

## IITA celebrates all women on International Women’s Day



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On 9 March, IITA celebrated the International Women’s Day (IWD) 2020, at the Institute’s headquarters. The theme for this year was “Generation Equality: Realizing equal rights for an equal future.”

IWD is a day globally recognized to celebrate the achievements of women in various fields such as social, economic, cultural, and political as well as in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

As it’s the usual practice to recognize and appreciate women’s valuable contributions to the Institute, IITA celebrated this important occasion by organizing a walk-for-a-purpose for

staff and students of the Institute’s International School. A seminar session also took place to discuss gender equality in the workplace and the society.

During the seminar, Kenton Dashiell, Deputy Director General, Partnership for Delivery, encouraged staff to endeavor to always contribute to promoting gender equality in the workplace. “A gender equal IITA can be healthier, wealthier, and more harmonious,” he said. Dashiell further enjoined staff to do what they can to make a positive difference for women working in IITA and around the globe.

In achieving gender equality, Patricia Nanteza, IITA science writer, suggested that gender-insensitive behavior be penalized. However, going through a clip of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s speech, at the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, Adichie mentioned that in a bid to establish gender equality, it is not only necessary to change laws that diminish women but also more important to change the mindset of people.

A short playlet was also performed by IITA’s women group to pass across the message that men and women must work together for gender equity to be a reality.



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# IITA Hub Staff Celebrate International Women's Day

As part of activities to celebrate this year's International Women's Day, some members of staff across IITA hubs expressed their views on what the day signifies.

**Regina Kapinga, Head Advocacy and Resource Mobilization, IITA**



"For someone coming from a male-dominated background in Tanzania, where it is believed that a male child should be educated and the female is only good for childbearing, IWD creates the avenue to censure the myth that women are only meant to get married and have children."

"It encourages women to become professionals and be self-confident."

**Steve Cole, IITA Gender Specialist**



"Today marks the 25th anniversary of IWD. I encourage all IITA staff to put gender equality front and center in the work that we do. Actually, I challenge everyone to put gender equality at the heart of what we do including in the office. When designing R4D and P4D proposals and projects, hiring and informing projects and other work teams, developing and testing technologies

and other innovations, or supporting young women and men to advance their education, skills, and career to generate agricultural innovations to meet Africa's pressing challenges of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, natural resource degradation, and improve livelihoods".

"It should be part of our strategy towards enhancing food and nutrition security, increasing employment, and preserving natural resources integrity".

"We must, as a team, ensure that our R4D and P4D efforts lead to women and men having the same opportunities and benefits and that we are all involved in transforming agro-foods system in Africa".

**Dr Marc Schut, IITA Country Representative for Rwanda, Senior Innovation and Scaling Scientist**



"I would like to wish everyone at IITA a happy International Women's Day. It is very symbolic delivering this keynote from Rwanda, the number one country in Africa for gender equality where 62 percent of the parliamentarians are women and where there is a mandatory 30 percent quota for women in public managerial positions."

"There is huge inequality worldwide in terms of opportunities for men and women, boys and girls. This applies to the farmers we work with, and to colleagues and students in the CGIAR and in the National Agricultural Research Systems, including universities."

"Our goal should be to strive for a situation where celebrating International Women's Day would no longer be needed, simply because of having more equal opportunities for men and women of different ages."

"In a multicultural environment like IITA, there is a need to accommodate all the different perspectives of staff from different cultural backgrounds, in a way that respects cultural diversity but at the same time, follows international progressive standards."

**Sika Gbegbelegbe Foresight Modeler/Agric Economist, IITA**



Three significant factors have helped shape my career path and my work here at IITA; my ambition, an equitable hiring process from the HR in the CGIAR, and senior research leaders with open minds. The two latter factors are what every woman and man should experience besides several other factors that will ensure that there is balance in the workspace, which will birth a conducive work environment and ensure timely deliverables.

## Coronavirus is real!

### Please stay safe

**Do your part to reduce the risk of spread of coronavirus!**  
Please follow these measures:

**Wash your hands regularly** with soap under running water and use hand sanitizers.



**Use disposable nose/face mask**—only if needed.



**Avoid touching hands, face, or items touched** by individuals with symptoms of common cold.



**Avoid close contact** with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.



**Cover your mouth and nose** properly with handkerchief or tissue paper when sneezing and/or coughing. Or cough into your elbow if a handkerchief is not available.



**Avoid self-medication; report** to the nearest health facility.



**Healthcare workers are always advised** to observe standard infection prevention and control measures when attending to patients. Make sure to take a travel history.

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