

Sanginga: A double-digit investment in the agricultural sector is needed to transform agriculture

[IITA](#) Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) has stated that a double-digit investment in the agricultural sector backed by a vibrant rural infrastructural network will help states in Nigeria to accelerate the transformation of agriculture. He said this as the Executive Governor of Oyo State, His Excellency Seyi Abiodun Makinde, received a delegation from IITA on 15 August.



Governor Seyi Makinde (right) welcoming guests during the visit.

“No matter our good intentions, we will not see a transformation in agriculture if we continue to invest less than 10 percent of our budget on agriculture,” Sanginga said during the visit in Ibadan, Nigeria.

In 2003, African heads of state in Maputo made a commitment to invest at least 10 percent of their annual budgets in agriculture. Sixteen years after the declaration, only a few countries have implemented the targets set out in that declaration.

“One of the countries that has fulfilled the commitment is Ethiopia...Ethiopia is today investing more than 10 percent and that country is witnessing a rapid transformation in agriculture,” Sanginga explained.

Referring to the Oyo State Agricultural Policy Framework, the IITA DG said that Oyo State’s investment in agriculture had nosedived from about 7 to 2 percent from 1995 to 2017, adding that the new administration needs to reverse this trend.

Continued on page 2

IITA launches Internet radio station to enhance dissemination of agricultural information for farmers, other stakeholders ...celebrates Communication Open House

Smallholder farmers in Africa can increase their productivity and improve their means of livelihood if they are able to access agricultural information, which is a key factor in IITA’s goal of transforming African agriculture.



Applause as DG Sanginga switches the On Air sign (above).

Using radio to disseminate vital agricultural messages, especially for rural dwellers, is one way of achieving this.

To harness this advantage, [IITA](#) formally launched a radio broadcast service, Radio IITA, on 14 August, at the Ibadan headquarters of the Institute.



IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga speaking in his first live Radio IITA interview.

The launch took place as part of the IITA Communication Open House, an event to highlight the capacities and activities of the communication function in the Institute.

Deputy Director General, Research for Development [May-Guri Saethre](#), in her opening remarks, said, "Communication is our most important tool for indirect resource mobilization."

In her presentation, Head of Communication [Katherine Lopez](#) shared the big dream of the Communication team, which is to "make IITA the center of excellence for science communication." She described Radio IITA as a collaborative effort between different directorates and units of IITA.

IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) officially launched the radio station when he switched the "On Air" sign at the Conference Center. The first scheduled program was a live studio interview featuring Sanginga and Director of the Development and Delivery Office, [Alfred Dixon](#) in a show called "Good morning, IITA!"

The DG described the celebration as "historic" and gave kudos to the project implementation

and Communication teams, and everyone who was involved in facilitating the foundation of Radio IITA. He said, "As we are scaling up IITA's initiatives and innovations, Radio IITA is going to be an opportunity to reach a larger number of people."

While speaking on the current phase of implementation of Radio IITA, Dixon said, "We have the expertise that can make Radio IITA the CNN of Africa, which is the DG's vision." He also spoke about the broadcast license approval of the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and noted opportunities for collaboration with other organizations interested in agricultural broadcasting.

Deputy Director General, Corporate Services [Hilde Koper](#) and others attending the event provided feedback and reiterated the significance of radio to smallholder farmers. They noted that with radio transmission, agricultural information is more likely to reach the target audience.

Radio IITA broadcasts test transmissions twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It currently operates as an Internet radio station with plans to upgrade to full service broadcast.

Sanginga: A double-digit investment in the agricultural sector is needed to transform agriculture **Continued from page 1**

On rural infrastructure, Sanginga said the government should pay close attention to the rehabilitation of rural roads (feeder roads) to help the transportation of agricultural products from the farm to the markets.

He decried the deterioration of infrastructure in several farm settlements in Oyo State and urged the government to tackle the trend.

The DG also called on the government to seek ways to involve the youth in agriculture, stressing that inclusiveness was imperative for sustainability in the agricultural development agenda of the State.

In his response, Governor Makinde commended the IITA DG for the courtesy visit and pledged the commitment of the State to work with IITA to achieve agricultural transformation.

The Governor noted that his administration had identified four pillars: education, rural infrastructure, economic development (agriculture), and security to help bring the dividends of democracy to the people of Oyo State.

He noted that for the State to attain economic development, agriculture must be transformed.

"This is because most of our people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Besides, through agricultural transformation, we will be able to provide the needed jobs for our youth...the jobs we promised during the election campaigns," he added.

On infrastructure, the Governor said work on one of the major agricultural roads (Moniya to Iseyin) would commence soon. On completion, the road would ease the movement of farm produce to the market. He also said that discussions were in top gear with the Federal Government to rehabilitate the Oyo-Iseyin road.

IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#); Director for Development and Delivery, [Alfred Dixon](#); and Senior Agricultural Economist for West Africa, [Tahirou Abdoulaye](#) were part of the team that visited the Governor. Other team members included Digital Extension and Advisory Services Specialist, [Godwin Atser](#); Executive Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture, [Debo Akande](#); Resource Mobilization, Protocol and External Liaison Manager, Toyin Oke; and IITA Youth Agripreneurs Oludamilare Odusanya and Adetola Adenmosun.



Top: Governor Makinde and DG Sanginga share a light moment. Bottom: DG Sanginga presents Governor Makinde with a token.

IITA Youth celebrate International Youth Day

The [IITA Youth Agripreneurs \(IYA\)](#) and [Business Incubation Platform \(BIP\)](#) joined the rest of the world to celebrate [International Youth Day \(IYD\) 2019](#) with a symposium themed, "Transforming Education," on 15 August. This year's IYD highlighted the need for transformation in education systems to make them more inclusive, equitable, and relevant for the 21st century.

