

IITA Director General receives award at AGRIKEXPO 2018

[IITA](#) Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) was recognized at the AGRIKEXPO 2018 with an Award of Excellence for his diligent contribution to the growth and development of agriculture in Nigeria and Africa.

Receiving the award on his behalf, [Beatrice Aighewi](#), Yam Seed Systems Specialist, thanked the organizers of the AGRIKEXPO for acknowledging the hard work of Dr Sanginga in leading research-for-development efforts towards the attainment of food security and job creation for youth along the agriculture value chains. "I thank you for this award. IITA is committed to transforming African agriculture and Dr Sanginga is not relenting until this task is done," she said.

IITA made a strong showing at this 7th edition of the AGRIKEXPO in Abuja organized by the Federation of Agricultural Commodities Associations of Nigeria (FACAN), an umbrella body of 45 agri-food associations in Nigeria, with support from the [Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) (FMARD), [Federal Ministry of Trade and Investments](#) (FMTI), the [National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control](#) (NAFDAC), the [Standards Organisation of Nigeria](#) (SON), and the [Nigeria Agribusiness Group](#) (NABG).

The Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbah was among dignitaries who visited the IITA stand.



Beatrice Aighewi receiving the award on behalf of DG Sanginga from FACAN President Dr Victor Iyama.

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Chinese Changsha Committee on Agriculture visits IITA-Abuja

A 13-member delegation from the Changsha Committee on Agriculture visited [IITA](#) Abuja Station on 11 September. The head of the delegation and Chairman of the Committee, Mr Wu Shiping, who communicated through an interpreter, said they were in IITA to explore opportunities of partnership and investment in agriculture in Nigeria with a special interest in the rice value chain.

Receiving the delegation, [Gbassey Tarawali](#), Head, IITA-Abuja Station, expressed his delight saying, "This is about the sixth delegation from China to visit us and it is a good sign; it means there is a relationship. Some of our staff have been trained and now we have a large delegation of investors visiting IITA."

Responding to questions from the delegates, Rice Commodity Specialist Dr Phillip Idinoba said: "Rice is a big investment for now and the future. Hence, there are many areas that investors can key into in Nigeria. Rather than import, it will be better for investors to come here and create jobs." Idinoba then pointed out the challenges in the rice subsector and prospects for a good return on investment.

Responding to some issues raised, AgResults Pilot Manager [Adebowale Akande](#) pointed out the weight of the value attached to the visit. He said: "There is a big shift from oil, and agriculture is taking center stage, so we must take a look at the generation of people that are in agriculture; the focus should be the involvement of more youth." He shared the success of the IITA Youth in Agribusiness Program and proposed an exchange program for the youth.

N2Africa Senior Business Development Officer [Edward Baars](#) proposed



Adebayo Oluwaseun of IITA touring the Changsha delegates around the Abuja farm.

a partnership with the Changsha delegation for groundnut export to Chinese businesses.

participate in the China-Africa Economic and Trade Fair coming up in 2019.

Chairman Wu equally extended an invitation to IITA to visit their institution and

The delegates were later taken on a tour around the fields of IITA Abuja Research Station.



Group photo of Chinese visitors with IITA staff.

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Various crop yield improvement and product development technologies being promoted by IITA were showcased, including a display from [AfricaRice](#), with technologies from the IITA-led outreach program of the [Nigeria Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Program Phase One](#) (ATASP-1).

At the close of AGRIKEXPO 2018, which was held at the International Conference Centre Abuja, on 18-20 September, IITA's contribution was acknowledged with an AGRIKEXPO 2018 Certificate of Participation.



Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh, visiting the IITA stand.

IITA senior scientist, alumnus receive nutrition awards

Every year nutrition professionals and associates from all around Nigeria gather for their Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference. This year the 48th edition was held in Ekpoma, Edo State, between 17 and 22 September. It was a significant meeting not only for nutrition in Nigeria, but also for the IITA family as IITA Senior Scientist, [Busie Maziya-Dixon](#), was honored with an Award of Excellence in recognition of her significant contribution to food and nutrition security in Nigeria.

Noteworthy in her accomplishments as an IITA scientist is her lead role in the execution of Nigeria's first comprehensive Nutrition and Food Consumption Survey (NFCS). The results of this survey have provided nutrition policy guidance for Nigeria and other African countries for over 15 years.

Currently, she participates in the process of updating the NFCS, as well as leading Nigeria's scientific committee on the Home Grown School Feeding project with a mandate to develop standards and protocols for schools to be used in feeding young children. She is also the lead scientist

for the flagship [CGIAR](#) Research Program on [Agriculture for Nutrition and Health](#) (A4NH) in Nigeria which seeks to provide solutions in the areas of sustainable and healthier diets in collaboration with the Nigerian Government and academia.

