



DG Sanginga cites 'uncommon courage' of staff during Nigeria strike crisis

'Uncommon courage' - this is how IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga described the commitment exhibited by IITA-Ibadan staff who defied all odds to report for duty during the weeklong nationwide strike actions across Nigeria. The strikes during the second week of January crippled transport, businesses, and other essential services in Ibadan, but this did not stop most staff from going to work.

The strikes were sparked by the removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government.

During the strike period, many staff had to leave their homes as early as 5:00 am to beat the road blocks mounted by the strikers. In some cases, staff were compelled to pay from out of their own pockets fees imposed by the strikers so that they can safely pass through their barricades on to their way to the institute.

Although staff were not required to come to work during this dangerous

period, some staff, on their own volition, risked life and limb to report to their duty stations while the strike lasted.

The DG cited the extraordinary effort and commitment by staff in a special recognition get-together held last Friday (27 January) at the open area beside Building 500.

"I am very proud of you," Sanginga told staff, who also received letters of commendation signed by the DG during the event.

Singinga also seized the opportunity to address staff regarding the changes within the institute and the CGIAR, calling on each one - regardless of rank or status - to contribute their best towards building a stronger institute to tackle the challenges ahead.

"Something as simple as maintaining a clean workplace and showing professionalism contribute to taking IITA to the top," he emphasized.

Singinga described IITA staff as critical stakeholders in building the institute, and called for a change in mindset especially from those who see IITA only as a 'paymaster.'

"IITA is for all of us... We are all together in it and I urge you to be committed to the mission and vision of IITA and not for the salaries alone," he said.

"Let us build the institute together," the DG added.

Aside from Sanginga, Lakshmi Menon, DDG-R4D Support; Shalewa Sholola, Chief Financial Officer; and Lilian Mendoza, Human Resources Manager also took turns addressing and lauding the staff.

(Bottom) DG Sanginga addressing IITA-Ibadan staff during the special recognition get-together; (inset) the DG flanked by Sholola, Menon, and Mendoza during the event.



US Ambassador to Nigeria pays courtesy call to IITA

The United States' Ambassador to Nigeria, Terence McCulley on Wednesday visited IITA in Ibadan. The visit was part of his tour across several institutions in Nigeria.

McCulley was accompanied by Sharon Pauling, USAID Director for Economic Growth and Environment, and other diplomatic officials.

The ambassador held discussions on food security with IITA management led by DDG-R4D Support Lakshmi Menon, R4D Director Robert Asiedu, and Gbassey Tarawali. He expressed his amazement with what the institute is doing in tackling hunger and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa.

Prior to the arrival of the ambassador, Menon, who represented DG Nteranya Sanginga, received Pauling and also organized a tour of campus key facilities such as the Bioscience Center, the Genetic Resources Unit, Postharvest Utilization Unit, demonstration fields, and the IITA lake.

Pauling commended IITA's efforts in improving the livelihood of

resource poor farmers, adding that IITA is a key partner to US' efforts in development in Africa.

She also sought feedback from IITA on current and past collaborative efforts between USAID and IITA.

On IITA's part, Asiedu praised the US government for its untiring support to the efforts of the institute, explaining that

resources received were judiciously ploughed into research for development.

He added that such support helped IITA in developing improved technologies, deploying those technologies to farmers, and more importantly building the capacities of national partners.



Ambassador McCulley (bottom row, center) and USAID Director Pauling (bottom row, rightmost) with IITA management and staff.

He also lauded the partnership between USAID and IITA, especially as agriculture is facing new and emerging challenges such as pests and diseases and climate change.

The visit rounded up with a cocktail dinner at the IITA International House organized in honor of the US delegation.

CEGA-IITA training workshop on Impact Evaluation in Agriculture

Agricultural economists from IITA joined their counterparts from across Africa for a four-day training on innovative techniques in impact evaluation for agriculture. It was held at ICRAF campus in Nairobi, Kenya from January 23-26, 2012.

The workshop was organized by IITA in collaboration with the Centre of Evaluation for Global Action (CEGA) of the University of California, Berkeley and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL) Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI). It was funded by a USAID capacity building grant awarded to IITA.

Participants included about 60 social scientists and technical experts from across Africa involved in the promotion of agricultural innovations in various countries for different research centres such as the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Maize and Wheat



Participants of the "Impact Evaluation in Agriculture" workshop at the World Agroforestry Center's campus in Nairobi.

Improvement Center (CIMMYT), International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Bioversity International, University of Helsinki and Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI).

The training involved a mixture of lectures, case studies, and problem-solving sessions, and focused on

various ways to measure impact such as randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental methods, measurement of spill-over effects, and managing the risks of evaluation research. It also explored emerging issues in impact studies such as the questions of ethics, human subjects protection, and contamination of study design.

According to Emily Ouma, IITA agricultural economist based in Burundi, the training was very useful as it build on their existing

skills in *ex-ante* and *ex-post* impact evaluation. She urges all scientists to think through their evaluation designs carefully and involve social scientists prior to commencement of the projects especially if they intend to assess outcomes/impact at the end.

The training was facilitated by ATAI researchers, and senior graduate students from UC Berkeley and UC San Diego.