

## Board meeting and commissioning of new science building in Dar

The IITA Board of Trustees is holding the first of their twice-a-year meeting in Tanzania from 9 to 12 May at the spanking-new Science Building located in the IITA Eastern Africa Hub premises in Dar es Salaam. The group will stay on for the official inauguration of the state-of-the-art science facility, which will be held on 13 May.

The event will be graced by His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the Republic of Tanzania, and by Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria. Other dignitaries and representatives of IITA partner institutions are also expected to attend.



*The Board of Trustees in front of the new Science Building.*

## Cocoa breeders meet at IITA to align research efforts

The World Cocoa Foundation/African Cocoa Initiative (WCF/ACI) recently held a meeting with the African Cocoa Breeders Working Group (ACBWG) and ACI at IITA in Ikeja.

The meeting aimed to align the research efforts of national agricultural research systems (NARS) and match available funding with the requirements needed to improve the productivity of cocoa in West Africa through better planting materials. Representatives from all member countries of ACBWG that include Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo, participated. WCF/ACI was represented by Sona Ebai, Chief of Party (CoP), and Akua Amoah Boateng, Finance Manager. The meeting was moderated by Dr Ranjana Bhattacharjee, IITA Molecular Biologist, who welcomed participants on behalf of IITA.

The following were the highlights of the meeting:

1. ACBWG members agreed that WCF/ACI support for ACI project implementation will be channelled through the NARS, not through ACBWG.

2. The funding arrangements were also clarified: WCF/ACI's support to ACBWG is limited to provision of meeting facilities and web site development and updates through their agreement with COPAL and does not include support for operations. ACBWG, however, agreed

to submit a request to WCF/ACI for financial support for the group's activities. ACBWG also indicated its commitment to get funding from other sources.

3. During a previous meeting in Cameroon, WCF/ACI indicated the availability of \$600,000 as savings from the fingerprinting project. The CoP invited the group to submit individual or joint proposal(s) to make use of this fund. The ACBWG crafted a proposal for WCF/ACI's consideration.

ACBWG members also provided updates on the status of fingerprinting of clones from gene

banks and seed gardens which is being funded by WCF/ACI.

Project proposals submitted to WCF/ACI and CORAF were also discussed. The proposal submitted to WCF/ACI was revised taking into account in-country priorities for planned activities.

The CoP informed the group about a planned regional symposium to be held in 2014 that would provide a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on next-generation cocoa research.

A presentation on "Roadmap to Public Private Partnership Platform (PPPP)" was also given by the CoP.



*The World Cocoa Foundation/African Cocoa Initiative (WCF/ACI) and the African Cocoa Breeders Working Group (ACBWG) met at IITA in Ikeja last month.*

# PNDHD and INRAPE seeks partnership arrangement with IITA

IITA scientists recently visited national program institutions seeking to partner with the Institute on research-for-development activities to improve agricultural productivity in the Comoros through sustainable agricultural intensification and market opportunities.

Drs Pheneas Ntawuruhunga of IITA Malawi and Emmanuel Njukwe of IITA Burundi visited Comoros between 27 April and 2 May to assess technical and human resource capacities as well as farming systems and challenges faced by farmers. Partner institutions visited include the PNDHD (Programme National de Développement Humain Durable) and INRAPE (Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture la Pêche et l'Environnement).

In welcoming the IITA delegation in Moroni, the national coordinator for PNDHD, Mr Nobataine Ali Mohamed, reiterated the urgent need for IITA's interventions in crop genetic improvement, natural



*Participants go on a field trip.*

resources management (NRM), seed systems, integrated pest management and capacity development.

On behalf of IITA, Dr Ntawuruhunga made a presentation highlighting IITA's R4D model and the CGIAR Research Program on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics led by IITA. He spoke on the decentralization of IITA into hubs, which allows the Institute to work

efficiently across the various regions in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. He also explained how the systems approach adopted by IITA allows the Institute to do research across the value chain and areas such as NRM and capacity development. Both institutes are harnessing synergies under this initiative to contribute to a sustainable production of food and income security for the population.

## IITA Ikenne gets a new weather facility

IITA Ikenne Station now has a new state-of-the-art weather station. With support from the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) Project and technical assistance from the IITA GIS Unit, an automatic weather recording station was installed on 19 March.

The weather station has solar radiation and tipping bucket rain gauges installed on the same machine and can also reliably record computerized data on rainfall, wind speed, minimum and maximum temperatures, and relative humidity.



Readings can be taken at 30-minute, hourly, monthly, and yearly bases. Rainfall amounts during storms can also be recorded. In addition, the

station can give 10-minute average wind speeds, dominance, and directions.

## Welcome!

**Adebowale Akande** has assumed duty at IITA-Abuja as the AgResults aflate™ Pilot Manager. Until his appointment, Debo was a Senior Project Management Adviser with JJ SEKI Group in the



United Kingdom. He obtained an MSc in Development Studies from London South Bank University in 2005, BSc in Development Studies from the Kimmage Development Study Centre in 2003, Diplomas in International Environmental Law from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, Switzerland, and in Business Management from the Association of Business Executives, UK, and Certificates in Climate Change and Science from Oxford University, Project Management and Generic Adult Training from College of North East London. He is a member of the Chartered Management Institute UK, Association of Business Executives, UK; Commission on Education and Communication, International Union of Conservation of Nature; and a fellow of the Sustainable Challenge Foundation, Netherlands/Switzerland.

Debo has 15 years of experience in international development and policy management, strategic and operational management, R4D, and innovation and rural development in several organizations, which include Education-Aid, British Council, and Community Action for Development. He was also a former Lecturer at the College of North East London, UK.

He has published articles on the areas of Development Practices in Africa.

**Moses Thuita**, Postdoctoral Fellow (Soil Microbiologist), joined the COMPRO II team in Nairobi 1 May.



Moises holds an MSc in Soil Science (Soil fertility and plant nutrition) and a BSc in Forestry, both from Moi University. He completed his PhD in Soil Microbiology at the same university in 2012. He had been working for IITA as a consultant on the COMPRO II project.

He is married with one child. He may be contacted at [mthuita@cgiar.org](mailto:mthuita@cgiar.org) and +254726462374