



CGIAR Development Dialogues get conversations on global development rolling

The CGIAR Development Dialogues 2014 was held on 25 September at the Faculty House at Columbia University in New York. The Dialogues “focused global attention on the fundamental role of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, landscapes and food systems, and demonstrated how these areas are fundamental to achieving the emerging UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

The signature day-long meeting took place alongside the UN General Assembly and the UN Climate Summit and was attended by more than 250 stakeholders that included



Frank Rijsberman, CEO of the CGIAR Consortium, addressing delegates at the opening of the CGIAR Dialogues held on 25 September at the Faculty House of Columbia University in New York City.

donors, scientists, academics and research partners, policymakers, civil society organization representatives, industry players, media, and private sector representatives.

The theme of the meeting was “Delivering solutions to realize the

sustainable development goals and global climate agenda.” Subthemes included Prosperous, food secure and resilient livelihoods; Healthier, innovative, capable

and inclusive communities; New partnerships for development impact; and Climate change-resilient agroecosystems.

Keynote speakers during the opening session included Akin

continued on page 3...

IITA MAIZE CRP review wraps up

In the week beginning 8 September, MAIZE CGIAR Research Program (CRP) reviewers Dr Guido Gryseels, former Chair of the CIMMYT Board, and Dr Seifu Ketema, former Executive Director of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), evaluated initiatives in or complementing the IITA MAIZE CRP in the Northern Ghana region. IITA scientists working on DTMA, SARD-SC, and ISMA projects in Nigeria, Ghana, and East Africa congregated at IITA Tamale office for the exercise. The week-long activity began with field visits to project sites in Mion, Nyankpala, and Yendi districts and included interactions with stakeholders of the innovative platform of SARD-SC in

Sang.

Dr Gryseels said the purpose of the evaluation was to identify the gap areas in order to enhance the contribution that MAIZE CRP makes towards reaching CGIAR goals on the productivity and sustainability of maize-based farming systems.

On a strategic basis, IITA leads collaboration with its national partners in the West African front of the research program. The DTMA project of IITA-CIMMYT has developed and deployed drought tolerant varieties in 13 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Last year in Nigeria alone, 7000 t of drought tolerant maize varieties were produced which can cover 400,000 ha. “IITA through the DTMA project has released several drought varieties



SARI staff explaining about the DTMA trials to the reviewers in Yendi district.

and is on the verge of releasing more after successful field trials in Ghana and Nigeria,” Dr Menkir Abebe, maize breeder, said.

In general, the CRP reviewers were pleased with the outcome of IITA’s

continued next page...

contribution to the MAIZE CRP. Dr Gryseel indicated that IITA had a positive attitude and commended the Institute on the level of research and results attained. He attributed it to the manner in which IITA established its partnerships and handled collaboration with its various partners.

The CRP on MAIZE is led by CIMMYT and implemented with IITA and more than 300 other partners. It aims to double the productivity of maize-based farming systems, making them more resilient and sustainable and ultimately increasing farmers' incomes and livelihoods. The main target group for the MAIZE CRP is about 640 million smallholders, (72 million of whom are maize-dependent) who live in stress-prone environments and have poor market access.



Dr Abebe Menkir inspecting a maize plant during the review activity.

Adesina, the Nigerian Federal Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, UNFCCC COP 20 President and Minister for the Environment of Peru; Tumusiime Rhoda-Peace, High Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union; and Kanayo F. Nwanze, IFAD President. At the closing, the following were the keynote speakers: Johan Rockstrom, Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre; Atsuyuki Oike, Ambassador, Director General for Global Issues, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Rajendra Pachauri, Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and Gerda Verberg, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security.

The panel discussions and interactive discussion forums featured key players and leaders from international research and development organizations, donors, agriculture NGOs, governments and civil society, the private sector, among others. The conversations on global development were designed to take advantage of the key presence of these players at the important events in New York.

The meeting answered questions on how sustainable development can be achieved for the billions of people in the developing world engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. It provided participants with the opportunity to "help shape agricultural research and development for tomorrow's food systems, landscapes, and rural economies." At the end of the day, participants affirmed the need for CGIAR and partners to continue engaging scientists and policymakers in using science to address food security and development issues.

