

DG visits with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, IITA Ambassador for Africa

Director General Nteranya Sanginga recently visited with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, IITA Ambassador for Africa, to commiserate on the fire incident that gutted part of his residence in late December 2012, and update him on the cassava multiplication program in farms at Iseyin (Oyo State) and Owiwi (Ogun State), and also on developments in the Institute.

He was accompanied by Gbassey Tarawali, IITA/Abuja Representative; and Toyin Oke, Head, RMPPEL.

Chief Obasanjo expressed his appreciation for the visit, explaining that the incident was providential as it happened at a day and time that allowed the fire to be contained.

Cassava multiplication/plantation farm

Meanwhile, Dr Tarawali reported that 74 ha had been planted to cassava since November 2012. The rest of the planting will be done in 2013.

At Owiwi, two demonstration trials of 1 ha each of six varieties of cassava were established in the farm premises.

Chief Obasanjo had just acquired 2000 ha of farm land in Ogun State for cassava multiplication. This facility would be extended for a college out-grower scheme focused on job and wealth creation.

During the visit, the DG also made a briefing on various IITA concerns.

IITA funding A youth development program has been established at IITA which is directed at agribusiness. This could be part of Chief Obasanjo's out-grower scheme. The program is presently engaged in seed cassava, seed, and plantain/banana tissue culture multiplication.

The youth program is considered a good model and innovation with big potential for development and impact.

IITA Science Building, Dar The DG extended an invitation to Chief Obasanjo to commission the IITA Science Building in Dar which is scheduled for the first week of May 2013, during the IITA Board Meeting. Chief Obasanjo responded positively and blocked the date on his calendar.

Stronger support from government Chief Obasanjo concurred that the Institute needs stronger support from the Federal Government of Nigeria. To achieve this, he suggested the following programs:

- Develop the cassava multiplication farm at Owiwi that could double as IITA's demonstration site, with 500 ha to be planted in 2013.

- Invite the current President to commission Chief Obasanjo's starch and glucose factory; the cassava farm at Owiwi would be used as a model and demo for IITA's research program that could feed the factory with adequate raw materials for starch and glucose production.

- State Governors would also be invited to the ceremony.
- The occasion would bring IITA's research to the limelight; State Governors would be encouraged to establish such factories in their States. The raw materials required would be produced by IITA, providing another funding source. Dr Tarawali will be working with Chief Obasanjo on these plans.



L-R: T. Oke, DG N. Sanginga, IITA Ambassador O. Obasanjo, and G. Tarawali

New IP policy approved by Board

The IITA Board recently approved the Institute's new policy on intellectual property (IP).

As a principle, IITA regards the results of its research and development activities as international public goods. The Institute is thus committed to "widespread diffusion and the use of these public goods to achieve maximum access, scale, and scope of impact and sharing of benefits to the advantage of the poor, especially farmers in sub-Saharan Africa."

The new policy document lays out principles on partnerships, farmers' rights, genetic resources for food and agriculture, sound management of intellectual assets (IA) and IP rights, maximizing global accessibility and impact, and prompt dissemination of research results. It also spells out some implementation guidelines.

The policy documents have been uploaded on both the IITA Intranet and Extranet (www.iita.org/intellectual-property).

The documents, released by the Project Administration Office (PAO), also includes an IP best practice memo which explains the CGIAR principles on intellectual assets and what they mean for IITA, and contains general advice on how to handle CGIAR/Consortium-related IP and IA issues.

The documents also include IITA's FAQ on IP and the CGIAR IA principles and some examples.

Management announces creation of Capacity Development Office

Director General Nteranya Sanginga this week formally announced the creation of the Capacity Development Office (CDO) with Zoumana Bamba as Head.

The mission of CDO is to strengthen the capacity of the R4D community to contribute to IITA's overall mission to achieve poverty reduction. The CDO pursues two main objectives:

- a. Strengthening IITA and NARS' capacity in R4D, knowledge sharing, and technology dissemination
- b. Establishing effective linkages and partnerships with investment projects, education, extension and innovation systems, and farmers for information and knowledge sharing.

The CDO comprises three units: the Learning and Meeting Services Center, Knowledge Center, and the IITA International School.

According to the DG, while the units and researchers are responsible for the design and implementation of projects and activities, the CDO will facilitate the overall coordination, provide quality assurance, and promote coherence as well as integrated delivery of IITA's capacity

development activities. The CDO will also develop strategic guidance for the use of resources dedicated to capacity development and knowledge management, assist in the development of project and program proposals, and support monitoring and evaluation. A capacity development strategy is being developed to fully revive and strengthen training and capacity development thereby promoting learning, in line with IITA's research priorities and outputs, and

develop implementation of programs that will strengthen, mobilize, and sustain partners' capacities.

The DG also said that all training activities – graduate, postgraduate, individual and group training, etc., will henceforth be coordinated from CDO. Thus, all requests for training must be presented to the Head of CDO who will take appropriate action for proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.



IITA has renewed its focus on capacity development as an important strategic concern

IITA team visits Republic of South Sudan

An IITA team composed of Drs Victor Manyong, team leader, and Silvestro Meseka, visited several institutions and projects in the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) in November 2012. The institutions included the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Rural Development (MAFCRD), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the USAID-funded project Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project, International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), University of Juba (UJ), Coordination Office of the Western Equatoria State (WES), and USAID mission in South Sudan, all in Juba.

The team also traveled to Yei (160 km from Juba) and visited the Yei Research Station (YRS) and Crop Training Center (CTC). During this visit, they formalized the steps for shipping crop germplasm to RSS with the MAFCRD Directorate of Research. They also discussed the importance of involving RSS in testing cassava varieties resistant to cassava brown streak disease and the Africa Union's initiative on aflatoxin control in Africa.

Similarly, GIZ showed interest in aflasafe™. The chief of party of the FARM project underlined the need for introducing cassava varieties which are resistant to cassava brown streak disease (CBSD). The project also expressed readiness to get involved in value addition of cassava (processing) and to test more cassava and maize germplasm in the fields of selected farmers in the Green Belt agroecology zone.

The visiting IITA team promised to facilitate the process of value addition by connecting the project with fabricators in Tanzania. The team also advised IFDC to use the participatory approach in promoting cassava varieties for marketing in RSS.

Meanwhile, the University of Juba is looking forward to strengthening partnerships with IITA, especially in the areas of capacity building and germplasm exchange.

The State Minister of Agriculture of WES requested IITA to visit his state and explore its agricultural potentials. He informed the IITA team that the immediate need in his state was the production of seed of locally adapted staple crops for the farmers. The team

visited some cassava and maize trials (IITA materials) at YRS. They also paid a courtesy call on the principal of CTC in Yei.

On return to Juba, the team visited the USAID mission and discussed the importance of involving RSS in the aflatoxin control program.

The IITA team debriefed their host, MAFCRD, on the several meetings with other potential partners and also about the visit to Yei. They extended the invitation of IITA's DG to the DGs of Research, and Extension and Technology Transfer, MARCRD, to visit the Institute.

This second visit of IITA to RSS was facilitated by the MAFCRD Directorate of Research.



L-R: Dr George Tadu, Mrs Joyce Michael, Dr Victor Manyong (IITA), Dr Pio Kwor, Mr Victor Silvan, Mr Mourice Mogga, and Dr Silvestro Meseka (IITA), at MAFCRD, Juba, South Sudan – November 2012