

## Farmer-preferred, CBSD-resistant cassava varieties released by Central Africa breeding program

The USAID-funded Action to Control Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) hosted the ceremony to nominate newly released cassava varieties.



Participants holding some of the selected cassava varieties.

They were selected using end users' preferences, particularly resistance to CBSD, in a participatory variety selection (PVS) approach, completed by a sensory test. The naming ceremony took place in the Ruzizi Plain, South Kivu Province, DRC.

The PVS comprised a collection of some of the best-improved varieties released earlier in DRC, and promising clones in advanced breeding trials were screened over three years in a CBSD's hotspot site of the Ruzizi Plain. From a total of 30 genotypes in the first year, eight clones were subjected to a final evaluation along with check varieties comprising two improved (a resistant variety 'NAROCASS 1' and a susceptible variety 'OBAMA') and a popular local variety (Doroetea).

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## IITA and Mastercard Foundation engage investors in agribusinesses



L-R: Director of Agribusiness, Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture, Aramide Ganzallo; IITA Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, Hilde Koper; Country Head, Mastercard Foundation Nigeria, Chidinma Lawanson; Ecobank Managing Director, Bolaji Lawal; and I-Youth Project Executive Director, Aline Mugisho during the I-Youth Project Agribusiness Investment Forum.

[IITA](#) and Mastercard Foundation have engaged the organized private sector to create profitable partnerships with youth-led agribusinesses to transform and revolutionize the agricultural sector and unlock its opportunities.

Both organizations made this known at the ‘The Agribusiness Investment Forum’ organized by Innovative Youth in Agriculture (I-Youth) held on 18 June.

Speaking at the event, IITA Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, [Hilde Koper](#), explained that the Institute had done a lot in scaling technologies and innovations while providing the much-needed capacity, knowledge, and skills to attract youth participation in agriculture. However, she conceded that they need more support from investors to retain their interest in the sector.

While singling out Mastercard Foundation for providing necessary funding for agribusiness training, Koper stated that it has become essential for the private sector to provide loans or microcredit to youth-led enterprises to scale their businesses. She stressed that successful youth-led agribusinesses are also a viable employment opportunity for Nigerian Youth.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Country Head, Mastercard Foundation-Nigeria, Chidinma Lawanson, stated that the Foundation aims to leverage the youth population in Africa to deliver on the target of providing 7 million dignified and fulfilling jobs in the agricultural sector. She noted that IITA is a strategic partner in realizing this objective.

“We remain committed to working with IITA to train the youth to have linkages to financial services and work opportunities. Also, create that access to market to make sure that there are no goods lost by evaluating the entire value chain from production to micro processing, warehousing, etc., and IITA has been a strong partner in achieving this,” she said.

While admitting that youth tend to be more attracted to the creative industries than agriculture, she said the narrative seems to be changing for the agric sector in recent times, particularly with the introduction of technologies and innovation by strategic partners.

Executive Manager, I-Youth Project, [Aline Mugisho](#), stated that the Institute has assisted in providing the capacity for the youth to become innovation and technology catalysts but lacks the necessary support to bring their ideas to life.

“Agribusiness can have its risk, which includes poor soil and diseases. But at the I-Youth project, we are bringing innovations and technologies and skilled youth into the market, which helps mitigate the risks. We have been investing in the business of young agripreneurs and would require viable partnerships with the private sector to transform the agricultural sector. There are challenges in the agric sector, but with the right expertise, good research and soil analysis, climate-

smart agriculture technologies, and mechanization, Nigeria can become the food basket of Africa. We need the private sector to start exploring investment and business opportunities in agriculture to grow the sector,” Mugisho said.

Also speaking, Director, Agribusiness, Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture, Aramide Ganzallo, who represented the Commissioner for Agriculture, Mrs Abisola Olusanya, expressed profound appreciation to IITA and Mastercard Foundation for their commitment to making agriculture attractive to the youth. Ganzallo noted that the Lagos State government would continue to do its best to prioritize the youth by harnessing their potential for the growth of the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

The Agribusiness Investor’s Network Forum was a platform for private, public, and development stakeholders to discover investment opportunities and the role of youth in the agro-industry. Financial institutions, commercial banks, recruitment agencies, agripreneurs, community leaders, angel donors, and Fin-Tech attended the event. It was an opportunity to introduce investors to economic prospects in agribusiness and an avenue to learn about agribusiness markets worldwide, digital financing, import and export opportunities, and profitability in the agri-food system.

