

R4D Special

IITA strategizes to face shaky funding environment and transform African agriculture

The uncertain world of donor funding is a major threat to CGIAR centers but IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) is optimistic that the Institute will thrive notwithstanding. Speaking on the first day of IITA's 2017 R4D Week, the annual planning week, the DG said IITA still had a role to play in Africa's agriculture and therefore must find creative ways to deal with the financial challenges.

"Currently Africa's leaders are concerned with the high import bill of US\$35 billion/year on foods we can produce in the continent. This figure, if we do nothing, will triple to \$110 billion/year. These are jobs we are creating elsewhere, yet unemployment for our youth is still very high.

"Our score card so far is very encouraging. Our social science team has shown we have contributed to moving 6 million people out of poverty. We are also proud of the high-quality research at IITA and the technologies we are rolling out," he said.

Preparing to transform Africa's agriculture

Sanginga said that IITA is now directing agriculture research to the different stages of agricultural development and political will in the various countries.

"We are conducting analyses of countries' readiness for transformation based on availability of resources and political good will and leadership. In some countries, there are plenty of resources but no good will. In others, there's a lot of political good will but a lack of resources. The approach will be very different in these two cases. One measure does not fit all," he said.



DG Nteranya Sanginga (above) addressing R4D Week participants including IITA scientists from the hubs and stations (below).



In conclusion, Sanginga said IITA will focus on delivering good science and results, and on aggressive resource mobilization.

"When times are difficult we find new ways of doing things. Business unusual is going to be the way forward for IITA."

Together we will go on a successful journey - Ken Dashiell, P4D

[Ken Dashiell](#), IITA Deputy Director General for Partnerships for Delivery (P4D), during his talk on the first day of R4D Week, gave an overview of IITA's efforts to scale out its technologies through partnership.

"We have technologies and knowledge that we have succeeded in rolling out but not at the level we want. We have pockets of successes here and there, but our challenge is to deliver our excellent research results at scale. At P4D we want and must do things at scale," he said.

The technologies include the soybean biofertilizer—[Nodumax](#), the biocontrol for aflatoxin—[Aflasafe](#), breeder seed of various crops—Go-Seed; and improved varieties of IITA's mandate crops. The Institute has also developed practices and systems, and knowledge on how good value chains ought to operate, how to work with extension, and on policies that are needed, Dashiell explained.

Giving an example of Aflasafe, he said "In 2011 we produced 14 tons of aflasafe and IITA had to hire 25 people. But today



Ken Dashiell talking about IITA technologies.

with the plant at Ibadan, that volume can be produced in just four hours and through the AgResults project, we have seen a doubling in the number of farmers using Aflasafe every year. For these farmers, 98% of maize harvested meets Nigerian standards. Over 100,000 ha of land is currently protected by Aflasafe.

"This shows what you can really do when you set your mind to it and work with partners. Our partners are doing a lot of work. We build their capacities. We have had big successes, big challenges, and learned many lessons along the way. But excellent research is still key. Together we will go on a successful journey," Dashiell said.

Biorisk facility prioritizes development of a biocontrol agent for fall armyworm

The newly formed Biorisk Management Facility (BIMAF) has prioritized the development of a biological control solution for the fall armyworm (FAW), which was introduced to Africa from America and is marching across the continent leaving a wave of destruction in its path.

"In the meantime, we are also looking at short-term management measures to control the pest.

"We have also been involved in capacity building. Currently we have three MSc students and soon we will have a PhD student to conduct a feasibility study for biological control of FAW," said [Ghislain Tepa-Yotto](#) while giving a presentation on the developments in BIMAF.

"This is important work for IITA. Developing a biocontrol product on fall armyworm presents a good opportunity to repeat our past success in controlling



May-Guri Saethre, DDG, R4D

cassava mealybug and cassava green mite all over Africa using biocontrol," commented [May-Guri Saethre](#), IITA-DDG for Research for Development.

BIMAF in Cotonou, Benin, was initiated by IITA and its partners under the

auspices of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD).

