

IITA welcomes Dr Nteranya Sanginga as new Director General

On 1 November 2011, IITA turned another important page in its almost 45 year history as it welcomed its seventh Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga. He takes over the helm of the institute from Hartmann who officially finished his 10-year term on 31 October.

According to Bryan Harvey, chair of the institute's Board of Trustees, Sanginga "was selected from an outstanding group of candidates. His achievements in reinvigorating the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of the *Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical* (TSBF-CIAT), as well as his extensive experience in tropical agriculture, make him an ideal choice to take on the much broader task of guiding IITA into the next decade."

Harvey was referring to Sanginga's leadership of ISBF-CIAT during which its portfolio rose from \$1.2 million in 2003 to over \$14.5 million in 2010, and its research coverage expanded from just western Kenya to east, central, and southern Africa.

During a welcome party organized by the IITA Directorate and attended by IRS and senior national staff management at the lobby of Building 500 on 1 November, Sanginga said that he will be focusing on three aspects during his tenure: research quality, partnerships and capacity-building, and internal organization.

"It is imperative that we continuously improve the quality of our research and our research outputs if we are to retain our position as the top agricultural research-for-development organization in Africa. We also need to do this if we are to remain competitive especially in light of limited donor funding," he said.

He also emphasized the importance of partnerships and helping build the capacity of our partners. He said that our growing interdependence with partners is crucial in carrying out our mission and vision, but we can only effectively achieve this if our partners are highly capable. In this regard, IITA is well-placed to provide them with training and technical support to develop their human resource capacities.

"Of course, all of these cannot be realized without harmony within our own organization," the new DG added,



DG Sanginga addressing IITA staff during the welcome gathering at the packed Conference Center on 3 November.

"which is also why I want to focus on strengthening our internal organization so that we would be able to complement each other more effectively. We could achieve more if we understand and work more closely and in harmony with one another."

In another well-attended welcome event organized for Ibadan-based general staff at the Conference Center on 3 November, Sanginga encouraged staff to think of themselves not as just being workers but as stakeholders in the institute.

"Just because I am the DG makes me more important than you – no! We are all connected – when one fails, everyone fails; when one succeeds, everyone succeeds," he said. "Everyone is important. For example, our guys at the airport are IITA's first line of introduction to people who do not know much about us, especially donors. If donors have a bad first impression there, there is very little that I, as DG, could do about it. Same goes for our drivers – if they are late or are unprofessional, it leaves a bad taste in people's mouths. Same goes for those who work the fields or man the stores. We must do our jobs well, and do them with pride."

DG Sanginga also urged staff not to stop dreaming. "I am from a poor family from

the Congo, but that never stopped me from aspiring for my dreams. And here I am now. Let me be a testament to what you could be – never stop dreaming and achieving."

Prior to this appointment, Sanginga was the director of TSBF-CIAT based in Nairobi, Kenya. He also has more than 21 years of experience in the field of agricultural research and development, particularly in applied microbial ecology, plant nutrition, and integrated natural resources management in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Sanginga is no stranger to IITA as he has worked here for 14 years from 1989 to 2002. He also did his postgraduate training at IITA.

He holds a PhD in Agronomy/Soil Biology from a joint program between IITA and the *Institut Facultaire des Sciences Agronomiques*, Yangambi, DR Congo. He studied at *Licence Speciale en Sciences Biologiques*, *Universite Catholique de Louvain*, Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium and obtained *Ingenieur Agronome* at the Faculty of Agriculture, Yangambi, DR Congo.

DG Sanginga arrived in Ibadan with his wife, Charlotte. His e-mail address is n.sanginga@cgiar.org.

