



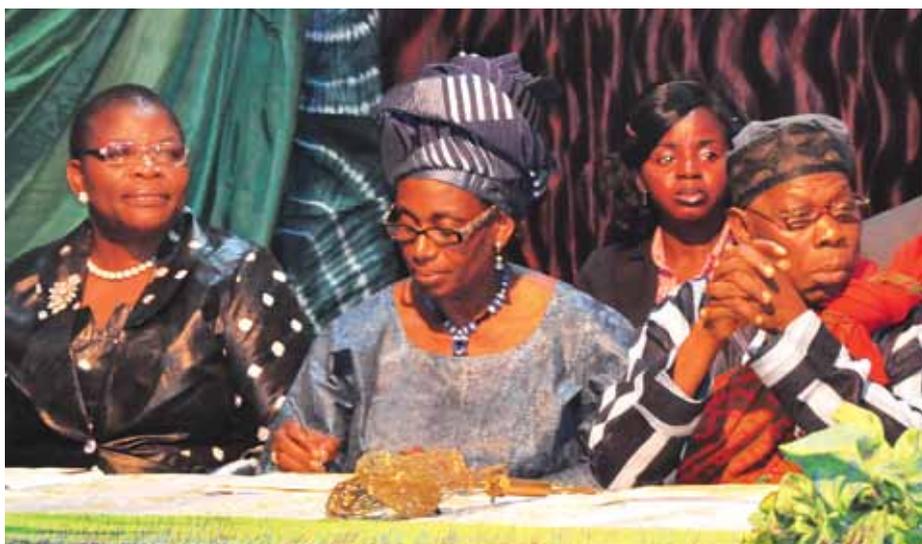
## At 75, IITA Ambassador, former President Olusegun Obasanjo task leaders on food security

IITA Ambassador, former Nigeria President Olusegun Obasanjo, renewed the call for greater attention to food security in Africa as he clocked 75 years on Monday, 5 March.

The septuagenarian worried that the rising food import bill in Africa was not sustainable and poses a major threat to human security.

As a former president of Nigeria, Obasanjo has been concerned over the level of food insecurity not only in Nigeria but across the continent. He is widely known for the institution of Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and also the Presidential Initiatives of commodities that dramatically increased the productivity of several staples including cassava and maize among others.

The celebration of his birthday brought development partners,



R-L: IITA Ambassador, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo; his wife; and the Vice President, Africa Region, Obiageli Ezekwesili, during the celebration of the former President's 75th birthday in Abeokuta, Nigeria on Monday.

business and political associates and farmers to rethink the issues of human security.

Leading the delegation from IITA was Dr. Robert Asiedu, R4D Director for West Africa, who gave a talk on "Best Practices in Research in Agriculture: Implications for Enhancing Food Security in Africa".

In his presentation, Asiedu highlighted the role being played by IITA in the fight against hunger and poverty across Africa, and the successes being recorded over the years.

He also talked about the emerging threats to pests and diseases which leaders across Africa should give attention in order to secure a food sufficient continent.

Other IITA staff who were at the occasion were Dr. Gbassey Tarawali, Toyin Oke, Dr. Joseph Atehnkeng, Olaoluwa Bode, Peter Iluebbey, and Godwin Atser, among others.

IITA also displayed an exhibition of improved cassava varieties, the Nigerian bread, aflasafe and other technologies.

### IITA bids farewell to two staff



The IITA Community recently bid farewell to two of its scientists: Dr Jorge Franco on 20 February, and Dr Hidehiko Kikuno on 2 March.

Colleagues and members of IITA management who were at the farewell get-together similarly described Franco and Kikuno as both being dedicated to their work, played vital roles towards the development of their respective units, and esteemed members of the Ibadan campus community.

Franco returned to Uruguay to join a university there as a faculty member, while Hidehiko went back with his family to Japan to join JIRCAS.



(Top) Franco receiving his plaque of appreciation from DG Sanginga; (bottom) Hidehiko receiving his plaque from DDG-R4DS Menon as his wife, Shoko, looks on.

# 2009 World Food Prize winner and US Science Envoy at IITA-Tanzania



*Ejeta (middle) speaking as Danny Coyne and Rose Swai listen intently.*

US Science Envoy and 2009 World Food Prize Laureate Gebisa Ejeta visited IITA-Tanzania to get an overview of the institute's research activities in line with his mandate of exploring partnerships and science cooperation between the United States and other countries.

Briefing IITA staff at the hub on the purpose of his visit, Ejeta said his appointment dated back to President Obama's Cairo speech of June 2009 in which he pledged to put together a team to spearhead science diplomacy with Islamic countries. This was in a bid to strengthen the relations between the US and the Muslim world.

Thereafter, Ejeta said, he appointed three science envoys to the Islamic world among them Bruce Albert, from the national academy of science. The others were Elias Zerhouni, former director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Ahmed Zewail, Nobel Prize-winner from the California Institute of Technology.

The Renowned Agricultural Scientist said the program's success led the President to extend it to the rest of the world and with the addition of three science envoys including himself.

"Our work is to interact with international and national research institutes, civil society and youth groups to strengthen relationships

and to empower scientists to solve problems and serve the community. We identify gaps and opportunities to build relationship with the US community," he said.

Ejeta was accompanied by Claudia Coleman, coordinator of the Embassy Science Fellows, Science envoy programs, US State Department, and Rose Anderson Swai, Economic Specialist at the US Embassy in Tanzania.

Victor Manyong, IITA Director for Eastern Africa welcomed and thanked the team for visiting IITA-Tanzania. He briefed them on the activities of the institute in the country which he said mainly focused on cassava. He said IITA was working with national agricultural research partners, advance research institutes, local and international universities to develop through conventional and marker-assisted breeding improved high-yielding disease resistant varieties, and to tackle the two deadly diseases affecting the crop, and to add value to products. He also said IITA was working on other crops such as soybean and banana.

Other scientists also briefed the envoy and his team on the various activities they were involved in.

Ejeta said he was happy to hear there was a lot going on at IITA that was having a lot of impact on the ground and thanked the team for their time.

## Institute welcomes new YIIFSWA Regional Economist



*Mignouna*

The IITA Human Resources Service announces that Dr. Djana Babatima Mignouna has joined IITA as Regional Economist (Impact Monitoring

& Evaluation) of the Yam Improvement for Incomes and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA) Project. Dr. Mignouna, from Togo, has recently served as a consultant at IITA's Tanzania Station. He obtained his BSc in Mgt degree from the Université de Lomé in 2003, his MSc in Management from the same University in 2004, and his PhD in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness from Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania in June 2011.

He worked as an assistant to the human resources director of NGO ASTODEC (Togolese Association for Consumers' Defence) in Togo. He also worked as a lecturer in Organizational Theory and General Economics at the technical Secondary School "Le Cocotier" in Lome, Togo.

He resides on the IITA-Ibadan campus at Apartment 1A. His office is in Building 401, Room 38. He can be reached at extension 2329.

### Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving the workplace at the day's end, 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.

Got a story to share for the Bulletin? Email Jeffrey T. Oliver ([o.jeffrey@cgiar.org](mailto:o.jeffrey@cgiar.org)), Godwin Atser ([g.atser@cgiar.org](mailto:g.atser@cgiar.org)), or Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)).