Another area the center is considering is carbon emissions in connection with climate-smart agriculture.

Aligning with national and regional priorities is a key strategy for IITA in Africa - Kwesi Atta-Krah

In addition to aligning its research activities with the strategic goals and priorities of the countries it is working in, IITA has also made good progress in aligning itself to regional and international entities, said [Kwesi Atta-Krah](#). He was giving an overview of IITA's site integration efforts during day 1 of R4D Week, IITA's annual research and development planning week.

Atta-Krah said IITA had been focusing on better alignment to the Africa Union and CAADP processes and to regional economic blocks such as the [Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\)](#), the [East African Community \(EAC\)](#), and the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#) as well as World Bank-supported initiatives such as the West African Agriculture Transformation Program (WAATP) and



Kwesi Atta-Krah says we need to have big picture thinking.

East and Central Africa Agriculture Transformation Program.

"For better impact in our research, we need to have 'big picture thinking'

and see how we contribute to national, regional, and international priorities. For our work to be relevant, we will need support at the high levels," he said.

Tackling emerging pest and disease threats - David Chikoye

The IITA plant health team is addressing a plethora of pests and diseases in Africa as part of efforts to increase agricultural production. [David Chikoye](#), Director for Southern Africa and head of the plant health team, talked about the various activities of the team during the R4D Week session on plant health. These include pests of cassava, soybean, banana, maize, and cowpea.

He said plant health was becoming more important than ever before in sub-Saharan Africa where predictions by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#) show droughts will be more frequent. This will have a negative impact on yield gaps which are already high.

On emerging new pests, the team is tackling the fall armyworm. "As at 2016 the pest was in 41 countries. To control this disease, we need to go back to countries where the pest has been to look for lessons. We also need active surveillance to track its spread. We are also looking at integrated control options including the use of pesticides, biological, cultural, and mechanical control methods, and host plant resistance," Chikoye said.

Chikoye also reported on progress in controlling the banana panama disease. This deadly soil-borne disease has eliminated the Gros Michel banana and is on the move. Many countries are at high risk based on their proximity to countries where the disease is.

The main challenge in controlling this disease is a lack of resources. Together with [Bioversity International](#), [CGIAR](#)

[Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas \(RTB\)](#), [FAO](#), and other partners, IITA had held a lot of meetings on strategies to address the disease.

"We are also strong on surveillance, reporting any new cases, raising awareness on the impact of the disease, and building capacity on rapid diagnostics. We have set up a response strategy and containment



David Chikoye presenting drought data.

plan for countries around Mozambique where the disease has been reported in Africa,” he said.

Under agronomy he said the team was addressing issues such as weed management. Weeding is a major

challenge as it is mostly done by women and children and takes 50–80% of the total labor budget. “While use of herbicides is increasing, its application is not well done—farmers are not protecting themselves and land preparation is poor. We are looking

at three components of cassava integrated weed management: mechanical weeding, use of herbicides, and good agronomy. We have had excellent results; we’ve seen herbicides being effective for 9 weeks with good land preparation,” he said.

50 years of soil research at IITA, failures and successes - Bernard Vanlauwe

After years of reduced attention, IITA research on natural resource management (NRM) has made a strong come-back and is now a fundamental component of the research portfolio. It is playing a major role in the achievement of one of the key performance indicators of the Institute—rehabilitating 7.5 million ha of land for sustainable use.

Speaking during the session on NRM, [Bernard Vanlauwe](#), Director for Central Africa and NRM head, said soil science is now stronger than ever. Learning from past failures, the team is now focusing on Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM).

“ISFM uses fertilizers as an entry point but integrates all other inputs. We now need to scale out technologies,” he said as he discussed the several initiatives focusing on taking agronomy to scale. These include *Taking maize agronomy to scale in Africa* (TAMASA), *Cassava Agronomy to Scale in Africa* (ACAI), and the *Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa* (CIALCA).



Bernard Vanlauwe on Day 1, R4D Week.

