

## IITA and partners meet with Togo president and officials to discuss joint projects

IITA Director General, [Nteranya Sanginga](#), in a joint delegation with the CEO of the [Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending](#) (NIRSAL), visited Togo on 24–26 January at the request of the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) President and the President of Togo. The joint mission met high-level officials of the Togo government and private sector in a mission facilitated by the AfDB Country Manager who also participated in all the sessions.

The two principals of the joint delegation (IITA and NIRSAL) and the AfDB Country Manager met with the President of Togo on day 2 of the mission with the Chief of Staff and the Minister of Special Projects to the President.



DG Nteranya Sanginga (front row, 2nd from left) with other delegates.

Singinga summarized the outcome of the earlier meeting with the larger group and briefed the President about potential

support from the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD), whose Togo portfolio is about \$15 million.

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## World Food Programme team visit IITA

Representatives of the [World Food Programme](#) visited the Institute on 26 January to collaborate on ways to improve livelihoods and innovations, and encourage youth in agriculture.

The five-member team led by Myrca Kaulard, the WFP Nigeria representative and country director, was received by the Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#). In his address, Dashiell expressed his delight at the partnership: “I really appreciate the partnership that we have built over the last two years; I look forward to building a stronger one,” he said.



Roundtable discussion among representatives of World Food Programme and IITA management.

According to Kaulard, the collaboration is important as the WFP in Nigeria is faced with the incredible challenge of reducing food importation and ensuring special access to nutrition, most especially for children and pregnant women. She stated: "It is fundamental to synergize with IITA, an institution with similar interests of improving livelihoods and creating an enabling environment for all." She congratulated IITA for its "amazing work." She reiterated WFP's focus on food nutrition as more than 1.2 million people, most of them young farmers, women, and children, depend on their activities for survival.

"We want to look at how we can use technologies and innovations to transform nutrition and the health sector to achieve our aim of being one of the forces focusing on transforming livelihoods and engaging youth in agriculture, and to see how, in partnership with IITA, we can move from saving lives to changing lives," she added.



World Food Programme representatives taking a look at some cassava products in IITA.

The team was taken on a tour of the Institute which included the Yam aeroponics, Plantain multiplication,

Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics, and Nutrition/Crop Utilization facilities.

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The President agreed to contact the IFAD President who incidentally had recently served on his cabinet as Premier Minister. The President also indicated that he will brief the AfDB President about the mission when they meet during the AU summit in Addis.

The delegation met in plenary on day 1 with all the Togolese counterparts. The Minister of Agriculture described the challenges that Togo was facing in agriculture and particularly with the cassava value chain. The IITA DG presented on IITA and described how it is helping other African countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, which faced similar challenges. He also explained

about the [IITA Youth Agripreneurs](#) model that is focused on bringing African youth to become active players and build careers in agribusiness. The NIRSAL CEO presented its model of enabling access to finance throughout the agricultural value chain.

On day 2, the meeting broke into two groups; one to discuss potential technical interventions, and the other to address financial interventions to support the development of agriculture in Togo, particularly the cassava value chain. A plenary meeting was then convened to integrate the outcomes of the breakaway discussions and agree on a roadmap for action. This

plenary meeting was further attended by commercial bank directors, directors of insurance companies, an administrator of the insurance sector's regulatory commission, the head of the Togo Federation of Agricultural Producers, and the head of the Food Processors Association, who were asked to provide comments and opinions on the proposed actions.

At the end of the meeting, the group agreed on certain conclusions and several action points were outlined. For more on this story and further details about the conclusions and agreements reached, visit <http://bit.ly/2DLyFOW>.

## Got a story to share?

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

## ENABLE Youth Program off to a great start in Sudan...

The ENABLE Youth program in Sudan started positively with the team receiving a very warm welcome and support from various heads of states in the country and agriculture research centers that consider it “a timely and much-needed initiative in the country.”

In River Nile State, the Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Irrigation & Forests, Eng. Omer Ahmed Elshikh, said that “the program was timely and well aligned with the state government’s priorities of creating youth employment.”

He said that agriculture was one of the key sources of livelihood in the state and youth involvement would further boost agriculture activities.

He assured the program team that paid him a courtesy visit led by its national coordinator, Dr Salih Khierallah, that the state had ample resources, especially land and human capacity, that could be leveraged by the program to deliver desired objectives.

The team also met officials from El Gedaref and Kassala states who also welcomed the initiative as they noted unemployment of graduates was on the rise, posing a major economic and social problem, and the numerous opportunities in agriculture to create jobs.

