

## IITA50 celebrated in Bujumbura

IITA Burundi celebrated the Golden Jubilee in Bujumbura on 21 September in collaboration with the Burundian Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Institute of Agronomic Sciences of Burundi (ISABU).

The colorful event was graced by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture, Bagorikunda Séverin, who represented the Minister for Agriculture; the Director General of ISABU, Dr Dieudonne Nahimana; and Nigeria's Ambassador to Burundi, Amb. Friday Okai. Other dignitaries included representatives from the World Bank, FAO, partner NGOs, and the Burundi national press.

[Nziguheba Generose](#) delivered a speech on behalf of the IITA leadership reiterating IITA's commitment to research and initiatives that will transform agriculture in the region through scalable and user-oriented technologies that cater to the needs of smallholder farmers.

The event was marked with speeches from chief guests delivering goodwill messages and reaffirming the commitment of their parent organizations to stronger partnership

**Continued on page 2**



*Cutting the Celebration cake.*

## IITA Cameroon hosts training on managing fall armyworm

IITA-Cameroon hosted an international training of trainers' workshop on Fall armyworm management at its campus in Yaoundé, on 2–7 October. The workshop was co-organized by IITA-Cameroon and FAO's subregional office in Central Africa.

The fall armyworm (FAW), an invasive insect species originating from tropical and subtropical Americas, is spreading rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa where it is causing enormous crop losses and posing a huge risk to food security.

While maize is presently the most damaged crop, FAW is known to affect more than 80 other crop species, including rice, cotton, sorghum, wheat, and several vegetable crops.



*Field inspection during the workshop.*

The workshop was attended by 40 participants from eight Central African countries. Technical support was provided by entomologists from IITA-Cameroon ([Rachid Hanna](#), Apollin Fotso, Rose Ndemah, and Albert Abang), IITA-Benin ([Georg Goergen](#)), DR Congo (C. Koko Nzeza), the University of Douala ([Maurice Tindo](#)), and five staff from FAO headquarters in Rome and the FAO subregional office in Libreville, Gabon. The participants were joined via Skype on three successive days by Dr Rob Meagher (USDA-ARS, USA), Dr William Settle (retired Senior Technical Officer, FAO, USA), and Dr P. [Lava Kumar](#) (IITA, Nigeria). They covered topics such as, respectively, the use of pheromones in monitoring FAW, the potential for nuclear polyhedrosis virus for FAW control, and the threat to Africa posed by maize lethal necrosis (MLN).

The opening ceremony was presided over by Her Excellency Clémentine Antoinette Ananga Messina, the Cameroon Minister Delegate for Agriculture and

Rural Development who echoed earlier comments by Hanna, IITA-Cameroon Country Representative. Helder Muteia, FAO subregional director for Central Africa, highlighted FAW's ominous threat to agricultural production and food security, and encouraged the participating countries to make maximum use of the workshop to gain knowledge and acquire the tools for reducing the threat of FAW in their countries.

Hanna also reminded the participants of previous continent-wide invasions by other destructive pests—the cassava mealybug and cassava green mite—that had similarly caused enormous threats to sub-Saharan Africa's food security, and how both species were successfully controlled with science-based research led by IITA and collective efforts of all those who have an interest in improving the livelihoods of populations that depend on agriculture. He expressed optimism that similar collective efforts could help in solving the FAW problem.

The fourth day of the workshop included visits to four IITA-Cameroon laboratories (biological control and entomopathology, molecular biology, analytical, and tissue culture). Participants greatly appreciated the science being conducted in the laboratories and the potential for using them for capacity development and services in the subregion.

In closing, Atanga, representing the FAO office in Cameroon, Winfred Hammond, FAO consultant in charge of coordinating FAO's FAW response in sub-Saharan Africa, and C.S. Nying, Director of Cameroon Agricultural Regulatory Services, implored the participants to make best use of the excellent information and interactions offered by the workshop in the completion of the action plans for managing FAW in their respective countries. They also promised continued support for a Central African platform for continuous exchange of knowledge and experiences to be used in reducing the threats to food production and food security in the subregion.

## **IITA50 celebrated in Bujumbura** *Continued from page 1*

ties with IITA. Scientists from IITA, ISABU, and Bioversity made presentations on ongoing research and projects carried out in collaboration between the two organizations in Burundi.

IITA staff in attendance included [Emmanuel Njukwe](#), IITA's Country Representative in Burundi; Chris Okafor, Officer-in-Charge, IITA Kalambo; James Legg, Plant Health Specialist; [Marc Schut](#), IITA Country Representative for Rwanda; and staff from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Ernest Manirambona, representing FAO, extolled IITA's transformational work in Burundi citing research on cassava in fighting the devastating cassava viral diseases cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD) as one of the outstanding contributions of IITA to the country.

### **Government of Burundi is ready to support IITA initiatives**

Bagorikunda Séverin, the Permanent Secretary from the Burundian Ministry of Agriculture, read the statement on behalf of the Minister, lauding the contributions that IITA has made in Burundi since setting up shop in the country in the early 1990s. He pointed out the introduction of improved cassava varieties and intensified research and propagation in banana farming as some of the most notable IITA inputs to the Burundian agricultural sector.

