

Sanginga elected Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences

[IITA](#) Director General, Dr [Nteranya Sanginga](#), has been elected as a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) for the advancement of science in developing countries, effective 1 January 2021.

The election, which was made known through a formal announcement, is a clear recognition of Dr Sanginga's outstanding contribution to science, research, agriculture, and its promotion in Africa.

In a congratulatory message, the Academy's President, Prof Mohamed Hassan, stated, "We will be honored to have you among our members."

The Executive Director of TWAS, Prof Romain Murenzi, also extended his heartfelt congratulations, noting that the Academy gives its members visibility.

The World Academy of Sciences for the advancement of science in developing countries is a global science academy based in Trieste, Italy, working to support sustainable prosperity through research, education, policy, and diplomacy.

Dr Sanginga will join 1278 elected Fellows of the Academy representing more than 100 countries, 14 of whom are Nobel laureates. Many other Fellows are renowned scientists and engineers, about 84% from developing countries, significantly making an impact in the South.

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IITA Director General and TWAS Fellow, Dr Nteranya Sanginga.

IITA's work, fundamental for Africa's stability and development– Belgian Ambassador

On a recent visit to [IITA](#) Ibadan, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mr Daniel Bertrand, described the Institute's work as fundamental for Africa's stability and development. The Ambassador visited the headquarters for the first time to engage with and understand IITA's research and operations better.

The Belgian Embassy's Director, Political and Economic Affairs, Stef Commers, accompanied Ambassador



The Belgian delegation meeting with the IITA team before touring the research facilities.

Bertrand. A team of IITA senior management and research staff led by the Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#), received the diplomats,

In his welcome address, Dashiell spoke about IITA's history from its 1967 inception in Nigeria. "We love working in Nigeria. This is such an important country for Africa and, we believe, for the world." He said Nigeria's success in agriculture would help drive the African economy forward, and IITA is proud to be a part of that endeavor.

Dashiell thanked the Belgian government and the people of Belgium for their strong support to IITA over the years, including their support for the banana and cassava breeding programs and the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA).

One of IITA's Belgian scientists and Banana Breeder, [Rony Swennen](#), guided the Ambassador through the Institute's banana research, which takes as much as 20 years to develop high yielding varieties. He highlighted the success of recently approved varieties in Tanzania and the setup of a tissue culture facility in Mali.

Director of IITA Central Africa Hub, [Bernard Vanlauwe](#), another Belgian national, gave a presentation underscoring the importance of Belgian support in IITA-related programs, including CIALCA.

During a tour of IITA facilities, the Ambassador made a quick stopover at the Cassava Processing Center. Molecular Geneticist/Breeder [Ismail Rabbi](#), Assistant Cassava Seed Systems Specialist [Mercy Diebiru-Ojo](#), and International Trials Manager

Peter Iluebey gave presentations showcasing the different processes in the cassava value chain, from breeding to value addition and distribution.

Ambassador Bertrand said that he had a positive first impression of IITA's work and is pleased with how Belgium is contributing to the effort. During his career in the development sector, he realized "that food and resources are at the center of conflicts and, you know with demographic growth, food production is vital to stabilize a country, to stabilize a region." This is why he believes in the importance of the Institute's work.

"Food and Agriculture are vital for the development, and I would say survival of Africa," said the Ambassador. He thanked IITA for what it is doing for the African continent.



Assistant Cassava Seed Systems Specialist Mercy Diebiru-Ojo giving Ambassador Bertrand a presentation on the cassava value chain.

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TWAS Fellows are some of the world's most accomplished scientists and engineers. They are the foundation for all of the Academy's work, building strength in science and engineering, including knowledge and skill to address such challenges as hunger, disease, and poverty, aimed at developing nations.

