

Second Nigeria Zero Hunger Forum held in Ebonyi State

The second meeting of the Nigeria Zero Hunger Forum (NZHF) was held in Ebonyi State on 7–8 November.

Led by former President of Nigeria and IITA Goodwill Ambassador, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the meeting was attended by more than 500 participants including policymakers and development partners, and discussed the progress made by Ebonyi State towards the attainment of zero hunger. Other participants included State Governors along with representatives from the donor and international community, including IITA, and members of the press.

Obasanjo said he is impressed with the impact the NZHF is making, especially in promoting healthy competition among the states in their drive to achieve food security. The first NZHF assembly had been hosted by Benue State in June.

“I see a healthy competition between states which is good,” Chief Obasanjo said as participating governors recounted progress made towards food security in their respective states.

The governors said that the Zero Hunger initiative was already having a positive impact on the food security of their states and all in less than a year. According to them, the initiative through its peer advisory/review mechanism has brought a new vigor and zeal to the agricultural sector with more commitments by participating states.

They also commended President Muhammadu Buhari for his strong support to the states’ agricultural programs.

According to Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, thanks to the NZHF,



DG Sanginga with Chief Obasanjo and Ebonyi State Governor David Umahi at the second NZHF.

there is now a realization that agriculture has untapped opportunities that the state can explore to benefit its people.

Governor Ortom said the state has keyed into the initiative and is confident that it would help the state to maintain its pride as the food basket of the country. “We believe that NZHF will help Nigeria,” he added.

Ebonyi State governor, David Umahi, said that the benefits of the NZHF initiative were priceless as participating states were learning from each other. The Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, who was represented by his deputy, Alhaji Usman Mamman Durkwa, expressed gratitude to the NZHF for the support given to the state early this year to cushion the effects of insurgency. Particularly mentioned were the “seeds of renaissance” provided by IITA, AfricaRice, and ICRISAT, and the rice from Ebonyi State to feed the internally displaced persons in Borno State.

The President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akin Adesina represented by the Director (Agriculture), Dr Chiji Ojukwu, commended the implementation of the initiative and reiterated the Bank’s support to feeding Africa. He reminded stakeholders that Africa must take agriculture seriously and implement policies and programs that would engender inclusive growth. Speaking at the forum, IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga pledged the Institute’s commitment to support and work with states to achieve their food security goals.

Participants included, among others, Abiodun Oladipo, World Food Program; Abraham Shaibu, AfricaRice; Tawanda Muzhingi, International Potato Center (CIP); members of Ebonyi State Executive Council, representatives from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, academia, the private sector, farmer groups, traditional rulers, and the press.

AfDB conducts end-SARD-SC project supervision mission

The African Development Bank was in IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, on 2–3 November for a 2-day end-of-project Supervision Mission on the Support to Agricultural Research for Development of Strategic crops (SARD-SC) project.

The AfDB team was led by Dr Ibrahim Amadou, Project Task Manager, with Yakubu Bako, Disbursement Officer; Abba Jaffar, Procurement Officer; and Femi Ojo-Fajuyi, Financial Management Consultant.

The mission, according to Amadou, is intended to look at the impact of SARD-SC in contributing to food and nutritional security during its five-year period of implementation.

“We are interested in the high-level impact the project has made. We also want to know of the challenges and lessons learned in the project implementation that could be useful to future projects. And we are happy that SARD-SC project was efficiently implemented.”



AfDB officials at the supervision presentation.

Chrys Akem, the Project Coordinator, thanked the team members and AfDB for giving SARD-SC the opportunity to implement such a huge project. He expressed satisfaction at the achievements of all the commodities including the wheat and rice value chains which the team had visited in Tunis and Abidjan, respectively, before coming to Ibadan.

Issaka Amadou, M&E Specialist, and Accountant Seyi Fashokun made

presentations in their respective fields of M&E and finance. Discussions then ensued on the outcomes and impact of SARD-SC cassava and maize activities and the Project Completion Report (PCR) findings, prepared by Dr Yaya Sabo, a PCR consultant. At the end of the mission, the Bank’s team drafted an Aide Memoire that highlighted the general implementation achievements of the project including lessons learned, with inputs from participants of the PCR.

British High Commissioner visits IITA

His Excellency Paul Arkwright, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, visited IITA, Ibadan, on 2 November, to familiarize himself with the institute and establish grounds for collaboration.

IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#), accompanied by some senior management staff, received the High Commissioner and his Communication Manager and Political Adviser, Adewale Adebajo. DDG Dashiell gave a breakdown of IITA’s achievements and success stories to date, and emphasized IITA’s commitment to improving agriculture in Africa, focusing on the need for collaboration.

