



CIPMN Oyo State cites IITA partnership

Lauds Institute for support given it through the years

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN), Oyo State Branch, has cited IITA for the support it has rendered at both the branch and national levels in its operational activities in the past. This was highlighted by branch chairman Mr Akin Akinpelu during an industrial visit by CIPMN management and branch members to IITA's Ibadan campus on 4 September 2008.

Mr Akinpelu said, "The CIPMN wishes to express its profound gratitude for the support and assistance IITA management had rendered to us all these years, and we hope that this fruitful partnership and cooperation will continue in many more years to come".

The branch members were warmly received by IITA management led by Mrs Lilian Mendoza, Human Resources Manager.

On behalf of the Institute, she commended the leadership of CIPMN in its efforts toward regulating,

controlling and raising HR professional standards in Nigeria. She also praised CIPMN's commitment in ensuring best practice and quality service delivery in people management and development of members toward excellence.

She also congratulated the Oyo State branch for being adjudged the Best Branch winner two years in a row, in 2006 and 2007. She concluded with the assurance that IITA will continue to support CIPMN in adding value to its objectives.

The CIPMN group toured the IITA campus grounds and were oriented by staff about its facilities such as the Conference Centre, water treatment plant, Cassava Processing Unit, farm demonstration fields, the lake and Craig Dam, and recreational services.

CIPMN is the apex professional body in charge of the regulation of human resource practice and the registration of HR practitioners in both the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy. It was chartered by Act. 58 of 1992.



Ms Abimbola Kolesho (representing the CIPMN National President) presenting a CIPMN journal to Mrs Lilian Mendoza as Mr. Akin Akinpelu, Oyo State chairman, looks on.

Announcements

Banana Conference 2008

IITA, in partnership with Bioersity International, ISHS, FARA and KARI, is organizing the Banana Conference 2008 to be held at the Leisure Lodge Resort in Mombasa, Kenya on 5-9 October 2008. Interested parties could register online at <http://www.banana2008.com>.



Events:

- HR Office Contract Review Seminar by Dr. Stephan Weise entitled "Rural transformation of cocoa communities: How?". Seminar Room, 2:00pm, Monday, 15 September
- Chain Supply Office meeting, Boardroom II, 10:00am - 12:00noon, 15 -19 September
- Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) Project Annual Planning Meeting, 15-19 September, Conference Centre

Visits:

- Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Akure, Ondo State (Farm Office, Cassava Processing & Postharvest), Tuesday, 16 September
- National Association of Plant Science & Biotech Student, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers (Tissue Culture, Virology/ Nematology, Pathology), Thursday, 18 September

R4D SEMINAR: MOLECULAR TOOLS FOR CROP IMPROVEMENT AND EFFECTIVE PLANT DISEASE DIAGNOSIS



Dr Dong-Jin Kim, IITA biotechnologist based in Kenya, presenting to staff and management highlights of his research on using molecular tools to improve crops and diagnose plant diseases.

As part of the regular IITA HR contract review process, Dr Dong-Jin Kim, biotechnologist based at the Kenya station, presented highlights of his work on biotechnology and use of molecular tools on 8 September at the Seminar Room of IITA-HQ in Ibadan.

During his seminar, he reported on his major research work and results starting in 2005, when he was initially hired as a consultant, up to the present.

These included his research into legume COS, development of a marker kit under the Kirkhouse Trust, cassava and cowpea SNP, bioinformatics, crop disease diagnostics, cowpea markers and cassava virus diagnostics.

His discussion primarily dealt on the specific uses of molecular tools to understand variations in plant genetic resources, determine useful traits and transferring these traits to produce improved varieties of different

crops. He also explored the uses of molecular tools to effectively and efficiently diagnose crop diseases and come up with specific solutions to address them.

He said aside from the usual PCR-based DNA analysis and PCR Primer Design, molecular tools nowadays also follow some innovative methods such as paper-based plant DNA protocol and use of dry PCR or agarose gel-based reagents. He also stressed the importance of training on these tools and methodologies and complementing them with bioinformatics to optimize use.

Aside from crop improvement, he also discussed results of some of his major research on the use of molecular marker tools to diagnose crop diseases, in particular banana *Xanthomonas*, cowpea *Xanthomonas*, Maize Grey Leaf Spot, Cassava Mosaic Virus and Cassava Brown Streak Virus (CBSV). Some of the tools and methodologies he has used included sequencing of *Xanthomonas* genomes (banana and cowpea), EST for *Cercospora* (GLS), and molecular diagnostics kit.

He also presented the way forward for work on molecular markers. These include utilization of germplasm conserved at IITA (i.e., wild cowpea collection and other orphan crops), extensions of PCR-based diagnostics to more plant diseases, development of a real time PCR diagnostics platform, conversion of the current/upcoming PCR-based diagnostics for non-gel based, throughput process, development of antibody-based diagnostics, bioinformatics screening of potential epitopes from genome sequences or comparative genomics approaches, continuation of a pilot bioinformatics work on CBSV and Xvm genome, and other research areas such as work on medicinal or parasitic plants like *Striga*.

HR ON PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION

The Human Resources Department conducted a one-day learning seminar for its staff about "Communication" on 5 September at the Seminar Room of IITA-HQ. Mr JO Ogunbayo served as resource speaker during the event.

The objective of the seminar was to familiarize HR staff on the concept of corporate communications, particularly for administrative purposes, in order to develop their skills in dealing with clients and colleagues alike.

Mr Ogunbayo said that although communication transcends all activities of an organization, the lack of effective communication is also the most inhibiting factor to successful group performance.

To highlight the importance of communication, he said that nearly 70% of our waking hours is spent communicating in the form of writing, reading, speaking and listening. Therefore, an idea, no matter how great, is useless until it is transmitted and understood by others.

He also expounded on the meaning and importance of communication in the context of work, as well as the elements and processes that comprise it. He also discussed the barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome them.

He concluded by saying that keeping people informed is not a matter of just "passing on information". It involves a sequence of steps, every one of which is necessary. These steps are (1) the act of sending the message; (2) the act of receiving the message; (3) communication is not finished until there is understanding; and (4) there must be action. Above all, we should try as much as possible to avoid slipshod communication.

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, make sure that you have:

- **Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/ lab equipment**
- **Turned off air conditioners**
- **Switched off all lights**

Email your comments, suggestions and/or contributions to Mr. Jeffrey T. Oliver (o.jeffrey@cgiar.org) or Ms. Olubukola Adediran (o.adediran@cgiar.org).