



IITA DG to address Nigeria's Senate on agriculture

In a bid to learn and implement constitutional reforms that will further improve agriculture in Nigeria, the Senate has invited IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) to address them on how to sustainably undertake the quest. Sanginga announced this on 11 November in Ibadan, during an annual meeting with staff.

Sanginga will address the senators on agriculture-related issues in Nigeria, drawing experiences from the novel work, projects, and achievements of the Institute. Hopefully, Sanginga's presentation will convince the Senators of the pivotal role of agriculture in eradicating the menace of poverty, unemployment, and hunger widespread in Nigeria.

The "meet with the DG" forum was also a platform for promoting transparency in governance and camaraderie among staff and also keeping staff members abreast of the financial status of the Institute for the closing year and the prospects for delivery in the coming year.

Sanginga said that compared to the situation in 2011 when he assumed office as DG, the Institute has steadily moved up from sixth to first place in 2015 in terms of research output and budget allocation among all 15 CGIAR centers. He also highlighted that [IITA](#) has almost tripled its budget within these years from US\$47 million to more than \$120 million.

"The financial outlook of the Institute looks good for the coming year...Despite the multiple budget slashes in 2014 and 2015, IITA is able to survive. Management has been able to contain the situation and will continue to keep all our scientists and staff...This is a victory for all of us, and as a team, we have to ensure that we will continue to win."

Sanginga expressed gratitude to the [World Bank](#), [USAID](#), [AfDB](#), [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [IFAD](#), and [MasterCard](#) for providing the Institute with funds, and also praised the [Youth Agripreneurs](#) and the [Aflasafe Project](#) for their many achievements that have ensured the steady allocation of funds to IITA.

Underlining the strategy for delivery in 2016, the DG said gender balance and the motivation of women to be active participants in the activities of the Institute are strategic directions that the Institute should consider. He also urged the Human Resources team to work towards identifying and harnessing talents within the IITA family through training opportunities.

"I particularly appeal to the men to think seriously and work towards promoting the participation and motivation of women to work...this is because when people have the right incentives, their attitude towards work is encouraged".

Furthermore, Sanginga encouraged all members of staff to be open-minded and not relent in proffering constructive suggestions to help move the Institute to greater heights. He also enjoined all staff to remain very committed to the work they do, and ensure the judicious use of institutional facilities. He also challenged all to increase efficiency, work smart, and save time on their jobs. "This will make IITA to continue to be at the top," he ended.



IITA staff applaud DG Sanginga (standing behind the podium), for a job well done in 2015.

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org), Jeffrey T. Oliver (j.oliver@cgiar.org), Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org), or Adaobi Umeokoro (a.umeokoro@cgiar.org).

NoduMax West–Africa’s first legume inoculant receive NAFDAC certification

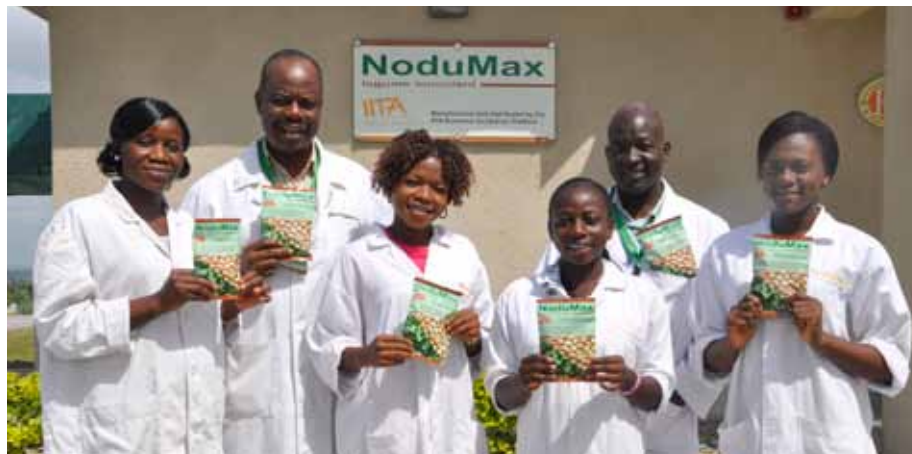
IITA’s [NoduMax](#)—a biofertilizer for inoculating and improving nodulation and yield in soybean—has received full certification from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), to commence commercialization in Nigeria.

