



Ondo governor addresses FARA Board of Trustees and IITA Management team

...underscores the need for agricultural research



Governor Mimiko addresses FARA BoT, FUTA and IITA Management in Ibadan

Drawing from personal experiences as a medical doctor-turned-farmer, Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State shared memories that support the importance of agricultural research to sustainable development.

As a one-time plantain farmer, Governor Mimiko told a story of how improved plantains developed by IITA that were resistant to Black Sigatoka restored hope to farmers in his state—Ondo in southwest Nigeria.

“Around the 1990s, I dabbled into agriculture and my first fancy was plantain. I planted 10,000 suckers of plantain as a medical practitioner. I was already calculating what I was going to gain because I was told that I will harvest in 8 months. In anticipation I went to get a 3-ton truck and wrote Iroko Farm on it which later became my political nickname. Within the first 7 months we were able to harvest a few bunches and I was excited and I was told that out of those 10,000 suckers we’ll be able to harvest 5,000 within the next few months... I was already spending the money in my mind. Within a month or two, I went back and found that the plantain were turning black, and out of 10,000 suckers, I could hardly harvest 100 bunches. So somebody who was more experienced told me that Sigatoka was ravaging my farm. Later I got to know IITA surmounted the

problem of Sigatoka and that is how far research can go,” he related.

Governor Mimiko also spoke about improved cassava varieties from IITA with which he also had a personal experience.

“Around the time I planted plantain, I decided to plant cassava, and again I planted 10,000 stands; my friend also planted 100,000 stands of cassava. At that time all you needed was to take somebody to your farm and the cassava stems will be counted; you will get paid and they will do the harvesting themselves. Probably they

were exporting cassava for the manufacture of industrial starch. A stand was three naira and we had calculated how much we were going to make; we even planned to go to Germany and buy some Mercedes cars that we could drive to our farms.”

He explained that the variety which he planted then was *Oko Iyawo* and was supposed to mature in 9 months.

“Exactly at 9 months when we were about to harvest, exports of cassava were banned and there was nobody to come and buy,” he continued.

Although he sold the cassava for N5000 (about \$320), the varieties performed even better after the expiration of their maturity period. “Again that was another essence of research,” he reechoed.

Governor Mimiko commended the founding fathers of IITA and noted that since the inception of the institution in 1967, “there is no question about the fact that we all grew up in Nigeria with a consciousness that IITA as an institute is ensuring that we don’t starve in Africa.”

“I have been told about the accomplishments of IITA particularly with cowpea, and that you develop varieties of maize seedlings that are disease resistant. I have also been told that but for your work here, cassava would probably have been

Continued on page 2...



R-L: DG Nteranya Sanginga, FARA BoT Chair Charity Kruger, Governor Olusegun Mimiko, and FARA Executive Director Yemi Akinbamijo in IITA Ibadan.

Ondo underscores the need for agricultural research

...from page 1

extinct and I think you should clap for yourselves.”

Governor Mimiko emphasized that agriculture remained the mainstay of the economy, contributing more than 40 percent to the GDP of his state.

He commended FARA for facilitating the

visit to IITA, stressing that he had no doubt in his mind that agriculture must be a main driver of Africa’s economy.

In this light, he explained that the goal of his administration was to leverage agriculture to enhance household food security, provide raw materials for

industry, and generate employment and create wealth for the people.

“We said the strategy to do this is for our government to subsidize and give support for inputs (mechanical tractors, improved seedlings, and extension work) and we have done that for the past four years. In the last five years we have spent N7 billion to support agriculture in the state. Somewhere along the line, we decided that the best way to get new, young entrepreneurs into agriculture was to build agricultural villages—a new agricultural environment with accommodation, and using modern agricultural tools. We built three villages and renovated one farm village and we have been able to get youths to work on this farm. But there is no question about the fact that we still have a lot of gaps in terms of technology, and technical know-how in market access to be able to make a resounding success of this effort,” he said.



Ondo State entourage with FARA BoT, IITA Management, and FUTA officials, IITA.

FARA and IITA visit presents an opportunity

Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State said the visit by the FARA Board and IITA management team to Ondo State provided an opportunity for the state to leverage and tap into the expertise of the two organizations towards developing agrobusiness cities in the state.

According to him, the visit was very significant and “I have no doubt it will be the turning point in our effort to get our young ones to embrace agriculture as a business, to generate and create a new group of agricultural entrepreneurs which will catalyze our economy, create necessary jobs for our young population, and ultimately develop our industrial economy based on agriculture.”

He said that another desire of his administration was to ensure that the people of the state benefit more from the agriculture value chain— from production to the end product.

“We are the biggest producer of cocoa in Nigeria but there is no question about the fact that we don’t manufacture any chocolate in Ondo State. We have tried to play our part in our cocoa revolution by:

- Improving on production: Bringing in innovation and technologies and improving varieties of cocoa.

- Advances in marketing strategy.
- Making chocolate: We are collaborating with a USA chocolate brand and have put together a chocolate academy. As a government we want to promote the consumption of chocolate in Nigeria.

Again this is another area in which we are hoping to collaborate with research institutes like IITA and FARA to take Ondo State to the next level.”



Ondo State entourage with FARA BoT, IITA Management, and FUTA officials on a guided- tour of one of the agricultural villages in Ondo.



