

ADWG presents policy brief to new Agriculture Minister in Nigeria

On 16 December, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria, Alhaji Sabo Nanono, received a high-level delegation of the Agriculture Donor Working Group (ADWG) in Abuja. The occasion was the presentation of the ADWG Policy Brief, which was prepared as a contribution of development partners towards the shaping of agriculture in Nigeria. [to page 3](#)



Agriculture Donor Working Group representatives speaking with Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Sabo Nanono.

The Kingdom of Eswatini celebrates milestone with the launch of nationally significant nutrition books

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini, in collaboration with [IITA](#), has launched a Food Composition Table and a National Recipe Book for foods commonly consumed in the southern African country. The ceremony to unveil the books took place in the legislative capital of Lobamba in October 2019.



Attendees with copies of the book.

Chief Research Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture, Similo Mavimbela, welcomed participants to the ceremony including senior Government officials and representatives from both local and international development partners such as the University of Eswatini, Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise, the World Food Programme, World Health Organization, and IITA.

He noted that, as with many developing countries, the Kingdom of Eswatini did not have a Food Composition Table (EFCT) that would provide detailed food composition data (FCD) on the nutritionally important components of their foods. Neither had they formally documented their local recipes with the methods of preparation. While these were passed on informally in the past, it was essential to capture and preserve the traditional methods of food preparation for the next generation.

The implementation of the IITA-MIRACLE Project formed a foundation on which to build as it included a study on the Food Consumption and Dietary Intakes of women of childbearing age and children 6–59 months of age from households affected by HIV/AIDS. The project involved conducting a nutrition survey carried out in collaboration with

the Eswatini Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health. The survey collected information on the amounts and types of raw and cooked foods that people consumed and nutrient intake estimates at the chiefdom and regional levels.

Part of the output of the nutrition study was the compiled food composition table and the recipe book for commonly consumed foods in Eswatini.

In her remarks, Principal Home Economics Officer, Nikiwe Dlamini, briefly described the origins of the documentation project. She covered details of the study, including the target population, the coverage, the data collection process, and the involvement of communities in the development of the EFCT. The study included samples taken from six constituencies and seven chiefdoms spread across different regions of the country.

Members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) gave presentations outlining the process of developing both the EFCT and the recipe book. The TWG Leader, Phumzile Mdziniso and group member, Siniketiwe Zwane-Mdaka both acknowledged the contribution of IITA, and Senior Food

and Nutrition Scientist, [Busie Maziya-Dixon](#) in particular.

Speaking on behalf of IITA, Director of Southern Africa Hub, [David Chikoye](#) congratulated the TWG for their hard work that had culminated in the launch of these two important compilations. He also commended the country for the development of such documents because appropriate nutrient intake and a quality diet are crucial for a healthy nation. He commended Maziya-Dixon and the IITA technical staff who provided backstopping during the implementation of the project for ensuring that the project was a success.

Under Secretary (PAD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Nkosinathi E. Mbingo presided over the official launch as a representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Jabulani Mabuza. He noted that the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture was to ensure that Eswatini is food and nutrition secure and he expressed appreciation as this helps to achieve that goal. He said the compilation of the recipe book is crucial for the country to “preserve our traditional preparation methods for the future generation,” especially concerning indigenous foods.



Participants, including Busie Maziya-Dixon (left) and David Chikoye (2nd left), listening to the official remarks by the Minister of Agriculture.

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.agha@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.



ADWG presents policy brief to new Agriculture Minister in Nigeria

The delegation, led by USAID Agricultural Development Officer, Dr Samba Kawa, included [IITA](#) Director of Advocacy and Country Alignment Function (ACAF), [Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah](#), who was Co-Lead on the Task Group that developed the document.

In his remarks, the Minister decried the lack of organization within the Nigerian agriculture sector and used the opportunity to share his ideas on avenues for improvement and the policy issues that need to be addressed. He mentioned that value chains should not only be limited to the level of smallholder farmers but must link with major industries such as the agro-allied industries, most of which have been shut down over the years, due to improper policy management in Nigeria.

He also called on the donor partners to focus on building human capacity in the agricultural sector, as this will be foundational in tackling most of the problems, including the key issue of weak agricultural extension system and the low number of extension agents. "We have dire need of extension agents. My last check on this was a mere 14,000 to 15,000 extension workers against a farming population of 70 million," he said.

The Minister stressed that he would do all he can to fix these, declaring an end to "Business as Usual" in the sector.

