

IITA signs partnership agreement to help Guinea improve agriculture



L-R: Dr Gbassey Tarawali with the Guinea Minister of Agriculture, Madame Jacqueline Marthe Sultan (2nd from right) and other officials in a high level discussion.

IITA has signed a partnership agreement to help Guinea in the production and promotion of cassava, maize, cowpea and soybean value chains. The agreement also involves improvement of the livestock value chain, for which IITA will help the country link up with livestock value chain actors including the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

The signing of the agreement follows recent interactions between IITA Ambassador Olusegun Obasanjo and the Guinean government in which the leadership of the West African

country sought solutions on how to move the country's agriculture forward. Chief Obasanjo then got in touch with IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga. The agreement between IITA and Guinea will allow IITA to deploy its agricultural expertise to that country and help increase agricultural productivity with the ultimate goal of improving livelihoods and wealth creation.

IITA will also mobilize other development partners, both local and international to help accelerate Guinea's agricultural growth, cutting across the value chains of

key staples including livestock.

With a population of about 10 million, Guinea shares its northern border with Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Mali, and its southern border with Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ivory Coast. Its economy is agricultural and mineral dependent, and the country is the world's second largest producer of bauxite, with rich deposits of diamonds and gold.

Despite the rich mineral resources, the country is diversifying and placing greater attention on agriculture to drive and achieve sustainable development. In fact, the government is eager to increase food production by intensifying the production systems sustained by the application of improved technologies.

To fast-track the take-off of activities, Dr Gbassey Tarawali, Representative of the DG & DDG PCD, with colleagues in IITA- Sierra Leone (Drs Braima James and James Abaka-Whyte) worked together to refine the Aide Memoire and developed a memorandum of agreement between IITA and the Guinea Ministry of Agriculture.

IITA intends to apply a similar agricultural research-for-development model which has helped a country such as Nigeria to top cassava-producing countries in the world.

"We hope this is a step in the right direction to help Guinea and other countries in the Mano River Union," says DG Sanginga.

IITA takes awareness on biological control of aflatoxins to Ghana

A stakeholder awareness and sensitization workshop on aflatoxin biocontrol in Ghana was held on 24 April at the Collinsmay Hotel, Ejura, in Ghana.

The Ejura District Director of Agriculture, Mr Lawrence Krampa, welcomed

participants and highlighted the effects of aflatoxin contamination on health and trade, and encouraged participants to interact with resource persons to learn and also disseminate what they learned to other stakeholders who could not participate in

the workshop.

IITA's West Africa Coordinator for the aflasafe project, Dr Joseph Atehnkeng, outlined the purpose of the workshop and stated that the awareness and sensitization of aflatoxin biocontrol was

next page, please



Group photo of participants at the awareness and sensitization workshop on aflatoxin biocontrol in Ghana

IITA takes awareness on biological control of aflatoxins to Ghana ...from page 1

an ongoing project in Ghana intended to find sustainable solutions to reducing aflatoxin contamination in maize and groundnut. He further stressed that the workshop was meant to raise awareness on aflatoxin contamination in some crops; identify farmers who would participate in efficacy trials of aflasafe (control product) in maize and groundnut; discuss work plans, responsibilities, and timelines of the various activities of the field trials; and obtain feedback prior to implementation.

PhD student Daniel Agbetiameh made a presentation on the prevalence of aflatoxin contamination in crops in Ghana. He explained what aflatoxins are, the causal agents, the effects on human and animal health as well as on trade, and outlined the history of aflatoxin surveillance studies

in maize, groundnuts and their products since 1964. He emphasized that aflatoxin contamination in maize and groundnut was a perennial problem in Ghana and appealed to participants to eat quality food free from contamination.

Prof Richard T. Awuah of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), discussed the level of knowledge and awareness of aflatoxin contamination in crops among the Ghanaian populace. He stressed that knowledge and awareness of a situation was paramount in making an informed decision. However, in the case of aflatoxins, even though there is awareness among health, agricultural and other professionals, the general Ghanaian population is mostly unaware of the aflatoxin problem or its

implications. He mentioned that the low level of awareness suggested that the menace posed by aflatoxins was not well appreciated in the country and emphasized that aflatoxin awareness-raising workshops should have a central role in the aflatoxin management interventions in Ghana.

The workshop was attended by 65 farmers (22 women), 16 officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) at the district level from four selected districts (Mampong, Ejura, Atebubu-Amanti, and Nkoranza South) in Ghana, representatives from some national institutions such as KNUST and the Crop Research Institute (CRI), an NGO (African Connections Ghana Ltd.) and the Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (ECASARD).

