

Maize Association of Nigeria honors IITA for supporting national agriculture

The Maize Association of Nigeria celebrated its 30th Anniversary on 21 March at Arewa Conference Hall in Kaduna.



Dr Abebe Menkir, Maize Breeder, receiving the plaque and certificate on IITA's behalf.

The Association presented numerous awards to Royal Highnesses, research, extension, and financial institutions, and seed and input suppliers. IITA was also given an award for supplying technologies and rendering supportive services in agricultural development to sustain food security in Nigeria.

This celebration took place when Nigeria recorded the highest level of maize production since its independence and unveiled the rejuvenated maize pyramids. Maize production increased from 914,000 tons (t) in 1960 to 11,600,000 t in 2021 with an annual growth rate of 178,570 t, making Nigeria the second largest maize producing country in Africa and the 14th largest producing country globally.

"This impressive achievement presents a shining example of the remarkable

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Integrated Agriculture Activity honors 169 stakeholders on World Agriculture Day



Integrated Agriculture Activity Chief of Party, Dr Prakash Kant Silwal, delivering opening remarks at the 2022 World Agriculture Day Celebration in Yola, Adamawa State.

USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) implemented by [IITA](http://www.iita.org) and its partners honored 169 stakeholders from Adamawa and Borno states to celebrate 2022 World Agriculture Day.

The event in Yola had government officials, dignitaries, and other participants from both states who attended the award ceremony and agriculture exhibitions.

IAA Chief of Party Prakash Kant Silwal, who elaborated on this year's theme: "Growing a Climate for Tomorrow," encouraged farmers to make the environment a safer place. Silwal used the occasion to commend the support of government officials, trainers, field agents, extension agents, supervisors, community development officers, and nutrition liaison officers, which the Activity has enjoyed since 2019. "We are indeed grateful for how much you have supported us in ensuring that the northeast does not lack sufficient food and nutrition," he said.

One of the recipients of the award for excellence, Adamawa State Commissioner for Livestock and

Aquaculture, praised the Activity for contributing immensely towards the growth of Adamawa State in the areas of agriculture and entrepreneurship. He assured that the state government would continue to support such laudable projects in the state.

During the award ceremony, some of the male and female categories included Best Smallholder Farmer, Best Community-based Seed Producer, Best Livestock Farmer, and Farm Waste-to-Wealth Technology Award. *Contributed by Joke Fayemi*



Top right: Representative of Asma'u Farms Ltd., recipient of the best seed company in Adamawa State, showcasing their seeds to dignitaries at the IAA-organized World Agriculture Day 2022. **Middle:** Integrated Agriculture Activity's implementing partner, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), displays the power of the Stover Crusher Machine during the World Agriculture Day 2022 exhibition. **Bottom:** Some award recipients with IAA staff at this year's World Agriculture Day celebration.

impact of years of investment from the Federal Government of Nigeria. It acknowledges the continuous involvement, dedication, and commitment of a multitude of research, development, financial, and other institutions; seed and input suppliers; and supportive government policies that other African countries can emulate," said National President of the Association, Dr Bello Abubakar.

The Maize Association of Nigeria, established at IITA, Ibadan, in 1991 to catalyze increased productivity of maize in farmers' fields, has played an important role in achieving this impressive growth in maize production. To encourage continuous improvement, Abubakar said the Association encourages maize farmers to adopt new varieties and learn new technologies to increase production. Succeeding in this would propel Nigeria to become a major maize

exporter, putting the economy in a stronger position.

During the anniversary celebrations, the founders of the Association, Drs S.K. Kim and S.O. Ajala, were

recognized for their pivotal role during the establishment of the Association and their significant contributions to the growth and achievements of the Association.

Contributed by Dr Abebe Menkir



Dr Sam Ajala (in purple) being recognized by the Maize Association of Nigeria.

IITA researchers to develop innovations for cassava production using end-user information

Esther Oluwatosin Obafunsho, a young female researcher, recently led [IITA's](#) gender and research team from the Cassava Breeding Unit to conduct fieldwork for a technographic study of cassava users' activities through case studies in Osun and Imo states in Nigeria. Technography is the observation, description, and study of technologies and their application within a particular ecological, social, and historical context.



Obafunsho (squatting) in an open market at Igbaie community in Osun State, with women cassava processors and buyers.

The gender-focused study was carried out to complement IITA's effort in developing modern and improved cassava clones that respond to end-users' preferences.

