



Agriculture offers recipe for Nigeria's economic challenges

Agriculture is one of Nigeria's most powerful tools in addressing its goals of creating more employment, better public health, and greater economic growth, says Hartmann, Director General of the Ibadan-based International Institute of Tropical Agriculture.

In his presentation titled "Forging an economic transformation: the role of agricultural research and productivity" at the monthly lecture series of the National Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) in Ibadan, Hartmann said the transformation of agriculture would stimulate small- and medium-sized industries that are the engines of the country's economic growth.

Among other reasons, the need to focus on agriculture stems from the fact that the sector employs about 70 percent of the people in the rural areas, there is ever-growing demand for food and, more importantly, agriculture comprise about 44 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product.

Hartmann said that achieving economic transformation would require more investments in agricultural research and development and the development of infrastructure. He also said that Nigeria needs to build its defense against biological threats to crops just as is being done for the military.

He noted that agriculture in Nigeria in recent decades has been a neglected



(L-R) IITA DG Hartmann in a lively discussion with Femi Olokesusi, representative of the Director-General of National Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), and John Adeoti, a researcher at NISER, during the September seminar series organized by NISER in Ibadan on Tuesday.

sector, adding that gains have been constrained by weak institutions and inadequate infrastructure.

"These constraints are well known. Less known are the limited application of technologies, the low skill base in the sector, and its aging population. The young are fleeing rural areas and the production side of the sector. Similarly, financial institutions view the agricultural sector as risky and so it receives a very small portion of commercial credit," he said.

According to him, getting the young interested in agriculture and developing a supportive financial system to facilitate the access of farmers, traders, and processors to credit could go a long way in addressing several national needs.

He described the agricultural setting in Nigeria as 'dynamic,' explaining that the challenges facing agriculture could be turned into profits.

For instance, postharvest losses could be significantly reduced, if not

eliminated, with more processing of what farmers harvest.

In addition, the Director General called on Nigeria to depend less on development partners, to move from comparative agricultural production to competitive production, to improve human capital, and to tap into the vast human resources available—particularly the youth—for development.

The Director General of NISER, Olufemi Taiwo, said the lecture was timely, considering the government's efforts in repositioning agriculture as a prime mover for Nigeria's growth and development.

Taiwo, who was represented by Femi Olokesusi, said that the transformation of agriculture would bring many benefits to the country. Such benefits could include the reduction in the level of unemployment and conservation and generation of foreign exchange, among others.

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.

Institute welcomes two new staff...



Harun Murithi, APO

A new APO, Harun Murithi, has joined the IITA team in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He will be working with Fen Beed as a Plant Pathologist on Soybean Rust. Murithi is from Kenya and joins IITA following two years at the University of Pannonia-Georgikon Faculty, Hungary working on his MSc in Plant Protection.

Murithi obtained his BSc in Horticulture from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and worked in the public and private sector in Kenya.

He can be contacted via his email at h.murithi@cgiar.org, or at phone number +255 752299561.

Lorraine Dzapata, Teacher

The IITA International School is pleased to welcome Lorraine Dzapata to its roster as the school's new Grade 3 teacher. Dzapata is a Zimbabwean. She attended the University of Zimbabwe where she obtained her B.Ed in history and geography before completing a Diploma in Education at Morgan Zintec Teacher's College. Dzapata has previously taught in Tanzania and in Zimbabwe. She arrives with her daughter, 12 year old Tanaka.

She resides at Apartment 3D, telephone extension 2445. Her email address is l.dzapata@cgiar.org.



... as three relocate to IITA-Ibadan

The IITA-Ibadan community welcomes the following staff who have relocated from IITA's various stations and locations:



Ismael Rabbi, Postdoc Fellow

Ismael Rabbi is a Molecular Genetics Postdoctoral Fellow and has relocated from Nairobi, Kenya where he has been working for IITA to develop genomic tools for cassava breeding since August 2009. Ismael completed his PhD in 2009 at the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany, in Population Genetics and Plant Breeding.

He arrived with his wife Amina and their three children. The family resides at #6 Guildway, extension 2529. Ismael's office is at Room 7, Bioscience Centre, extension 2743. His email address is i.rabbi@cgiar.org.

Ousmane Boukar, Cowpea Breeder

Ousmane Boukar, Cowpea Breeder, has moved from Kano, Nigeria to IITA-Ibadan. Ousmane, a Cameroonian, has been with IITA since April 2007 in his current position and, later, as IITA's Country Representative in Kano.

Ousmae holds a BSc in Agronomy and an MSc in Plant Breeding and Genetics. He completed his PhD in 2002, also in Plant Breeding and Genetics, at Purdue University in the USA.

He arrived in Ibadan with his wife Yata and three children. The family resides at #1 IITA Drive, extension 2258, while Ousmane's office is at Room 29, Building 401, extension 2372. His email address is o.boukar@cgiar.org.



Stefan Hauser, Agronomist

Stefan Hauser, Agronomist, is moving from DR Congo to Ibadan. Stefan has been with the institute for 23 years and to date has been based in Kinshasa. Concurrent to his position, he was also IITA's country representative in the DRC. Upon arrival at HQ Stefan will take up the position of Root and Tuber Systems Agronomist. He will be joined by his wife Flora Josee and their young son.

The family will reside at #2 Africa Drive, extension 2225. His office will be at Room 30, Building 401. Hauser's email address remains as s.hauser@cgiar.org.

Announcement: IITA Safety Week 2011

The HR Unit and IITA Safety Committee, in collaboration with the Security Unit and FMS, is proud to announce the holding of the IITA Safety Week on 13-16 September. Events will start off with an institute-wide seminar on Fire Safety Awareness, followed by training in driving safety and accident prevention and First Aid. Resource persons will include seasoned safety/maintenance specialists.

All are enjoined to attend the activities. Unit heads and supervisors are requested to make sure that their staff do not miss the seminars. The HR Unit will circulate the program of activities of IITA Safety Week 2011.