Essentially, this license from [NAFDAC](#) gives IITA’s Business Incubation Platform (BIP) the impetus to advertize and distribute the inoculant to farmers and organizations involved in the soybean value chain.

The inoculant was manufactured by IITA after over 4 years of testing and popularizing similar imported inoculants to prove and convince farmers in northern Nigeria that the technology works. Following this acceptance and success of inoculants during trials, IITA established the first inoculant-producing plant in West Africa, and manufactured the first batch of inoculants in 2014. The plant in Ibadan will produce at full potential about 16 tons of NoduMax yearly. The product contains strains of [rhizobia](#) (strain USDA 110 of *Bradyrhizobium japonicum*), mixed with [peat](#), with the inherent ability to [fix](#) nitrogen from the air.

IITA Inoculant Expert, [Mahamadi Dianda](#), said the certification was a result of hard work and vibrant support from the team, management, and partners in the [N2Africa](#) project and other units on the IITA campus. He also noted that the license will also ensure that farmers have unlimited access to NoduMax for maximizing their yields from the next production season and onwards.

“When we commenced the effort of getting



IITA NoduMax team.

a standard product in July 2014, it was not certain when we would be able to deliver NoduMax en masse to farmers. Fortunately, the team’s hard work has ensured that we met this target. We have developed a product that works for African farmers. We have also been able to develop new initiatives to scale it up and deliver to farmers for use...This achievement is a baseline for more work,” he ended.

Ayodele Alonge, BIP Manager, said with the certification, the target is to market about 11 tons of the inoculants in the next planting season for farmers in West Africa. He also highlighted that plans were already in place to replicate the NoduMax model in Ghana and DR Congo.

So far, NoduMax is already in use by R4D partners mainly in Nigeria and Ghana, also in Benin and Burkina Faso. The project is also open to replication by others and the establishment of franchises with interested countries.

Raising the hopes for a genuine scientific treatment for other legumes, the researchers say plans are in progress for formulation of inoculants compatible with other legumes such as cowpea, and groundnuts. They are also tackling the challenge of conducting research to find locally sourced substitutes for imported peat with an equally effective ability to act as carrier for rhizobia. This will make NoduMax cheaper and also ensure sustainability of the project goals.

Further work is ongoing to also initiate a process to get local strains of rhizobia and improve the formulation of inoculants as well as the environmental conditions for farmers to use and store the product as recommended.

The work of NoduMax is supported by the IITA-N2Africa (Putting nitrogen fixation to work for smallholder farmers in Africa) project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through a grant to Wageningen University.

AfDB acknowledges IITA Agripreneurs as champions for agricultural development

The President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), [Akinwumi Adesina](#), has identified the IITA Youth Agripreneur ([IYA](#)) model as a scalable approach towards transforming Africa’s agriculture using youths as drivers of the change.

The President said this during a conference on Africa’s Agriculture Transformation organized by AfDB with the Senegalese government and the African Union.

The conference, held at the Abdou Diouf International Conference Center in Dakar, Senegal on 21-23 October, aimed to strategize and forge alliances with African governments, financial institutions, and other stakeholders on how to unlock Africa’s potentials to eliminate



Adesina, Sanginga, flanked by IITA Agripreneurs during the conference in Dakar.

poverty and reposition Africa’s place to feed the rest of the world.

Adesina spoke about the potential of Africa and emphasized that unless Africa embarks

on substantial agricultural transformation initiatives, it would be difficult for the continent to break the chain of poverty.

“We know that Africa has a huge potential due to its natural endowments, but Africa will not feed on potentials but on food. For instance, Africa exports cocoa very cheaply but surprisingly, we import chocolate expensively,” he said.