On 24 March, Obafunsho highlighted the research in a presentation titled "Contexts and practices: A gendered technography of farmer-processor cassava activities in Nigeria". She said the research aimed to identify aspirations, constraints, and opportunities within cassava farming-processing-marketing activities in Osun and Imo. They did this by mapping "context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations" and how they differ for men and women cassava users and determine opportunities and challenges for men and women among the various value chain actors.

The team also mapped out the ways actors are organized, how cooperation and organization differ by gender and value chain actor, and why they differ. They unveiled hidden mechanisms such as cultural beliefs, community

organization, prestige, and historical knowledge, embedded within the communities. These mechanisms were identified as factors that shape aspirations, opportunities, and challenges for men and women in their daily cassava-related activities. Fieldwork, e.g., indicated that women would prefer small processing machines that can be individually owned rather than initiatives focused on larger machines, group work, and processing centers.

In an interview with Favour Eleta, IITA Gender Communication Liaison, Obafunsho shared her experience

working with the gender team. She said she has learned how to navigate an international work environment, as her previous experience was with national research organizations. She also mentioned the importance of validating people's knowledge in the communities where the research is being carried out through intercultural dialogue. Explaining why she worked with the gender team, Obafunsho said, "My passion is to ensure equity, inclusiveness, and diversity."

Obafunsho is an MSc student from Wageningen University who has been working as an intern with the IITA

Cassava Breeding Unit on qualitative social science research. Obafunsho is supervised by Drs Harro Maat and Birgit Boogaard (Technology, Knowledge and Innovation Group at Wageningen University, the Netherlands) and [Béla Teeken](#), Associate Social and Gender Scientist in IITA. *Contributed by Favour Eleta*



Left: Obafunsho (squatting) and some team members with the Afaji of Faji Community, one of the selected communities in Osun State. Right: The entire research team with a woman processor and her husband, at Umuakpu community in Imo State.



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IITA management engages new UI Vice Chancellor on first visit



IITA management delegation with the Vice Chancellor and UI management staff.

An [IITA](#) management delegation paid a courtesy visit to the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan (UI), Prof Kayode Adebowale, on 24 March. The visit consolidated the longstanding partnership between both institutions as the 13th Vice Chancellor of the University begins his tenure.

In 1967, when IITA was established, Nigeria was in the middle of a civil war. Giving a brief history of the relationship between the two institutions, [Kenton Dashiell](#), IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, said: “The University of Ibadan was one of the reasons the Ford and Rockefeller foundations insisted on locating IITA in Nigeria, knowing that the University will provide needed partnership for the Institute.”

Dashiell enumerated the areas of similarity IITA shares with the University, “We work on all types of research in agriculture, transforming agricultural value chains. We are also for partnerships, extension, and delivery, just like the University.”

In 2006, the two institutions signed a memorandum of understanding to

strengthen the research capacity of students and collaborate on projects. Over the years, IITA has bolstered UI students’ research through the Graduate Research Program and Internship Program. Modupe Banwo, IITA External Training Manager, said, “Since 2013, IITA has trained 310 student interns. For the Graduate Research Program, of the 374 MSc and graduate students registered, 324 have graduated successfully, including Prof Felix Salako, the current Vice Chancellor of FUNAAB, Prof Kehinde Babatunde, and Prof Morufat Balogun, who are doing well and giving back to society.”

Prof Adebowale was pleased to see that the IITA team consisted of four females and two males. He said his board also acknowledges the role of women and the importance

of their inclusion in managerial roles. “Women in managerial roles are a positive sign of great development,” he added.

He was at IITA in 2017 with a group of other delegates, reporting on what obtained in science, technology, and innovation for the development of agriculture and agro-allied industries, to the President of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari. He said, “Of the 22 countries visited globally, IITA provided the bedrock for the content of the report presented.”

[Sylvia Oyinlola](#), Head Administration, West Africa, invited the VC to revisit IITA to see the various developmental projects of the Institute since his last visit in 2017. She added that IITA has leveraged digital research and apps to improve agricultural extension services in the country. Oyinlola said, “IITA has [RadiolITA](#) to disseminate good agricultural practices (GAP) to farmers; [Akilimo](#) and [SeedTracker](#) apps to help farmers identify quality seeds and make right hands-on decisions on their farms.”

Prof Adebowale promised to revisit the Institute to revitalize partnership agreements and bring up new areas of partnerships and collaboration with IITA, especially in research, journal publishing, and citations.

Dashiell said that IITA values its relationship with the University as one of its most important partners and promised to uphold the partnership that has been ongoing between the institutions for 55 years.

Contributed by Folake Oduntan



University of Ibadan Vice Chancellor, Prof Kayode Adebowale (left), with IITA DDDG-P4D Dr Kenton Dashiell.