

IITA Abuja hosts US think tank...

A three-member delegation from the [Center for Strategic and International Studies \(CSIS\)](#), a US Congress think tank on global challenges including food security, visited the [IITA Abuja Station](#) on 10 September. The team of researchers are in Nigeria to evaluate a new research project "*Feed the Future and Resilience in Nigeria: Advancing Food and Nutrition Security in Fragile Environment*"—a Global Food Security Project that will examine key issues relating to the implementation of the Feed the Future refreshed strategy in northern Nigeria.

Receiving the CSIS delegation, the Head of IITA Abuja Station, [Gbassey Tarawali](#), gave an overview of IITA's work with the [United States Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#) in the past while expressing the readiness of IITA to lead other partners in implementing the USAID proposed Integrated Agricultural Program in North-East Nigeria. He equally informed the delegation of the intervention made by IITA in the North-East through the Seeds of Renaissance Program.

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CSIS and IITA representatives in a group photo.

...and delegates from Chinese tropical research institute

Under the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the [Chinese Academy of Tropical Agriculture \(CATAS\)](#) and [IITA](#), Prof Liu Haiqing, a CATAS Director, with 12 other delegates visited IITA Abuja Station on 5 September.

Receiving the CATAS delegation on behalf of the Head of IITA Abuja Station, Yam Seed System Specialist [Beatrice Aighewi](#) welcomed the delegates and

apprised them of the research and development work being undertaken in IITA as well as the evolution of the IITA Abuja Station.

Haiqing gave a brief background on the work of CATAS describing it as the Institute that "researches tropical crops in China just as IITA in Africa." He thanked IITA for the relationship built over the years: "We are in collaboration with the Changshu Institute of Technology (CIT) where grants are given and we would like to strengthen our partnership with IITA so that IITA will

benefit from the grant next year for the development of research laboratories.”

He further elaborated on the exchange program, noting that six slots are available to Africans every year. “IITA research students can also benefit

from this program,” he concluded.

Responding, Aighewi thanked CATAS for the offer of the exchange program. Equally, Ijie Ben Asuelimen, Project Administrator, also appreciated CATAS for the opportunity given to four IITA

Youth Agripreneurs to undergo training on crop protection in China last June.

The visit culminated in the delegates being taken on a field tour around the Station to see some of the technologies being promoted by IITA.



CATAS delegates on a guided tour around the IITA-Abuja Station.

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Speaking on behalf of the CSIS delegation comprising CSIS Senior Adviser Emmy Simmons and Nigeria CSIS Representative Adedeji Olubusayo, Dr Julie Howard, CSIS Senior Adviser, explained the objective of the team’s mission to Nigeria which is to explore key resources and opportunities for the implementation of inclusive and resilient agri-food system development and nutrition security in northern Nigeria.

According to Howard, the US Congress wants to outline existing US Government policies and programs that are relevant to rural and agri-food development and resilience in northern Nigeria. “With the vast experience and work that IITA has done, it is very important to get information from IITA. I will also use this opportunity to congratulate IITA for winning the 2018 Africa Food Prize Award,” she added.

IITA Savanna Systems Agronomist [Alpha Kamara](#) also gave a detailed outline of IITA’s work in the North-East since 2003 and recommended that

USAID consider including Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states in their interventions as they are equally affected by the crisis in the region. Kamara also highlighted the achievements of the IITA Youth in Agribusiness program in Borno State.

Responding, Simmons appreciated the work of IITA in the North-East and

expressed interest in meeting some of the youth agripreneurs in Borno State.

CSIS will publish the research report and develop a policy brief based on the findings in early 2019, including recommendations for Feed the Future in Nigeria and more generally for the expansion of Feed the Future in fragile environments.



Head of IITA Abuja Station, Gbassey Tarawali, giving an overview of IITA.

IITA trains ENABLE-Youth Senegal in preparation for implementation phase of project

To learn from the experiences and successes of the [IITA Youth Agripreneurs](#) model, 15 beneficiaries of the ENABLE (Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment) Youth Program in Senegal, visited [IITA](#) for orientation training on 3–14 September at the IITA-Ibadan campus.

The youth, led by Cherif Djelani Ndiaye, National Agency for Youth Employment, Senegal, was received by key IITA staff and IYA members. The training aimed to expose and enlighten the participants on the best agricultural practices to adopt for the successful implementation of the program in the country.