With over two decades of contributions to the fields of Food Science, Nutrition, Health and Agriculture, Maziya-Dixon was one of only two awardees in this category at this year's meeting. The other awardee is IITA alumnus Dr Yinka Onabolu, who presently advises the Nigerian Minister of Agriculture on nutrition and development issues.



Dr Busie Maziya-Dixon showing off her plaque.

With this award, Maziya-Dixon joins a unique list of awardees of the society who have significantly advanced the course of human nutrition, food, and nutrition security in Nigeria.

CocoaSoils launched in Cameroon

As part of its four-country implementation initiative, the [CocoaSoils Program](#) has been officially launched in Yaoundé, Cameroon. This is the third program launch and it builds on the momentum following the Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire launches. The program with its theme "Sustainable intensification of cocoa production for the development and dissemination of integrated soil fertility management" took place at the headquarters of the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD) in Yaoundé, on 4 September.

The two-part program was attended by over 80 scientists and key partners. Partners present included [IDH](#), [IITA](#), the [World Cocoa Foundation](#) (WCF), [IRAD](#), the [Center for International Forestry Research](#) (CIFOR), [Yara International](#), the [World Agroforestry Centre](#) (ICRAF), the [Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) (MINADER), local universities, government agencies/ministries, multilateral organizations, and other private NGOs.

The program included a technical session with participants debating varying scientific

questions regarding the project protocol design, the CocoaSoils Partnership as well as its extension and dissemination tools.

The launch was chaired by the IRAD Deputy Director General Dr Ngome Ajebesone Francis Emmanuel, who represented the Director General. Speeches were made by [Richard Asare](#), the Coordinator of the CocoaSoils Program; Dr Hervé D. Bisseleua, Director, Agricultural Productivity and Chief Party ACI II for WCF; and Dr Didier Begoude, the CocoaSoils Focal person for IRAD.



A group photo of participants at the launch ceremony.

Journey to a better “Mchare”

“Mchare” is an important cooking banana in Tanzania and parts of Eastern Africa. Its production, and hence the food and income of millions of smallholder farmers, are currently threatened by several pests and diseases attacking the crop including black sigatoka, fusarium wilt, weevils, and nematodes.



Banana Breeder Allan Brown in a discussion with members of the research team.

IITA has established the first ever breeding program for the crop in Arusha, Tanzania, and together with national and international partners, IITA researchers are working diligently to develop high-yielding disease resistant hybrid “Mchare”. This is an arduous task due to the sterile and sexless nature of banana.

According to IITA Banana Breeder [Allan Brown](#), “There really is no other breeding program in the world that is focusing on these “Mchare” bananas so if we are not doing this, it’s not going to get done.” This work is part of the [Breeding Better Banana](#) project which seeks to develop and deliver improved hybrid banana in Tanzania and Uganda.

In addition to this program, the IITA banana breeding team and its partners in Uganda and Nigeria are breeding “Matooke” and plantain, respectively. These are the most important cooking banana and plantain for food security in Africa.

Watch the video showcasing the journey as the team shows the difficult process in breeding for better “Mchare”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzhNKTLN73c>

New farm machinery commissioned in Onne

In its continuing efforts to fight poverty and hunger, the [Nigeria Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Program – Phase 1](#) (ATASP-1 Outreach Program) unveiled a new tractor and other farm implements on 12 September at the [IITA Onne Station](#) in Rivers State, Nigeria. Head of IITA Abuja Station and ATASP-1 Outreach Coordinator [Gbassey Tarawali](#) presented these at an official ceremony witnessed

by the Head of Onne Station [Richardson Okechukwu](#), along with other management and station staff.

Tarawali was accompanied by ATASP-1 Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist [Rogers Sheik](#) as he presented the new farm machinery which included a chisel plow, disc plow, planter, and boom sprayer, all funded under the ATASP-1 Outreach

Program to eliminate drudgery and increase efficiency in research work.

Tarawali said: “I have been planning to come here for the past few years but this is a special call and I am happy that I came. It is good that the station is back and has made tremendous progress compared. This place is like my home because I was the last Head of Station here before it stopped operations a few years ago.”



Gbassey Tarawali cutting the ribbon as staff members look on.

While on a tour of the station, Tarawali was elated at the extent of work done on the station despite the funding challenges the Institute is facing. He said: “Now I understand why other management staff members are passionate about IITA Onne. A lot of work has been done here and it requires additional work to make it stand out. We all have to put our hands together to build this place.”

In his welcome address, Okechukwu stated that he was pleased to receive Tarawali back “home” and expressed optimism that the Onne station will put in more effort to ensure it becomes the pride of IITA. He also noted that this was the first time personnel from Abuja visited the station.

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, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.