

## First edition of the 2019 IITA Town Hall Meeting held



*Cross section of participants at the town hall meeting.*

The first town hall meeting for 2019, organized by Human Resources, took place from 22 to 25 (in Abuja) and on 28 May in Ibadan. The town hall meeting is a regular forum to improve the flow of communication between staff and management.

Lilian Mendoza, Head HR, welcomed and appreciated staff for attending the forum. She highlighted the objectives of the meeting as a medium of sustaining dialogue, generating ideas, and obtaining direct feedback from staff.

Updates from the town hall meetings in 2018 were discussed and staff were

glad to discover that their suggestions had been taken. Mendoza urged staff to bring up any challenges they face at work.

During the interactive forum, facilitated by the HR team (Lilian Mendoza, Temilade Oke, Wole Oladokun, Helen Adeniji and Wole Amusa), staff made observations and suggestions on issues such as performance management, personal financial management, and creating a work-life balance policy. While speaking on personal financial management, Wole Oladokun, IITA Employee Services Manager, advised staff to live within their means, saying:

“IITA is discouraging borrowing; calculate pay-ability when taking a loan.”

Recommendations were made on dressing mode of staff. The Training Unit was advised to henceforth attach a code of conduct for dressing to the acceptance letter of new intakes, interns, and IT students, as a way of ensuring nonoccurrence of sexual harassment.

The HR team assured participants of a positive response on suggestions that were brought up on options for accrued severance benefits as well as work-life balance.

## IITA Internal Audit Unit holds 2019 annual awareness meeting

The Internal Audit Unit of IITA held a meeting on 17 May to commemorate its annual International Audit Awareness Month which takes place May of every year.

The Internal Audit is a Unit set up by the IITA Board of Trustees to provide audit services to IITA. The unit held the audit awareness meeting to interact with and enlighten stakeholders on what auditing is about, as this will enhance their efficiency and productivity. Last year, the awareness meeting was held at the IITA Conference Center. This year, the Internal Audit Unit hosted the Senior Staff Association (SSA) and General Staff Association (GSA) executives for the meeting in the Internal Audit office.



*Internal Audit group photo.*

These executives were invited so that they could relay the information to other colleagues.

In his opening address, Fumhe Takawira, Head of IITA Internal Audit, shared some functions of the unit aside auditing. He pointed to the fact that the unit performs an advisory role to the management and Board. The advisory role extends to the Risk Management Committee as risk management is key to the survival of any organization. "We provide awareness on occupation fraud detection and prevention, and also carry out investigations on fraudulent

issues, which can come from management or the whistleblowing platform," he added.

Rasheed Dauda, Deputy Head of Internal Audit explained that as a way of ensuring that things work properly, Internal Audit has Whistleblowing guidelines on the Intranet, which will assist in guiding employees in reporting perceived fraudulent issues. This can be done by calling or sending a text message to a dedicated number, sending a mail to the whistle-blow email address, or sending a message on the Intranet.

He further noted that one can whistle-blow anonymously, but if anyone decides to reveal one's identity, it would be kept in strict confidence. Going on, he clarified the fact that Internal Auditors are not fault finders but partners looking out for best ways to help and follow up on how processes can be improved in the Institute.

However, to render better services, the unit has decided to work on ways of making the whistleblowing platform more visible, as suggested by the executives.

## International Labor Day Celebration in IITA Cameroon

Workers of IITA Cameroon on Wednesday, 1 May 2019 joined their comrades nationwide in commemorating the 133rd edition of the International Labor Day under the theme; Worker's protection vector of social justice and decent work in Cameroon.

Dr Fotso Apollin who presided over the ceremony on behalf of the Country Representative Dr. Masso Cargele on the occasion, extended gratitude to workers who have so far distinguished themselves in terms of discipline hard work and service rendered at the job side. He challenged all to ensure growth and development of the institution.

Meanwhile before the day of the ceremony, Dr Masso Cargele who was out of the country on duty had sent words of appreciation to Mr. Mendouga Thomas and Mrs. Tegantchouang Monique Under the supervision of Mr. Simila Boubakari the Station Administrator who worked tirelessly to ensure the successful organization of the event.

The International Labor Day also called the International Day of Workers and the Day of May, is a



*IITA Cameroon International labor day group photo.*

day set aside to demand better working conditions and celebrate contributions made by the workers in nation building. Cameroon is among the 80 Nations worldwide where the day is given recognition with a public holiday that permit workers to celebrate.