“IITA has been working with partners for the past 50 years to generate agricultural innovations to meet Africa’s most pressing challenges of hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. This cannot be easily achieved without your support and commitment; we need you to step in and contribute to help us secure the path to food security,” he said.

Evelyn Ohanwusi, Interim Head, IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA), gave an overview of their journey, highlighting enterprises achieved and areas of



His Excellency receives a NoduMax souvenir from Plant Manager, Ayodele Alonge.

intervention. “We are young, vibrant, and skilled youth who are looking for opportunities to scale up while engaging more youth in agribusiness. If the right technology can be put in place, I believe we will go a long way in solving the problems of malnutrition and unemployment in Nigeria,” she added.

The Commissioner expressed his interest in IITA’s activities, most especially the youth program. “I am honored to be in the midst of determined youth and management. This is my first visit and I need you to win more souls

to the agribusiness world. If only Nigeria can have more focused youth like this, then it is certain we can feed ourselves through agriculture, which is one of the solutions to Nigeria’s problems,” Arkwright stated.

During the tour of the [IITA Business Incubation Platform \(BIP\)](#) facilities, including the [aflasafe™](#) and [NoduMax](#) production plants, the Commissioner said: “...I have heard so much about the institute, and with what I have seen, IITA has exceeded my expectations. I am really impressed that Africa has an institute like IITA.”

Security Unit enlightens staff on strategies to ensure a safe and healthy environment

The IITA Security Unit organized a seminar on 8 October, to educate, enlighten, and create awareness among staff on the best approaches to ensure a safe and habitable campus at IITA Ibadan.

The seminar titled “Health safety environment: Fire prevention strategies in a campus environment” was attended by staff and students from different units within the Institute and sought to instill a better understanding on maintaining a safe, accident free, healthy environment as well as equipping members to cope with emergency situations within and outside the campus.

The event was facilitated by James Adedayo, IITA Security Superintendent, who encouraged the participants to be alert at all times and ensure that all their operations are carried out within the strictest safety standards. During the plenary session, attendees were taught how to prevent fire outbreaks and its consequences, comply with safety instructions, and effectively use a fire extinguisher.



Security Superintendent James Adedayo guiding staff through practical firefighting techniques.

Speaking on the need to adhere strictly to overall safety management, David Oluwadare, IITA Security Manager said: “We are committed to conducting activities in a manner that promotes the health and safety of IITA employees, assets, and the public, and which protect the campus and its immediate

environment. This cannot be totally achieved without the IITA community being vigilant and doing the right thing at the right time.”

At the end of the seminar, the audience took part in a practical demonstration on how to use a fire extinguisher in case of emergencies.

Africa RISING success story

Unraveling links between gender and adoption of agricultural innovations: Insights from communities in Malawi

The successful scaling out of agronomic practices and technologies demands that scientists and development partners consider gender issues at the household and community level (and beyond). Important questions are: How do male and female farmers evaluate new agricultural practices? How do they differ in their preferences for adoption? How do they perceive various extension approaches?

A team of social scientists explored the above questions with smallholder farmers in Africa RISING intervention communities in central Malawi. Focus group discussions were held with 148 male and female farmers in Dedza and Ntcheu districts and complemented by key informant interviews.



A farmer standing next to an Africa RISING demonstration plot in Malawi. Photo by K. Lopez, IITA.

Select findings from the study show:

- Male and female farmers evaluate new agricultural practices differently—female farmers tended to evaluate technologies in terms of household food security, while male farmers more often opted for technologies/varieties that are demanded by the market.
- With regards to preferences for adoption of specific technologies promoted by the project, both female and male farmers mentioned a preference for adopting: intercropping, doubled-up legumes, maize fertilized with NPK, and urea

using the Sasakawa method (i.e., planting one plant per station spaced 25 cm apart) and the use of *Gliricidia* and *Faidherbia albida* as supplementary feed to livestock. However, men and women differed in their choice of crop combinations for intercropping and doubled-up legumes.

- Most study participants, particularly females, appreciated the mother and baby trial extension approach of Africa RISING as opposed to the government extension demonstrations. The former allows farmers to learn and practice on the mother plot and implement the technology in

their own fields within the same season.

The findings of this study make a strong case for projects implementing research and development activities to gain an in-depth understanding of gender dynamics and relations at household and community levels as a starting point for ensuring effective uptake of technologies. In the Africa RISING context, these results will be essential in informing research and discussions in the program's second phase.

