



IITA

Transforming African Agriculture

TALKING DRUMS

Issue 79

January 2019

New Year Messages from Senior Management



Dear Colleagues,

I trust that you had an excellent holiday celebration and you are rejuvenated for a Happy New Year. While deciding on your 2019 resolutions, add a point on IITA that will help promote it and make the difference

in your area of work.

Once again, thank you for keeping IITA strong and hopefully, even stronger in 2019.

Nteranya Sanginga (Director General)



Dear All IITA staff!

I hope you spent a relaxing and rewarding time with family and friends as 2018 was ending. Last year was a successful year for the Institute, and quite a hectic year for all of us, so it was important to

recharge our internal batteries before embarking on 2019. I would like to thank each of you for the efforts and energy you expended for IITA in 2018, as your part of building an even stronger Institute. Because of excellent team work, we have been able to secure several new projects, which will enable IITA to deliver on its goals and strategies, to secure jobs, and not least, allow us to think strategically about IITA into the future. IITA has developed a lot in recent years, and you have all contributed strongly to its success. I think you will all agree that IITA receiving the Africa Food Prize in 2018 shows that the Institute is highly recognized both within and outside the continent.

I look forward to continuing working with you, I count on your support, and I wish you all the best for 2019!

May-Guri Saethre (DDG - Research for Development)



Dear colleagues,

I hope that 2019 finds you, your families, and friends in good health, and full of hope and confidence about your important contribution to IITA. The work that each and every one of us does is important!

During 2018 the P4D Directorate successfully worked in partnership with the R4D Directorate to deliver research results all over Africa, and developed strong partnerships with private industries, Governments, and NGOs to ensure that the technologies being developed by IITA are taken to the farmers, processors, and marketers.

A major highlight of 2018 was the successful startup of the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) project sponsored by AfDB. The main objective of the program is to improve the business of agriculture across Africa by raising agricultural productivity, mitigating risks, and promoting processing in 18 agricultural value chains.

We were actively involved in coordinating the Nigeria Zero Hunger Forum, which aims to fulfill Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) that seeks to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture" by 2030. The NZH Forum was inaugurated in January 2017 under the leadership of former President Olusegun Obasanjo with the secretariat located in IITA Ibadan. Six states consisting of Benue, Borno, Ebonyi, Kebbi, Ogun, and Sokoto are actively involved.

All these successes could not have been achieved without the continued support, hard work, and dedication of all of you.

I wish you a fulfilling and prosperous 2019 as we work as one strong team to transform African Agriculture.

Kenton Dashiell (DDG - Partnerships for Delivery)

Another year over, a new one just begun! Thank you for your commitment to IITA during last year and welcome back to work in 2019. I hope you all had a restful time and welcomed the start of 2019 in good spirits.

Last year we started work on changing IITA's culture and staff mindset to adapt to the new reality of IITA being a "project-based institute". Change is never easy, especially not change brought on by funding challenges, but we made a confident start and I am convinced that with the commitment of all of us, we can make it work.

For Corporate Services, this means that we will have to keep adapting to the changed circumstances of IITA, and thus of our

clients. We need to improve our services by becoming more efficient and innovative; doing more with less funds and finding new ways of service provision by modernizing our services.

One way of modernization is through the automation program that we are implementing, and we are looking forward to improved Oracle, HR, and Payroll services later this year. I would like to thank all the staff that have been working hard on this so far and will still have to work hard to achieve this, especially for those who gave up part of their holiday time.

A member of staff composed a song "Everyone Counts!" that became the slogan in the recent FMS team building retreat. All our staff have their own responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and strengths. Every single one of you is needed to help support IITA. It is because of every one of you, and because we know what we can achieve while working together in a culture of professionalism, transparency and respect, that IITA has a future, and we can be confident that we will make a difference.

IITA is a great organization. Thank you for being part of it and thanks so much for helping IITA to achieve our goals. Wishing IITA, you, and your family members a wonderful, successful, and prosperous 2019!

Hilde Koper-Limbourg (DDG- Corporate Services)

Compliments of the season colleagues!

The year 2018 has come and gone, leaving us with some unaccomplished expectations and achievements. The year 2019 is here offering us a new beginning of new ventures, new projects, new initiatives, and a new automated business processes/system. Let us therefore continue to see success and breakthroughs, as we did last year with the hope that we grow and achieve better results in our contributions towards making IITA an impactful research-for-development institution in the continent.

Sincerely, it is my desire that 2019 brings more achievements in your personal life and to the Institute. Wishing you and your family a joyous, blessed, and healthy year.

Shalewa Sholola (Director of Finance)



Recipients of 2017 IITA Board Award for Excellence

The Partnerships for Delivery (P4D) week climaxed with the launch and dedication of the Tissue Culture building and presentation of the 2017 IITA Board Awards for Excellence to recipients in various categories, namely: outstanding scientist, outstanding support staff, most promising young scientist, and outstanding publication.

- **Dr Tahirou Abdoulaye** (outstanding scientist). He joined IITA Kano station on 1 October 2007 as Coordinator, Kano Katsina-Maradi (kkM) Pilot Learning Program (SSA-CP). Thus, he has worked for IITA for 12 years. He is



Dr Tahirou Abdoulaye with the Board chair

currently based in IITA-Ibadan as a Senior Agricultural Economist for West Africa.