The annual IYD is part of public information activities to bring awareness to the role of young people as essential partners in regional and global change. It serves as an opportunity to highlight the challenges and problems facing the world's youth.

Program Coordinator of [Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation \(TAAT\)](#), [Chrys Akem](#) opened the symposium during which he discussed the objectives of TAAT and the need for youth to take agribusiness as a passion. He said to the youth, "Don't give up on agribusiness, good things don't come

easy, but we will do all we can to help you. I assure you that TAAT is strongly behind you."

Paul Woomeer, Technical Adviser to IYA, praised [IITA's](#) commitment to youth involvement in agribusiness. He also encouraged the youth to come up with stronger business plans that can facilitate funding. He said, "We have a huge challenge before us, but we also have the tools and teamwork needed to meet those expectations."

IITA encourages youth engagement in agribusiness in Africa with its "agripreneur"

model of youth in agribusiness. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted this model and the Institute is actively involved in socioeconomic research that has contributed significantly to advance the world's research agenda to include mentoring and coaching youth.

Presenters at the symposium emphasized that empowering youth to become innovators and "agripreneurs" is key to solving some of the most binding constraints to the growth of a prosperous agricultural sector, thriving agribusiness value chains, and improved food and nutrition security.

Representatives of IYA, BIP, and the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) encouraged the youth to embrace agribusiness as a means of sustaining themselves instead of looking for white collar jobs that might not allow them to discover their real capabilities.



Youth attendees at the conference center.

Events

First Start Them Early Program (STEP) Planning Workshop, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 10-12 September
AgResults Nigeria Aflasafe Pilot Project Close-Out Symposium, Abuja, Nigeria, 12 September
Launch, Start Them Early Program (STEP), IITA, Kalambo, Democratic Republic of Congo, 21 September
Commissioning of Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo Research Campus, IITA, Kalambo, Democratic Republic of Congo, 8 October
Board Meeting and R4D Week, IITA headquarters, 18-22 November



Got a story to share?

Please send your story with photos and captions every Tuesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.gha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern and Southern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.

Scientists discover best practice for minimizing aflatoxin contamination of maize

IITA researchers, working with scientists from other agricultural institutions, have come up with a pre-harvest practice for minimizing aflatoxin contamination of maize. The practice was developed and outlined in a study in Kenya, which was carried out to document the rate at which aflatoxin contaminates physiologically mature maize in the field.



Maize contaminated by aflatoxin in the farm.

Aflatoxins are secondary metabolites produced by *Aspergillus flavus* (*A. flavus*) and *Aspergillus parasiticus* fungi that are abundant in many tropical soils where maize (*Zea mays* L.) is grown. This is a serious problem affecting the short and long-term health of humans and animals, trade, and export markets of maize-based products. When consumed in low dosages over prolonged periods, aflatoxins may cause liver cancer, suppress immune systems, increase the occurrence and severity of infectious diseases, and lead to poor nutrient absorption and retarded child growth and development by contributing to [malnutrition](#).

Maize, the main crop in Kenya, is most vulnerable to infection by *A. flavus* and contamination by aflatoxin. Aflatoxin contamination of maize grain has been a major issue in Kenya, where average per capita consumption is 400 g of maize/day. More than 75% of maize in Kenya is produced by smallholder farmers and mostly for their own consumption, while the surplus is informally traded. As a result, aflatoxin contamination of homegrown maize presents a significant threat to the health of rural and urban consumers, who are dependent on maize as their staple crop.

Kenya has witnessed periodic incidences of acute aflatoxin poisoning, dating back to 1981, because of consumption of aflatoxin-contaminated maize. Multiple aflatoxicosis outbreaks have been documented since 2004, resulting in nearly 500 acute illnesses and 200 deaths.

However, a study was carried out in Eastern Kenya, a high aflatoxin-risk region with reported cases of acute aflatoxin poisoning, and in South Western Kenya, which is considered a low-risk region with no published reports of aflatoxin poisoning. About 789 maize samples were collected from smallholder farmers' fields while the crop was still in the field. The samples were collected from Embu, Makueni, and Machakos of Eastern Kenya and Homabay, Migori, and Kisii of South Western Kenya. Also, 10 farmers were randomly selected from each village, with a distance of about 5 km between the villages and farms to obtain a representative sample.

A 1-kilogram sample was taken per farm and transported to the laboratory for aflatoxin extraction and analysis. For each sample, the farmer's name, village, location

(GPS coordinates), and name of maize variety were recorded. Results revealed significant levels of pre-harvest aflatoxin contamination of maize in both regions, although higher in Eastern Kenya.

The presence of many pre-harvest maize samples contaminated by aflatoxin in both regions revealed the importance of developing strategies for minimizing aflatoxin contamination while the crop is still in the field. In line with this, technologies such as the use of resistant maize varieties, good crop husbandry to minimize damage from insects and diseases, and proper fertilization schemes can go a long way to minimize *A. flavus* infection and subsequent aflatoxin contamination.

In addition, adopting technologies that minimize stress by combining heat and drought tolerant maize lines with high levels of resistance to *A. flavus* and aflatoxin contamination should be emphasized. However, biological control using atoxigenic strains of *A. flavus* to prevent infection by toxigenic strains was found to consistently reduce aflatoxin contamination by 80% and should be promoted to become an integral part of pre-harvest aflatoxin control measures.

The full article is available here: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2018.08.032>

[Mahuku G.](#), [Nzioki S.H.](#), [Muteji C.](#), [Kanampiu F.](#), [Narrod C.](#), [Makumbi D.](#) Pre-harvest management is a critical practice for minimizing aflatoxin contamination of maize. *Journal of Food Control*, 2019; 219-226.



Healthy maize plants in a trial field.