



NGO and IITA sign agreement; farmers visit IITA



Dr Kenton Dashiell, IITA DDG Partnerships and Capacity Development (right), and Sulaimon Arigbabu, HEDA Resource Centre Executive Secretary (left).

About 11 farmers and representatives of farmers' cooperatives from Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria, working with the Human and Environmental Development Agenda Resource Centre (HEDA), visited IITA Ibadan last week and interacted with researchers and discussed potential areas of collaboration.

The farmers' visit was arranged by HEDA, a nongovernmental organization based in Lagos that advances human

rights and environmental protection in public policy and programs. Through partnerships, HEDA works with knowledge and information as tools for ensuring accountable governance, addressing poverty, and empowering local communities.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on 7 August between IITA, represented by Kenton Dashiell, DDG for Partnerships and Capacity Development, and Sulaimon Arigbabu, Executive Secretary of

HEDA Resource Centre. The aim is to foster cooperation for the developing and implementing opportunities for collaboration and partnership to help reduce poverty, empower local communities, foster farmers' rights, provide climate information services, engage the youth in agriculture, and promote other agriculture-related areas.

HEDA aims at helping to bridge the communication gap between small

and medium-scale farmers and IITA to increase public awareness programs and partnership by informing the public and farmers through various media of opportunities in agriculture. It intends to create a clear information sharing system on knowledge in agriculture, as well as to increase participation by the youth through their advocacy programs and initiatives, said Pelumi Okuyemi, HEDA Senior Programmes Officer.

Some of the organizations represented by the farmers included the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria, Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria, and the maize and tuber crops associations. Farmers asked a lot of questions about challenges in the production of banana/plantain, rice, and cassava during the interactive discussion. Researchers were on hand to answer their questions. Staff present from IITA were Alfred Dixon, Partnerships Coordination Office and Cassava Weeds Management Project; Hilde Koper, Project Administration Office; Katherine Lopez, Communication Office; and Delphine Amah, Banana Breeding Unit as well as Venuprasad Ramaiah from AfricaRice. A tour of IITA's facilities and farms was also conducted.

DR Congo Minister describes IITA as a priority agricultural development actor

Prof Patrick Mzee Somora, the Honorable Minister of Planning and Budget of the South Kivu Province, has described IITA as a priority agricultural development actor in the region. He said this during a study visit on 6 August to IITA-Kalambo, leading a team of Ministers, Cabinet Directors, and Heads of Divisions from five provinces (Bandundu, Katanga, Kasai Oriental, and North Kivu) of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Prof Somora said the visit aims to create awareness among other provincial ministers of DR Congo about IITA facilities and technologies and agricultural innovations brought into the country by IITA.

These innovations include state-of-the-art laboratories, e-library, greenhouse, and mechanized agro-processing facilities with a product development and exhibition building run by the Youth Agripreneurs. He added that the facilities were for the development not only of South Kivu province but the whole country.

Dr Chris Okafor, Officer-in-Charge, IITA-Kalambo, received the visitors and said, "IITA-Kalambo was started in 2004 as a small 'Science Building for Peace' with support from the Governor of South Kivu, His Excellency Marcelin Chishambo Ruhoya. Today, the story of the Station is a different one. It is fast becoming a center for all the CGIAR institutions operating in the region."

He took the visitors to a tour of the facilities at the Station as well as interact with the Youth Agripreneurs who are carving out a niche for themselves in agribusiness.

The visitors applauded IITA for its new technologies and, more importantly, for reaching out to government agencies, development partners, and farmers with the new technologies to fight poverty and hunger.



Ministers, Cabinet Directors, Heads of Divisions of DR Congo provinces in a group photo with IITA Kalambo staff and Agripreneurs.

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions to Andrea Gros (a.gros@cgiar.org), Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org), Jeffrey T. Oliver (j.oliver@cgiar.org), Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org), or Adaobi Umeokoro (a.umeokoro@cgiar.org).

IITA Youth Agripreneurs to train young people from Borno State

IITA Youth Agripreneurs have concluded plans to train and empower young people from Borno State, northeastern Nigeria.

The proposed 3-week training, scheduled in early September, will equip them with knowledge about modern agricultural practices and entrepreneurial skills that would make them self-dependent and able to create wealth. It will draw from the experiences and successes of the IITA model and will be conducted by youths who have been trained and empowered by IITA.

