

## UK Parliamentarians visit IITA/STCP in Ghana, commend program

A delegation from the UK Parliament has commended IITA and its Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) for not relenting in efforts to promote knowledge on Good Agricultural Practices to farmers.

The team said that even in the face of dwindling donor funding in agricultural development in Africa, policy makers and politicians need to be well informed about the impact of programs such as the STCP in order to bring agriculture back on the development agenda to attract funding for the sector.

The group, which was led by Lord Cameron of Dillington (Crossbench), are members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development, a cross-party group in the UK Parliament that seeks to raise awareness on agriculture, nutrition and wider food security issues in the developing world. They also seek to engender progressive and informed debate within Westminster and beyond and bridge the gap between policy makers and practitioners in the field whilst also giving a voice to the 700 million smallholder farmers worldwide.

The delegation included Graham Jones (Labour Party), Eilidh Whiteford (Scottish National Party), Baroness Berridge (Conservative), and Lord Inglewood (Conservative). They were accompanied by Guy Poulter, Former Director of The Natural Resources Institute, and James Birch, Coordinator of APPG. They visited a Farmer Field School session being run by IITA/STCP in Senfi, Bekwai District of the Ashanti region.

The delegation, which was in the country to examine the joint issues of food security and agriculture development in Ghana, interacted with some 30 cocoa IITA/STCP FFS participants from the district to hear firsthand their concerns, challenges and opportunities.

During the visit, the farmers demonstrated how the knowledge acquired through FFS helped them to manage their cocoa farms and increase yield.

IITA/STCP Extension Specialist Sylvanus Agordorku briefed the delegation on the concept of FFS.



(Above)  
IITA/STCP Extension Specialist Sylvanus Agordorku briefing the dignitaries about the program and the concept of FFS with participating farmers and partners.  
(Right)  
Agordorku explaining to the visitors about cocoa. Photos by C Prah, IITA/STCP.



# Liberia and Ghana agree to jointly develop agric sectors, IITA/STCP brokers deal

The Governments of Ghana and the Republic of Liberia have officially agreed to jointly develop, promote and implement research activities to improve the agricultural sectors of the two countries.

The agreement was forged through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by representatives of Ghana and Liberia. IITA, through its Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), in collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board facilitated the development and signing of the agreement. IITA/STCP works in both countries.

The agreement was signed by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Dr. Kwabena Duffuor, and the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Mr. Anthony Fofie, for Ghana, and by the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Florence Chenoweth, and the Deputy Director General of CARI, Dr. Abugarshall Kai on behalf of Liberia.

Under the MoU, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) and Liberia's Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) will exchange expertise, knowledge, and genetic resources (seeds and nursery development) to develop and improve the tree crops sector in Liberia. Specifically, the national research institutions of both countries will facilitate the provision of planting material as requested by either countries, make available research and training facilities and materials to visiting scientists from either institution, and provide technical expertise for the successful implementation of mutually-agreed projects.

"We are very proud to be associated with the signing of this significant agreement between Ghana and Liberia," says John



*The agreement is envisioned to greatly benefit both Liberian and Ghanaian farmers.*

Casey, IITA/STCP Program Manager. "This MoU is a testament to our ongoing commitment to realize a food secure and poverty-free Africa."

"With this agreement, we envision a brighter tomorrow for farmers in both countries. This is also one way of giving back to these countries who have graciously hosted us all these years," he adds.

"We believe that this historical initiative will provide a vital link between the two countries to catalyze the exchange of knowledge and expertise that is direly needed to rehabilitate the agricultural sector especially of Liberia," said Paula

Bramel, IITA Deputy Director General, Research for Development.

Liberia is slowly rising from years of civil war that devastated its economy. IITA/STCP has been in the country since 2006 to help rebuild its agricultural sector by developing and implementing innovations geared towards raising productivity and product quality of cocoa, oil palm and rubber, strengthening farmer organizations and enhancing market opportunities in collaboration with local partners, and engaging stakeholders to address policy and institutional constraints.

## 2010 IITA Annual Awards for Excellence: Call for nominations

To recognize and reward the outstanding achievements of staff working at IITA, the Board of Trustees have decided to present Annual Awards for Excellence to deserving individuals and teams. The excellence awards will have the following categories: Outstanding Scientist, Outstanding Support Staff, Outstanding Publication, and Outstanding Team. Nominations for the awards are open to all staff.

The following will guide the nomination and selection of awardees:

- Staff must fill the nomination form and send it to the DDG-R4D Support Dr Lakshmi Menon at [L.Menon@cgiar.org](mailto:L.Menon@cgiar.org) before 14 March;
- Only one nomination per form. If you have many nominations, please fill separate forms for each nomination;
- Any IITA staff can submit nominations. More than one

nomination per category may be submitted. You can also nominate yourself. A group of people can also nominate an individual;

- Nominations will be screened for completeness and qualifications before being sent to an independent committee for consideration;
- The independent committees consisting of representatives of R4D and R4D support and the BoT will review all nominations and decide;
- The recommendation of the committees will be sent to the BoT prior to the Board meeting in April;
- The Board will announce the winners.

### Award categories:

#### **Outstanding Scientists:**

IITA scientists who have worked full time in

R4D throughout 2010 are eligible.

#### **Outstanding Support Staff:**

All fulltime R4D support staff are eligible. Consultants are not eligible.

#### **Outstanding Publication:**

All types of publications will be considered including PA publications, peer-reviewed journal article, approved varietal release, production manual, video presentation, etc. The publication must contain at least one IITA staff and must have been released in 2010.

#### **Outstanding Team:**

Any group working as a team in 2010 is eligible. Any team of IITA staff or combination of IITA and partner staff who worked together in 2010 are also eligible.