



Cameroon releases IITA-improved cassava varieties to boost food security

The Cameroonian government has released five new improved cassava varieties developed by IITA and partners to help improve the food security of millions in the country.

The varieties, which were developed through conventional breeding, are recognized as IITA genotypes' TMS 92/0326, TMS 96/1414, TMS 96/0023, TMS 92/0057, and TMS 92/0067.

The varieties were formally released by the Cameroonian Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Essimi Menye; and the Permanent Secretary, Ms

Ebelle Etame Rebecca, representing the Minister of Research and Scientific Innovations.

With an estimated yield of between 20 tons and 35 tons per hectare, the improved varieties have high nutritional qualities and are rich in carotenoids, iron, and zinc.

Partners that worked in the development of the varieties include the *Programme National de Développement des Racines et Tubercules*, the Institute of Agricultural Research



Dr Rachid Hanna presenting the newly released IITA-improved cassava varieties to the public in Cameroon.

for Development, IFAD, various NGOs, and local farmers.

"These varieties will help close the yield gaps, improve yield, and put more money in farmers' pockets," said Dr Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, adding that "these would help improve the fortunes of farmers who depend on the crop for their livelihoods.

According to him, IITA will continue to support farmers in Cameroon by offering improved technologies

that address constraints to development.

Mr Menye said the new improved varieties would help Cameroon to take advantage of the opportunities of cassava. He also commended IITA for developing the varieties.

Grown by most farmers, cassava is one of the major staples in Cameroon that is contributing to food security and wealth creation.

The crop is boiled and eaten, or made into local delicacies such as *Mitumba*, *Baton de manioc*, *Beignets de manioc*, *gari*, and *Ndas*, among others.

Cassava has also gained industrial importance with uses in ethanol, flour, and glucose syrup production.

Farmers who participated in the release process said they 'loved' the varieties for their cooking qualities.

Dr Rachid Hanna, IITA Country Representative, said the release of the varieties "is a significant step in improving the nutrition and livelihoods of farmers in Cameroon."

"We see it as a new dawn for cassava farmers," he added.

Welcome new West Africa Regional Administrator and COMPRO-II Project Leader



Sylvia Oyinlola, a Brazilian, has joined IITA-Ibadan team as a Regional Administrator for West Africa. Mrs Oyinlola has a Diploma (Advanced Level) in French from Cheik Anta Diop University, Senegal. She obtained a BSc in Psychology from the University of Brasilia, Brazil and an MSc in Organisational Behaviour from the University of Lagos.

She has over 20 years of technical experience in human resources and administrative management, including working in the US Congress as Director for Policy, Manager at the State of Maryland Department of Human Services, Administrative Manager with a known law firm in Lagos, and stints with the Embassies of Portugal and Brazil in Nigeria.

She is married to Mr. Yinka Oyinlola and has two children. Her office is at Room 47B of Building 400, tel ext 2870; her email address is s.oyinlola@cgiar.org.



Dr Cargele Masso is the new Project Leader for COMPRO-II. He is a Canadian/Burundian and is based at IITA-Kenya. He has a PhD in Soil and Environmental Science from the *Université Laval*, Québec, Canada; MSc in Environmental Science from *Université de Sherbrooke*, Canada; and MSc and BSc in Agronomy from the *Université de Zhejiang*, Hangzhou, China.

He also holds a Certificate in Project Management from the *Université de Québec en Outaouais*, Gatineau, Canada.

Before coming to IITA, he was Acting Chief at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in Ottawa. Prior to this, he held various management and academic positions in the academe and government institutions in Canada and Burundi.

Dr Masso is married to Clotilde Kigeme and has two daughters. His e-mail address is c.mass@cgiar.org; mobile number: +254 708 090 089.

Cassava commercialization project in SA completes review

IITA's project on cassava commercialization in Southern Africa, funded by the Common Fund for Commodity (CFC), completed its mid-term review in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. The 4-year project aims to create commercial opportunities to farmers and processors by applying market-oriented research and ensuring High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) is widely produced.

Dr Adebayo Abass, Project Coordinator, indicated that under Phase I, sun-drying was identified as a major challenge. Phase II will address this by introducing mechanized driers and a two-step production process. The resulting semi-dry grit will then be transported to processing plants where it is dry-milled into HQCF.