“What we intend to do is actually use agriculture to solve some of the social problems in most societies of Africa, including those of poverty and hunger,” Dr Nteranya Sanginga, IITA’s Director General said.

“Over the last few years we have seen that it is more effective for young people to train others. We want to use this approach to bring more of the youth into agriculture, take them off the job market, and reinstate stability in our communities.”

Established over 2 years ago, the IITA Youth Agripreneurs program uses learning, mentoring, and practical demonstrations of modern agriculture to attract the youth into agribusiness. The primary goals are to attract to the sector young and vibrant human capital by making farming profitable, thereby creating wealth and jobs needed in the society.



IITA Youth Agripreneurs in the banana-plantain multiplication chamber in Ibadan.

Dr Alfred Dixon, Leader of the IITA-managed project Sustainable Weed Management Technologies for Cassava Systems in Nigeria, said, “By engaging the youth in agriculture, we envision we can help to solve the problem of youth restiveness in Borno and make the State one of the major food exporters in the country.”

The training, with strong financial support from the N2Africa-to-Borno project, will have 16 youth-participants and will involve classroom lectures, on-field practical training, and interactive sessions and group exercises.

Ms Evelyn Ohanwusi, IITA Youth Agripreneur based in Ibadan, said, “We are happy to meet our peers from Borno State. We will be sharing our knowledge

and experiences with them so that they can be better inspired to improve their lives through agriculture.”

Borno in the northeast is the largest state in Nigeria in terms of land mass with about 69,435 km². The state is agrarian; it occupies the greatest part of the Chad Basin and shares borders with the Republics of Niger to the north, Chad to the northeast, and Cameroon to the east. In recent times, the State has recorded outbreaks of insurgency triggered partly by growing unemployment and poverty.

Researchers are hopeful that empowering the youth through agriculture would complement the efforts of Nigeria’s government, create wealth in communities, and lead to greater stability of the State and region.

Africa RISING Babati team holds write-shop to produce scientific papers



Participants to the Africa RISING write-shop.

The Africa RISING team from Babati, Tanzania, held a 4-day write-shop in Arusha, 21–24 July, to compile their data from the field and write scientific papers.

The participants reviewed their data and drafted manuscripts that they “peer-reviewed” for one another. By the end of the exercise, six possible papers for publishing had been generated.

Bekunda Mateete, Principal Investigator for Africa RISING in Eastern Africa, said the purpose of the write-shop was to make researchers develop and write the papers and have them published where possible.

“Researchers are usually very busy people. They tend to focus more on collecting research data which are time bound and relegate making their analysis and documenting the outcomes to some ‘future’ available time. With their busy

schedule, this can mean a long wait and yet information should be published in its most current state where possible.

It is even more difficult to get multi-team researchers to come together to document complementary outputs until there is an external hand making the arrangements.

It is my role as the project’s Principal Investigator to get the researchers to attend to this part of the research activities. At the write-shop, authors were at different stages of manuscript development, ranging from compiling raw data requiring analysis to drafting formats. I appreciate this situation because authors are from multiple institutions that are some distance apart,” he added.

Fred Kizito from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) appreciated the write-shop, saying it had

helped the researchers to exchange ideas and get a feeling of what others were doing in their work packages.

“It would be great if we could publish these papers because a lot of resources had been invested. We can then use this as a measure and see if we should hold such workshops in the future,” he said.

The researchers were drawn from the various research teams working together under the Africa RISING project. Topics covered were soil fertility and land degradation, livestock, mycotoxin and postharvest, and vegetables.

The participants looked forward to the publication of their papers to enable sharing of success stories with stakeholders and also to adapting the papers into policy briefs to support in the scaling up and delivery of the technologies.

IITA holds forum with village chiefs and farmers to promote cassava production in Zambia's Eastern Province



Participants visiting a cassava multiplication site established by the FTF project in Chipata.

On 14 July, IITA and partners working under the project *Mitigating Cassava Disease Threats for Improved Cassava Production* held a community-level forum with the traditional village heads and cassava growers from four districts in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The objective was to determine their most pressing challenges to cassava production as well as to work out action plans to address these problems. About 70 village Heads and farmers from Chipata, Petauke, Lundazi, Ketete, and Mambwe attended the forum; it was held at a participant's farm in Chipata.

