



Polycymaker seeks proactive actions against negative effects of climate change



Participants pose for a group photo during the IITA-IARSAF conference on the impact of climate change in Ibadan

The Deputy Governor of Osun State, Erelu Olusola Obada, has called on scientists to take urgent steps to save millions of farmers in Africa from the negative consequences of climate change.

With about 70% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa depending on rainfed agriculture, Obada says measures that will cushion the effect of climate change on farmers are imperative.

The Deputy Governor, who was represented by her Media Assistant, Femi Adefila, spoke during the 14th annual symposium of the

International Association of Research Scholars and Fellows (IARSAF) in Ibadan.

According to her, a wide range of adaptive actions are necessary to lessen or overcome adverse effects of climate change on food production in the region.

Marie Octavie Yomeni, IITA-IARSAF President, says the symposium, with the theme "The Impact of Climate Change on Food Security in sub-Saharan Africa," is aimed at drawing more attention to the consequences of climate change in the region.

David Watson, IITA Director, Project

Development and Management, in his presentation: "Climate Change and Agriculture," says the harsh reality of climate change is that developing countries are likely to be hardest hit.

He, however, noted that agriculture could make a significant contribution towards mitigating climate change and reducing vulnerability in SSA.

"To do this, agricultural production must become more resilient, more environmentally benign, more ethical, and more socially sustainable," he says.

IITA-MARKETS project establishes 40 demo trials in 8 Nigerian states



One of the cassava demonstration farms established by IITA-MARKETS

The Global Food Security Response Program (IITA-MARKETS Project) has established 40 demonstration trials to train farmers on improved practices to enhance cassava production in the southwest and parts of southeastern Nigeria. The initiative is meant to transform Nigeria's cassava industry into a

high-yielding and competitive force to satisfy the demand from the large-scale agro-processing companies in the country.

Between July and October 2009, the IITA MARKETS project trained farmers and provided them with improved cassava stems for planting in 1304 ha. The recipients were farmers in Oyo,

Ogun, Ondo, and Ekiti States in the southwest and Delta, and Imo and Anambra states in the southeast. While addressing the stakeholders on the importance of the field demonstration trials, the Project Manager, Gbassey Tarawali, said, "It is not sufficient to provide only improved cassava stems. Farmers also need to be trained on improved agronomic practices that will make them achieve high yields."

The demonstration is made up of two strips: Technology Transfer Practices (TTP) and Present Farmers Practice.

It will be recalled that through the efforts of IITA's Integrated Cassava Project (ICP), many farmers in the Niger-Delta and the southeast have adopted varieties with yields ranging from 25 to 45 t/ha (on-farm yield) depending on the agronomic practices.

The IITA-MARKETS project is building on this success and is working hard to replicate the same success story in the southwest and other parts of the southeast.

It is hoped that this will in turn raise average cassava yield in Nigeria from about 12 t/ha to between 40-50 t/ha recorded on IITA farms.

Congolese farmers happy with IITA improved cassava varieties



Bulungu Territory Deputy Administrator, Mr. Clement Nkosi (right) hands over planting materials of improved cassava variety, Obama je t'aime (TME 419), received from IITA's Nzola Mahungu to traditional chiefs for further multiplication.

High-yielding improved cassava varieties distributed by IITA and partners under the Unleashing the Power of Cassava in Africa (UPoCA) project have been praised by partners and farmers in DR Congo. The varieties, they said, would contribute to the revival of cassava production in that country that had been devastated by diseases nearly causing famine.

This was expressed during an open day organized by the institute and one of its partners, Groupement des Paysans Agriculteurs de Miwanzi (GROPAM), on 3 March, in Bulungu province, 600 km from Kinshasa. It was attended by the Assistant Territory Administrator, 10 traditional chiefs of "Groupements", and more than 300 farmers.

In his speech during the event, Mr Jean Octave Mawika, the GROPAM leader, thanked IITA for its positive contribution to cassava production rehabilitation in their area and to the fight against hunger and poverty. He said that the beneficiaries, who had already harvested their new cassava varieties, were very happy because they had obtained high yields.

Nzola Mahungu, IITA cassava breeder based in DR Congo, praised GROPAM and the farmers for taking ownership of the project activities. He asked them to ensure its sustainability.

The participants visited the multiplication plot and harvested the cassava. They were impressed to see that improved IITA varieties (Butamu, Disanka, Nsansi, Obama je t'aime -TME 419, and Zizila) already had big roots at only 10 months.

They also enjoyed cassava-based doughnuts, bread, chin chin, and other traditional products prepared by women trained by GROPAM, who were trained under UPoCA. At the end of the event, Mahungu symbolically opened the official distribution campaign of cassava planting material by giving a bundle to the Bulungu Deputy Administrator, who in turn passed them to traditional chiefs on behalf of the farmers.

Nestle officials visit IITA

A delegation from Nestle on Thursday visited IITA headquarters in Ibadan.

The delegation, comprising Martin Woolnough, Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer, Nestle Nigeria Plc; Wim Van Geffen, Regional Supply Chain Manager; Adewale Ojo, Supply Chain Manager, Nigeria; Klutse Kludomor, Regional Lead Buyer, Grains; and Oluwaseun Akinoso, Grains Strategic Buyer, were received by Hartmann, IITA Director General.

Briefing the delegation about IITA's operations, Hartmann said the Institute's vision was to improve livelihoods of farmers by increasing crops' productivity and also providing solutions to pests and diseases, thereby improving the health status of people in the region.

He said the 42-year old Institute had created impact, citing the cassava revolution and the PROSAB project as case studies in Nigeria alone.

The delegation thereafter toured the IITA campus and specifically visited the Genetic Resources Center and the cassava processing unit.

The delegation could not hide their feelings; they found the tour "refreshing and educative."



Nestle delegation meets IITA. L-R: Hartmann shakes hands with Kludomor, while Woolnough, Geffen and Akinoso watch.

Announcements

World Cowpea Conference 2010



IITA, in cooperation with partners – Pulse-CRSP, Purdue University, and the ISRA, Senegal – is organizing the 5th World Cowpea Research

Conference to be held on 27 September - 1 October 2010 in Dakar, Senegal. Global cowpea experts will tackle research issues related to enhancing the profile of cowpea as a viable income-generating and food security crop. For more details and to submit papers, please visit the conference Web site at <http://cowpea2010.iita.org>.

Submission of abstracts: 15 April
2010 Abstracts approval and contact with presenters: 16 May 2010
Full paper submission: 30 September 2010
Early registration: 16 July 2010

ISTRC-AB to hold 11th symposium

The International Society for Tropical Root Crops- Africa Branch (ISTRC-AB) will hold its 11th symposium with the theme "Root Crops and the Challenges of Globalization and Climate" in Kinshasa, DR Congo, 4-8 October 2010. Submission of abstracts: 30 April 2010
Submission of full papers: 30 July 2010

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, 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.