Another initiative was the N2Africa project, a research-in-development project that had distributed over 100,000 Nodumax sachets. Nodumax is a biofertilizer for growing soybean.

NRM had also been embedded in new initiatives at the institute such as the

[IITA Youth Agripreneurs \(IYA\)](#) and new products had been forwarded to the Business Incubation Platform (BIP) for commercialization. He said the team was all about developing innovations to do things better, faster, and more cost effectively.

Advances in social sciences and biotechnology lauded

“It is truly impressive how far we have gone with the work we have done, particularly the tools, methodologies, and technologies, especially in the past 3 years in social science, crop breeding, and biotechnology,” said IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga in reaction to the various presentations done by scientists in these areas during R4D Week held at IITA-HQ in Ibadan.

“This makes me extremely proud to be at the helm of IITA at this point in time, and to be associated with such distinguished researchers and scientists as we work towards achieving

our vision and mission for 2020,” he added.

The DG’s statements came at the Q&A and closing of the Social Science and Agribusiness, and Crop Breeding and Biotechnology sessions on Day 2 of the week-long annual gathering of IITA scientists and research support colleagues.

During the Social Science and Agribusiness session, participants listened to presentations on the status, achievements, and future of social science and agribusiness by

[Victor Manyong](#), Director for Eastern Africa and team lead; assessing and accelerating the ‘scaling readiness’ of agri-food innovations by [Marc Schut](#), Rwanda Country Representative; and the impact of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria by [Tahirou Abdoulaye](#), Impact Socioeconomist.

Some of the key issues raised by participants from this session included how to improve on the access to formal and informal credit by farmers, positioning social science as an engine of transformation or end-game analysis of adoption, making scaling-readiness

an integral part of IITA project concepts, and making use of network analysis to help IITA better choose the partners it will work with in future endeavors.

In going into full gear towards transformation through scaling, Schut said that scaling is not just about technologies but about whole 'packages' which should include ideas, innovations, policies, infrastructure, and other elements. "We also need to shift from fundamental to more applied sciences," he added. "Also, we cannot say that we have achieved scaling if only our partners have used the technologies that we develop—it's about network penetration. And this (scaling) does not just happen—we need to be ready to make it happen," he concluded.

On the impact of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria, Abdoulaye indicated that "the impact pathway from development of improved varieties to food security and poverty reduction is not simple nor linear—there are several factors to consider such as income, wages, institutions, policies, and others."

"We should not be surprised that productivity has remained essentially the same for the past 50 years as some important factors have remained the same; for example, the contact of farmers with extension," he added. "However, the entry of cheap Chinese herbicides has led to an increase in use by farmers, but the substandard quality has also exposed farmers to greater health risks. This is also something that we need to consider as we continue our pursuit of enhanced productivity among our Nigerian cassava farmers."

During the session on Crop Breeding and Biotechnology, [Robert Asiedu](#), Director for Western Africa and thematic research lead, gave an overview of the status, achievements, and future of Biotechnology and Genetic Improvement at IITA. He reported on the current activities and developments in this area such as staffing, products development and delivery, biotic stress



Victor Manyong making a presentation.

studies, breeding efficiency, enhancing germplasm, cryobanking, and transgenic research, among others.

[Livia Stavolone](#) followed with her presentation entitled "Together we are stronger: A multidisciplinary approach to improve cassava yield." Here, she highlighted her team's work on investigating the genetics of potential storage roots and fibrous roots relating to cassava root development, size, and characteristics.

"Hopefully," she said, "our research will help cassava farmers attain bigger, better harvests—that's the end-game anyway."

[Allan Brown](#), in his presentation on Banana SNP Array Design, said that "there have been great advances in genomic analysis in the past years—you can now analyze thousands of markers within the same time to analyze one marker (RFLP) since about 2-3 years ago."

DDG-R4D Dr May-Guri Saethre added that given the urgency of the spread of banana diseases in Africa, including the current Tropical Race 4 incidence in Mozambique, we need to make full use of this SNP technology to address the situation. She also raised the question of the possibility of applying SNP in other IITA mandate crops.



