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## **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLANT PROTECTION TASKFORCE OF THE WEST AFRICA GEOGRAPHICAL ZONE**

The annual meeting of the regional plant protection taskforce of the West Africa geographical zone took place in Cotonou, Benin, July 3-6, 2023.

### **Background**

In recent years, emerging diseases and invasive species have spread dramatically and pose a serious threat to food security. They therefore have a very perceptible economic impact, and affect low-income populations.

In West Africa, climate variability combined with the existence of widespread hosts and vectors has worsened the situation in the case of species introduced for the first time into an ecologically favorable environment where there are few natural enemies that can contain them, and where growers don't know how to deal with them. Recent examples include the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), the papaya mealybug (*Paracoccus marginatus*), and the cotton jassids (*Amrasca biguttula*). The FAO and its partners have long been on the front line of the fight against invasive species, supporting early warning and prevention efforts and implementing effective responses.

### **Objectives of the meeting**

The present workshop's objectives included:

- The facilitation of knowledge-sharing between stakeholders;
- The assessment of the IPM technologies currently being implemented while evaluating the phytosanitary situation in the country members;
- The production of information for the development of a regional integrated management manual for cotton jassids.

The workshop gathered the national focal points (NFP) from West African countries including Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Benin, Mali, Ghana, Togo, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, The Gambia, Cabo Verde, Niger, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, and various stakeholders involved in pest management.



### **Main achievements of the workshop**

The participants discussed several topics including:

- The global action plan against Fall Armyworm (FAW);
- The phytosanitary situation in sub-Saharan Africa and FAO initiatives;
- The FAO plant protection initiatives in West Africa;
- The phytosanitary situation in West African countries;
- The country members' support needs.

The participants took two days to prepare an integrated management manual for cotton jassids, one of the most damaging emerging pests in cotton in West Africa. They concluded the workshop with a field trip to the Toffo region and the industrial zone of Golo-Djigbè near Allada in Southern Benin.

**Dr. Souleymane Nacro**

IAPPS coordinator for Region IV: West/Central Africa

**E-mail:** [snacro2006@yahoo.fr](mailto:snacro2006@yahoo.fr)

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**IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.**

**It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to the world's crop and forest ecosystems.**

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**Manuele Tamò  
Editor, IAPPS Newsletter  
IITA-Benin  
08 B.P. 0932 Tri Postal, Cotonou, Republic of Benin  
E-mail: [m.tamo@cgiar.org](mailto:m.tamo@cgiar.org)**