YIIFSWA holds follow-up training for farmers on modern seed yam production

On 8-9 and 11-12 September, IITA's Yam Improvement for Income and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA) project held a follow-up training for its participating farmers in Tamale, Ghana and Abuja, Nigeria, respectively, on crop maintenance, harvesting, storage, and propagating yam using vine cuttings.

The training was sequel to a similar one held in February also in Tamale and Abuja. However, this follow up training focused on the practical experiences and challenges of the farmers as they applied what they learned at the initial training.

Apart from the lectures, the trainees also visited a well laid-out seed yam field of Mr Fuseini Haruna, a beneficiary of YIIFSWA, in Tamale. In Abuja, the participants also saw several fields under seed yam production at the IITA station. All the fields visited were planted to yam minisettis and the trainees saw how positive selection was carried out to improve seed quality by tagging apparently virus-free plants for use as seeds of next season. Evaluations of the training in the two countries showed the most important lessons learned by the farmers, such as yam can be grown on ridges, minisettis can grow and produce tubers, and using virus-infected tubers as seeds leads to low productivity of their crop.



(Top) In Abuja, Thomas, a trainee demonstrating how to cut minisettis for seed yam; (Bottom) Dr Aighewi, a resource person, showing participants how to select clean plants and make vine cuttings.



Artwork on display depicting the ideals and messages of the CGIAR Development Dialogues.

IITA Directorate in monitoring visit to Africa RISING site in northern Ghana

An IITA R4D contingent led by Dr Ylva Hillbur, Deputy Director General for Research, and accompanied by the institute's regional directors' Drs Robert Asiedu (West Africa), Bernard Vanlauwe (Central Africa), Victor Manyong (East Africa), and David Chikoye (Southern Africa) conducted a visit to demonstration sites of the IITA-coordinated Africa RISING project in the Navrongo District in the Upper East Region of north Ghana. The visit was part of the directorate's retreat itinerary, during which they met at IITA's Tamale Station.

On route to the villages, the group paid a courtesy call on the Executive

Director of Navrongo district who welcomed the team and thanked them for the work IITA was doing in the district. He pledged his support towards IITA-led initiatives and indicated that he was committed to partnering the organization on agricultural development programs geared towards food security and poverty reduction.

Upon arrival at the project sites, the group was met by farmers with songs and dances, expressing their joy and gratitude for the project's interventions. The farmers' representative for the district indicated that low soil fertility in the region was an issue but farmers



(From L-R) Drs Robert Asiedu, Ylva Hillbur, Asamoah Larbi, and David Chikoye at the Africa RISING site in Navrongo district, Ghana.

were benefiting from Africa RISING's interventions such as proper fertilizer application and intercropping.

IITA DDG-R4D concludes Eastern Africa sortie (Part 1)

IITA's Deputy Director General for Research, Dr Ylva Hillbur has just concluded her successful tour of the institute's Eastern Africa (EA) hub.

During the regional sortie which ran from 19 to 30 September, she got the opportunity to meet the institute's research teams, partners

and beneficiaries and to see on-going research activities in Tanzania and Kenya. She was accompanied throughout the tour by the EA Hub Director, Dr Victor Manyong.

IITA Kenya

The DDG's first leg of her EA trip was in Kenya where she visited IITA Nairobi offices at the International Livestock Research Centre (ILRI) and its laboratories at the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa (BeCA) hub, which is also housed at ILRI. She also visited a regional mycotoxin laboratory that IITA is refurbishing at the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KARLO) field station in Katumani.

KARLO Katumani

Early on Saturday, 20 September, the DDG, accompanied by Dr Victor Manyong, Dr Leena Tripathi, Officer-in-Charge of IITA-Kenya, and Eveline Odiambo, East Africa Regional Administrator, drove to the KARLO substation at Katumani in Machakos County, 80 kms southeast of Nairobi. Here she toured the regional mycotoxin research laboratory that IITA was establishing. The trip was organized by Charity Mutegi, who is coordinating IITA's work on aflatoxin in East Africa, and her team.

IITA also intends to put up a

modular manufacturing plant for production of aflasafe^{KE01} which is has been registered provisionally in Kenya after its produced very good efficacy results in the field trials.

While at Katumani, Hillbur and the team were welcomed by the Deputy Director of the station, Dr Eric Mungube, who thanked the institute for establishing the mycotoxin research facility at the station.

