

## New Year Message from Senior Management Team



Dear Colleagues,  
Welcome to the year 2020!

I invite all of us to reflect and have a mindset change to address the tasks below in the best possible way as this will enable us to achieve coherence and the right mix of

hub-specific and center-shared agendas. Therefore, this year the following tasks are critical:

- Ensure leadership both at the Board and Management level continues to support the healthy development of the Institute while championing the evolving R4D portfolio, especially aligning to the upcoming CGIAR Business plan.
- Actively pursue opportunities to build our newly created P4D program, extending activities to the Hubs.
- Continue to “professionalize” our human resources, increasing diversity, and look for further efficiencies in embracing automation of our system. Other centers like CYMMIT are doing the same especially with automation.
- Engagement with both funders and CGIAR, for example, by working with the leadership of other centers to develop shared services and joint initiatives such as TAAT and Excellence in Agronomy while keeping strong relations with AfDB, BMGF, World Bank, IFAD, USAID, and others.

My tasks in 2020 are, with the Board and the Management team, to follow the change agenda and the CGIAR reform and business plan. As DG, I also have a guiding role in keeping the IITA System running and making sure we are implementing the Refreshed Strategy to its completion in November 2020 and plan IITA active alignment with the new one CGIAR system to be a great player by 2022.

It is pertinent to note that Projects are awarded to IITA and not to individual staff as there cannot be individual projects without IITA. Hence, the Institute must come first and be protected.

Although the magnitude of the challenges confronting us is enormous, I have tremendous confidence in you and with the remaining time, I hope to continue earning your trust. The winning team is IITA!

**Nteranya Sanginga, DG-IITA**

Happy New Year to all staff and your families!

‘Everyone Counts!’ I have mentioned this on many occasions before but find it essential to keep emphasizing it. All our staff in R4D, P4D, Finance, and Corporate Services, from postdocs to directors, plumbers to unit heads, have their responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and strengths. I am asking all of you to put in renewed efforts to work together, within teams and between teams, and not in silos. Also, I am asking that you respect one another and not to blame others when things go wrong, but instead work together to make things right!

We are all still getting used to changing IITA’s culture to adapt to the new reality of IITA being a “project-based institute”, along with the additional changes that are coming up around “One CGIAR”. Change is never easy, but it is continuous, so we must embrace change and not be afraid of it. Corporate Services must 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 and find new ways of service provision without looking at the past, but by looking to the future.

One way of modernization is through the automation program that we are implementing. This process has been more difficult than anticipated, and I would like to thank all staff who worked on this so far, next to their day jobs, and our users for their patience. We are not yet there, and further efforts of all who are involved are required to push this to successful completion.

Another way of modernizing our environments, offices, and campuses, and one that is very much needed because of climate change, is working towards a “Greener IITA”, with greener energy and other measures to contribute more towards climate action. You will hear more about that this year.

There is one more thing I would like to address, and that is to ask all of you to actively participate in our “call for action on gender equity in IITA”. IITA has a very low percentage of female staff, compared with other CGIAR Centers. Research suggests that institutional performance is positively associated with gender balance. For the benefit of IITA, we must start working hard to increase the number of women working in IITA; women in all categories; scientists and specialists; and having more women in



professional roles, amongst IRS as well as NRS. Together, let us work on our gender balance and create an environment where everyone feels at home.

I would like to welcome you back from your holidays into a new decade of working together to change the lives of people in Africa for the better.

**Hilde Koper-Limbourg, DDG Corporate Services**



Dear IITA family,  
Season Greetings! I am glad that this year has started on a good note and hope you, your family, and friends are in excellent health and full of positive energy.

We are grateful to every one of you for the successes recorded in the Institute as a whole. Last year, 2019, was a fruitful year because of your loyalty and commitment. We look forward to more success during 2020 as we work together as one team with our partners to transform African Agriculture.

I wish you the best of health and happiness throughout this year.

**Kenton Dashiell, DDG-P4D**

Glad to welcome you all into the New Year of completeness 20/20 (2020). I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate you all for your accomplishments and achievements last year. Last year no doubt presented a lot of challenges (posed by the CGIAR and other reforms in Africa and globally) to our existence as an institution.

Notwithstanding, with your support, dedication, tolerance, and personal sacrifice at work, we were able to weather these challenges. Together we made it in 2019; and I strongly hope that we will improve the good team spirit and strive for greater productivity and performance in 2020, and all through this new decade.

Wishing you and your families a rewarding 2020, and tremendous accomplishments for IITA.

**Shalewa Sholola, Director of Finance**



## IITA celebrates long serving staff members

Annually, IITA sets aside a day to celebrate staff members who have served the Institute for 10, 20, and 30 years. On 6 December, the Institute's Long Service Award for 2019 took place at the IITA Ibadan Campus.

IITA is known for excellence because of its commitment to ensuring a food-secure future for sub-Saharan Africa through research. The Institute has received several awards such as the Risk Management award and the World Food Prize, and the IITA Youth Agripreneurs program won the 2019 International innovation award for sustainable food and agriculture. Although IITA is still working towards its goal, the Institute realizes that its achievement would never have been possible without working hands. As a result, IITA holds its staff in high esteem and believes celebrating them once a year is one way to show it.

In his welcome address, IITA Director General, Nteranya Sanginga, showed his excitement over the commitment of staff to the Institute's advancement over



*Long service awardees and their families*

the years. "I am very proud that in our institution, we have people who can work for 30 years. This is to show that IITA is a good place. Congratulations to all awardees for their achievements and faith in IITA over the years," he said.