He added that this was the right time for Africa to act. “China did it in 10 years; we as a continent can do it in less than that only if we involve the youth, women, local farmers, financial institutions, local governments, private sector partners, and other development partners to uplift Africa,” he added.

In line with this, Adesina announced that the African youths will be supported to be gainfully engaged in agriculture through the [ENABLE YOUTH](#) program.

The program will be implemented by the AfDB in collaboration with IITA, using its IYA, and will exploit the potentials of the youth in agriculture through a change in mindset, the use of ICT in agriculture, and rural youth involvement to reduce rural-urban migration.

During a ministerial panel and a work stream session on youth in agribusiness, Nteranya Sanginga, IITA DG, spoke about the rationale behind driving a youth-led initiative.

At this panel which had Ministers and representatives of various countries in

attendance, the President said the IYA model will be adopted and scaled out to other countries in Africa.

Some action plans decided at the conference include the establishment of a \$300 million facility to de-risk financing to women owned-businesses by commercial banks and microfinance institutions; and the development of Agribusiness Diaspora Bonds to protect remittance flows for investments in African agriculture and agribusiness.

Finally, the Bank intends to scale up skill enhancement for youth in agriculture and establish an African Youth in Agriculture Financing Facility to support young commercial farmers and youth in agriculture.

IITA-Abuja hosts HarvestPlus Nutritious Food Fair

The IITA campus in Kubwa, Abuja was host to more than 15,000 guests who attended the nutritious food fair organized by [HarvestPlus](#), to enlighten Nigerians about the importance of consuming wholesome and vitamin A-fortified food products.

In many developing countries, [malnutrition](#) is the cause of mortality for about half of the children under 5. In the Nigerian context, about 2,300 children die daily, as a result of malnutrition. The food fair addressed the need to use agricultural research to save the lives of children and women.

Farmers, students, food processors, research institutes, civil society groups, NGOs, entertainers, top government officials, scientists as well as food vendors from the North, East, West, and South of Nigeria converged at the first-ever nutritious food fair organized in Nigeria, on 4-5 November to experience and learn about the contribution of [vitamin A](#) to the immune system, sight, and overall health. IITA was a partner and one of the featured centers

at the fair where the exhibition showcased research progress and products from cassava, yam, soybean, and maize.

The vice president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, [Prof Yemi Osinbajo](#), said in his speech read by his representative, Arch. Sunday Echono, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, that government recognizes the effort of HarvestPlus and its partners in promoting healthy living. He also said the theme of the event: “Closing the nutrition gap—prospects for biofortified foods” was in consonance with the nation’s efforts to support food fortification at a national scale.

[Gbassey Tarawali](#), Head, IITA-Abuja, remarked that IITA supports the vision of HarvestPlus to foster healthy living and fight malnutrition and hunger in Africa because “producing more food is not enough; food needs to be nutritious”.

[Howarth Bouis](#), Director, HarvestPlus commended the efforts of CGIAR in

raising the yield potential of staple crops of importance and also enhancing their mineral and vitamin contents.

“For instance, deficiency of vitamin A and iron in food compromises the immune system, but HarvestPlus and partners have raised the mineral content of cassava and maize through [biofortification](#) to help farmers and people improve their lives and diet,” he said.

The first batch of vitamin A [cassava varieties](#) were released in Nigeria and 29 other countries in 2011. These varieties have received very high acceptance in Nigeria and have been distributed for free to more than 1 million households. [Paul Ilona](#), HarvestPlus Country Manager, said that the next batch of cassava to be released will contain more than 15 $\mu\text{g/g}$ of vitamin A compared to 8 $\mu\text{g/g}$ in the first batch.

HarvestPlus continues to surmount the challenge of ensuring that biofortification features in national policy.



Elizabeth Parkes (left) explains research progress on biofortification to Arch. Echono and his entourage.



Students get a taste of vitamin A-fortified products at the IITA Youth Agripreneurs' booth.