Robert Asiedu presents on Crop Breeding and Biotechnology.

Announcements

- Introduction to Liquid Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry, IITA, Yaounde, Cameroon, 26–29 December

Research Support Services showcase status, achievements, and future prospects

Presentations from units under the Research Support Directorate kicked off Day 3 of R4D Week with presentations on the status of the unit, achievements, and future activities. Various side meetings and training sessions made up the rest of the day.

[Tonny Omwansa](#), Director for Research Support, started with an introduction to the new subdirectorate, explaining the structure of the units under the directorate and reporting lines. In his introduction, Omwansa described an initiative called the Monitoring Evaluation Landing (MEL) platform which is capable of extracting data from many systems which can be pushed to other platforms such as websites for easy access to potential users. The implementation of MEL now facilitates the option of one entry point for data.



Director for Research Support, Tonny Omwansa, anchoring the session on research support.

[Petri Wiren](#), Head of the new Data and Information Management Unit (DIMU), started off the unit presentations, describing the unit structure and 2017 highlights including the implementation of Office 365 platform, a ticketing system for logging IT support requests called SysAid, activities related to Open Access, and a Human Resources and Finance solution (HURIX), among many highlights. For the future, DIMU is looking at numerous areas including opportunities in improved asset management, mobile solutions in data collection, video conferencing services, and more work on remote sensing where we have access to satellite data from NASA and the European Union.

Next, [Katherine Lopez](#), Head of Communication, started her presentation by explaining the important role of communication in research and in achieving success in terms of creating awareness of IITA's activities both internally and externally. Some Communication Unit achievements included the strengthened Community of Practice (CoP) consisting of communication practitioners at HQ and the hubs/stations and project communication officers; the development of an

Institute communication workbook, communication policy, and communication strategy; increased visibility and coverage of IITA activities and IITA50 celebration; the soft launch of the IITA website; active growth of social media activities and reporting; and media monitoring and engagement with media partners especially based around the IITA50 celebration. Lopez mentioned future activities such as enhancing web presence in areas like websites and social media, more engagement with media partners and public awareness campaigns, and streamlining of communication operations through business orientation and more engagement with the CoP.

[Rosern K. Rwampororo](#), the new Head of the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit, introduced her presentation by discussing the M&E Results Indicator Book and its role in assessing key performance indicators (KPIs). Another set of achievements included the ongoing capacity building in M&E in units as well IITA being represented at the Annual CGIAR MEL CoP Meeting. She also highlighted some challenges in fully implementing M&E at the Institute including lack of budget allocation and staff for M&E, and lack of an enforcement mechanism for

projects reporting on applicable KPIs. Looking into the future, she mentioned the provision of M&E technical support service to other Directorates, Platforms, Projects and Hubs; development of standardized tools and guidelines; institutionalization and automation of M&E processes; and conducting data quality assessment on the reported KPIs.

[Allan Liavoga](#), Project Development and Administration Unit (PDAU) Head, described the role of PDAU and its relation to resource mobilization. He discussed the emphasis on proposal development and its respective success rate. Liavoga explained the processes and compliance from the hubs with regard to financial reporting. He mentioned the importance of scientists and the need to reduce administrative load and focus on delivery with the support of PDAU. Liavoga also highlighted the importance of resource mobilization and strategies for improving IITA's effectiveness in this area. Looking forward, he mentioned that there will be many activities including the following: automation of functions, decentralization of some functions, implementation of a sound feedback mechanism, and more work done on continuous communication with scientists and project managers.

Photo album: R4D Week



Overhead view of poster presentations.



Acknowledging the BoT members.



Prof. Ken Giller presenting on Farming Systems Research in Africa.



May-Guri Saethre with social media hashtags.



After the Social Media Jam Session.

