

IITA Kalambo is South Kivu capital for one day The Council of Ministers confirms partnership with IITA



IITA DG Nteranya Sanginga (right) and South Kivu Governor Cishambo Ruhoya (in blue coat).

On Tuesday, 20 May 2014, the South Kivu provincial government held a special Council of Minister's meeting at the research site of IITA in Kalambo, located 10 miles from the city of Bukavu in Eastern DR Congo.

The council members were warmly welcomed by IITA's Director General Nteranya Sanginga and his team as they inquired about the progress of work on the IITA Science Building scheduled to be commissioned on 5 June 2014.

"This research center based in the DRC will improve food security in 14 African countries through research on soil, plants such as cassava, banana, and soybean as well as agroprocessing," said Sanginga during the Council meeting.

The Ministers of the province led by Governor Marcellin Cishambo Ruhoya asked IITA staff many questions, with a special interest on the cassava value chain and the integration of women and youth in agriculture.

During a guided tour of the facilities of IITA Kalambo, the government delegation noted that the construction of this center was going on well and that the cassava processing units are almost ready. Hundreds

of Congolese hired for this purpose are hard at work on various construction sites.

The science building and its laboratories are of international standards and give researchers from the region the unique opportunity to work using state-of-the-art science facilities, constructed by IITA's Facilities Management Services.

In a well attended press conference organized by IITA's Communication Office in collaboration with 15 local media houses, the South Kivu Governor urged all Congolese to take ownership of the IITA initiative.

"The IITA research center provides a great opportunity to improve the quality of life among the poorest populations in our area," said the Governor, adding "and when I say 'area', I mean not only South Kivu but the DRC as a whole, as well as the Great Lakes countries. This is why the government is making every effort at all levels to ensure that everything goes well as we prepare to welcome our guests to the official inauguration on 5 June".

On listening to the widely broadcasted radio programs on the event, the residents of South Kivu felt that the IITA Science Building had turned Kalambo into the



Kalambo officer in Charge Chris Okafor



L-R: South Kivu Governor, Sanginga, and Minister of Agriculture in press conference



Part of the rehabilitated office buildings



Facility Managers Rod Bishop and JJ Ben

provincial capital for the day.

"The establishment of this research center in my area gives hope because, for decades, our soil had not been productive," said Deo Akilimali, a farmer in Kalambo. "I am confident that this agricultural center is part of the process of rebuilding the Kivu region."

Results show Africa can eradicate *Striga*



ISMA participants at the annual planning and review workshop, Abuja, Nigeria.

Improved technologies being promoted by the *Integrated Striga Management for Africa* (ISMA) project have shown promise that *Striga*—a parasitic weed that destroys cereal and legume fields—can be eradicated from Africa.

Infesting up to 4 million hectares of land under maize production in sub-Saharan Africa, *Striga* causes farmers yield losses of up to 80% representing about US\$1.2 billion, and affects approximately 100 million people in the continent.

In the last three years, the ISMA project has deployed an integrated approach for managing *Striga* while improving soil fertility and reducing the *Striga* seed bank for sustainable increases in crop yields in some selected communities in Nigeria and Kenya.

Specifically, these included cultural practices such as intercropping maize with legumes (soybean and groundnut); crop rotation of maize with soybean; a “push-pull” technology that involves intercropping cereals with *Striga*-suppressing *Desmodium* forage legume; using *Striga*-resistant maize and cowpea varieties; using maize varieties resistant to Imazapyr (IR)—a BASF herbicide (StrigAway®) which is coated on the maize seeds and which kills the *Striga*; and adopting *Striga* biocontrol technologies

which uses a *Striga* host-specific fungal pathogen.

Dr David Chikoye, IITA Director for Southern Africa, said results from the project showed that the battle against *Striga* could be won.

“We will eradicate *Striga* in Africa just as America did,” he said at the Annual Review and Planning Meeting of ISMA in Abuja held 21-23 May.

IITA Deputy Director General for Research, Dr Ylva Hillbur, in her opening remarks called for concerted efforts from partners to tackle the *Striga* challenge.

