



# IITA is crucial to Nigeria's Cassava Revolution, Adesina says

Research by IITA is critical to the transformation of Nigeria's agricultural sector, says Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Minister's Statement to the Nation.

"IITA is crucial for Nigeria and we stand ready to support IITA in its important work. Very well done," he says.

Addressing a gathering of researchers, policymakers, and investors in Ibadan, Adesina says agricultural research and development across the value chain of Nigeria's agricultural commodities could reduce hunger and poverty, and forge the transformation of the economy.

He commended IITA for the development of improved maize varieties, which brought about transformation of maize production in the northern Guinea savanna.

"IITA's work on soybean helped to make Nigeria the largest soybean producer in Africa... IITA's biocontrol program saved the ECOWAS region an estimated \$94 million per year... research on the control of cassava mealybug generated benefits worth between \$15.6 and \$27.8 billion in 2004," he explains.

The meeting in Ibadan brought stakeholders in the cassava sector to the table to discuss opportunities on value chain development in cassava processing with a view to developing markets and generating jobs and incomes for farmers.

Citing a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute, Adesina



*Akinwumi addresses participants in the 2-day consultation with stakeholders held at IITA, Ibadan*

said that doubling research investments in R&D in sub-Saharan Africa could lift an estimated 144 million people out of poverty.

He reiterated the resolve of the Nigerian government to support agriculture to cut food imports and drive economic growth.

While commending IITA for organizing the conference on building a cassava road map, the minister said the government

would give the necessary support to cassava, stressing that the root crop was among the crops targeted to drive the transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan's administration.

The support, according to him, would come in the area of creation of policies that would support cassava production and value addition. He said the limitations to agricultural production would be tackled, adding that the private sector would be encouraged to take the lead in agricultural development.

It will be recalled that better and improved cassava varieties helped Nigerian farmers boost production by 10 million tons between 2002 and 2008, enabling the country to overtake Thailand as the world's biggest producer of cassava.

Consumed by millions of Nigerians, cassava is also an important industrial crop that provides starch and other products for confectionery, sweeteners, glues, plywood, textiles, paper, biodegradable products, monosodium glutamate, and drugs. Cassava chips and pellets are used in animal feed and alcohol production. Investing in value chain development would ensure food security and jobs.

DG Hartmann, while welcoming the minister, emphasized that the key to economic transformation in Nigeria lies in agricultural development.

According to him, addressing agricultural issues along the value chain will help produce the desired results.

*IITA DG Hartmann leads discussions on developing a road map for the Cassava Green Revolution*



*Participants brainstorm on how to develop a financing plan for cassava value chains led by the private sector*



# IITA-CFC holds national sensitization workshop in Sierra Leone

The IITA-CFC Cassava Value Chain Development Project in Sierra Leone held a national sensitization workshop on 29 July at the presidential lounge, National Stadium, Freetown.

The workshop was organized as part of efforts to disseminate information on the project's activities, outcomes, and impacts.

It also provided stakeholders the opportunity to share experiences and evaluate successes with a view to strategizing how the gains will be made sustainable.

The program attracted the attention of ministers, parliamentarians, academics, development partners, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the cassava sector. Project beneficiaries also attended, displaying their various cassava products for sale and competition.

Representatives of the regional project coordinator, country coordinator, and public and private sectors commented on the successes of the project and identified gaps for policy support.



Stakeholders at the final dissemination workshop

Feedback from beneficiaries showed an appreciable level of impact.

Prof. Rhodes who represented the Director General of the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute said that "going by the objectives of the

project and beneficiaries' responses, it is a success in Sierra Leone."

Stakeholders, however, expressed the need for phase two to consolidate the gains already recorded.

## IITA-Leventis project 'regreens' Ibadan golf course

The IITA-Leventis Forest Restoration project has planted some 200 trees in and around the IITA Golf Course in Ibadan as part of its ongoing efforts to rehabilitate tree stands in the campus.

The IITA Golf Course is recognized as one of the finest in Nigeria, largely because of its majestic trees. But all the large trees are older than anyone currently working at Ibadan campus, having been left as mature specimens when forest areas were cleared during the landscaping of the headquarters from the late 1960s onwards.

The initiative to replace dead and ageing trees in the golf course was the brainchild of Rod Bishop, Construction Services Manager and present Chair

of the IITA Golf Committee. The activity was funded by the committee and through donations by private individuals. Plans for replanting were drawn up by Deni Bown, Coordinator of the Leventis Project, and Kunle Olasupo, the project's nursery manager. The actual tree planting was carried out by staff of the Leventis Project team.

A total of 203 trees belonging to 37 different species were planted, including many with beautiful flowers and edible fruits. The project team envisions that someday, these trees will provide shade and enjoyment for golfers, caddies, staff, and people coming to the golf course for picnics and other social gatherings.



Researchers regreening IITA Golf Course

## ISTRC to hold 2012 symposium on root crops in UNAAB



The International Society for Tuber & Root Crops (ISTRC) will hold its 16th international symposium on root crops at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB), Ogun State, Nigeria next year.

With a proposed theme "The Roots and Tubers of Development and Climate Change," the symposium will be held on 23-28 September 2012.

Organizers say tropical roots and tuber crops are essential to meeting global food security needs, improving staple foods of the world's poor, and creating new opportunities in global food supply.

For more information on subthemes and important dates, kindly visit: <http://www.iita.org/> events or <http://www.istrc.org/>