IITA looks towards food and nutrition security for the next half century

The IITA Conference on Food and Nutrition Security Futures was held on 24 November at the IITA Conference Center, Ibadan, as part of the closing program of the IITA50 celebration. The symposium was the second core celebration event of IITA's golden jubilee year with IITA scientists from the various stations and hubs and colleagues from partner organizations in attendance.

The conference was chaired by the former president of Nigeria and Honorary International Ambassador of IITA, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The symposium aimed to find ways to harness the potential of science for the transformation of agriculture towards increased food security and economic development on the African continent. Chief Obasanjo, in his opening remarks, spoke of IITA's impact over the years, citing the example of the cassava mealybug scourge that was tackled by IITA's research.

He said he encountered the pest on his first attempt at cassava cultivation, but he said, "Within three years, IITA gave us cassava that is mealybug free. And that is what has enabled Nigeria to remain as the largest cassava producer in the world."

He commended IITA for continuing to fulfill the mandate of the founding fathers but noted that innovation is incomplete until the products of research have gotten into the hands of the farmer. "We must get whatever you produce out there to the farmers. And whatever it takes us to get your products to the farmers, I believe it's worth it," he said. He then added that "getting the products to the farmers is almost as important as getting the products ready because the product that is not in the hands of the farmers is a wasted product."

In his welcome address, chief host and IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga spoke about the leadership constraints in Africa, the resolution of which he believes will create a more effective foundation for the transformation of the continent. He said while we want to "talk about technical things at the conference, as an institution we have to remember that the social dimension of leadership is extremely important because in the end, it's going to be about people and that will be key in how we will lead the transformation in agriculture."

"We will have technology and knowledge but the way we lead our people and inspire those who are going to come in the future is going to be very important," said Sanginga. He also said that after celebrating previous achievements, we should have greater visions of what agriculture will look like in the future.

In a congratulatory message to the institute, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the [African Union Commission](#), Her Excellency Josefa L.C. Sacko, spoke highly of IITA's many contributions to the progress of African agriculture over the last 50 years. A number of areas of future collaboration between IITA and AU Commission are being identified including a welcome initiative by IITA to work with two AU Commission departments to establish a collective framework that will ensure alignment of the priority program of IITA to those of the AU Commission especially to support the implementation of the Malabo declaration and aim at transforming

African agriculture through increased productivity, youth employment, and strengthening resilience of Africa's production system.

Technical sessions at the conference included talks by some leading scientists and touched on different challenges facing food availability such as burgeoning population growth and climate change. The presentations showcased a wide range of solutions including removing constraints to sustainable farming, building sustainable food systems, and the rise of the processing sector in African agriculture. It was noted that with well managed implementation of research findings, Africa can experience economic recovery, youth empowerment, and both urban and rural transformation.

After making inroads in agricultural research over the past 50 years, IITA and its partners are intent on transforming African agriculture and achieving food and nutrition security in the next 50 years.



HE Chief Olusegun Obasanjo relates his experience as a beneficiary of IITA research.



DG Sanginga welcomes delegates.

IITA50 celebration ends on a high note

The year 2017 marks IITA's 50th anniversary. The anniversary celebration reflected two milestones—the first 50 years, covering the period from inception up till now; and the next 50 years. The first core event, held on 24 July, celebrated the achievements of the institute and its people—researchers, staff, alumni, partners and donors—that have been part of the history and success of the institute.

The second celebration event held on 24 November was a conference organized to address the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for ensuring food and nutrition security for the next 50 years. The conference had a foresight and futuristic focus, given the key challenges of population growth and climate change and their impact on agriculture and food systems in the world.

The conference, tagged “Towards Food and Nutrition Security for the next half century: challenges, opportunities, and strategies” attracted about 300 experts from the research community, policymakers, and the donor community. The shared ideas looked at emerging challenges of food security, and the future with an emphasis on what role IITA could play as a solutions provider and as a driver of agricultural transformation in Africa.

The African Union's Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Mrs Josefa Correa Sacko; former

President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga; Chair of the IITA Board, Bruce Coulman; and Chair of the IITA 50th Anniversary Committee, Kwesi Atta-Krah, addressed participants during the opening session, setting the tone for the conference.