In line with tradition therefore, the occasion took place in a restaurant in Yaoundé popularly called FLAVOUR. Workers of IITA Cameroon led by Dr. Fiaboe Komi, took over the feasting

phase of the occasion in grand style. He encouraged all to savor the meals which had been prepared for them and to enjoy the music which graced the occasion, at the same time, cautioning all not to forget about work the next day. He also led the workers to take the group photographs. It was a memorable day, there was lots of fun and a relaxed atmosphere. After enjoying themselves, workers went home by 6:00pm to prepare for work the next day.

## The PYP Exhibition at IITA International School

Students in grade 5 of The International School of IITA carried out an extended, collaborative inquiry process, known as the Exhibition, under the guidance of their teacher and mentors. The Exhibition is the culmination of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) where students synthesize the essential elements of the PYP and share them with the whole school community. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the IB Learner Profile that they have developed throughout their engagement with the program. Students are given flexibility in their choice of real-life issues or problems to be explored and investigated. The



*IITA International School PYP*

central idea states a broad conceptual understanding that the students will investigate. Students work together with their teacher to focus their inquiry. They explore the local and global issues related to that inquiry, and then prepare a presentation for the community to view.

This year the students have planned their Exhibition under the PYP transdisciplinary theme of Sharing the Planet. This involves an inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities, and the

relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; and peace and conflict resolution.

**Central Idea:** (developed by the grade 5 students and teachers)

Sustainable Tourism provides important environmental and cultural benefits

**An inquiry into:**

- The nature of Sustainable Tourism
- The process and roles of sustainable tourism in local economies
- The cultural impact of sustainable tourism.

We offered the students 14 strands to choose from, and each student chose one strand to investigate further. The results of their investigations were quite varied and diverse allowing each student to use their own particular areas of strength to support their investigation. Well done to everyone but a special thank you to Grade 5 for being such good inquirers, to Grade 6 for being such good mentors, all auxiliary staff for support and hard work, and all students and teachers of our school for their support, Mrs Ekun for being “there” for all of us and lastly Mrs Okorie for her commitment and leadership.

## Obituaries

The IITA family condoles with the families of Dr Yoel Efron and Mrs Sarah Virginia Gamble, the spouse of former IITA Director General Dr William K. Gamble, and extends our love, sympathy, and prayers. The IITA family is proud to have been associated with our former colleagues and friends.

### Dr Yoel Efron



Dr Yoel Efron is from Israel. He worked in IITA for 10 years, first as the maize breeder (1979–1980), then as Director of the Cereal Improvement Program (1980–84), the CIMMYT/IITA African Maize Program (1984–86), and Maize Research Program (1986–1988). After leaving IITA, he also worked with the private sector in Zaria, Nigeria from 1988 to 1992 as Director of Research and General mNanager of AgSeeds Ltd., and then Head of the Cocoa Improvement Program, Cocoa and Coconut Institute at Papua New Guinea from 1994 to 2004.

Dr Efron earned a BSc degree in General Agriculture and MSc in Field Crops and Genetics from The Hebrew University, and a PhD in Plant

Breeding and Genetics from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

He is survived by wife Hanna Levy Efron, seven children, and 15 grandchildren.

According to his friend and colleague, former IITA scientist Dr Ivan Buddenhagen, “He was a fine man, a good friend, and a good maize breeder. He successfully ran a hybrid maize program in Northern Nigeria after his time at IITA.”

### Mrs Sara Virginia Gamble



Mrs Gamble had apparently lived a long and fulfilled life, having been married to Dr William K. Gamble for 76 years. Mrs Gamble lived in IITA for several years when Dr Gamble served as the second Director General of IITA from 1975 to 1980. At that time, IITA had expanded its geo-domain mandate to include humid and subhumid tropical zones and had established a highly successful Root and Tuber Improvement Program.

According to Dr Gamble, Mrs Gamble accompanied him while he engaged in agricultural education, research, and development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America throughout his career. She was also known to have been an active member of the IITA women’s group and was good at organizing social events.

All these years—even after retirement, the Gambles have been actively communicating and participating in important IITA events. The most recent of these was at the recent 50th year celebration in 2017, for which Bill and Virginia Gamble sent a special video message that was played as part of the opening session of the celebration. In this message, he indicated, “At 96, I am not able to attend the Celebration but extend the very best wishes and greetings of Virginia and I, to those attending. We celebrated the 10th Anniversary when I was Director General. On this 50th Anniversary, we wish the institute all the best for the future.”

## Quotable quote

*“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”*

*~ Walt Disney.*

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