*"IITA has played a significant role in capacity building in research, seeing our young men and women become scientists, supporting our research institutes, and creating opportunities for collaboration,"* the statement read in part. The Minister is one of the scientists who have gone through IITA's research and capacity building program.

In the statement, the Minister reaffirmed the Government's readiness to support and

work with IITA on future activities, among them the recently commenced PRODEMA project funded by the World Bank.

ISABU Director General Dieudonne Nahimana asked for more IITA presence in Burundi. He noted that an organization of IITA's stature in the continent had a lot to offer to the country's agricultural and research ambitions. He said ISABU will be looking forward to more collaboration with IITA and support on financial and technical aspects, sharing of expertise, new technologies, and linking ISABU to regional and international research organizations.

### **Fun and festivities**

The celebrations culminated in an expo-display of scientific work done in Burundi between IITA and ISABU scientists for both past and ongoing projects. The display session segued to an entertaining performance by a traditional dance troupe as the guests settled in to enjoy the evening cocktails.



*Cross section of staff listening to presentations (left) and entertainment (right).*

# IITA and partners organize 3-day International Symposium on Agriculture and Health in DRC

IITA, in collaboration with the International Center for Advanced Research and Training (ICART) and the University of Michigan (UM), organized a 3-day symposium on Agriculture and Health, on 17–19 August in Bukavu, South Kivu Province, DR Congo.

Against the background of a post-conflict environment in Eastern DRC, the symposium focused on food security and nutrition, infectious diarrheal diseases, health and social consequences for women, and ecological and environmental impacts on health. The symposium's themes underscored the delicate link between agriculture and health of the population who are predominantly farmers in Africa.

The main objectives of the symposium were to build on the outcomes of an earlier ICART symposium, maximize opportunities for face-to-face interactions with highly qualified international researchers and budding scientists; deepen collaborative interactions among the participants; and share IITA's contribution to agriculture and nutrition through science and development.

In his opening remarks, the chairman of the occasion, Dr Denis Mukwege, a gynecologist who in 2014 was awarded the Sakharov Prize for his work in protecting women and promoting human rights, welcomed participants. He spoke on the importance and need to ensure food and nutrition security especially for women and children by reducing health hazards in DRC, especially in South Kivu Province.

The symposium featured five keynote speakers including Dr Nzola Mahungu, who represented the IITA Director General, Nteranya Sanginga. His presentation highlighted IITA's achievements in collaboration with other national and international research institutions in developing and promoting consumption of biofortified crops such as vitamin A-rich banana, cassava, maize, and common bean. He made a strong case for mobilizing and channeling youth energy towards agri-enterprises, an initiative IITA is championing in sub-Saharan Africa. There were also papers and poster presentations. IITA staff and students featured in the two sessions. An aflatoxin poster by Pat Udomkun et al. attracted the attention of many participants including Dr Benoit Nemery, Professor

of Toxicology and Occupational Medicine at KU Leuven, Belgium, who commended the study saying: "I am really happy to see that such kinds of studies are being undertaken in the Great Lakes Region. I will be happy to visit IITA to explore possibilities of a joint research project to look at the effects of aflatoxin on human health to improve agriculture and nutrition at the farmgate and household level."

The final day's event was held at IITA Kalambo with presentations including that of Renée Bullock, IITA Gender Postdoctoral Fellow on IITA's women empowerment work with ICART in Kinshasa. The over 150 participants had the opportunity to interact with IITA youth agripreneurs and visit the labs.

In his closing remarks, Chris Okafor, Head, IITA Kalambo Station, invited the organizers to think about involving policy makers the next time around and how to use the rich research outputs presented to influence policy and induce positive changes in the society. The remarks were well received by the Michigan State University delegates. The end of the symposium was marked with a cocktail hosted by IITA in commemoration of IITA50.



Group photograph.

## Announcements

- **Modeling under Climate Change Scenarios Hands-on Training**, Abomey-Calavi, Benin, 16–20 October
- **World Food Prize 2017**, Downtown Des Moines Marriott, Des Moines, Iowa, USA, 18-20 October
- **Basic Bioinformatics Workshop**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 23–25 October
- **R4D Week**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Board Meeting**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Science Conference on Food and Nutrition Security: Foresight and Futures**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 24–25 November
- **Open Day**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 25 November

# Presentation on gender responsiveness in Tanzanian policies ignites heated debate among policymakers

A presentation on the findings of a recent study on gender integration in agriculture and natural resources in Tanzania spurred a heated debate among the country's policymakers and clearly showed that their understanding of gender issues was limited. One of the key follow up actions agreed upon was a request by the Tanzania Parliament for training on how gender issues are related to the environment, climate change, and food security. The training will be organized in November 2017 when Parliament resumes.



Top: Edidah Ampaire presenting the findings to the policymakers.