The Minister of Agriculture to the ElGedref State, Dr Abdullah Suleiman, noted that there was a huge market gap in fish and that the state was importing up to 100 tons of fish from neighboring Ethiopia. This he said was a huge opportunity for youth to engage in aquaculture to bridge the gap.



*The ENABLE team with the Director General, ARC Gedaref State, Dr Khalafalla Ahmed Ali.*



*ENABLE mission team meeting with Dr Hassan Khalid Ali, DG of ARC Nile State.*

Both states expressed their willingness and commitment to avail resources to complement the program. Notably, they indicated willingness to allocate already existing facilities and infrastructure within respective ministries as well as land for use by the Agripreneurs in their agribusiness ventures.

## ...forms partnership with research centers to commercialize agriculture technologies

The Agriculture Research Centers (ARCs) in Gedaref and River Nile states have agreed to partner with ENABLE Youth to commercialize their research outputs in a bid to reach more users.

The partnership, using the incubation model, will see the youth in both states set up a business in seed propagation to support mass production of improved varieties of wheat, sorghum,

and sesame, among others, to ensure adequate supply in the market.

In separate meetings, the Director Generals of both centers noted that they had adequate land at their disposal for research as well as human and infrastructure capacities for conducting research in diverse agriculture disciplines. They noted the many varieties developed that were

awaiting multiplication to meet market demand.

### Private sector pledges support

ENABLE Youth also embarked on a mission to mobilize private sector actors along agro value chains to create public-private partnerships (PPPs) that will drive the program’s sustainability agenda.

The team initiated a meeting with private sector stakeholders including farm input suppliers, machinery and equipment vendors, large-scale farmers and traders, and financial institutions that expressed their commitment to work with the program to ensure that the value chains were functional and profitable for Agripreneurs. The relationships established with the private sector will

ensure a vibrant business environment that will assure youth of running sustainable enterprises.

The 5-year ENABLE Youth program, funded by the African Development Bank, will support the creation of 2000 agribusinesses in five states of Sudan using business incubation models. It is expected that by the end of the

program, 12,000 jobs would have been created in the agribusiness sector where graduates running businesses will each employ five other youth.

The program is being implemented by the Government of Sudan under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests with technical support being provided by IITA.

## DDG R4D inaugurates new IARSAF executives

IITA DDG, Research for Development (R4D), [May-Guri Saethre](#), on 30 November 2017 inaugurated the new executives of the International Association of Research Scholars and Fellows (IARSAF). The event was held at Board Room II (Building 500) following the successful elections in October in which Taofeek T. Adegboyega was elected as president.

The oath of office was administered by the immediate past President Felix Adegbehingbe after presenting his stewardship to the audience.

In his acceptance speech, Adegboyega acknowledged members of staff present and applauded the Institute's continued support of IARSAF over the years. While presenting his team's agenda for 2018, he gave assurances

that the new executives will do their best in delivering on target outputs. Highlights of proposed programs include the use of statistical software, techniques and methodologies for nematode disease diagnosis and identification, as well as the annual symposium, research visit to IITA Benin Station, the launch of the IARSAF website, and a special conference on Youth in Agriresearch to commemorate 2018 International Youth Day. The overall goal of all these programs was to increase the competencies and enhance capacity of fellows.

In her response, Saethre appreciated the new team for starting on a good note by thinking and meticulously planning ahead. She noted that the programs were very ambitious but promised the support of the R4D wherever

applicable. In her own congratulatory message, R4D consultant Prof. Janice E. Olowoye asked the new executives to ensure that they work together to move the association forward, also promising to work with the new team in any way possible.

The new IARSAF executives subsequently embarked on courtesy visits to heads of units in IITA HQ, Ibadan where their 2018 program of events were presented and discussed.

The new IARSAF executives are Taofeek T. Adegboyega (President), Ifunanya N. Ifezue (Vice President), Afolabi S. Sanni (General Secretary), Moses S. Anzenge (Public Relations Officer), Mary O. Edhemuino (Treasurer), and Chidinma A. Nwachukwu (Welfare Secretary).

*Deputy Director General, R4D, May-Guri Saethre (middle) with the new IARSAF executives.*



# IARSAF holds first journal club meeting in 2018

On 25 January, the International Association of Research Scholars and Fellows (IARSAF) held its first monthly Journal Club meeting at [IITA](#), Ibadan, to discuss and review research work that has been carried out by Research Scholars and scientists in the institute using the bibliography from the Knowledge Center.

Usually, a volunteer presenter for each month chooses a journal of his choice and share among Fellows; and on the last Friday of every month, present his or her review while other Fellows contribute their ideas based on their understanding of the journal. These outputs are either incorporated into ongoing research or used later.