Monde Zulu from Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) reported that the flash drier purchased by the project for pilot-testing had been handed over to a final processor. When installed, it would be the first in the country.

Ivor Mukuka, also of ZARI, added that three suitable cassava varieties introduced by the project were being grown by beneficiaries who supply cassava to the processors. He also said that over a hundred farmers had been

trained on good agricultural practices and post-harvest handling of cassava.

The project had also facilitated access to credit by farmers from the Citizen Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) and National Savings and Credit Bank (NATSAVE).

It was also reported that the expansion of markets for HQCF was well underway, with project participants delivering HQCF to Zambezi paper mills (Packaging Division) and to Liberty Biscuits, Ltd.

Dr Elifatio Towo and Roger Romanov reported similar progress in Tanzania and Madagascar, respectively. As final output, the participants finalized the project's action plan for July-December 2012.



Project implementors interviewing farmer-beneficiaries.

Burundi minister commends IITA for work on banana

The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development (MINAGRIE – French acronym) Hon Ms Odette Kayitesi, has said her government is pleased with the research being done by IITA to increase banana production and halt the spread of pests and diseases in Burundi under the multi-partner CIALCA initiative.

Honorable Kayitesi was speaking to a team from IITA led by Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, R4D Director for Central Africa, who paid her a courtesy call on 31 August 2012. With him were Emmanuel Njukwe, IITA Associate Scientist in charge of CIALCA partnership, Jean-Prospere Kanyaruguru, CIALCA Coordinator for Burundi, and Patrick Mutuo of CIAT-TSBBF.

The minister urged IITA to continue supporting the country to develop its agriculture sector. She said capacity building and NRM are areas that needed urgent strengthening.

Vanlauwe briefed the minister on the changes that are taking place within IITA and CGIAR, including the new CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). He said CIALCA was perfectly aligned to the CRP on Humidtropics which IITA is leading. He said CIALCA would gain a lot from this new arrangement which will bring in more partners with diverse expertise and widen its research scope for more impact.

He assured the minister that IITA has a strong capacity building component and would continue to support Burundi in this area. He added that CIALCA, so far, had supported 4 PhD students from the country's national agricultural system.

Vanlauwe, who was on a two-day visit in the country, also met with Koichi Shoji, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) chief of mission in Burundi to explore expanded collaboration.

Shoji appreciated the team's visit and said he was keen to explore opportunities to work together in the country to help smallholder farmers. He noted that their areas of interest dovetails with CIALCA's such as NRM, value addition, climate change, and capacity building.



(L-R) Jean-Prospere Kanyaruguru, Patrick Mutuo, Bernard Vanlauwe, Emmanuel Njukwe, Minister Kayitesi, and Zénon Nsananiyiye.

Africa RISING meets to design research framework

The Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) team composed of program and project staff, donor representatives, and partners met at IITA in Ibadan to design a research framework for the program.

The two-day meeting reviewed an earlier research framework developed by a task force coordinated by USAID, identify gaps and roles of partners working on the projects, pinpoint project sites and a portfolio of interventions for the program, and design monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.



The Africa RISING team in a group photo during the research framework design meeting at IITA-Ibadan.

Africa RISING was initiated in October 2011 and is funded by USAID as part of the U.S. government's Feed-the-Future initiative to address global hunger and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. The program focuses on value chains for maize and livestock, and systems intensification research.

Currently the projects cover research in three geographical locations: (1) Sustainable Intensification of Cereal-based Farming Systems in the Guinea Savannah Zone of West Africa – led by IITA; (2) Sustainable intensification of crop-livestock systems to improve food security and farm income diversification in the Ethiopian highlands – led by ILRI; and (3) Sustainable intensification of maize-legume-livestock integrated farming systems in Eastern and Southern Africa – also led by IITA.

According to Jerry Glover from USAID, this multi-stakeholder program with funding directed to the CGIAR is envisioned to deliver international public goods where they are needed.

The program is being undertaken with partners that include ICRISAT, ICARDA, Africa Rice, IFPRI, AVRDC, icipe, and many other organizations.