



## IITA proffers recipe to tackle food insecurity

Food security in Africa will remain elusive with isolated successes, fueling a sense of false optimism in an otherwise dismal situation unless decisive actions are taken to assist small-scale farmers to grow more and more valuable crops, according to Director General Nteranya Sanginga.

Addressing participants at the Crawford Fund annual conference in Australia, Dr Sanginga noted that in spite of the progress

made in crop improvement, low soil fertility and nutrient depletion continue to present huge obstacles to securing the needed harvests.

The Director General's position is supported by recent studies by IITA in the Great Lakes Region of Eastern Africa that show that majority of the soils in that region are now barren with very little fertility. The barren soils are a result of years of mining and insufficient replacement of nutrients by smallholder farmers, mostly practicing low-input agriculture.

Dr Sanginga suggested the adoption of Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) which is defined as 'the application of soil fertility management practices, and the knowledge to adapt these to local conditions, which optimize fertilizer and organic resource use efficiency and crop productivity.' ISFM is also the topic of an ongoing international conference in Nairobi, Kenya, where the Institute's natural resource management specialists and experts, including the DG, are attending.

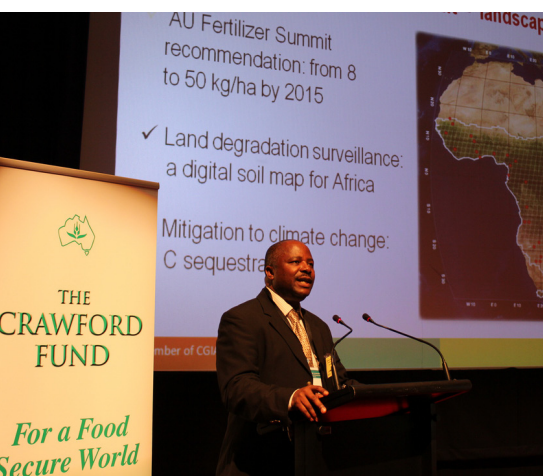
Dr Sanginga said that ISFM presented a means to overcome the dilemma of low productivity, by offering farmers better returns for investment in fertilizer, through its combination with indigenous agro-minerals and available organic resources.

He, however, pointed out that disseminating the knowledge of ISFM and developing incentives for its adoption now stand as a challenge for national planners and rural development specialists, and if done efficiently would result in more productive and sustainable agriculture, improved household and regional food security, and increased incomes among small-scale farmers.

The Africa Union's Abuja declaration on fertilizers for an African Green Revolution, which has stated that efforts to reduce hunger on the continent must begin by addressing its severely depleted soils, recommends countries to increase fertilizer use from the current 8 kg/ha to at least 50 kg/ha by 2015 to boost agricultural production.

Participants at this year's Crawford Fund annual conference included the CEO of the CGIAR, Dr Frank Rijsberman, and IFPRI DG, Dr Shenggen Fan, among others.

The annual conference is a key event in Australia's international development calendar. It attracts development professionals, decision makers, researchers, agribusiness people, farmers, conservationists, educators, students, and other stakeholders. This year's event with the theme, "The Scramble for Natural Resources: More Food, Less Land?" also marked the Crawford Fund's 25th anniversary.



Director General Nteranya Sanginga at Crawford Fund annual conference in Australia.

## IITA-Cameroon holds discussions with IFAD mission

IITA-Cameroon recently hosted the visit of an IFAD mission. The two institutions explored potential areas of collaboration towards the development of an IFAD investment program for promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture.

Discussions centered on what IITA in general and specifically IITA-Cameroon can provide for the youth program in terms of crop production and processing technologies, capacity building, and social science backstopping.

The IFAD team was led by Valantine Achancho, Country Program Officer at the IFAD Cameroon Country Office, who was accompanied by five IFAD consultants and the

coordinator and production specialist of PNDRT (Programme Nationale de Développement de Racines et Tubercules), an on-going IFAD investment project in Cameroon). Drs Rachid Hanna and Holger Kirscht represented IITA.

The IFAD team was particularly interested in how IITA works with partners in Cameroon. Of interest to IFAD is IITA's successful collaboration with PNDRT, PRFP (Programme de Relance de la Filière Plantain), IRAD (Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement), FRTC (Fonta Rural Training Center), and several other NGOs and farmer organizations. IITA had provided PNDRT and PRFP in the past with propagation, production, protection, and postharvest technologies, and had trained government extensionists and the private sector in various aspects of the entire cassava and plantain production chains.