In his opening remarks, Tope Taofeek Adegboyega, 2018 IARSAF President, applauded all IITA researchers and Fellows present. While welcoming the participants, he particularly commended Munirou Sow, plant geneticist for abiotic stresses, Africa Rice, and Ben Faloye, Field Bank Manager, Genetic Resources Center (GRC), saying: "Your presence is an encouragement to us, and I hope to have more of your colleagues around in future meetings, to help broaden the scope of our horizon by sharing their wealth of experience with us."



*Afolabi Sanni (standing) fielding questions from other participants.*

Afolabi Sanni, a PhD candidate from the University of Ibadan and Fellow at GRC, presented a review of the article "Application of genomics-assisted breeding for generation of climate resilient crops: progress and prospects," by Michael Abberton, Head, GRC and 36 others.

While making his contribution after the presentation, Sow acknowledged the importance of the journal club meeting and suggested that future presenters should always source for publications with more practical issues, which could be applied as science has gone beyond mere journal publication. He

shared his experiences during his PhD and postdoctoral fellowship at [AfricaRice](#) Cotonou, emphasizing the importance of hard work and diligence.

In concluding the seminar, Muideen Olayiwola, former president of IARSAF, advised members to always read the circulated journal before coming to meetings to have more robust discussions. Concurring, Moses Selumun Anzenge, the moderator of the meeting, thanked the senior researchers present and noted all their suggestions. The next Journal club meeting is slated for 23 February.

## Events

- TAAT inauguration and planning workshop, 22–24 January, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria
- CIALCA Open Data Kit training workshop, 23–25 January, Nairobi, Kenya
- ACAI Strategic meeting, 29 January – 2 February, Nairobi, Kenya
- CLiP Annual review and Planning meeting, 29–31 January, Bukavu, DRC
- CIALCA project launch, February, Kigali, Rwanda
- YIIFSWA-II Annual Progress Review and Work Planning Meeting, 5–8 March, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria
- Nairobi Innovation Week, 5–9 March, The Great Court, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
- International Women's Day, 8 March
- BASICS annual review and planning meeting, 14–16 March, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria
- 2018 Annual Review and Work Planning Meeting, Cassava Weed Management Project, 19 – 20 March, Conference Center, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria
- IITA Board Meeting, 24–26 April, [Center for Development Research of Bonn University](#) (ZEF), Bonn, Germany
- Special event on "African agricultural transformation: The IITA Agripreneur Approach to Job Creation", 26 April, ZEF, Bonn, Germany
- 7th International Food Legume Research Conference, 6–8 May, Palais des Congrès, Marrakech, Morocco

## Oyo State Chinese investors and stakeholders explore ties with IITA

Chinese investors from the Polaris Pacesetter free trade Zone (Nigeria), accompanied by stakeholders from the Oyo State government, visited [IITA](#) on 18 January to establish a partnership and prepare the ground to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The visitors were received and welcomed by [Kenton Dashiell](#), Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, and [Kwesi Atta-Krah](#), Director, Systems and Site Integration.

Stating their purpose of visit, Charles Lu, one of the Chinese investors said: "We are at IITA because, having heard about the institute as a high-level, professional organization with the latest technologies, we want to explore the technologies, prepare the ground for a future partnership, and hopefully sign an MoU with IITA.

According to Tolu Sadipe, Special Adviser to the Governor of Oyo State on Projects and the Bureau of Investment Promotions and chairperson of Oyo State Agricultural Initiatives, the Oyo State government in their effort to industrialize the state, partnered with the Chinese team in setting up a free trade zone called the Polaris free trade zone, located on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. She said: "Agriculture is going to be a key part; we are going to produce some foodstuffs, but the raw materials would come from the farms. So instead of going to source all the raw materials, we want to produce some of the raw materials here in IITA that would go to the factories. Whatever is produced is going to be exported out of Nigeria. Hence, we are here to also develop a technical partnership with IITA. As part of the process, we brought some of the investors who are investing in the free trade zone and some agricultural companies that are interested in the project as well."

The visitors were taken on a tour of IITA's research facilities and technologies.

After the tour, the Chinese investors and the Oyo State government delegates met with key IITA staff to discuss the way forward. It was decided that a committee comprising representatives from each organization be formed to enable them



*IITA management and staff discussing with the Oyo State government delegates and Chinese investors.*



*Special adviser to Oyo State Governor on project and bureau of investment promotions Tolu Sadipe (left), and one of the Chinese investors (right) presenting a souvenir to IITA management.*

to continue the communication. Also, it was agreed that IITA, with contributions from the partners, prepare an MoU that would be signed on their next visit.