

Special bulletin: Highlights of IITA50 celebration in the Central Africa hub.

IITA-Cameroon marks 50th anniversary

Activities marking the 50th anniversary of IITA in Cameroon were organized and held at Nkolbisson, Yaoundé on 28 June. The ceremony brought together state personnel including the Minister Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ananga Messina; representatives from the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovations and the Ministry of External Relations; the Director of IRAD, and other state dignitaries. The IITA team comprised Namanga Simon who represented the Director General; country representative Rachid Hanna; and station administrator Simila Boubakari.

The Congo Basin Institute representative Matthew Lebreton and a host of scientists, researchers, students' commercial agents, and farmers' representatives also attended.

Presiding over the ceremony, the Minister Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ananga, expressed satisfaction for the collaboration that exists between IITA and the government of Cameroon. According to the Minister, agriculture is the pillar of advancement and to step up production, there is a need for increased production, diversified research, and access to new markets. Ananga particularly saluted research carried out so far in the areas of maize, cassava, and plantain/banana using in vitro plantlets.

She also highlighted the ongoing fight against the [Banana Bunchy Top Disease](#) and progress achieved in helping to prevent the disease from entering the country. Commenting on the negative effects of climate change, the Minister explained that more than 200 million hectares of forest are cut down each year for agricultural reasons, exacerbating the problem of climate change, and remarked that IITA should also take up



The IITA anniversary cake.



Ananga Messina, who represented the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, at the event tasting some finished and nutritious food products from IITA staple crops.

Photo album



Top left: Rachid Hanna (right), IITA-Cameroon Country Rep. welcoming a member of parliament to the station. Top right: Rose Ngango, IITA scientist, explaining about research in Plant & Soil Science Laboratory to the dignitaries at the event.



Bottom left: Rachid leading the delegates to the various exhibition stands. Bottom, right: Ananga Messina, telling the press about IITA's collaboration with the government and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.



Guests posing for a group photo.

IITA-Kalambo celebrates IITA's Golden Jubilee in grand style

IITA-Kalambo Station celebrated the IITA50 Anniversary on 29 June at College Alfajiri premises Bukavu, South Kivu Province, DR Congo with the theme "Youth in Agripreneurship". Thirty-four enterprising youth groups exhibited their products in an exhibition.

The IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs (IKYA) exhibition stand was the center of attraction with different types of agricultural produce and processed products. The event attracted hundreds of youth, public agencies, other CGIAR centers, universities/research institutes, international development organizations, local NGOs, corporate bodies, and farmers' associations.

Many of the corporate bodies and development partners mounted exhibition booths to share information on their collaborative efforts with IITA to promote youth-led agri-enterprises.

Dignitaries who graced the event included the IITA Director General, [Nteranya Sanginga](#); the representative of the Governor of South Kivu, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Adolphine Muley Byayuwa; Mwanza Nangunia, Minister of Health and Gender, Tanganyika Minister of Gender; the Archbishop of South Kivu, His Eminence François Xavier Maroy, a representative of the Provincial Parliament, Honorable Kinja Mwendanga; and a representative of traditional chiefs, His Majesty Mwami Roger Ntambuka.

In his opening remarks, the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) IITA Station in Kalambo, [Chris Okafor](#), extolled the contributions of IITA towards improving the lives of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. Okafor commended the organization's leadership for broadening its focus and making the youth agenda mainstream.

"For the past five years IITA has directed its attention towards mobilizing and directing the youths' energy towards agri-enterprises, an innovation that is now spreading to many African countries." said Okafor.

Addressing the audience on behalf of the South Kivu Governor, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Adolphine Muleyi, said

that the IITA-youth agripreneur initiative is a valuable idea for agricultural development and needs to be supported by all stakeholders.

"On this date of the 50th anniversary of IITA, we ask the South Kivu population to encourage the young generation to invest their capital asset and knowledge in agricultural entrepreneurship for the well-being of all the entire population of the Province," she added.

Archbishop Maroy, expressed hope that the IITA Youth Agripreneur initiative

will stimulate other youths to engage in agri-enterprises.

In his press interview, DG Sanginga remarked: "My greatest satisfaction today is to see all these young people who are engaged in agribusinesses. I think they have chosen the best way to assure their future," he said.

After a tour of the exhibition booths, prizes were given to the three best exhibitors selected by a panel. The celebration ended with a party at Hotel Residence, Bukavu.



Top: Colorful balloons were released into the sky to set the golden jubilee celebrations in motion. **Bottom:** Chris Okafor, OIC, IITA in Kalambo accepts an award on behalf of IITA at the ceremony.

Photo album



L-R: Adolphine Muley Byayuwa (second from left), Provincial Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, His Eminence François Xavier Maroy, Archbishop of South Kivu, DG Nteranya Sanginga, OIC Chris Okafor, and Marcellin Cishambo (rightmost), governor of South Kivu.



Above: DG Sanginga accompanied by Chris Okafor OIC, went round congratulating and welcoming all to the event and also presented awards to deserving staff. Below: Staff, scientists, partners, and friends of IITA in Bukavu had a great time during the celebrations in Kalambo.



An array of agricultural products finished and fresh were displayed during the celebrations.

IITA50 anniversary celebrations held in Kinshasa DR Congo

At IITA-Kinshasa, the golden Jubilee was celebrated on 18 July at the Pullman Hotel, Kinshasa. In attendance were Kabongo Kazadi, the Minister of Agriculture and other representatives from partner and donor organizations including INERA, and the United States Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)).

“Although IITA began operations in DR Congo about 47 years ago, the Institute has been working to advance African agriculture for 50 years now” noted [Nzola Mahungu](#), IITA Country Representative. He also applauded the DR Congo Government for its unflinching support since 1974 and for funding IITA’s initial research to combat [cassava bacterial blight](#) (CBB) in the region.

On behalf of the IITA Director General, [Nteranya Sanginga](#), the Central Africa Hub Director, [Bernard Vanlauwe](#), thanked the Honorable Minister for his presence at the celebration. He also recognized the inputs from all participants including funding agencies and technical partners.

Vanlauwe then led the guests on a tour to see posters on IITA’s research-for-development breakthroughs, products from the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Kinshasa (IYAKIN), [HarvestPlus](#), and some private sector enterprises using IITA technologies.



IITA50 cake sharing moment.



Dr Tata Hangy explains a poster on CBSD activities to the Minister of Agriculture.