Nine invited presentations were made in three technical sessions, on topics ranging from farming and food systems, sustainable intensification, agroecology, climate change, youth in agriculture, impact of NERICA rice, molecular science, developing genebanks, and IITA's research and orientation into the future.

In the next 50 years IITA will continue undertaking research and delivery in its key mandate domains, while intensifying efforts in four particular areas:

- The transformation focus of its research, which aims through massive scaling out efforts, to impact on changing livelihoods of farmers and in the economies of African countries.
- Youth in agriculture and agribusiness, which provides solutions to the issue of youth unemployment and unearthing opportunities for youth in agriculture and agribusiness. The African Development Bank has initiated a program called ENABLE-Youth, based on the IITA Youth Agripreneurship Program model,

aimed at supporting African countries to initiate youth agripreneurship incubation programs.

- Strengthening research to address direct and indirect impacts of climate change. Emphasis will be placed on the indirect impacts such as the effect of climate change on new pests and diseases. Based on previous successes of managing large biocontrol and IPM projects, IITA and partners have spearheaded the initiative of establishing a Biorisk Management Facility (BIMAF), housed in its research campus in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, under the umbrella of CORAF/WECARD.
- Finally, IITA will strengthen efforts in aligning its research and delivery operations with the strategic goals and targets of priority countries. This will also include alignment to continental policy and political processes such as the African Union Commission, CAADP, and NEPAD-PCA. Strategic partnerships with country, regional, and international agencies involved in agricultural research and delivery towards food and nutrition security, job creation, import substitution, and economic diversification will be central in this work.

To read more IITA stories and about the IITA50 celebration, visit: blog.gfar.net/2017/12/12/conversations-in-transformation-why-its-good-to-talk-to-people-on-your-way-to-work/.



Group photo of IITA50 science conference participants.

IITA celebrates Open Day in grand style

It was a day of fun and laughter, and celebration and appreciation for the entire IITA community, friends, and well-wishers, as they gathered at the IITA Sports Center on 25 November to celebrate the IITA 2017 Open Day.

The special event, which was attended by more than 5,000 participants, marked the official end of IITA50 celebrations and R4D Week. There were exhibitions from different units, where staff and guests had the opportunity to come, see, learn, feel, and experience first-hand the Institute's research activities over the past 50 years. The program was attended by members of the Board of Trustees, scientists, staff members and their families, and students from IITA International School who gave musical and theatrical performances.

The celebration was declared open by [Hilde Koper-Limbourg](#), Deputy Director General, Corporate Services: "Today is not about making long speeches, but it is about you—the staff and your families enjoying the day and making the best out of it. As we celebrate this day, I urge you all to make a conscious effort to ensure that we tackle the various dimensions of the food and nutrition security challenges that face us over the next 50-year cycle leading to the centenary of IITA."

"Open Day is about interacting between and among staff and families, and providing a relaxed atmosphere to unwind and get together as one big IITA family," she added.

The highlights of the day included the conferring of Long Service Awards to more than 25 staff members in the 10, 20, and 30-year service categories. Ten retirees were also recognized; and the annual Board Award of Excellence was given based on merit after a short talk by IITA Board of Trustees outgoing chair, Bruce Coulman.

In his talk, Coulman noted the many milestones achieved by IITA in its 50 years of existence and recognized



Cassava products on display at the Cassava Unit exhibition stand.



Dancers performing a traditional routine.

the work of Director General Nteranya Sanginga and the staff in ensuring that IITA meets its goals. Coulman then proceeded to call on the various awardees of the Board Award of Excellence (see separate story).

The occasion was spiced with various cultural dances and displays by groups depicting the culture from Western, Eastern, and Northern Nigeria. Children were not left out as they enjoyed themselves at the lawn tennis courts which were transformed into a big playground.