Dr Sanginga has more than 30 years of experience in agricultural research and development, particularly in applied microbial ecology, plant nutrition, and integrated natural resources management in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, having worked with the University of Zimbabwe, IITA, International Atomic Energy Agency in Austria, and Tropical Soil Biology

and Fertility Institute of CIAT. He became the head of IITA on 1 November 2011.

He has published more than 120 research articles in peer-reviewed international journals and was honored with the International Foundation for Science Sven Brohult Award for his contribution to agricultural and agroforestry research.

Scaling up innovations: IITA's commitment to African agricultural transformation

In 2017, [IITA](#) celebrated 50 years of service to Africa and its smallholder farmers in particular. Since then, the Institute has advanced even further in its mission to transform African agriculture through collaboration with farmers and farming communities, youth and women in agribusiness, and other partner-stakeholders.

[IITA's 2019 Annual Report](#) detailed this work and highlighted the delivery of research innovations on five impact areas: Nutrition and food security; Poverty reduction, livelihoods, and jobs; Gender equality, youth, and social inclusion; Climate adaptation and greenhouse gas reduction; and Environmental health and biodiversity. IITA continues active participation in [CGIAR](#) Research Programs (CRP) and Platforms that align with its strategy to achieve this goal.

The biggest challenge in agriculture is to feed the growing human population, which is projected to reach 9.7 billion in 2050 compared to 7.7 billion in 2019.

Operating via its regional hubs and research stations across sub-Saharan Africa, IITA is keen to deliver research innovations even more efficiently through its Partnerships for Delivery (P4D) efforts.

In 2019, IITA added the Sahelian region of West Africa—one of the world's most vulnerable regions—as a priority impact zone. The agriculture sector here is under strain due to many risks that are likely to deteriorate in the face of climate change. Hence, IITA and partners are making contributions in the Sahel through collaborative projects to improve livelihoods, enhance food and nutrition security, increase employment, and ensure natural resource integrity.

“We believe that a better organized and more focused IITA can provide the food and agricultural research base and service and delivery partnerships necessary to ensure greater impact by complementing the ongoing efforts of African countries and their national undertakings,” said IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#).

As former president of Nigeria, and IITA Ambassador, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo noted at the 50th-anniversary celebrations, innovation is incomplete until the research products have gotten into the farmer's hands. “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 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.”

IITA's commitment to the farmer and African agricultural transformation remains fresh, and [the 2019 Annual Report](#) contains multiple highlights showcasing this commitment. “We would like to express our appreciation to our various funders, collaborators, and partners who have been with us throughout this continuing journey of hope, faith, trust, and learning,” concluded DG Sanginga.



IITA works across sub-Saharan Africa in ensuring the delivery of research innovations.

IITA trains women on homestead gardening

Achieving food security also involves addressing nutrient deficiency. Using the space around a house, families can often raise a homestead garden to supplement the nutritional quality of home meals.

Through the USAID-funded Feed-the-future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, IITA trained 300 women in homestead gardening between 7 and 10 December in northeastern Nigeria.

The training covered five Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Borno State; namely, Bayo, Biu, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar, and Shani. The participants learned to cultivate tomato, okra, pepper, and green leafy vegetables such as ugwu and spinach in their backyard gardens. As well as improving household nutrition, these homestead gardens will provide an additional income source to the women. At the end of the training, the women received improved vegetable seeds to support their new endeavor.

Earlier in August and September 2020, the Integrated Agriculture Activity conducted a similar capacity building exercise for 838 women in Demsa, Fufore, Gombi, Guyuk, Hong, Song, and Yola South LGAs, Adamawa State, bringing the total women trained in the two states to 1138.



Top: Women in Kwaya-Kusar LGA, Borno State practising how to make organic manure from Animal dung. Bottom: Participants in Bayo LGA learning to improvise land space with empty container or used tyre with manure for planting vegetables in their backyards.

Got a story to share?

Please send your story with photos and captions every Tuesday 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 and Southern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.



Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Always clean your hands; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks properly; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; and practice general sanitation and hygiene.