Download the [full report](https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/87892). <
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Nutritious Food Fair set for 28–29 November in Enugu

The third edition of HarvestPlus' Nutritious Food Fair (NFF) is all set for 28–30 November with the theme: "Scaling-up nutritious food choices: Engaging everyone, everywhere".

This edition of the Nutritious Food Fair is a partnership with the Enugu State SME, the Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Budget and the Planning Centre. It will take place at Michael Okpara Square, Enugu.

The NFF was conceived as an umbrella advocacy and enterprise platform and aims to drive the production, marketing, and consumption of nutritious food in Nigeria. "Today's food is highly essential for tomorrow's growth and we must begin to connect the dots between food, health, and GDP for Nigeria," said Paul Ilona, Country Manager for HarvestPlus.

At the food fair, which will host over 10,000 participants, nutritious food products will be displayed by participants who will get to build up entrepreneurial skills and linkages, identify and network with new partners, discuss new brands to boost marketing, and participate in competitions targeted at promoting the consumption of nutritious foods by Nigerians. Participants will include farmers, processors, marketers, and consumers of nutritious foods as well



The Nutritious Food Fair, Enugu State from 28 to 30 November 2017.

as food industries, seed companies, input dealers, research institutions, and students.

Among many objectives, the NFF will increase the production, value addition, marketing, and consumption of foods made from biofortified staple crops such as vitamin A cassava, vitamin A maize, orange sweetpotato, and iron and zinc sorghum, in addition to creating 3000 new job opportunities in the nutritious food sector.

The Food Fair has become an annual flagship event of HarvestPlus Nigeria

and one that many people nationwide anticipate. Consumers will get to experience a world of nutritious food and drink options, traditional and masquerade dances, and special events such as the grand finale with the NutriQuiz competition for secondary schools, the NutriYield competition for farmers, and NutriCook competition for caterers.

The largest, nutritious cassava dish in the world will be unveiled for the Guinness World Records and a new platform for women called "Smart Mother" will be launched to give women a voice in nutrition.

Looking back

Dual-purpose cowpea

In the late 1980s, there was an increase in the production of cowpea by around US\$650 million annually in Nigeria alone. This was largely due to the increases in area and yield of the crop. To take advantage of this boom, IITA partnered with the newly established International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

The partnership initiated a program to breed cultivars that are both fit for human consumption and fodder for livestock in the dry season.

The success of the *dry-season dual purpose cowpea* was immense. Farmers' profits went up on average by 55%. Benefits included food security, cash income, and fodder, in periods where prices of cowpea peak and good-quality fodder is scarce.

Source

Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) seeds, Feedipedia, <http://www.feedipedia.org/node/232>



Cowpea production boomed in the late 1980s.

New soybean for Africa

Before IITA was set up in Ibadan, high-yielding soybean cultivars from the USA could not be grown in Africa without what is called rhizobia inoculation. This

is a process that is far too expensive and technically complex for most farmers in the continent. Therefore, IITA designed a breeding program led by Edward

Pulver, a physiologist/agronomist, and Eric Kueneman, a soybean breeder. The project was created to breed a new soybean that would grow in African soils with the high-yielding characteristic of USA-bred lines.



Drs Edward Pulver (left), and Eric Kueneman (right) led IITA's soybean improvement program in the early days. Rice Today, Twitter, 2015, <https://twitter.com/ricetoday/status/628032858641137664>, and Eric Kueneman, Google Plus, <https://plus.google.com/106203031966529851120>

The team eventually used a traditional soybean cultivar from Southeast Asia that grew well in African soil, but was poor-yielding. Using a carefully thought out methodology, the IITA soybean breeding team was able to combine the two populations. This resulted in "new" soybean cultivars that yield well without artificial inoculation.

Sources

Ortiz, Rodomiro, compiler. 2017. IITA: 50 years after. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, Nigeria. 120 pages.

Announcements

- **CGIAR AT COP23**, Bonn, Germany, 7–16 November
- **Phylogenetic Workshop**, IITA, Yaounde, Cameroon, 13–17 November
- **Open Access Training**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 13–17 November
- **R4D Week**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Board Meeting**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Science Symposium** on Food and Nutrition Security: Foresight and Futures, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 24–25 November
- **Open Day**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 25 November
- **ATTC annual project review meeting**, Senegal, 27–29 November
- **Introduction to Liquid Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry**, IITA, Yaounde, Cameroon, 26–29 December

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.gha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Jeffrey T. Oliver (j.oliver@cgiar.org) for Southern Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.