Ondo State entourage with FARA BoT, IITA Management, and FUTA officials in Ondo State.

Photo News



Ondo and IITA can join forces and tackle the problem of aflatoxins. This will give farmers better access to markets especially in Europe and the US. Farmers will also have good quality maize for home consumption. Dr Ranajit Bandyopadhyay (right) explains how IITA is helping farmers to control the deadly toxin.



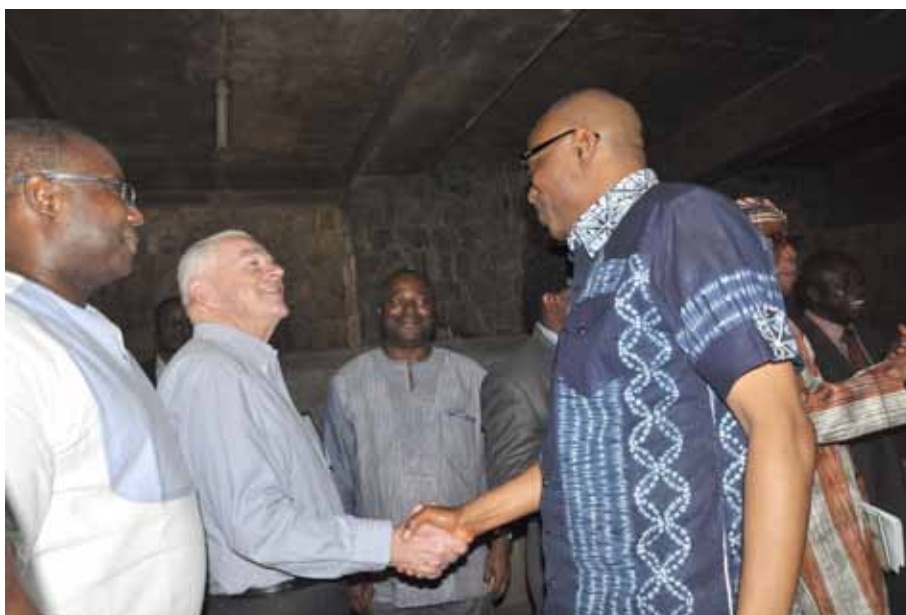
Simple machines help take away the burden/drudgery involved in cassava processing and could help Ondo women and children to live better lives. IITA could facilitate the deployment of such machines to Ondo. Engineer Thierno Diallo (right) explains to the governor simple processing machines.



IITA expertise as exemplified in the youth project can be extended to Ondo to help tackle the challenge of youth unemployment using agriculture as a tool. Governor Mimiko with FARA, IITA, and FUTA officials with members of IITA Youth in Agriculture project pose for a group photo.



Deputy Director General, Partnerships & Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell welcomes guests.



Vice Chair of IITA BoT, John Griffith welcomes Governor Mimiko with a handshake.



FARA BoT Chair Kruger assisted by ED Akinbamijo honors IITA DG Sanginga for his efforts in supporting agricultural research.

IITA in collaboration with FARA, CORAF, FUTA signs MoU with Ondo State to boost agriculture

IITA, in collaboration with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD), and the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ondo State Government in Nigeria.

The MoU will help harness the synergies of partners towards increasing the agricultural productivity of the state, create wealth and jobs for the youths, and contribute towards efforts to eradicate poverty.

Under the MoU, the four specifically agreed to collaborate on agricultural projects in Ondo State, undertake joint implementation of programs or projects on food and agriculture relevant to Ondo State, provide advice on any relevant topics related to agriculture in the State, provide training on agricultural topics for youth in Ondo State, and foster capacity building in all areas of mutual interest.

Governor Olusegun Mimiko signed on behalf of the State Government, while IITA Director General Dr Nteranya Sanginga; Executive Director of FARA, Dr Yemi Akinbamijo; and Dr Ayo Ajayi



L-R: DG Sanginga, Governor Mimiko, FARA ED Yemi Akinbamijo; and Adewale Adekunle at the signing of the MoU in IITA, Ibadan.

of FUTA signed for their respective establishments.

The signing of the partnership agreement was the climax of the visit of Governor Mimiko last week during which he also toured the facilities and premises of IITA in Ibadan.

Commending the vision for establishing IITA, Dr Mimiko promised to establish a practical and actionable plan that would make the partnership successful.

In welcoming Dr Mimiko to the

institute, Dr Sanginga noted that the institute was ready to partner with the Ondo State Government to develop agriculture, saying that the state was blessed with vegetation capable of growing any variety of crops.

In his remarks, FARA Executive Director Akinbamijo lauded the governor for demonstrating the political will to develop agriculture and stressed that neglecting agriculture at this point of Africa's history would be detrimental.

IITA tour shows opportunities for Ondo

With the signing of the MoU, there are several opportunities for IITA and Ondo state to jointly explore and pursue to attain rapid agricultural transformation in the state. This fact was reechoed during a quick tour by Governor Mimiko and his entourage to the IITA Ibadan campus. As captured pictorially, the opportunities cut across the value chain of several crops and include training of the needed critical human resources.



IITA and Ondo can work together in the area of improved cowpea and soybean seeds. Dr Christian Fatokun speaks on opportunities in the sector as Governor Mimiko listens.



Opportunities also exist in cassava processing.



Maize seed multiplication is another goldmine.