"We are honoured that IITA has chosen KARLO Katumani to put up a Regional Research Centre for mycotoxin. Once it's inaugurated we'll be receiving researchers from the region. Our doors are open to further collaboration especially on building the capacity of our staff," he said. "A nourished brain is efficient and, therefore, our researchers need to keep learning and updating their knowledge on new technologies."

Dr Hillbur, on her part, noted that aflatoxin was a major challenge in the region, adding that by working together the two institutes would be able to deliver the much-awaited aflasafe^{KE01} to Kenyans.

Next week, we will bring you highlights of the DDG's visit to Tanzania where she, among others, signed an agreement on banana research with the Nelson Mandela –Africa Institute of Science and Technology (see story on page 4 of this issue).



(Top) DDG-R4D Hillbur meeting with IITA-Kenya staff at ILRI-BeCA. (Bottom) Maina Wagacha, consultant-researcher with IITA on aflatoxins, explaining to Dr Hillbur the process of testing of aflatoxin.

IITA to spearhead pan-African efforts to boost youth employment in agriculture

The Director-General of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Dr Nteranya Sanginga, has solicited for continued support from the African Development Bank (AfDB) in promoting youth employment in Africa through agriculture and agribusiness. He made this call at the Immeuble CCIA, Abidjan on Monday, 29th September, 2014 during the bank's commemoration of the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security.

The event had in attendance important dignitaries including the Bank's Vice-President, Sector Operations (OSVP), Mr Aly Abou-Sabaa and its Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department (OSAN), Dr Chiji Ojukwu; as well as Prof Wiseman L. Nkulu, Chancellor, University of Pretoria, who delivered the keynote address.

Dr. Sanginga was accompanied by two members of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) who spoke on

the activities of the group and its achievements thus far. They also shed light on the proffered road map for the continent which entails adopting a comprehensive outreach effort across Africa through collaborations with regional, national and private sector partners, amongst others, to ensure expanded opportunities for youth in agriculture.

IITA's leading role in addressing this continental problem of youth unemployment has fostered interest from various institutions, donor organizations and development partners as well. IITA's commitment to youth empowerment – as exemplified by its youth program



DG Sanginga (5th from left) with event dignitaries, IYA representatives, and officials of the Africa Development Bank led by Mr Chiji Ojukwu, Director Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department (OSAN) (5th from right), and Mr Aly Abou-Sabaa, Vice President, Sector Operations (OSUP) (6th from right).

– has indeed demonstrated that the youth dividend could be garnered with appropriate institutional support.

IITA, NM-AIST strengthen agriculture research ties

The partnership between IITA and the pan-African Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) on agriculture research and capacity building in Tanzania got a big boost with the signing of an agreement on banana research between the two organizations.

This agreement, which spells out how the two institutions will work together to tackle the challenges affecting banana production in the country, was recently signed by the IITA DDG for Research, Dr Ylva Hillbur, and the NM-AIST Vice Chancellor, Prof Burton Mwamila, at a ceremony at the university campus in Arusha, Tanzania.

According to the agreement, NM-AIST will give IITA land to conduct banana breeding to develop improved varieties that are resistant to pests and diseases and especially Panama disease (*Fusarium*), a devastating banana disease, and office space for use by IITA staff. It will also give IITA access to NM-

AIST's laboratories and screenhouses.

IITA, on its part, will provide funds to refurbish NM-AIST's molecular and tissue culture laboratories as well as complementing existing research equipment. IITA will also construct a seed extractor and a banana ripening chamber at the university. All these facilities will be open to both the staff and students of the university.

The institute will also conduct training for the university's staff and students on banana breeding, tissue culture, pest and diseases, and molecular biology, among others.

Speaking at the signing event, Prof Mwamila said that the university aspires to become a world-class institution dedicated to the pursuit and promotion of excellence in Science Engineering and Technology and its applications for economic growth and sustainable development in the region. He therefore noted that the collaboration with an international agriculture research center such as IITA would be very beneficial towards this end.



Dr Ylva Hillbur (R) and Prof Burton Mwamila (L) signing the research partnership agreement.

On her part, Dr Hillbur, who was on a monitoring tour of IITA's activities in Tanzania, noted that there are numerous opportunities for IITA to collaborate with NM-AIST in research and in training agriculture researchers.

The new agreement supplements an MoU signed between the two institutions last year in which they agreed to conduct joint research projects, share scientific information and materials including genetic material for breeding and jointly supervise postgraduate students.