



Humidtropics launched in Action Area for East and Central Africa

Humidtropics was launched in the Action Area for East and Central Africa (ECA) comprised of Rwanda, Burundi, East DR Congo (Kivu), Southern Uganda, Western Kenya, and Ethiopia in Bukavu, DRC, in May. The event took place at the IITA-Kalambo Station, followed by a two-day workshop.

Humidtropics seeks to improve the incomes of farm households in tropical Africa, Asia, and Americas through integrated agricultural systems intensification that preserves the integrity of land resources. The workshop was attended by 50 participants representing Humidtropics, CGIAR centers and partners (IITA, Bioversity, ILRI, CIAT, ICRAF, FARA, Wageningen University). It provided a forum for stakeholders to discuss and agree on key start-up issues, such as the process of selecting action sites within the Action Area; criteria for identifying entry points, guidelines for establishing innovation platforms and measures to promote coordination, and next steps to move the program forward. The action site would be launched in each of the six participating countries.

Participants went on a field trip to the Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (INERA) and surrounding communities



A Rwandan hillside.

(South Kivu) to learn about ongoing research and development efforts, challenges and opportunities in the communities; and assess potential entry points within the context of Humidtropics.

In his welcome address, Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, IITA R4D Director for Central Africa,

welcomed the participants to IITA Kalambo Station and presented a brief history of the station, which bordered a community with low farm productivity, high poverty levels, soil and environmental degradation. He explained that the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA) was established in 2005 to address these challenges and indicated that CIALCA's focal activities would be gradually integrated into Humidtropics.

He said he hoped that the workshop will help participants better understand the essence and spirit of Humidtropics. He thanked the Governor of South Kivu, His Excellency Marcellin Chishambo Ruhoya, for gracing the opening ceremony and more importantly for his support to IITA and other international organizations.

In his goodwill message, the Governor indicated that his attendance in the workshop with the Minister of Agriculture for South Kivu demonstrates his support to Humidtropics and desire to know more about the outcomes of the workshop. He said that if Humidtropics achieved 10% of its targets, it would make a great difference in the lives of the poor farmers.

Africa Agriculture Science Week 2013

Next week, IITA is participating in the 6th Africa Agriculture Science Week 2013 in Accra, Ghana, convened by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) every three years.

This gathering of all stakeholders involved in Africa agricultural development (and the General Assembly of FARA), brings together representatives of FARA's constituents including African and non-African institutions involved in African agricultural research and development such as the subregional organizations (ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD, CCARDESA and NASRO), farmers' and pastoralists' organizations, agricultural research institutions, agricultural educational institutions including universities. Others are

nongovernmental organizations working in agriculture, policy makers and private enterprises that comprise the national agricultural research systems, non-African advanced research institutions, international agricultural research centers, international NGOs, policy makers, private sector, Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Science and Technology, national and regional parliamentary subcommittees on agriculture and Africa's development partners.

IITA is participating in a side event titled "Productivity, Processes, People: Adding Value to Cassava" slated for 16 July, with presentations and discussions by IITA staff and partners.

Director General Nteranya Sanginga will also make a

presentation on "African Agricultural Science: Highlights from Scientific Partners" during day 1 of the FARA Assembly on 18 July.

IITA will take part in a week-long exhibition as part of the CGIAR system's showcase.

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, make sure that you have:

1. Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/ lab equipment;
2. Turned off air conditioners; and
3. Switched off all lights.

5CP Annual progress review and technical meeting

The first annual review and planning meeting of the Cassava Varieties and Clean Seed to Combat CBS and CMD project, dubbed 5CP, was held on 18-20 June, in Lilongwe, Malawi. It was jointly organized and hosted by IITA and the Department for Agricultural Research Services (DARS) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Malawi.

The meeting was opened by the Principal Secretary of Agriculture, Dr Jeffrey Luhanga, who described the project as "timely" since cassava had been prioritized for commercialization by the Malawi government.

Through a speech read on his behalf by the Director of Land Resources, Mr John Musa, he said that the program on cassava commercialization had been launched by their Excellencies, Malawian President Dr Joyce Banda and Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in Malawi, in September 2012. The first cassava drier had already been installed whereas a mobile cassava processing unit would be launched by year's end.

"Malawi faces rain shortages which often lead to maize crop failures. Cassava has always come in handy to fight food shortages," he said.

He thanked the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the project support and IITA for coordinating the project, which focuses on improving cassava productivity and food security in Eastern and Southern



Participants of the annual 5CP planning meeting tour cassava field trials at Chitala Research Station.

African region by deploying new varieties that have dual resistance to cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBS).

Dr Regina Kapinga, senior program officer with the Foundation who was present at the launch, said the 5CP project was an opportunity to bring together materials from different countries to combat the two deadly diseases affecting cassava. She thanked all partner governments for agreeing to submit materials for sharing among all the countries after cleaning by the Natural Resource Institute (NRI) and Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS).

Dr Victor Manyong, IITA R4D Director for the Eastern Africa Hub reported that IITA had made good progress in implementing the project. He also said technical work had begun in all the project countries.

The four-day meeting brought together over 40 participants that included researchers in breeding, virology, seed systems, and the private sector in seed systems for vegetatively propagated crops. They reviewed the progress made in the different components and countries and also planned for activities for the second year. Participants also visited the Chitala Research Station to see the national field trials.

Interest in using cassava for bread and confectionery increasing

Since IITA successfully baked bread and other confectionery products with 40% cassava flour, there has been an upsurge of interest from the private sector to tap the technology.

"Many people are now interested in understanding how to maximize the use of cassava," says Sami Mazumdar, IITA Head of Hotel and

Catering (HotCat).

In the past months, IITA has received several invitations from stakeholders wanting to know more about the technology. This is in addition to the training of hundreds of bakers by the Institute across the country, which ended last year.

This year, IITA's Food Utilization

Lab, led by Dr Bussie Maziya-Dixon, Crop Utilization Specialist, and HotCat, have participated in numerous exhibitions and demos on agriculture and food security showcasing cassava bread and other food products.

One of the recent invitations came from Nigeria's premier trade chamber group, the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The chamber, in collaboration with the Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi (FIRO), Nigeria, organized a seminar/exhibition with the theme "High quality cassava flour production and utilization in baking and allied industries: current status, trends, and opportunities."

The seminar created a platform for relevant cassava stakeholders to present and exchange views on the need for cassava flour inclusion in producing bread and confectioneries.

"It was a great opportunity for IITA to talk about the opportunities of using cassava flour in bread for Africa," said Mazumdar.

Participants had a taste test of cassava bread and other cassava-based products.



Cassava products on display at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry exhibition.