- **Ms Linda Brasa** (outstanding support staff). She joined IITA Central Africa hub headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, 7 years ago, on 23 July 2012 as an Administration Assistant. She is currently an Administrative Officer.



Ms Linda Brasa with the Board chair.

- **Dr Tesfamicheal Assfaw Wossen** (most promising young scientist). He joined IITA on 11 December 2015 as a Postdoctoral Fellow - Agricultural Economics



Dr Tesfamicheal Assfaw Wossen with the Board chair

based in Abuja station. He is currently an Agricultural Economist.

- Outstanding Publication - **Mutungi, C., Irungi, F.G., Nduko, J., Mutua, F., Affognon, H., Nakimbugwe, D., Ekesi, S. & Fiaboe, K.K.**

Postharvest processes of edible insects in Africa: A review of processing methods, and the implications for nutrition, safety and new products development - *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 2017: 1–23.

Zambia holds 2018 end-of-year party

After a busy 2018, it was a grand celebration for the IITA family at Zambia Station as staff came together to bond, relax, and celebrate the end-of-year at SARAH offices. The party was held on 7 December 2018 and this was particularly unique as it was the first time such an event was ever held on Campus. IRS, NRS, and Zambia Youth in Agriculture (ZYA) were all in attendance. The Regional Hub Director (David Chikoye) addressed the staff with a call for more teamwork and a continued spirit of oneness among employees in 2019. He further encouraged staff to continue working hard and make IITA a better place. Staff went into wild jubilation when it was announced that the Regional Hub Director had donated a K10,000 from his PA towards the purchase of Shoprite gift vouchers for all staff.



Zambia-get-together — Staff listening to the address by the Hub Director



Zambia get-together — Cassava Breeder Dr Pheneas with other staff



Zambia get-together — Staff sharing cake

IITA Abuja Station hold end-of-year get-together

Staff of IITA Abuja Station were on Friday, 14 December 2018 hosted to a get-together by the Welfare Committee with support of the Station's Management. This event marked the last meeting of the year for the Station and served as an avenue to appreciate all categories of staff.

In his opening remarks, the Head of IITA-Abuja Station, Gbassey Tarawali thanked the staff for their superlative performance during the year. He emphasized the efforts being made by IITA Management to make the work environment a pleasant workplace for all. He mentioned the Scholarship granted to a child of a member of staff by the IITA Women's Group. He specially appreciated the welfare committee and the Station for sponsoring the event despite the financial challenges and encouraged everyone not to relent but rather work harder to achieve more in the coming year. He wished the Abuja Station staff and their families a joyous Christmas and New year celebration.

On his part, the AgResult Pilot Project Manager, Akande Adebawale was full of appreciation to the Welfare Committee for organizing the event. He urged staff not



Abuja Staff

to get carried away by the good rating received from the appraisals but put in more effort in the coming year.

Responding on behalf of the Abuja Station staff, Godwin Okpachu, Chairman of the Welfare Committee expressed profound appreciation to the Head of Station for his unending support to staff and to the IITA Women's Group for the Scholarship support to the children of staff in the Station.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of a Scholarship award to Stephen Okunade, the son of Michael Okunade, a member of staff of IITA-Abuja Station.

Earlier, toys donated by the IITA Women's Group to Abuja Station Crèche, were presented to children of the Crèche on behalf of the Group by Gbassey Tarawali.

2018 MSA Retreat

The Management Staff Association MSA had a fun-filled retreat at Agodi Gardens on Friday, 14 December 2018 with the theme Bonding with fun. The event, which was the first of its kind for the MSA, commenced with visitation by members of the association to Ibadan Motherless Babies Home where the members donated cash and other gift items to the Management of the home. The occasion culminated in a joyful event at Agodi Gardens where members were entertained by a live band and many leadership team-building activities.

In his opening remarks, the MSA President, Olaniyi Oyatomi, thanked IITA Management for granting the association the permission to have the event and charged members to work as partners in progress in the genuine pursuit of IITA's objectives under the leadership of the DG, Dr N. Sanginga to transform African agriculture and bring millions of Africans out of poverty, by playing their respective quota as managers. The DDG-Corporate Services, Ms Hilde Koper-Limbourg in her speech encouraged



MSA Retreat

the managers to work together as leaders of their respective teams, work harmoniously with other categories of staff, with determination and absolute commitment to IITA's vision in their various capacities, as their roles are very important to the Management. The one-day event

provided an opportunity for members to interact, share ideas, exchange gifts among themselves, relax, and of course dance away some stress! The occasion was also used to honor some retiring MSA members.



DDG-CS & MSA on the dance floor

Quotable quote

"As this New Year approaches find inspiration around you, and motivation within you, to be all that you can be."

- Kate Summers

Newsletter staff

Editor: Helen Adeniji
Associate editor: Yvonne Olatunbosun
Contributors: HR & Communication
Design and Layout: Ibukun Shodeinde, Adegboyega Juba, & Omolola Atunu
Editing: Katherine Lopez
Distribution: Ibukun Shodeinde & Dayo Oyewole
Advisers: Lilian Mendoza & Katherine Lopez
Contact: h.adeniji@cgiar.org