



US Senate, USAID team in monitoring visit to Africa RISING program in Ghana

As part of their mission to monitor bilateral and multilateral food security programs in northern Ghana, Janet Stormes, Professional Staff of the US Senate Appropriations Committee, and Dorothy Rayburn of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, US Department of State, visited the IITA-led 'Sustainable Intensification of Cereal-based Farming Systems in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone of West Africa' project on 16 August 2012. They were accompanied by staff of the USAID-Ghana mission and MCC.

Funded by USAID, the project was launched in January 2012 as one of the three research projects under the Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program. The project is being implemented in northern Ghana and southern Mali. Africa RISING-Ghana is hosted by the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI), Nyankpala, Tamale.

The team was met by Dr. Asamoah Larbi, Consultant/Farming Systems Agronomist of Africa RISING, and Dr Stephen Nutsugah, Director of SARI. They also held discussions with partners composed of SARI staff and representatives of farmers groups, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA),



The US Senate-USAID monitoring team led by Ms Storme and Ms Rayburn being briefed by Dr Larbi about the maize trials in one of the Africa RISING project sites in Ghana.

Ghana Health Services, University for Development Studies (UDS) and Seed Producers Association of Ghana (SEEDPAG), AfricaRice, ILRI and AVRDC.

Dr Larbi briefed the team on the participatory approaches used by the project, value chain research and gender issues. He said that activities are being implemented with partners in northern, upper east, and upper west regions of Ghana. Dr Nutsugah pledged the support of SARI to Africa RISING in Ghana. Zakaria Sumani Iddrisu, president of the northern region branch of SeedPAG, said they are working with Africa RISING to produce quality seeds of maize, cowpea

and soybean for distribution to farmers, and train them in seed production. Gladys Gamor reported that UDS is working with the project to train women on processing and integrating soybean and cowpea into diets for improved nutrition.

The monitoring team also interacted with about 80 farmers in Kpachi village participating in on-farm demonstration trials of drought and *Striga*-tolerant maize varieties developed by IITA. This activity is led by MoFA supported by Africa RISING and SARI. Hamida Adam, MoFA Agricultural Extension Agent, explained how MoFA works with

farmers in the demonstrations.

The team also visited the joint rice seed multiplication and variety trials by SARI and AfricaRice with funding from Africa RISING and the Rice Sector Support Project. Baba Inusa, SARI rice scientist, explained the production of quality rice seed for distribution and identification of adapted varieties for upland and lowland production.

The two US Senate staff said that they were extremely satisfied with what they have seen with the project in Ghana. They especially highlighted the involvement of various partners in the implementation of Africa RISING in the country, and look forward to more exciting outputs.

Welcome new staff: Elsa Franke-Pienaar and Christopher Ngosong



Elsa Franke-Pienaar has joined the IITA International School as Grade 1 Teacher. She is a South African/Dutch national with Advanced Certificate in Education from the University of Stellenbosch and BEd Hon in Education Psychology from the University of Free State, Bloemfontein.

She previously worked as freelance English teacher and classroom teacher at Arnhem

International School in The Netherlands from 2008 to 2009. She is accompanied by her husband and their two kids. She resides at No. 9 Africa Drive in IITA-Ibadan.



Dr Christopher Ngosong has joined IITA-Bukavu, DRC as Postdoctoral Fellow – System Agronomist. A Cameroonian, he has a PhD in Biology-Ecology from the Humboldt University, Berlin and a MSc in Environmental Protection and Agric. Production from the University of Hohenheim, Germany.

He served as Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of McGill, Canada in 2011/2012 and at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2011.

IITA and Jigawa State Government formalize partnership...

IITA and the Jigawa State government have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding, opening a fresh chapter of transfer of agricultural innovations from the institute to that state.

The agreement will facilitate collaboration between the state government and IITA towards improving food production, food security, and value addition and marketing of agricultural products.

"This MoU further demonstrates our resolve to work with partners," said IITA DG, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, during the signing on 30 August.

The deal to work with the state came after a visit by Jigawa Governor Sule Lamido to IITA on 6 July. The governor, who was impressed with innovations at IITA, subsequently invited the Institute to come and help his state boost agricultural production.

The DG lauded the Jigawa State government, adding that the signing of the MoU was a "clear message to governments all over the world that IITA is willing and able to help."

The Jigawa State Commissioner for Agriculture, Alhaji Rabiu Isah Taura said the agreement signifies "the level of commitment on the part of the state to

collaborate with IITA with the aim of uplifting the standard of Jigawa farmers."

Under the MoU, IITA will assist the state in evaluating and adapting best-bet agricultural technologies that address drought, parasitic weeds, and soil fertility in cereals and legumes using maize and cowpea as 'test' crops, diversifying the cereal-based cropping systems with adapted cassava varieties for industry and food security, introducing farmgate post-harvest technologies for cassava, cereal, and legume crops, exploring the potential of the chaff by-product extruded from the Jigawa Starch Mill as livestock feed, strengthening the capacity of agricultural/livestock production, processing, and marketing stakeholders in the state, and conducting feasibility



IITA DG Sanginga (L) and Jigawa State Governor Sule Lamido (R) signing the MoU between the institute and the state government on August 30.

study of farm gate processing facilities and developing a cluster model to support the cassava-starch processing factory at Kila, which at the moment is operating below capacity.

Dr Kenton Dashiell, Deputy Director General for Partnerships and Capacity Building, said IITA was excited to work with the state government. Even before the signing of the MoU, IITA had already deployed improved cassava, maize, and cowpea varieties to Jigawa State.

... as IITA and Afe Babalola University ink agric R&D collaboration agreement



Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti Vice Chancellor Prof Sidi Osho (L) and IITA DG Sanginga (R) signing the MoU between IITA and ABUAD on August 29.

MoU will help in building the critical human capital that will address the present and future challenges of not only agriculture but also development.

IITA and Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD) on 29 August signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will see the two institutions joining efforts to unlock the potential of Africa's human, agricultural, and natural resources. The MoU provides a 'bridge' that will link the two institutions and foster cooperation to complement each other's research efforts.

"We are very excited in signing this MoU and we are also confident that together we can work to tackle the challenges to hunger and poverty," said IITA DG Sanginga. He added that the

"Today, if you take agriculture for instance, you will discover that the sector is faced with several constraints such as climate change, emerging pests and diseases, etc. These constraints can be tackled if we develop the human capacity that will provide solutions to them," he explained.

Dr Dashiell said the MoU between IITA and ABUAD would help tap the potential of youths that are important stakeholders for rural development.

"This is one way of meaningfully engaging the youths...giving them the tools to be productive," he added.

Specifically, IITA and ABUAD will collaborate in research and development topics of mutual interest, develop joint research and development project proposals, organize joint research activities, conferences, and workshops, establish linkages between IITA and ABUAD scientists, exchange students, and share research materials and publications of common interest.

Prof. Sidi Osho, Vice-Chancellor of ABUAD, said that the MoU would also help in increasing food production and food security. According to her, the MoU will confer great benefits on the university in terms of international linkages, exchange programs, strengthening research, and offering qualitative strategies for administrative capacity.

Located in southwest Nigeria, ABUAD aims at producing highly skilled and socially relevant graduates capable of applying scientific knowledge for the resolution of social and technological problems. The university is equally committed to transforming students into expert thinkers, innovative managers, and resourceful technocrats who could become future leaders not only in Nigeria but the rest of Africa.