



IITA strides in cassava value addition commended



Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, A K Mohammad, cutting the tape at the commissioning of a Gari processing factory in Lafia. Second from right, Lateef Sanni; Women Leader, Talatu Umaru (fourth from right) and Country Coordinator of Cassava Value Chain Project; O. B. Ope-ewe (Second from left in front row)

The Nigerian government has lauded IITA's contribution towards cassava enterprise development, as the country intensifies the campaign to diversify its economy.

The commendation was made by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Jubril Martins Kuye during the inauguration of a Gari Processing Center in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

The Center, which is the third to be commissioned within two years is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities but implemented by IITA and partners including the Federal Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and the Farm and Infrastructure Foundation. The two earlier inaugurated by the team included Joe Bergg Cassava Processing factory in

Masaka, Nasarawa State; and Shaback Gari Processing factory in Kuje, Abuja.

According to Kuye, "I must also appreciate IITA, the Project Executing Agency, for their relentless efforts towards the success of this project."

The Gari Processing factory in Lafia comes as a relief to a women group of more than 50 that are engaged in garri processing in the village of Agwan Mada, a suburb in Lafia.

Specifically, it has a capacity of processing at least one tonne of garri per day in a hygienic environment thereby guaranteeing food safety and security.

Kuye who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, FMC&I, A. K. Muhammad said the processing center would add value, enhance

competitiveness and reduce waste in the cassava value chain.

In his words: "For any commodity to attract premium price in the market, both locally and internationally, it must necessarily pass through some level of processing."

While expressing the willingness of Nigeria to continually support such projects, the minister noted that the Gari Processing Center would not only absorb the cassava produced in the country but also spur the cultivation of the crop.

The Women Leader of the benefiting group, Mrs. Talatu Umaru, who spoke on behalf of her colleagues, pledged that the group would ensure judicious use of the factory.

She commended the IITA-CFC team for coming to their aid, stressing that the Center would make their jobs easier, increase their incomes and improve livelihoods.

Lateef Sanni, IITA-CFC Project Coordinator emphasized that the development of value chain projects seek to shift the country's attention from oil, — a commodity that currently provides more than 90 per cent of the country's revenue — generate employment and create sustainable wealth.

According to him, the establishment of cassava processing centers across the country is necessary for increased cassava production in the country and wealth generation in the local communities in particular.

He explained that the Gari Processing Center was part of a bigger project funded by the CFC in three countries including Nigeria, Benin and Sierra Leone.

Sanni also urged the Nigerian government to replicate the processing centers in other communities.

IITA-STCP gets a new office in Akure

IITA-STCP and partners operating in Nigeria have relocated to a new office in Akure.

The new office is now situated at No 3, Ola Akadiri Street, Alagbaka, Akure.

Prior to this, members of the team operated from Obakekere Quarters, opposite Great Hall, at the Federal University of Technology Akure.

The new office accommodates officials of IITA-STCP, GTZ, Technoserve and SOCODEVI.



New IITA-STCP office in Akure

IITA developed aflatoxin-resistant maize now available in the US



Menkir examines a maize variety in the field

Six new corn inbred lines with resistance to aflatoxin contamination have been found to be free of seed-borne diseases foreign to the United States, and seeds of these lines are now available in the United States for further development toward commercialization. Abebe Menkir, IITA Maize Breeder, working in collaboration with Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Plant

Pathologist, Robert Brown, developed the lines.

The six inbred lines have been dubbed TZAR101, 102, 103, 104, 105, and 106.

Aflatoxins are cancer-causing toxins produced by the fungus *Aspergillus flavus* after it infects agricultural commodities such as corn. *A. flavus* fungi are found in soil, on crops and in air. Contamination of corn with aflatoxins is a potential health

hazard to animals and humans, and causes financial losses for growers. Crop resistance has become one of the widely explored strategy to eliminate aflatoxins in corn because of the large amount of genetic diversity in this crop.

Another option is the use of aflasafe™, which is a product recently developed by IITA.

ARS Plant Geneticist Mark Millard in Ames, Iowa, arranged a quarantined growout of the seeds at the ARS station on the island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. After quarantined seed was imported into St. Croix and planted, resulting plants and ears were inspected to ensure they were free of any foreign seed-borne diseases. This “certified” seed then was shipped to Ames, Iowa, processed, and stored in the ARS collection.

The seed can be obtained and planted in the United States for further evaluation for resistance to aflatoxin. Seed samples of these and other lines can be obtained from the ARS North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station in Ames by going to: http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=36-25-12-00

IITA-UPoCA kicks off 2010 cassava stem distribution to farmers

IITA-UPoCA (Unleashing the Power of Cassava in Africa) project has launched the distribution of improved cassava varieties in Nigeria as part of activities to boost cassava production.

The distribution, which began in Oyo State will continue in six other states of the federation including Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Benue, Kogi, Nasararwa.

Over 300 farmers received between four and six bundles of the six improved cassava varieties (TMS 30572, TMS 98/0581, TMS 95/0289, TMS 91/02324, TMS 92/00057, TME 419).

The two-day event started on 29 June 2010 with an opening ceremony graced by policy makers, traditional rulers, state officials and farmers.

The distribution of the improved cassava varieties was preceded with a hands-on training on cassava products development and utilization, and competitive cassava production tutorial.

The Chairman of Ido Local Government, Isiaka Adeola, thanked IITA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for selecting his community to participate in the UPoCA Project. He also announced a grant of five hundred thousand naira (\$3,400) from his council to Ido Cassava Growers Association, to support their programs in relation to cassava production. The Onido of Ido, who is also the Chairman of Traditional Council of Ido, Elder



A farmer receiving improved cassava cuttings in Oyo State

Benjamin Ademola Isola Orobiyi II, expressed joy over the gesture.

He said, “this is the first time we have witnessed such a training event that culminated in our people receiving free cassava cuttings from any organization.” He thanked IITA and USAID for helping his community. Benefiting farmers also promised to implement skills acquired and to plant the new varieties.

Richardson Okechukwu, IITA-UPoCA Country Manager, said the adoption of the new improved varieties would speed up the replacement of low yielding varieties currently in the hands of farmers.

“It will also lead to increased cassava production and will ensure food security, raw materials for industries and increased income for the rural poor,” he added.