Over 70 stakeholders gathered in Abuja for the 3-day annual event which sought to evaluate the successes, challenges, and opportunities of the project, identify gaps, and plan how to implement the decisions to successfully scale out *Striga* management technologies to rural farmers in the next coming year.

Dr Mel Olouch, ISMA Project Manager, said “We have established partners and stakeholder capacity in Kenya and Nigeria and installed *Striga* seed processing facilities in Kenya; awareness is high. Already, registration of the herbicide has been achieved in both countries and we expect to release two IR maize varieties in Nigeria in 2014.” He said that some of the scaling up

approaches that need to be adopted include the use of volunteer farmers to reduce costs and increase ownership, and use of complementary inputs and empowerment of stakeholders to give farmers the best technologies.

The Senior Program Officer for Agriculture Development of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr Yilma Kebede, in his address, looked at future plans for the project while expressing that the project is close to reaching farmers and addressing their concerns/problems due to *Striga*. He emphasized that there needs to be concerted efforts to profile the farmers reached such that the take-home message will be sustainable for them in the long run. “Demonstrations need to be focused and there is greater need to engage a wide range of stakeholders in controlling *Striga*. The various institutions involved should synergize to promote the project and scale out to farmers because no one partner will be responsible for the success of the technologies in the end,” he said.

Project partners include CIMMYT, AATE, *icipi*, Bayero University, KNARDA, BSADP, seed and chemical companies, extension workers, Scientists and the private sector.

aflasafe™ featured at the Feed the Future Global Forum

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are major supporters and contributors to the development of the aflatoxin biocontrol product, aflasafe™, in Africa. On 19-21 May, the first ever Feed the Future (FtF) Global Forum (Forum) was held in Arlington, Virginia, USA. The event brought together stakeholders who are driving the implementation of FtF and other complementary efforts across the globe, with a view of looking at the past, present, and future for FtF objectives.

USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service partnered with USAID to present information on aflasafe™ during the Innovations Marketplace segment of the Forum. Margaret McDaniel of USDA and Jacklyn Claxton of USAID (see photo) set up an aflasafe booth to showcase the technology. They prepared two posters, showed aflasafe videos, displayed



aflasafe™ product packages, distributed leaflets, and promoted the technology at the Forum. The aflasafe™ booth evoked interest about the technology among the stakeholders. The US Government’s

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack made a special mention of aflasafe™ in his speech at the Forum, praising its contribution to improving health and income of African farmers.

Impact of sustainable intensification on landscapes and livelihoods



Africa RISING addresses sustainable intensification at the farm and landscape levels.

The USAID Africa Bureau is providing support to Africa RISING (funded by the USAID Bureau of Food Security) for a study that advances the understanding of the landscape-level implications of farm-level sustainable intensification activities in Zambia. It will also inform the design of future integrated projects that address food security, climate change, and biodiversity issues. The objective of this study is to provide an evidence base for the linkages between field- and farm-scale sustainable intensification interventions and climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation in Zambia.

The pilot site for the study will be Eastern and Lusaka Provinces in Zambia. Although this study is focused on agricultural-environmental linkages in Zambia, it will hopefully provide lessons that are relevant in many other countries about

how to effectively establish integrated programs that build resilient households, communities, and agricultural landscapes, while also contributing to climate change mitigation and the protection of biodiversity. The study will be implemented by Michigan State University researchers, under the leadership of Prof Robert Richardson, Department of Community Sustainability, in collaboration with IITA, CIMMYT, CIFOR, and key national partners in Zambia.

The study will address questions about how sustainable intensification—in particular conservation agriculture and agroforestry systems—may influence encroachment into forested landscapes or protected areas. In addition, the study will consider the role of communal resources (e.g., community woodlots), household technologies (e.g., alternative

cooking fuels), and alternative livelihoods in addressing problems of deforestation and environmental degradation. The study aims to better understand the benefits and tradeoffs associated with integrated programming that targets food security, climate change mitigation, and biodiversity conservation.

