

# Effort to double yields of Nigeria's major staples underway



Representatives of CBARDP stakeholders pose for a group photo during a break in their planning workshop in Abuja. The project aims to double the production of five of Nigeria's major staples: maize, cowpea, soybean, cassava, and yam.

IITA researchers are working with national partners in a national initiative dubbed "Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development Project (CBARDP)" aimed at doubling the production of Nigeria's major staples. The project is funded by the Africa Development Bank (AfDB). Plans for the CBARDP were drawn by project stakeholders during a workshop held at IITA-Abuja station in June.

The initiative, which involves active participation of farmers across five states, will deploy best agronomic practices and improved varieties, according to Sam Ajala, IITA Maize Breeder.

"CBARDP will focus on showcasing production technologies that can double yields *in-situ* with the hope that farmers will pick up from there," he adds.

Despite the numerous innovations developed to boost crop yields, access to these technologies by resource-poor farmers has been generally limited. This has negatively affected the productivity of the country's agriculture—a sector that employs more than three-quarters of people in

the rural areas.

In recent years, IITA implemented a project that proved that maize production in Nigeria could be significantly increased. The "Doubling Maize in Nigeria" project, the first phase of which ended in 2009, raised maize yields in participating farmers' fields from 1.5 tons to an average of 4.2 tons per hectare.

"The project demonstrated that with the deployment of the right technologies and backed by good agronomic practices, farmers could definitely increase crop yield."

Scientists will be leveraging on lessons learnt from the Doubling Maize project to increase productivity.

The project will be implemented in the five states of Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, Kaduna, and Kwara involving maize, cowpea, soybean, cassava, and yam. Cassava and yam, however, will only be implemented in Kaduna and Kwara states, according to Arabi Mohammed, national project coordinator.

Partners in the project include the Institute of Agricultural Research of

Ahmadu Bello University (IAR/ABU), the National Cereal Research Institute (NCRI), University of Ilorin, and the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) of the ABU. The National Root Crop Research Institute (NRCRI) at Umudike will collaborate on yam miniset technology.

Researchers are optimistic that the project will benefit from the experiences of similar efforts such as the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA), Doubling Maize in Nigeria Project, Tropical Legume II, Nitrogen for Africa (N2Africa) project, and Striga Control Project, among others.

IITA and partners will complement the participating State Agricultural Development Programs, whose mandate is to promote agricultural technologies for optimum productivity.

"We expect that these linkages with other projects will provide the needed synergy that will create the maximum possible impact," Ajala added.

## 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.

## Akin Adesina, IITA alumnus, is Nigeria's new agriculture minister

Dr Akin Adesina, a former IITA staff, has been appointed Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources.

An agricultural economist by training, Adesina has over 20 years experience in African agriculture. Prior to his current position, he was the vice president (policy and partnerships) for the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

He won the Rockefeller Foundation Social Science Research Fellowship in 1988, which initiated his career in international agricultural development. He has worked in senior research positions in international agricultural research centers of the CGIAR, including IITA. He joined the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, as a senior scientist for Africa in 1998 and

later served as Rockefeller Foundation representative for Southern Africa, based in Harare, Zimbabwe (1999-2003). He is also an associate director (food security) at The Rockefeller Foundation, based in Nairobi, Kenya (2003-present). Adesina helped to design, inspire and galvanize support for the landmark Africa Fertilizer Summit. He is well-respected and is regularly consulted on agricultural development issues in Africa by the World Economic Forum, World Bank, and African Development Bank, among other institutions. In 2007, he was awarded the Yara Prize for African Green Revolution for his pioneering work with developing rural agrodealer networks that are now supplying affordable farm inputs to millions of poor farmers across Africa.



*Dr Akin Adesina, Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources and former IITA staff.*

For more information, visit <http://agrforum.com/speakers/akinwumi-adesina>.

## IITA Sports Fest 2011 is on!

Amidst fun and fanfare, IITA-Ibadan staff launched Sports Fest 2011 on 18 July. Donning the colors of their respective teams and regaling to chants and music, staff paraded from the Conference Center to the Sports Center.

The event was formally opened by Lakshmi Menon, DDG-R4D Support, with a short speech and a ceremonial football kick. Wole Oladokun, Employee Services Manager, led the players in taking the oath of sportsmanship. He also thanked IITA Management for supporting the activity. Also in attendance were DG Hartmann, Robert Asiedu, and heads of units.

A demonstration football match was then played between Red and White teams, with Red winning 1-0. Games

are currently being played and team standings will be posted around the campus. The event is slated to end on 23 August with an awarding ceremony.



*(Left) Parade of team colors; (top right) Dr Menon kicking-off the ceremonial ball; (bottom right) Red and White teams slugging it out during the opening exhibition match. More photos available from IITA's Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/iita-media-library/>.*



## Sicco Kolijn, former IITA Postharvest Scientist, passes on



*Sicco Kolijn.*

It is with heavy heart and deepest sympathy that IITA informs all concerned of the passing away of Sicco Kolijn, former IITA postharvest scientist based in Mozambique. Sicco succumbed to injuries he sustained in a car crash while traveling from Catandica to Chimoio on 15 July 2011.

Kolijn was formerly with IITA-Mozambique from 2003 to 2009, where he worked on the development of cassava processing equipment and the evaluation and multiplication of foundation seed of new soybean varieties introduced to the north of that country.

At the time of his death, Sicco was providing technical assistance to associations of small farmers in Manica and Tete through *Banco Oportunidade*, a financial institution devoted to assist small enterprises in Africa.

Kolijn is survived by a wife, Freida, and two boys: David (7 years old) and Simon (7 months).

IITA staff and colleagues who worked with Sicco who would like to send eulogies to the family could do so through the Communication Office ([o.jeffrey@cgiar.org](mailto:o.jeffrey@cgiar.org)) for onward delivery. These will be kept as testament to the life and work of Sicco, especially for his young children so that one day they can learn about and appreciate their father's good work in Mozambique, and how much he was respected, admired and loved by those who had contact -- professional and social -- with him.