The project is one of the six components of the Zambia Feed-the-Future Research and Development Program, which is funded by USAID and coordinated by IITA.

"The idea of the forum is to identify problems in cassava production from the perspective of the local farmers," said Dr Pheneas Ntawurhunga, cassava breeder and leader of the project. "We involved the traditional village chiefs because they are a vital social node for farm-related information besides the fact that they are held in the highest esteem by members of their communities. This will help to ensure that whatever agreements or action plans are developed in the forum will be followed up."

Through participatory focus group discussions, the village chiefs and farmers highlighted common challenges to cassava production in their communities. These were a lack of good seeds/planting materials, prevalence of diseases attacking the crop, a lack of market for their produce,

and the low numbers engaged in cassava production. In addition, they said that domestic animals/livestock and elephants were eating their cassava; bush fires were damaging cassava stands; cassava roots were being stolen, and there is a lack of training and information on good cultural practices, among others.

"From a research standpoint, we are aware of some of these issues which the project is already addressing. Through this local engagement, we are also able to verify from the farmers themselves that these are indeed their main challenges, and even the proposed solutions can come from them," added Dr Ntawurhunga. "Such engagement enables farmers to have a sense of ownership of the project."

During the forum, farmer-participants came up with action plans to address the challenges they had identified. Some of the solutions proposed included project farmers taking the responsibility for sharing knowledge and information on good cultural practices with their fellow farmers; by-laws should be passed by the village chiefs penalizing owners of free-roaming livestock that damage other farmers' crop; cassava growers should make sure that appropriate fire breaks are integrated in their fields to minimize or avoid bush fire damage; neighbourhood watches should be established or strengthened to deter theft; ropes dipped in chili should be used to fence off the cassava fields from elephants.

"But, of course, the project is here to provide farmers with the research support and backstopping they need to improve their cassava production," said Mr Kennedy Kanenga, the Acting Provincial

Agricultural Coordinator for the Eastern Province and Director of the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute's (ZARI) Msekera Research Station.

"For example, through the project, ZARI and IITA can provide farmers with good quality planting materials that are well adapted, high yielding, disease resistant, and with the qualities that end users prefer. We will also help them to identify markets for their produce, as well as deliver training on modern cultural practices. These are just some of the interventions that we can make based on the needs the farmers have identified in this forum," Mr Kanenga added.

The stakeholders' forum also gave the project researchers the opportunity to clarify some misconceptions raised by farmers, such as the belief that cassava can cause blindness and that regularly eating cassava causes goiter.

"This exercise has enabled us to get a feel of the pulse of the communities – to see the situation through the eyes of the farmers," Dr Ntawurhunga emphasized. "This is something that IITA will be doing for our other projects as well, to make our research results even more relevant to our intended beneficiaries."

"It is now up to them [village chiefs and farmers] who are present here to follow through with the action plans that they developed. The donor [USAID] wants to see solutions coming from the farmers themselves and an increase in the number of farmers getting into cassava production in Zambia. Of course, IITA and our partners in this project will continue to support them in whatever way we can," he concluded.

Facts about Ebola/

Awon otito nipa arun Ebola

You can't get Ebola through air
O ko lee ko arun Ebola ninu afele

You can't get Ebola through water
O ko lee ko arun Ebola ninu omi

You can't get Ebola through food
O ko lee ko arun Ebola ninu ounje

You can only get Ebola from touching bodily fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola, or from exposure to contaminated objects, such as needles.

O lee ko arun Ebola nipa fifi owo kan oje ara eniti o nsaisan tabi ti o ku nipase arun Ebola, tabi ti o ba fi owo kan ohun elo ti o ni arun ebola lara, fun apeere, abere.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>
Yoruba translation by Funke Ogunsola, IITA

Welcome!

Dr Fred Kanampiu, a Kenyan citizen, has joined IITA-Kenya as the N2Africa Project Coordinator, in June. He has 25 years of extensive experience in conducting agricultural



research, technology development, and dissemination in cereal-legumes-livestock systems in East and Southern Africa, local and regional project implementation, coordination and management, including publishing, with public and international organizations.