To spice up the celebration, Kenton Dashiell, Deputy Director-General, Partnerships for Delivery, shared the good news of the collaboration between IITA and Afe Babalola University.

Although the University has been in partnership with IITA in various projects including youth employment in agribusiness, this is another aspect of the partnership between them. The University has decided to grant a 50% reduction in fees to IITA staff and dependents. The news made it a double celebration.

IITA recognized and awarded 85 staff for long service.

## Safety awareness week observed at IITA Ibadan campus

On 9–13 December, the IITA safety awareness week was held at the Institute's Ibadan campus. This event takes place annually to promote safety awareness for road users—motorists and pedestrians—and to encourage adherence to safety rules.

Safety is a significant aspect of society and organizations that cannot be overemphasized, because it is part of ways to protect human lives and ensure that there is order in the environment. IITA, concerned with the safety of its staff, set up a work and safety policy. Nonetheless, the Institute demonstrates practical safety awareness annually, with the understanding that passive awareness is not enough to ensure safe lives.

For most of the awareness week, safety officers stood at the IITA gate to ensure staff use their seat belts and followed traffic rules for their safety. Although a lot of staff saw these efforts as burdensome due to the level of passive awareness as well as not knowing the importance of following these rules, other road users adhered to the rules.



*Safety week 2019*

About nine safety signposts have been erected in sections of the IITA campus, covering from the BIP building to the Forestry unit's nursery, down to the lake spillway, to alert road users to exercise caution. Three lifebuoys have also been placed at both ends of the lake and at the pumphouse, to be used only if someone has fallen into the water and is in danger.

The highlight of the safety awareness week was the question and answer

session held at the IITA conference center after a series of talks on various areas of road safety and driving; the question and answer session was anchored by the IITA Communication Unit. This session was to reveal how much staff knew about road use safety rules as well as to enlighten them on the issue better. Winners who got the questions right were rewarded with gifts to encourage future participation by staff.

## IITA School showcases December production

Barack Obama said, "The future belongs to young people with education and the imagination to create". To encourage the development of their creativity, all children at The International School of IITA take part in the preparation and presentation of a musical show each December. Last December, Aladdin was the choice and the show was presented to children from six local schools on Wednesday, 4 December while parents and staff at IITA Ibadan were able to attend on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 December.



*Dance performance by IITA school children*

Preparations for the production begin in September and as the show took shape, it was inspiring to see the children grow in confidence. All classes, from Playgroup to Grade 8, participated in the production. The youngest children prepared a dance presentation, learning the dance steps, and worked together to synchronize their movements as they performed. Older children took on speaking roles, studying the script to understand their roles more fully, which allowed them to develop unique mannerisms that suited their characters.

The children had great fun and being part of a school production is also an

excellent opportunity to develop the 4 Cs of 21st Century Learning. Children develop critical thinking skills as they read the script, analyze their character's actions, and ask and answer questions to better understand their character's motivations. They enhance their creativity as they develop choices for their character, how they'll walk, talk, and interact. Communication develops as they offer feedback and suggestions to each other during rehearsals and work on the feedback from teachers and of course collaboration is enhanced by working together with over 70 other people to ensure an effective production.

The high level of attendance at all the performances was a great encouragement to the children with over 70 children from six schools attending the Wednesday morning performance and over 200 parents and friends attending the evening performances. Following the Friday evening performance, children and parents celebrated the success of the event at Pizza Night at International House. The school would like to thank the staff from International House, FMS, and Security for ensuring that the event ran smoothly, and we look forward to seeing everyone again in December 2020.

## SSA visits Ibadan Home for Motherless Babies

As part of the activities scheduled to celebrate the end of the year 2019, representatives of the IITA Senior Staff (SSA) paid a visit to a motherless home in Ibadan on Thursday, 12 December.

The team, which was led by Michael Ekong, took food items for the children as part of social responsibility, and especially to celebrate the festive season with them.

Ibadan Home for Motherless Babies was founded by late Mrs Rebecca Sholanke in 1960 to cater for babies whose mothers died during childbirth and cannot be raised by family members. The home gets donations from groups, individuals, and sometimes, the state government, to sustain the standard and vision of the founder.



*Gift presentation by SSA Executives*

## IITA Abuja Station celebrates year 2019

To mark the end of 2019, staff of IITA Abuja Station came together on Friday, 13 December to celebrate the achievements of the Station and recognize the need to tackle the challenges that came with the year head-on in 2020. The social event, which was hosted by the welfare committee, was very colorful and gave hope for 2020.

In his opening remarks, the Head of IITA-Abuja Station, Dr Gbassey Tarawali thanked all staff for their input in achieving the goals of IITA in the course of the year; he appealed to all staff to do much more in 2020.

The Chief of Party, Feed-the-Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, Dr Silwal Prakash Kant and his team were present at the event and were formally welcomed into the IITA fold and recognized alongside all new staff of the Abuja Station.

The Staff ate, drank, and made merry while engaging in some competitive entertainment. Then highlight of the event was the presentation of IITA



*Abuja station team on the dance floor*

Women's Group Scholarship to Steven Okunade. Steven is the son of Mr Michael Okunade, a member of staff of IITA Abuja Station. He received the Scholarship for the second time consecutively.

The get-together was celebrated in the very spacious, conducive, and newly constructed and furnished Staff Canteen that has the capacity to seat 150 persons; one of the Station's achievements recorded in the year 2019.

### Quotable quote

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

*- Kate Summers*

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