



IITA launches construction of research center in Southern Africa hub

IITA officially launched building work on its regional agricultural research center at Kabangwe on 12 September.

The state-of-the-art Southern Africa Research and Administration Hub (SARAH) Campus will be the focal point of IITA's research, training, outreach and business support, consolidating Zambia's position as a regional hub for small-scale agricultural development and training.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Hon. Rogers Mwewa, on behalf of Hon. Dr. Guy Scott, Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, was on hand for the official ground-breaking and foundation stone-laying ceremony at the campus site on a 50-hectare plot of land within the Zambia Seed Company farm, some 25 km north of Lusaka City. IITA Director General Dr Nteranya Sanginga also attended the ceremony, along with senior management of the institute, members of the diplomatic community, donor representatives, IITA staff, and local and regional partners.

"The establishment of the research campus is aligned with the Zambian government's vision of developing an efficient and competitive agricultural sector that assures food security as well as maximizes the contribution of the sector to GDP, thereby making agriculture an engine for economic growth, development, and poverty reduction," said Dr Sanginga.

Mr Mwewa said: "It is gratifying to see that government initiatives and programs to foster national development are being augmented by local and international organizations. Today's ground breaking ceremony is yet another testimony of the confidence organizations like IITA have in our nation's development agenda and potential to uplift the lives of our people and make Zambia a prosperous nation."

"Today's ground-breaking ceremony comes at the right time when we are reforming agriculture in the country. My government realizes that research and development initiatives such as this one have a positive impact on agricultural development. This is in line with my government's vision of making Zambia the food basket of the region," he added.

Once built, key facilities at the campus will include laboratories for natural resource management, agronomy and crop physiology, pest management, social



The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Hon. Rogers Mwewa unveils the marker (above) and lays the foundation of the new research center in Kabangwe, Zambia (below).



sciences, plant breeding, biotechnology, geographic information systems, crop use and nutrition as well as a post-harvest facility. The hub will also have a tissue culture facility, modern greenhouses, processing facilities for producing high-value cassava-based products, a fabrication workshop for labor-saving agricultural machinery and training facilities for

students, producers, processors and other actors along the priority value chains. There will also be a Knowledge Center that has access to computers, high-speed Internet, and a powerful server and space for about 50 people. Student hostels, recreation facilities and secured parking area will complete the center's facilities. In addition, the long-term vision of IITA



Above: Panoramic view of Kabangwe, site of the future Southern Africa Research and Administration Hub (SARAH). Below: The site was first cleared on 7 August. Five weeks later, it was ready for the ground breaking and stone laying ceremony, thanks to the efforts of staff in the hub (middle photo). Bottom photo: On 12 September, IITA led by Board of Trustees Vice Chair John Griffith and DG Nteranya Sanganya and staff welcome important guests to the launch ceremony.

is to establish two testing sites in Zambia, covering the more humid zones (northern Zambia) and dry savanna (Zambezi valley) of southern Africa.

IITA's total investment in the project—taking into account the cost of land, buildings, scientific equipment, utilities and establishing a research farm – is approximately K75-100 million (about US\$14-19 million). Construction of Phase 1 is expected to start by 30 September, subject to obtaining building permits and approval of environmental assessment reports. Phase 2 will commence in January 2015.

The IITA Southern Africa Hub, established in 2010, is located in Lusaka and oversees and coordinates activities in the sub-region. To strengthen its operations in Southern Africa and to help realize the region's agricultural potential, IITA is investing in establishing the new SARAH research and outreach center in Kabangwe, north of Lusaka.

The SARAH campus will have fully automated power back-up systems, digital telecommunications facilities, computer-controlled environment control systems, and fiber optic-based broadband Internet connectivity. Where possible, environment-friendly and efficient energy technologies will be used to run SARAH's facilities.

IITA'S work in Zambia over the past 25 years has been guided by a Memorandum of Understanding on Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Research, and Training with the Zambian Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL). Its overall objective is to strengthen the technical capacity of stakeholders working in the agricultural sector for the benefit of all Zambians especially small-scale farmers. To achieve this, IITA works in close partnership with the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, Golden Valley Research Trust, University of Zambia, National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research, and other national entities including civil society organizations and the private sector (e.g., Zamseed, SeedCo, Greenbelt Fertilizers). IITA's activities cover capacity building, crop breeding, seed systems, postharvest value-addition, input/ output markets, policy and institutional arrangements.



IITA's achievements in Zambia over the years include the development of improved varieties of cassava and cowpea, establishment of community-based cassava processing centers, generation and promotion of better crop management technologies, establishment of community-based seed systems, and training of scientists and technicians who are contributing to the national research program.

Snapshots of history



Topmost left: R4D Director David Chikoye (in orange shirt) and DG Nteranya Sanginga (second from right) welcome the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Hon. Rogers Mwewa (leftmost). Topmost right: David Chikoye (right) shows the map of the new research center to the Deputy Minister. Above left: The guests look at the 3-D scale model of the research site. Above right: Guests at the launch program included members of the diplomatic corps, research and development partners, and media.



Top left: Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Hon. Rogers Mwewa (right) delivers the keynote speech while BOT Vice Chair John Griffith look on. Top right: Part of the launch program was a symbolic tree planting by dignitaries. Above left: Guests from the diplomatic corps look at the exhibitions. Above right: DG Nteranya Sanginga (right) explains about the various uses of cassava.

IITA Women's Group launches first scholarship outreach in Southern Africa Hub; forms Southern Africa chapter

The IITA Women's Group announced the launch of a scholarship program to benefit children of national staff in the Southern Africa Hub and stations. During a special dinner this week to celebrate the successful launch and ground breaking ceremony for the new research campus that will be built in Kabangwe, the IITA Women's Group, led by Idara Ahmadu, said that this year, the Group's scholarship program is being extended to the hubs starting with Southern Africa.

Ahmadu, accompanied by other IITA Women's Group executives and members, including Safi Yade (Treasurer), Gloria Dashiell, and Charlotte Sanginga, attended the stone-laying and ground breaking ceremony for the new Southern Africa Research and Administration Hub (SARAH) Campus. This new facility will be the focal point of IITA's research, training, outreach and business support, in the region.

"We are honored and privileged to have witnessed the ground breaking and inauguration ceremony for the new research center earlier today. We are also using this opportunity to encourage the women/spouses in the Southern Africa region to be part of the ongoing changes in the IITA family. We are here to encourage you to come together to constitute a group that will uplift its members and the community, and also to share some of our experiences with you so that as a group, we can grow into one large IITA family," Ahmadu said.

The IITA Women's Group met with women staff members and spouses of Southern Africa-based staff in an informal get-together hosted by Mary Chikoye, spouse of David Chikoye, R4D Director of the Southern Africa Hub based in Lusaka. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Nigeria-based women's group to talk to their sisters in the hub about the Group's activities and experiences in undertaking community service projects.

As a result of this coming together, the women in the Southern Africa hub, led by Mary Chikoye, pledged to organize themselves into a chapter. The local group

would support the bigger IITA Women's Group in undertaking projects that would benefit the hub.



IITA Women's Group members from Ibadan and counterparts from the Southern Africa Hub and stations came together in a meeting hosted by Mary Chikoye, spouse of R4D Director David Chikoye.



IITA staff and Women's Group members after the unveiling of the marker.



Left: IITA staff from the Southern Africa Hub and stations worked hard to pull off the ground breaking and stone-laying ceremony. Right: Local dancers (Barefoot) welcome guests to the launch program.