

AU Commission explores possible collaboration with IITA

The African Union Commission held talks with IITA management and scientists on possible areas of collaboration that would produce the necessary synergy needed to bring Africa's agriculture out of the woods.

Making a presentation on the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), Yemi Akinbami, Head of the Agriculture and Food Security Division, African Union Commission, says the CAADP provided a veritable platform that would boost agricultural growth on the continent.

According to him, the CAADP framework has opportunities that IITA could tap and further help in reducing hunger and poverty.

Endorsed in 2003 by the African Heads of State and Government as a framework for accelerating agriculture and rural development in the continent, the CAADP provides a common framework, tool and process for the restoration of African agriculture in supporting a growth agenda.

Currently, donors have pledged to support the initiative with about \$30bn, with other sources of funding also underway, says Akinbami.

"I see CAADP as an opportunity. If we miss CAADP now, nobody will listen to



Yemi Akinbami, Head of the Agriculture and Food Security Division of the African Union Commission, during his seminar on the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) at IITA-Ibadan.

Africa in the next two generations," he emphasized.

For an organization like IITA, opportunities for collaboration abound in areas of research that would address food insecurity in Africa.

He described IITA as a good potential partner which the African body could tap

its cutting edge research to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture.

Apart from his seminar presentation, Akinbami also held a closed door discussion with IITA Director General Hartmann. He also held other meetings with individual scientists and program groups on possible areas of partnerships.

IITA-Benin holds regional water weed management training

IITA-Benin is holding a series of regional training for stakeholders in the ECOWAS bloc with a view to tackling the menace of water weeds in the sub region.

The activity aims to strengthen the capacity of participants through knowledge and information that will enable them to implement participatory and cost effective biological and integrated control of floating pest in their respective countries.

The training series started in November 2009 and will end on 30 January 2010.

IITA scientists based in Benin are facilitating the training, which has attracted about 40 participants from Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, and Senegal.

The training is part of a five-year project that started two years ago and funded by

African Development Bank (AfDB).

IITA's role as a key partner with relevant experience in biological control of weeds will empower stakeholders through capacity building and also supply starter cultures of biological control agents.

In the early 1980s, alien invasive floating water weeds namely water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) and water fern (*Salvinia molesta*) became a major problem across many ECOWAS member states.



Some of the participants listening intently to a classroom lecture during one of the weed management training sessions.

These weeds grow fast and become so dense that they impede fishing and water transport resulting in significant economic losses in the affected areas.

Surviving change: IITA's energy challenge

The changes within the CGIAR and today's energy reality dictates that IITA change its mindset, approaches, and way of doing business, says IITA Director General Hartmann.

With rising energy costs, global efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and stakeholders' expectations, the DG says the pervasive effects of energy call for an equally pervasive counter measure, stressing that IITA has taken the broadest

perspective to its energy use, conservation, and generation.

This perspective, he says, is reflected in IITA's Energy Strategy, which states that "the effect of energy degrades the Institute's efforts to address hunger and poverty. Directly and indirectly, energy is impacting the poor in detrimental ways. Over 80 percent of their energy is from biomass, but not of the efficient kind. Changes here can be transformative."

Key points of the IITA Energy Strategy include:

1. Our R4D outputs must be conceived with the energy factor in mind. We must add energy as another key trait to pursue in our breeding work, production system designs, and impact evaluations. We can breed varieties that need less cooking time; we can design processing equipment that saves energy. We are doing this, but now we must do more. The bigger impact will come when we can help our colleagues in the national systems adopt similar moves.

2. Online collaboration has reduced the need for travel in many corporations, but IITA and, especially the CGIAR



Hartmann, on his bicycle, exchanging views on energy efficient vehicles with an International House staff. The DG says that the institute has taken the broadest perspective to its energy use, conservation, and generation.

system, are not sensitive to the energy factor. Most CG instruments (i.e., challenge and system-wide programs) demand more travel and more meetings instead of less; therefore contributing to more energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions. While unintended, most CG instruments increase the carbon footprint of the system. Now that CG member-countries have made climate change a priority, perhaps exposing this inconsistency will be worth doing.

3. IITA staff also, directly and indirectly, contribute to the carbon footprint in a range of ways, from the impact of the commute to and from the office, to the physical office space and its energy requirements. A lot of this can be addressed via better planning, fewer trips, more centralized locations, reduced travel, and better physical real estate. IITA Ibadan, for example, is a major consumer of energy due to its construction.

4. The biggest aid to reducing energy consumption is awareness. Staff greatly discount the value of their contributions. Recent efforts at IITA Ibadan, which led to significant reduction in energy waste, demonstrated the value of 'awareness'. Beyond awareness, IITA will need to move to more friendly technologies and sources of energy, e.g., solar-thermal energy to heat water and geothermal energy to cool buildings and wind. Some options are better with new construction. Using, for example, the German building standard would reduce energy use by over three quarters compared to standard construction.

IITA-Tanzania honors departed colleague

Staff of the IITA-Tanzania office held a brief and well-attended ceremony on 20 January 2010 to celebrate the life of the late Frances Onyango, the former regional administrator for Eastern and Southern Africa who passed away in December 2009.

Aside from colleagues and staff led by Victor Manyong, R4D Director, the event was attended by partners, friends, and a few family members who were in the country.

Speakers at the event stressed on her efficiency at work, and her warmth and friendliness. Manyong noted that when Frances was in charge of any activity you were sure everything would proceed smoothly without any hitches.

Aichi Kitalyi from World Agro-forestry Centre in Tanzania speaking on behalf of the institute's partners in Tanzania hailed Frances as a very friendly person with whom she related well both professionally and socially. She, as did many speakers before and after her, spoke of her shock on learning of her sudden demise. She passed on her condolence to the institute and family.



(Above) A section of colleagues, friends, and family members who attended France's memorial ceremony at IITA-Tanzania. (Right) Frances Onyango during happier times.



Her uncle, Mabanja Nasoru, speaking on behalf of the family said Frances was a role model in her family and home village. He also thanked IITA for the assistance provided and is still continuing to provide to the family. Henry Okello, a friend of Frances and who was driving her on the day she passed away told of the events before and immediately after her death.

A short pictorial presentation of her life in IITA was viewed and candles were lit in her honour.

Library update

LanTEEAL 2.0:

LanTEEAL 2.0 is the newest version of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) for local area networks. TEEAL is an offline, entirely self-contained compilation of the most important journal literature in agriculture and related fields. It is a collaboration between Albert R. Mann Library of Cornell University and scientific publishers, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation and other donors.

With LanTEEAL 2.0, a user can search for and browse full-text articles in 140 highly ranked agricultural and biological sciences journals. No data are transmitted over the Internet at any time during your use of TEEAL.

To install the resource:

1. Map a drive letter (say drive T:) on your local computer to \\nt-fs-backup\lanteeal;
2. From T:, install the application "2007 teal setup.exe";
3. Install dotnetfx.exe

IITA Google Books:

Use statistics of IITA publications in Google Books for week of 10/01/2010 ~ 16/01/2010:

- 476 book visits
- 8,458 pages viewed