Bottom: The shadow minister for agriculture guiding the house to refocus on the study findings.

The findings of the study, which highlighted the status of gender integration and gender budgets in Tanzania's natural resource, agriculture, and climate change policies, strategies, and implementation plans, were presented by a team of researchers from IITA and their partners from the [Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries \(MALF\)](#) and the [Tanzania Civil Society Forum on Climate Change \(FORUMCC\)](#) on 13 September.

The study found that although positive progress had been made over the years in

integrating gender in policies, the degree of intervention and the interventions were mainly superficial and little attention had been paid to addressing causes of structural inequalities and power dynamics that left women vulnerable to climate change. In addition, a limited and inconsistent budget had been allocated for gender-related activities and practitioners had limited knowledge and skills for conducting gender analysis and addressing gender issues.

The findings were received with mixed reactions from the legislators, initially

showing a gender-based divide in perceptions. The male MPs queried the relevance and necessity of gender responsiveness, whereas their female counterparts voiced their support for the need to address gender issues in climate change adaptation, agriculture, and policy and the benefits it can bring.

The ensuing heated debate diverted the focus of the study, until the opposition shadow minister for agriculture, [Hon. Magdalena Sakaya](#), used her technical expertise to bring some order. She pleaded with the MPs in attendance to focus on the findings of the study.

"What I see is a scientific study that clearly shows the findings about our national policies. It shows what we have done well and the gaps that need to be filled. What we need to do is develop and implement strategies to close the highlighted gaps, and I think [that] is clear," she said.

She was followed by the woman representative for Geita region, who gave a practical example on the need to address gender issues from the region: "I come from Geita, and this is what I see: there is food shortage during the drought period and men migrate to townships for up to eight months. Women shoulder the responsibility of feeding their families, including looking for fuel wood or charcoal, and water. ... Under such circumstances, women should not only be sensitized about climate change and the environment but should be supported [to] improve the livelihoods of their families," she said.

The discussions that followed the two submissions suggested that the message had been understood as participants started to appreciate that gender mattered and should be considered in policy making. Through the committee chair, members of Parliament requested the team to organize a capacity building session for them in the next parliamentary session in November focusing on climate change, food security, gender, and the environment and how these topics are interrelated.

"One lesson learnt from the event is that gender is still a controversial topic for policymakers in the country. There is an apparent need to create awareness among policy decision makers as well as build capacity of practitioners to address issues of gender inequality," said [Edidah Ampaire](#).

Project Leader for the [Policy Action for Climate Change Adaptation \(PACCA\)](#) and who led the research project and was part of the team.

Other team members included [Perez Muchunguzi](#), a Multistakeholder Specialist at IITA Uganda; Issa Fazal, Program Officer at FORUMCC; and Natai Shakwaanande, Head of the Environment Management Unit in Tanzania's MALF.

The policy engagement was attended by about 35 members of the Tanzania Parliament and nine non-parliamentarians. MPs included members of the standing committees on agriculture, the environment, budget, and constitution, law, and governance, and representatives from the parliamentary youth and women groups.

The activity is part of PACCA, an initiative of the CGIAR program on [Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security \(CCAFS\)](#).

Read more in a blog on the session: [Capacity building is a prerequisite to advocacy: An experience from Tanzania.](#)



*Policymakers listening keenly to the presentations.*

## IITA Human Resources conducts training on “Leading and managing people for results”

Managers and supervisors from the various IITA hubs and stations across Africa converged in Ibadan for a 3-day workshop, 26–29 September, to enhance their knowledge on leading and managing staff for effective results. The training, titled “[Leading and managing people for results](#)” was organized by the Human Resources team in collaboration with the Capacity Development Office with 23 staff member-participants.

In her opening remarks, the Deputy Director General, Corporate Services, [Hilde Koper](#), advised participants to be as transparent as glass when dealing and working with staff and to create a good succession plan as managers and

supervisors. “[As a leader, do not assume that you have the answers to everything; accept correction because it gives room for improvement,](#)” Koper said.

[Lillian Mendoza](#), Head, HRS, encouraged the participants to make maximum use of the opportunity to learn and apply the knowledge gained to their work. She stated: “[During this training, you should be open-minded, and bring out the issues that affect you and your staff for discussion as this will ease any tension off.](#)” She went on to introduce the course which cut across IITA HR policies, procedures, systems, values, mission, vision, and norms.

The aim of the leadership and management workshop was to strengthen participants’ management and leadership to influence and motivate their staff to achieve exceptional performance.

The training was very interactive and participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers. The participants were able to evaluate their leadership skills based on the new knowledge acquired. They said they understood better the quote “[Trustworthy leadership is the most motivation an organization can offer its employees.](#)” Certificates were issued to the participants at the end of the training.



*Lilian Mendoza introducing course to participants.*

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)), Jeffrey T. Oliver ([j.oliver@cgiar.org](mailto:j.oliver@cgiar.org)), Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)), or David Ngome ([d.ngome@cgiar.org](mailto:d.ngome@cgiar.org)).