The unique day incorporated the Women's Group Scholarship Award

given to children of IITA staff from Pay Grades 1 to 6 throughout IITA's hubs. This year's scholarship is the biggest since the inception of the Women's Group in 1992 as \$11,500 was given out to scholars for their excellent performance. As a result of hard work, 25 students from Ibadan, four from Kano, one from Abuja, seven from DRC, two from Cameroon, and three from Uganda, benefited from the scholarship scheme.

The Golden Jubilee Open Day activities ended with a raffle. The winner of the grand prize was Emily Iwu, Administrative Assistant, Genetic Resource Center.

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.

Board Excellence Awardees announced at Open Day festivities

Board of Trustees (BoT) Chair Bruce Coulman announced the recipients of the 2016 Board Awards for Excellence, Gold Edition, as part of the commemoration of IITA50 anniversary during the Open Day program held at the end of R4D Week on 25 November. Awardees were given special IITA50 edition plaques and certificates signed by the BoT members.

The purpose of the Awards is to recognize and reward the outstanding achievements of deserving individuals and teams working in IITA. The Awards also aim to provide staff with incentives and motivate them to excel at work. Awards were given for Outstanding scientist, Outstanding support staff, Outstanding publication, Outstanding team, Most promising young scientist, and the special edition Outstanding NRS general staff introduced this year to mark the special anniversary celebration. The search applied to all regular staff across the Institute, not only in Ibadan.

The Outstanding NRS general staff award aims to recognize hard-working staff who worked selflessly beyond the call of duty, has been able to influence or impact on how IITA performs, exceeded performance targets, is highly praised by co-workers, and has demonstrated commitment and dedication to IITA. This award covers all regular NRS on PG 1-6 with "outstanding" rating during the performance appraisal in 2016.

The Outstanding scientist award aims to recognize the outstanding scientific impact of an IITA scientist. The award was based on a single achievement or an accumulation of outputs over a period of time.

The Outstanding support staff award recognizes outstanding service by a member of the support staff in achieving IITA's goals. The award is based on performance and delivery on workplans, dedication to IITA's goals, significant contribution to what IITA is now, respect of fellow staff members, customer orientation, consideration of others, and integrity.

The award for Outstanding scientific publication aims to recognize an



BoT Chair, Bruce Coulman and Outstanding Scientist awardee, James Legg.



The Communication Unit receiving the Outstanding Team award.

IITA peer-reviewed publication in the previous calendar year which has the potential for significant impact.

The award for Outstanding team aims to recognize the contributions of a high performing IITA team. The nominations were evaluated based on impact or potential impact on IITA's audience, and were based on significant achievements over a period of time.

The Most promising young scientist award recognizes a young scientist who has shown great potential in his/her field of expertise; is receptive to all learning opportunities and is already making a significant contribution to IITA's research agenda.

The 2016 awardees include Outstanding Scientist: James Legg, IITA-Tanzania, Dar es Salaam; Outstanding Team: Communication Unit, IITA-Ibadan; Outstanding Support Staff: Rose Ndango, IITA-Cameroon; Outstanding General Staff: Sunday Ebere, IITA-Ibadan; Most Promising Young Scientist: Laurence Jassogne, IITA-Uganda; Outstanding Publication: Bandyopadhyay, R., Ortega-Beltran, A., Akande, A., Mutegi, C., Atehnkeng, J., Kaptoge, L., Senghor, A.L., Adhikari, B.N. & Cotty, P., Biological control of aflatoxins in Africa: current status and potential challenges in the face of climate change, published in World Mycotoxin Journal, 9(5), 2016. 771-789. (ISSN: 1875-0710).

Photo album: Open Day



L-R Charlotte Sanginga, DG Nteranya Sanginga, and Manuele Tamò.



Band made up of IITA staff volunteers provided some exciting music.



Outstanding General Staff award recipient, Sunday Eberè, with Kwesi Atta-Krah.



International School Children's Choir.



Drawing out the winning raffle tickets.



Excited star prize winner, Emily Iwu, flanked by MC, Wole Oladokun and BoT Chair, Bruce Coulman.