due to the risk of spreading cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD).

- **La Réunion, where CMD and CBSD are absent, will act as a transit site where cassava can be checked for viruses and bacteria and where crosses could eventually be made to produce seeds for export without risk of spreading diseases.**
- **3P Center will work with regional and international centers to perform relevant tests for all known cassava viruses and bacteria.**

Conclusions

The meeting in La Réunion was the first step in implementing a roadmap to improve surveillance and control of cassava viruses and bacteria in Africa. The workshop participants, discussed several international initiatives for the coming years. Firstly, the establishment of a Pan-African Cassava Surveillance Network (PACSUN) and an International Cassava transit Site (ICTS) in La Réunion. Secondly, the development of standardized and robust diagnostic tools to better identifying viruses, their vectors, and bacteria infecting cassava, and a comprehensive educational and training plan to support the activities of PACSUN.