



## IITA headquarters hosts USAID top brass

The IITA community in Ibadan feels very honored having received the visit of Dr Robert Bruce Bertram, the Director of the Office of Agriculture Research and Policy with the USAID Bureau for Food Security based in the US, and Mr Howard Batson, the Senior Agricultural Specialist with the USAID Economic Growth and Environment Office in Nigeria for almost three days in mid-July.

One of the visit's highlights was Dr Bertram's seminar presentation on "Feed the Future Research Strategy and Technology Scaling". The seminar saw participation from hundreds of IITA staff and young scientists convened in the IITA Conference Center to discuss Africa food security and agriculture. Other highlights included the visits to the different IITA labs and the Genetic Resource Center as well as the post-harvest and processing facilities and nutritional products. Our visitors also gained a better insight into life in the Ibadan campus by walking through our beautiful forest and discussing with the Women's Group and the staff of the Community Resource Center. Many informal contacts were created and reinforced in the evening hours and during lunch sessions.

Throughout their visit, the USAID guests met with countless high powered IITA individuals who have been working tirelessly to help achieve IITA's mission; and our visitor's feedback was overwhelming.

"Every single IITA staff member has demonstrated the effectiveness of USAID funding in IITA through dedication to their work and motivation to team up



IITA DG Sanginga, Director of USAID's Office of Agricultural Research & Policy Dr Rob Bertram, IITA Managers.

together to reach a common goal", said Director General Nteranya Sanginga. To this, Dr Bertram added, "The team spirit in IITA is visibly very developed and makes me feel like being home".

IITA builds, nurtures, and maintains many important partnerships to define common goals and implement joint programs in research to nourish Africa, and USAID is one of IITA's most valuable partners in this mission. The IITA-USAID partnership is older than our archives can show, and since the institute's inception

in 1967, USAID has generously supported IITA with funds for diverse research programs and approaches. Over the past 15 years alone, IITA has implemented a total of 35 directly-funded USAID projects, with 27 other projects indirectly funded by USAID through US-based organizations and universities.

Currently, IITA manages 16 projects with US funds and is looking forward to develop and implement new projects and mutually discussed ideas with our long-time donor and partner USAID.



USAID visitors with IITA team.

## My encounter with USAID officials, by Jacinta Ezurike



My name is Jacinta Ezurike. I am working with IITA in the Crop Utilization Unit. We work on different crops that are important to many people in sub-Saharan Africa. These crops provide more than 25% of the carbohydrates and 10% of the daily calorie intake for more than 70 million people in the continent. Too much of Africa's food harvest is lost to spoilage and infestations on transit to consumers. Losses occur in all operations from harvesting through handling, storage and processing. In IITA, we have intensified our research effort to avoid post harvest losses and increase income for the resource poor. During their visit Dr Bertram and Mr Baston were highly impressed with our products especially the banana juice, plantain malt, banana wine, soy milk, cassava strips, cassava chin-chin and the cassava bread. Our visitors tried everything personally and said that these products were very good. They highlighted the need for more public awareness and ordered some of our soy-drinks to be taken for lunch. These kinds of visits are very critical for us in IITA to improve the food security situation. As an organisation, we thank the American people for the support we have received over the years that has led to the development of our products. We also believe that if we get more households to adopt our post-harvest and food-processing technologies, it would go a good way in alleviating poverty and creating a better society.



*"If you believe your contribution is important for our research to nourish Africa, then get up and raise your hands!"*



*Having a close look at L-strains of Aspergillus sp.*



*Birdwatching in the forest.*



*With the IITA's Women's Group in the creche.*



*Discussing food security with USAID visitor Howard Batson.*



*Inspecting the automatic gari fryer with Engineer Diallo.*