Bringing new agriculture for a wealthier Africa - Message from DG Sanginga

In his first official communication to IITA staff, DG Sanginga gives an overview of his plans for IITA and appeals for support from all. Below is his email of 1 November in its entirety:

In December 2002, when leaving IITA after 13 years of service, I wrote to all IITA staff - "Former IITA staff, Kwesi Atta-krah (IPGRI now DDG at Bioversity) and Akin Adesina (Rockefeller Foundation now the Honorable Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria) pointed out to me that they could never imagine me leaving IITA. They are right. It is still difficult for me and my family to realize being somewhere else than at IITA especially when the days ahead seem to be so bright. IITA has been my family and will continue to be so. I would like to thank all of you. You have contributed immensely to our successful stay at IITA. I will, whenever I have the opportunity, continue to be an IITA ambassador and we will seek all means possible to improve the relation and joint work between IITA and my new Institute".

Now in 2011, nine years later, I am back home at IITA.

Hartmann has finished his tenure as Director General and I was elected to replace him from November 1, 2011 (today). I take this opportunity, and on behalf of all staff, to thank him for leaving us with a healthy Institute.

Since being named the DG designate on April 28, 2011, I have been in frequent contact with Hartmann and the Executive Management team to discuss transition arrangements. I have interacted with government ministers, donors, NGO leaders, private sector executives, and colleagues in the CGIAR and in academia – many of them personal friends.

The good examples are the visits of Dr. Akin Adesina, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria, who made his agricultural transformation address to the nation here at IITA campus in August 2011, and that of Mr. Bill Gates and his BMGF Senior Leadership team at our Kano station on September 28, 2011. A BMGF team of two Senior Officers were here at IITA yesterday to explore further ways of partnering with us in their priority countries (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda). The most striking thing about these interactions is the high esteem in which IITA



DG Sanginga to IITA staff: "I know that I will rely heavily on your support and advice."

is held, and the great hopes and expectations that these men and women place on the Institute's future. IITA is a remarkable institution; thanks entirely to the work and commitment of all of you.

I now want to take this opportunity to reach out to the rest of IITA staff to tell you how proud I am to work with you. It makes me feel grateful, because I cannot imagine an incoming Director General who is more blessed with committed and accomplished staff. The magnitude of the challenges confronting us makes this no time to slap each other on the back in congratulations, but feel it entirely appropriate to tell you that I have tremendous confidence in you – and with time, I hope to earn your confidence. I know that I will rely heavily on your support and advice.

So, in the coming days, we will work together in trying to see how we will implement the IITA Strategy in face of the challenges posed by the CGIAR and other reform in Africa and globally. We will respond to the following questions: So what changes? So what stays the same? When does it happen? and Do I have a role to play? etc..... Our team is IITA and our 2012 Motto "bringing new agriculture for a wealthier Africa". I am looking forward to getting to know you as quickly as I can, and to strengthening the already strong IITA Team.

IITA bids farewell to four staff

The IITA Human Resource Service (HRS) announces that the following staff have disengaged their services from the institute:



Bernd Neumann as Head of Systems Application and MIS (SAM) effective 31 October. In the meantime, Hameed Olaide will be acting Head of SAM as of 1 November.



Christopher Okafor as Country Coordinator of IITA/STCP in Nigeria. He has moved to TechnoServe as



Sonii David as Technology Transfer Specialist for IITA/STCP based in Accra, Ghana.



Alexandra zum Felde as Banana and Plantain Agronomist effective 5 November.

The IITA community wishes them all good luck in their future endeavours. We are proud to have worked with all of you.

Reminder: Vehicle insurance 2012 renewal

The Finance Office is reminding all staff that the insurance year 2011 is soon coming to end and there is need to renew your various policies for year 2012. Staff are therefore informed that those on Third Party Liability (TPL) insurance policy, your motor car/vehicles and motorcycles would be automatically insured on the existing basis. Should you have a contrary view and do not intend to continue with the insurance, please notify the Finance Office accordingly to have it discontinued.

On vehicles under comprehensive insurance policy, you should by now have received your renewal instruction notices, but if you have not, please call ext. 2835 or email Temitope Aboderin (t.aboderin@cgiar.org) for necessary action.

Do have an accident free year!