

## Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa launched

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was launched on 31 October at the Africa Union Commission (AUC) headquarters in Addis Ababa by Her Excellency Mrs Rhoda Peace-Tumusiime, Commissioner, AUC-Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, supported by her colleague for Trade and Industry, Mme Fatima Haram Acyl.

The Institute was represented by Dr Victor Manyong, Director, East African hub. Meanwhile, Dr Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, IITA Pathologist, presented the keynote address during the launch.

The launching coincides with the celebration of the AUC Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security. The 12-member PACA Steering Committee, chaired by Dr Yemi Akinbami of AUC, was inaugurated and held its first meeting on 1 November. IITA is a



*PACA Steering Committee. IITA was represented by Dr Victor Manyong (extreme right, second row).*

member of the Steering Committee as a technical partner. It also represents the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) in this body. One major decision of this first meeting is to

organize a Platform-wide Stakeholders Meeting in the first quarter of 2013.

PACA's mission is to improve the health, income, and livelihoods of African farmers, farm households, and consumers by addressing the agriculture and food security, health and trade issues associated with aflatoxin prevalence and exposure in Africa by working at all levels (continental, national,

regional, and local).

IITA, with partners, is leading the research on aflatoxin mitigation in Africa with special emphasis on the development of a biocontrol product that has proven to reduce aflatoxin contamination in food and grain called aflasafe™.

## Mozambique president appreciates IITA's soybeans varieties

The president of Mozambique has commended IITA for releasing five soybean and three cowpea varieties in the country and challenged the institute to make these varieties available to many more farmers.

H.E. Armando Emilio Guebuza was visiting the IITA exhibition at the launch of the 2012-13 agricultural season in Nampula province, Mozambique, organized on 25

October, in Monapo district, Nampula Province, Mozambique, by the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture.

The five soybeans released (TGx1740-2F, TGx 1908-8F, TGx 1937-1F, TGx 1904-6F and TGx 1485-1D) and three cowpea varieties IT-16, IT-18 and IT-1263, are currently available to farmers.

The president challenged all participating institutions to work along the whole agricultural commodity value chain.

As part of promoting soybean, IITA-Mozambique featured 12 soybean-based recipes among households and home processors. Over 250 participants enjoyed the food as light lunch.



*A display of soybean and cowpea varieties released and under promotion at farmer level.*



*From left, the Minister of Agriculture Luis Pacheco, H.E. President Armando Emilio Guebuza, admiring a rice-soy dish, and to his right the Governor of Nampula Province, Cidalia Chauque.*

## Liverpool Hope University and IITA explore areas of possible collaboration

Liverpool Hope University and IITA are exploring areas of possible collaboration with a view to improving livelihoods and promoting social justice.

In a recent visit to IITA, top officials of Liverpool Hope University expressed interest with the work IITA is doing in tackling hunger and poverty.

The officials—Professor Gerald Pillay, Vice Chancellor and Rector; Monsignor John Devine, Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the University Council; and Dr. Keith Paterson, Associate Dean, International Relations—were impressed with the level of staff dedication and enthusiasm to work, and the excellent facilities and safety of the IITA campus.

Areas under consideration for possible partnership include bioinformatics, conservation, capacity building, and student exchange program.

Liverpool Hope specializes in Social Sciences, Liberal Arts, IT, and business. The school has a strong social action focus and is involved in implementation of Fair Trade policies in the UK.



Liverpool Hope visitors with IITA staff led by Peter Kulakow (5th from right).

IITA expressed interest in capacity development opportunities with Liverpool Hope especially to address scaling out of IITA technologies, development of effective value chains/markets, monitoring adoption and impact, gender issues, and effect documentation of development outcomes.

Dr Peter Kulakow, who represented IITA Management, observed that there might be a potential role for Liverpool hope in CRP-Humid Tropics in social science arena especially perhaps in developing development outcome indicators.

## Staff in Tanzania trained on using GIS for R4D

A 3-day training on the use of geographic information systems (GIS) as a tool in agricultural development research was conducted for researchers at the IITA hub for Eastern Africa in Dar E Salaam, Tanzania, on 12-14 October.

The training was conducted by Mr Tunrayo Alabi, the GIS Support Services Manager, to enable participants to understand the basic concepts of GIS and to discover how it can be applied in the context of IITA research for development in a descriptive, analytical, and predictive manner.

The participants were exposed to various GIS tools that enable dynamic decision making in priority setting, spatial targeting, trial site selection, and dissemination of



Simon Boniface, a research associate at IITA-Tanzania creating a GIS map during a practical session during the training.

research through simple maps.

Particular emphasis was placed on how to bring field data from surveys and trials into a GIS and perform analysis in the spatial dimension. The participants were also trained on the use of global positioning systems (GPS) for data collection on the fields.

At the end of the training, participants were looking forward to applying spatial technologies for priority setting and improved decision making in their R4D activities.

One of the participants, Dr Edward Kanju, a cassava breeder, said the training was very relevant to the research work at the hub and the team will now be able to use GIS in their trials.

## Harnessing the potential of partnerships through innovation platforms

Since its inception, the IITA-led MIRACLE project has promoted the use of an innovative approach to build and strengthen partners' capacities in its four operational countries: Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zambia. In this Innovation Platform (IP) approach, stakeholders from local communities, research, extension, NGOs, and the private sector who share a common developmental vision, come together to

interact, prioritize issues, identify challenges and opportunities, and share experiences, with the overall goal of addressing the effects of HIV/AIDS on and to enhance food and nutrition security in agricultural communities through research.

Under MIRACLE, IPs provide a springboard for building functional linkages between entities focused on HIV/AIDS, agriculture, nutrition, and community health R4D. IPs start with the conduct of a series of community workshops involving these entities, which provide a forum for multi-stakeholder interactions. This grassroots IPs help to develop a sense of local ownership among the project's beneficiaries and partners and create an environment conducive to sustain MIRACLE's interventions. For example, in Zambia, Camp Agricultural Committees comprised of indigenous leadership, local extension officers, and community-based organizations were identified as the nucleus for operational-level IPs, with district-level stakeholder panels or development committees providing guidance. To be more effective, grassroots IPs make

use of Participatory Research and Extension Approach or PREA. This emphasizes a "bottom-up" approach with a focus on locally defined priorities and local perspectives. It involves a four-stage annual learning cycle: social mobilization, action planning, implementation, and learning.

The success of the community-level IP led to the formation of higher (district and even national) level IPs in MIRACLE's participating countries that follow the same principles and approach. The project initiated steps to form strategic-level IPs by convening representatives of the respective countries' Ministries of Agriculture, NARES, HIV/AIDS support groups, microfinance institutions, food and nutrition councils, food processing companies, NGOs, society leaders, and policymakers in roundtables.

These higher-level IPs are expected to provide avenues for the creation of supporting policies that promote agriculture-based HIV/AIDS R4D initiatives. More importantly, these policies are also expected to complement and strengthen community-level IPs, therefore multiplying the effects of MIRACLE's interventions.



Farmers prioritizing criteria for selecting cowpea and soybean varieties during an end-of-season participatory evaluation workshop in Malawi.