The IFAD mission continued its tour of meetings with various partners including government ministries and other international institutions. A meeting will be convened soon to provide the various potential partners with a synthesis of the mission accomplishments and the way forward.



An IFAD mission visited IITA-Cameroon to explore areas of collaboration, specifically on the development of an IFAD investment program for promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture.

## Welcome, Dr Beatrice Aighewi

Dr Beatrice Aighewi has joined IITA-Ibadan as Yam Seed System Specialist. Dr Aighewi is a Cameroonian/Nigerian citizen. She has a PhD in Agronomy from the University of Ibadan (1998). She obtained an M.Sc. in Agronomy (1986) and B.Sc. in Agriculture (1983) from Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria.

Prior to her appointment, she was a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Crop Science, University of Abuja since 2008. She was also a consultant with IITA between 2003 and 2007. She is accompanied by her husband, Dr Dan Aighewi, and children. She resides in Apartment 3C, and her office extension is 2298.



## 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.

## USAID hands over cassava processing factories to farmers

Farmers in Sierra Leone have received two new processing centers to improve the processing of cassava, thanks to the USAID-funded project – Unleashing the Power of Cassava in Africa (UPoCA) that is being implemented by IITA.

The two factories are located at Robis Bana, Yoni Chiefdom in the Tonkolili District; and Koribondo, Jaiama Bongo Chiefdom in Bo District. These two factories, established by IITA in partnership with Future in Our Hands (FIOH) in Robis Bana and World Vision International (WVI) in Koribondo, were commissioned in September, by Mr Robert W. Hanchett, the USAID Country Program Manager accompanied by Mr Edward Benya (Development Specialist and Economic Growth - Team Leader, USAID) and Mrs Mary Hanchett.

In his address, Mr Hanchett conveyed greetings from President Barack Obama and the American people. He said he was blessed to celebrate with the communities

activities to commission the cassava factories. Mr Hanchett underscored the importance of cassava as a complement to rice in Sierra Leone. He said USAID supported the cassava project for two reasons: (1) to establish a value chain to generate income for the farmers and their families; and (2) to improve the nutrition value of all processed cassava by fortifying the commodities with vitamin A and improve the nutritional status of women and children.

He said the investment in the factories would go a long way to support the communities and the neighboring villages, and stressed that USAID and its partners were committed to build the rural economy of Sierra Leone through investments such as the factories. According to him, “the factory will benefit the women, youth, children, and the elderly to minimize hunger and generate income for the household.”



Mr Robert W. Hanchett, the USAID Country Program Manager, cuts the ribbon during the commissioning of the cassava processing centers.

## Zambia Feed-the-Future R&D Program partners hold bimonthly meeting



Stakeholders and partners of the FtF-Zambia R&D Program during their third bimonthly meeting in Chipata, Zambia.

On 17 October, about 20 implementing partners of the Zambia Feed-the-Future Research & Development Program converged in Chipata for their third bimonthly meeting. Participants included representatives of the six component projects and other program collaborators. During the meeting, participants discussed ways of further strengthening collaboration and coordination.

A major point deliberated during the meeting was the establishment of common demonstration sites and implementation of joint activities. Sites that host two or more projects would communally display the various technologies as well as hold joint field days. Program partners agreed to have common sites in Chipata (Chiparamba FTC and Msekera Research Institute), Katete (Katete FTC and Kafumbwe Camp), Lundazi (Lundazi FTC), and Petauke (Chimtanda Farmer Field School).

## Training course on conduct and management of field trials and seed production of maize OPVs and hybrids held at IITA

A one-week Training Course on Conduct and Management of Field Trials and Seed Production of Open-pollinated and Hybrid Varieties was held at IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, in August, under the sponsorship of the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) Project. The course was designed to upgrade the skills of maize technicians, seed specialists of public institutions, and production managers of seed companies drawn from the DTMA partner countries. A total of 33 participants from Ghana (9) and Nigeria (24), including seven women, took part in the course which was intended to improve their understanding of maize variety testing and seed production. At least 60% of the course time was devoted to hands-on practical sessions.

Resource persons for the course included Drs Baffour Badu-Apraku, Abebe Menkir, and Tahirou Abdoulaye of IITA; Drs Peter Setimela and John



Group photo, DTMA-sponsored training on conduct and management of field trials and seed production, IITA.

MacRobert of CIMMYT, Prof M.A.B. Fakorede of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and Prof J.E. Onyibe of the Institute of Agricultural Research,

Nigeria. During the course, copies of a new publication titled *Conduct and Management of Maize Field Trials* were distributed to the course participants.