IITA to hold workshop on engaging youth for agricultural transformation in Africa

IITA, in partnership with the Support for Agricultural Research for Development of Strategic Crops (SARD-SC) in Africa, will hold a two-day workshop on Engagement of Youth Entrepreneurship for Agricultural Transformation in Africa on 28-30 May at the Conference Center, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria.

IITA and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) are developing an Africa-wide program on the Youth Agribusiness Development Initiative (YADI), a private-public partnership to advance youth employment in agriculture and agribusiness in Africa. The workshop will bring together interested stakeholders to brainstorm and develop a Pan-African Youth in Agribusiness program. Several dignitaries are expected at the workshop including Ministers of Agriculture; heads of potential funding institutions such as IFAD, IDRC, and Bill & Melinda Gates



Youths in a conference

Foundation; and partners in African agriculture development such as FARA and other subregional research organizations. Others expected guests are representatives of 20 SARD-SC project countries and Heads of CGIAR and international research institutions such as AfricaRice, ICARDA, IFPRI, ICRISAT, *icipe*, and ILRI who will

be collaborating partners in the program. Meanwhile, the SARD-SC project site has been redesigned for a better user experience. Readers can visit the site at www.sard-sc.org for the latest news and publications on the four mandate crops of the project—cassava, rice, maize, and wheat.

Cassava Science Day held at IITA-Cameroon

A Cassava Science Day took place in February at IITA-Cameroon. It was organized by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), IITA, and the Institute for Agronomic Research and

Development (IRAD). The workshop was on cassava production, processing, and marketing.

There were 29 participants at the workshop including Prof Akiyo Shioya

representing JICA, IITA Country Representative Dr Rachid Hanna, IITA Country Representative for Burundi Dr Emmanuel Njukwe, Dr Papa Saliou Sarr, Dr Manga Gabriel Ambroise, media representatives, researchers, field technicians, cassava chip and flour marketers, and farmers' representatives.

The workshop started with a welcome address and a brief presentation on Cassava Day by Dr Hanna.

The objectives of the 2014 Cassava Day were to examine the various approaches put together on cassava platforms at the international, regional, and local levels by different stakeholders.

Prof Shioya proposed that the third annual Cassava Science Day workshop slated for 2015 should be for two days and that participants from China and Thailand should be part of the workshop.



Group photograph of participants at the Workshop.

Dr Alfred Dixon now Head of Partnership Coordination Office

Dr Alfred Dixon has been appointed Head of the Partnership Coordination Office. The position had been vacant for two years since it was created in April 2012.



The Partnership Coordination Office is in the Partnerships and Capacity Development Directorate

and is responsible for the management of projects that are mainly implemented by a diverse group of partners doing research, development, capacity development, and monitoring and evaluation. These projects are often in several countries and in more than one of the regional hubs.

Alfred will continue to be the Project Leader for the project on “Sustainable Weed Management Technologies for Cassava Systems in Nigeria.”

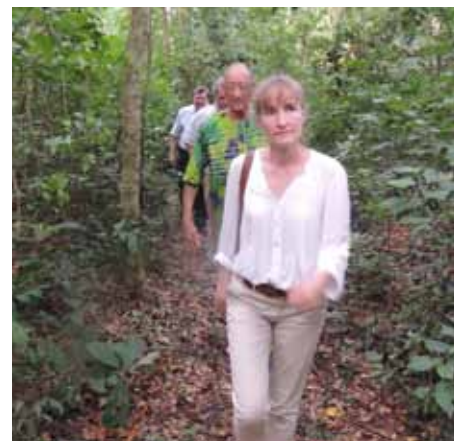
Alfred served as the Director General of the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research

Institute (SLARI), Freetown, Sierra Leone, for five years after leaving IITA in 2008. His career with IITA-Ibadan started as a Postdoctoral Fellow (1989-1991), Associate Scientist (1991-1994), and Scientist (1994-2008) in Cassava Breeding/Genetics. He holds a PhD in Agronomy (1988) and an MSc in Genetics (1985) from Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA, and a BSc in Agriculture (1981) from Njala University College, University of Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone.

Photo News: Board meeting in Cotonou



IITA BOT Chair presents a plaque of honor to Peter Neuenschwander at Drabo Gbo forest.



On tour in Drabo Gbo.



Sanginga addresses participants.



Board members in the insects museum in IITA-Benin.



Board members taking a look at the mites under the microscope.



World Food Prize winner, Hans Herren with Ylva Hillbur at the conference on climate change and agriculture in the Republic of Benin.



IITA Board and IITA Extended Management team at the Center of Excellence in Cotonou.