The 12-month project began on 1 April, and will include four primary activities:

- A review of literature on agricultural-environmental linkages, and the impacts of sustainable agricultural intensification,
- An inventory of data sets in Zambia that can provide evidence of agricultural-environmental linkages (including household survey data, spatial data, demographic information, and other data sets),
- Development of a participatory systems dynamics model that will provide the foundation of an integrated framework of agricultural-environmental linkages,
- Analysis of spatial data for the development of maps and other images that represent agricultural-environmental linkages and the impacts of sustainable intensification practices.

In 2013, Africa RISING has established a strategic partnership with the USAID Zambia-funded SIMLEZA project to develop sustainable intensification options for small-scale farmers in the Eastern Province of Zambia. This study provides Africa RISING insight into the higher level impacts of the farm-level activities. This will allow redesign and adaptation of future research interventions to reduce negative and/or increase beneficial impacts in all Africa RISING targets.

PAO holds training workshop



Partners who attended the training appreciated having a capacity building course that enhanced service delivery.

The Project Administration Office has just concluded a training workshop on Proposal Writing, Grants, Contracts, Database Management, Project Administration and Intellectual Property (IP).

The training, held on 14-16 May at the Conference Center, Ibadan, attracted 45

participants from IITA's partners and other agriculture-related institutions from within and outside Nigeria.

It was the second edition of a fee-paying training and was aimed at building the capacity for development of participating institutions with a view to enhancing effective service delivery.

“The participants displayed much enthusiasm and positive spirit throughout the sessions and the feedback we got from them was very encouraging as many of them commended the PAO team and even promised to be part of such in future,” said Kayode Awobajo, Project Resource Manager in PAO.

IITA to hold workshop on engaging youth for agricultural transformation

IITA, 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 next week, 28-30 May at IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria.

The workshop will bring together interested stakeholders to brainstorm and develop a Pan-African Youth in

Agribusiness program. 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. Expected to attend the workshop are Ministers of Agriculture of several sub-Saharan Africa countries; heads of

potential funding institutions; and partners in African agriculture development such as FARA and other subregional research organizations. Other guests include representatives of 20 SARD-SC project countries and CGIAR and international research institutions such as AfricaRice, ICARDA, IFPRI, ICRISAT, *icipe*, and ILRI who will be collaborating partners in the program.



Youth entrepreneurs in IITA produce banana planting material (left) and soybean (right).

Year of family farming: IITA students raise funds to support women and families

As the world marks this year as the International Year of Family Farming, students from IITA International School have raised over \$1000 (N160,000) to support a group of 20 women farmers and their families.

The funds were raised through a Dance-a-thon that was held on 14 March in the School Hall, which drew financial support from parents, teachers, friends and the entire IITA campus in Ibadan.

The mobilization of resources for the project is an important component of the school's program, and the goal is to develop in the students an awareness of and a desire to contribute to the community.

"It also demonstrates to the students that team effort can make a difference ... To this end we involve our pupils each year in an activity to help others," says Carole Inniss-Palmer, Head of the IITA International School.

In the past, children and parents have raised funds for many projects as diverse as The Crop Diversity Trust, Wells for Villages in the Ibadan area, Pro Labore Dei and Water Aid, Nigeria.

The students are working with Engineer Thierno Diallo, IITA Postharvest Engineer to procure a cassava shredder for a group of women involved in cassava processing in Shasha—a suburb in Ibadan.

Though accounting for more than 70% of the agricultural workforce in Africa, women have little access to the benefits of research and innovation, especially in the domain of food crops. Most women still rely on manual graters to shred cassava – an approach which promotes drudgery with negative emotional and health consequences and subjects the women to a vicious cycle of poverty.

Inniss-Palmer said supporting the women with a cassava shredder would increase their efficiency in processing and would make a big difference in their lives and families by increasing their incomes.



Women make up 70% of the agricultural workforce in Africa.

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, make sure that you have:

1. Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/lab equipment;
2. Turned off air conditioners; and
3. Switched off all lights.