In his address, Atta-Krah commended the Nigerian Federal Government for maintaining policy consistency and urged the government to do more in coordination and organization

between the states. He also expressed delight with the policy brief, which was developed as part of the agriculture promotion policy that will bring about agricultural transformation in the nation.

The ADWG is a consortium of development partners who support agriculture such as the [World Bank](#), [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD), [United Nations Industrial Development Organization](#) (UNIDO), and [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB). Other stakeholders include the [Japan International Cooperation Agency](#) (JICA), [GIZ](#), [International Food Policy Research Institute](#) (IFPRI), [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [US Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), [Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa](#) (AGRA), and IITA.



ADWG delegation and Alhaji Sabo Nanono in a group photo.

AgriServe partners with Cropnuts Kenya to launch joint venture

The knowledge of the right type of land and soil quality is integral in agriculture. Leveraging IITA's research-for-development experience in Africa, AgriServe, a unit of the [IITA Business Incubation Platform](#) (BIP) was launched to provide technical professional services in laboratory operations, soil suitability assessment, and agronomic advisory and agricultural enterprise development.



Cropnuts and BIP-AgriServe partners discussing at the event.

To reach out to more people across Africa, IITA AgriServe set up a joint venture with Cropnuts based in Kenya, with the name Cropnuts-AgriServe.

With Cropnuts being the largest private-sector agricultural laboratory and advisory company in East Africa and IITA being an international research organization specializing in helping farmers to increase their yields in sub-Saharan Africa, this joint venture is expected to be a strong partnership.

Based in Ibadan, Cropnuts-AgriServe, is offering a range of services throughout Nigeria and across Africa including:

- Soil and plant analyses
- Fertilizer and soil correction recommendations
- Mobile laboratories (FARMLAB)
- Land and crop suitability surveys
- Independent field trials (product performance trials)
- Farm and crop consultancy
- Fertilizer analyses

With the combination of IITA's long experience of crop and good agricultural practices in West Africa and Cropnuts experience on soil testing and fertilizer recommendations, Cropnuts-AgriServe is strategically positioned to help farmers and Agri entrepreneurs and investors to make better decisions, and improve their yields and business.

This strategic partnership will increase the venture's range of services, increase its reach across Africa, and help build a stronger brand identity.

IITA scientists seek to improve soybean yields to bridge SSA demand gap

IITA scientists through research, have revealed the current status of [soybean](#) in [sub-Saharan Africa](#) (SSA), while exploring options that could reduce import dependency on soybean in SSA despite the challenges from [climate change](#). A paper published in the [Food and Energy Security](#) journal revealed that this research is the first to analyze plausible futures for soybean production, consumption, and trade in SSA under climate change.

SSA spends more than its public agricultural expenditures on the net import of soybean-based agricultural products. As of 2011, SSA spent US\$1 billion on imports, while its public agricultural expenditure was about US\$812 million. This was as a result of the region consuming 6.3 million tons of soybean grains while only producing 1.7 million tons. Hence, there is a huge demand gap of 72% of total consumption, which can only be filled through imports and stocks.

Apart from challenges faced by the soybean processing sector that is not producing enough to meet the rising demand, soybean grain production remains low across SSA. Although the consumption of soybean is spread widely across countries in the region, production is dominated by Nigeria and South Africa. While Nigeria accounts for about 29% of total production, South Africa accounts for 40%. Nevertheless, some countries are currently trying to strengthen their domestic soybean industry to enhance food safety and increase income growth opportunities where they have a comparative advantage.

Soybean consumption in the region is currently dominated by cooking oil production. The net imports of cooking oil alone, when converted to the grain equivalent, account for 55% of total soybean grain consumption in the region. Similarly, the additional demand for soybean cake being imported and used for animal feed has risen substantially over

the years, fueled by the growing poultry industry to meet the increasing demand for meat in SSA.

However, projections imply a widening of the current soybean demand gap by 2050 under two climate-change models; an optimistic one involving perfect climate-change mitigation till 2050 and a pessimistic one involving a drier future climate. The study also shows that a combination of bold innovations would be needed to close the demand gap in SSA by 2050 under a drier future climate. These innovations would need to deliver yield gains, which are much higher than those obtained through conventional breeding.

The researchers suggested that one such mix of innovations would involve doubling soybean acreage and the size of the processing industry by 2025. It would also involve ensuring that a technology package that doubles yields is adopted on 75% of soybean acreage across the region.



Soybean in the field.