Before his appointment, he worked at CIMMYT for 17 years, most recently as Senior Agronomist. He worked as Project Leader, Conservation Agriculture for Smallholder Farmers of East and Southern Africa (CASFESA) (2013-2014) and was the Team Leader for Smallholder intensification for Maize-Legume Systems in East and Southern Africa (SIMLESA) (2010-2014).

He has an MSc in Agronomy from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and a PhD in Soil Science-Soil Fertility from the Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, USA.

He is accompanied by his wife Salome and their two sons. His e-mail address is f.kanampiu@cgiar.org and mobile telephone number (+254) 72 2154877.



Dr Andreas Gisel, a Swiss citizen, has joined IITA-Ibadan as Bioinformatician. He has a Diploma in Natural Science from the Swiss Federal

Institute of Technology Zurich, in 1990. He obtained a PhD in Natural Science from the same university in 1995.

Before his appointment, he was a Senior Researcher in Bioinformatics at the Institute of Biomedical Technologies, Bari, Italy, 2010-2014, where he also worked as Bioinformatics Researcher (2003-2010). He was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Computational Biology at Navartis SA, Basel, Switzerland (2002-2003). He works on general

bioinformatics projects but especially in sequence analysis of next generation sequencing data.

He is accompanied by his wife, Livia Stavolone, and their children; they reside in Africa Drive 9. His office is at the Bioscience Center. He can be contacted at extension 2288 and e-mail a.gisel@cgiar.org

Dr Shiferaw Feleke, from Ethiopia, has joined IITA-Tanzania as Agricultural Economist. He has MSc in Agricultural Economics (2002) and a PhD (2006), both from the University of Florida, USA.



Before his appointment, he was a Research Associate at the Center for Tobacco Grower Research, Agricultural Policy Analysis Center, University of Tennessee (2007-2013). He also worked as Research Associate at the Dairy Systems Management, University of Florida (2006-2007). He was also Research Assistant at the Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida (2000-2006).

His e-mail address is s.feleke@cgiar.org and telephone number (+255) 22 2700092.

Dr Livia Stavolone, an Italian citizen, has joined IITA-Ibadan as a Visiting Scientist. She has an MSc in Agricultural Sciences (1992) and a PhD in Virology and Molecular Biology (1997) from the University of Naples, Italy. She worked as Postdoctoral Researcher at Friedrich Miescher Institut, Basel, Switzerland.



Before her appointment, she was a Group Leader at Consiglio Nazionale Delle Ricerche, Istituto di Virologia Vegetale, Bari, Italy, from 2002 to 2014. She works on plant virology and biotechnology.

She came with her husband, Andreas Gisel, and their children. Her office is at the Bioscience Center. Her e-mail address is l.stavolone@cgiar.org and her office extension is 2288.

Before her appointment, she was a Group Leader at Consiglio Nazionale Delle Ricerche, Istituto di Virologia Vegetale, Bari, Italy, from 2002 to 2014. She works on plant virology and biotechnology.

Dr Anderson Kehbila, from Cameroon, has joined IITA - DRC as Regional Scientist on Agricultural Systems Intensification. He has an MBA with double majors in Economics and Marketing from Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University, Canada. He obtained his MSc in 2004 and PhD in 2010, both from Brandenburg University of Technology, Germany.



Before his appointment, he was the Director of Research and Business Development (2011-2014) and Senior Associate Director of Research (2010-2011) at EcoXergy Solutions Inc., Vancouver, Canada. He was a Research Fellow – Energy and Climate Change, Africa Region, at Brandenburg University of Technology, Germany (2005-2009).

He will be accompanied by his wife and children. His e-mail address is a.kehbila@cgiar.org and telephone number (+243) 97 6021562.

Dr Bekele Hundie has joined IITA-Ghana as Agricultural Economist, Africa RISING. Dr Hundie is an Ethiopian citizen. He has an MSc in Agricultural



Economics from Alemaya University, Ethiopia (2001). He obtained a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from Humboldt University of Berlin.

Prior to his appointment, he was a Senior Research Fellow at the Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute of the Ethiopian Economics Association from 2011 to 2014. He was Assistant Professor at the Department of Development Economics, Ethiopian Civil Service University from 2008 to 2011.

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