In his opening remarks, [Zoumana Bamba](#), IITA Congo Country Representative, apprised the participants of IITA's strategic role in creating job opportunities for youth across Africa. "Through IITA's involvement, the ENABLE Youth Program will mobilize the energies and ambitions of youth as engines for employment and agricultural transformation. The youth engagement approach undertaken by IITA is providing a way out of the two major problems—unemployment and a deteriorating agricultural base. Therefore, I implore you to tap into this opportunity to create wealth and help grow Africa," he added.

The Team Leader for the ENABLE Youth program in Senegal, Birama Sena, commended IITA for providing the opportunity to build their capacities to enable them to be a key player in the agricultural sector in Senegal and beyond. "For us to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive global economy, we need to be properly mentored and trained. We appreciate IITA for making such a platform available and equipping us with modern agricultural practices and entrepreneurial skills that will help us be self-dependent and able to create wealth."

Molayo Owoeye, Head, Capacity Development, ENABLE Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT), gave a breakdown of the activities of the project and highlighted the importance of capacity building among youth who are willing to make Africa a global powerhouse for food and agriculture. "Capacity building is a necessity if today's youth are to be

fully engaged in the agriculture sector. However, agribusiness for youth should be seen as a serious undertaking that will determine the future of many young people in Africa," she added.

Highlights of the 12-day training session included lectures, field practical training, interactive sessions, group discussions, a tour of IITA facilities, and visits to some of the IYA-led activities in Ibadan (Afribroiler, Gracevine, and Frotchery) and Abuja. Applauding IITA for its agricultural transformation agenda, Ndiaye stated, "We have learned countless things. With the knowledge and skills acquired in IITA, I am certain that the implementation phase will be successful."

The ENABLE Youth program, implemented by IITA, aims to expand opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness to youth as a means to advance rural livelihoods and economic development across Africa. The Africa-wide program, supported by the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB), is designed as a comprehensive outreach effort that would provide information, proven technologies, and opportunities to about 800,000 youth in at least 20 African countries, of which Senegal is one.



Participants undergoing an evaluation exercise during the training.

TAAT Cassava Compact holds implementation planning meeting in Zambia

On 11-12 September, [IITA-Zambia](#) hosted the cassava compact stakeholders meeting of the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) program to discuss its implementation in Zambia. In attendance were key stakeholders in the cassava sector in the country including His Royal Highness Senior Chief Kaputa of Kaputa District; the Deputy Director of the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI), Mrs Monde Zulu; the Kasama District Commissioner, Mr Kelly Kashiwa; and other senior government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and different NGOs.

In his introductory remarks, [Pheneas Ntawuruhunga](#), acting on behalf of the IITA Regional Director, welcomed stakeholders and reiterated IITA's commitment to efficient collaboration to ensure success in delivering good technologies for livelihood improvement for all beneficiaries.

In her opening remarks, Zulu thanked AfDB for their financial support and IITA for convening the meeting and leading the implementation of TAAT. She reminded those assembled that the goal of the cassava compact planning meeting was

to develop a high impact execution plan for achieving cassava transformation in Zambia through well-articulated production and processing systems, cassava markets, and a business development plan.

The meeting focused on using the cassava value chain to unlock opportunities for millions of farmers, therefore discussions focused on the following: (i) Scaling up to reach millions of farmers and processors; (ii) Private sector-led value chain development and investments to

unlock growth opportunities; and (iii) Food security, jobs, and income generation especially for women and youth.

Technical aspects of developing the roadmap for TAAT Cassava implementation in partnership with ongoing cassava projects in Zambia were also discussed. There were presentations on technologies, marketing, institutional financing, public investment, and policies, laws and regulations for unlocking the wealth in the cassava sector in Zambia.

HRH Chief Kaputa thanked IITA for the continued support in cassava farming. He said: "Kaputa District has a comparative advantage in cassava farming because of favorable high rainfall and humidity conditions, and we picked cassava as the driver for the economic emancipation of our people."

The ZARI Director, Mr Moses Mwale, closed the meeting with a vote of thanks to AfDB and IITA for bringing TAAT and the cassava compact to Zambia.



Group photo of meeting participants.

Events

- **Basic bioinformatics workshop**, 19–21 September, Ibadan, Nigeria
- **Hands-on basic molecular biology techniques**, 24–28 September, Ibadan, Nigeria
- **Training on “Cassava virus diagnostics to support virus elimination at KEPHIS”**, 24–27 September, Germany
- **Big Data Convention 2018 “Decoding the Data Ecosystem”**, 3–5 October, Nairobi, Kenya

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