*Contributed by Adetola Adenmosun*

## Got a story to share?

Please send your story with photos and captions every Tuesday to [iita-news@cgiar.org](mailto:iita-news@cgiar.org) or Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)) and Uzoma Agha ([u.gha@cgiar.org](mailto:u.gha@cgiar.org)).



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## Farmer-preferred, CBSD-resistant cassava varieties released by Central Africa continued from page 1

Unfortunately, all the improved varieties succumbed to CBSD for leaf and root necrosis.

From the field evaluation, five clones, free from CBSD roots symptoms at harvesting, were selected by farmers. The data confirmed that the five clones outperformed the checks with the agronomic data collected. Among these five clones, two were chosen for leaf quality as vegetables because of their light red petiole, indicating that they would require less oil to cook.

### Sensory test

In addition, the roots of each evaluated variety were processed either as chikwangue or flour to prepare fufu—the main market product of cassava in DRC. Consumers assessed prepared foods during the sensory test, from

where four clones were rated as the best among the five previously selected in the fields. These four clones showed good quality of paste and chikwangue and were proposed for release.

The naming ceremony was held at Kamanyola, near Katogota in the Ruzizi Plain. Fifty-two participants attended (27 females and 25 males), including 36 community members, particularly farmers, and 16 technicians and researchers from seed multipliers and other private sector stakeholders, the Director of Mulungu-INERA research station and team, SENASEM, [IITA](#), and SNV (extension agents), local authorities and the Inspector of Agriculture of Kivu.

IITA Cassava Breeder Sikirou Mouritala said, “The serial MVZ of these released

varieties are triple resistant to major diseases like CMD, cassava root necrosis disease (CRND), and CBSD in DRC. It is the beginning of a new era in the DRC breeding program. The next step is to have our varieties in large farmer fields all over DRC to establish a good seed system sector and show more of IITA’s impact on food security in DRC.” He continued, “Work is in progress with the Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures with the NextGen project to develop immune varieties for CBSD disease and resistant cultivars suitable for cultivation in DRC. While intensive efforts are focused on preventing the westward migration of CBSD with the IITA Tanzania team.” *Contributed by Michèle Kimpwene*



*The naming ceremony participants in Kamanyola.*

## Networking to improve agriculture: IITA joins other organizations at ECOWAS-Aviana expo

The ECOWAS-Aviana Aviv West Africa Int’l Expo 2022 took place at the University of Ibadan Conference Center from 8 to 9 June. The international B2B exhibition is hosted annually in Nigeria with global participation from companies, farmers, institutions, associations, banks/ insurance brokers, individual professionals, and other private sector stakeholders in agriculture. The conference and exhibition enabled business and personal networking, brand building, new market generation, trade and commerce, and market research.



*Adebowale Akande receiving his award as Best Agribusiness Ambassador.*

In his opening remark, the Expo Chairman, Dr Isaac Bright explained that they organized the conference to share ideas and learn more ways to improve agricultural productivity. “We know that the price of planting materials is increasing daily, so we need ways to increase productivity,” he said.

President of Feed Industry Practitioners Association of Nigeria (FIPAN), Dr Raymond Obiajulu, appreciated all the participating farmers for attending the educative conference. He said that farmers’ patience is paying off, and the agricultural sustainability possible today is a result of their competence and consistency. “Let us learn more today to improve our farming system,” he added.

The Baale of Farmers in Oyo State, the President of African Women in Animal Resources Farming and Agribusiness Network (AWARFA-N), and Presidents of other organizations also gave their goodwill messages.

Nigerian Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar, represented by Cooperative Department Deputy Director Omolara Folasade Oguntuyi, gave the keynote address. Oguntuyi spoke about the importance of agriculture to Nigeria’s economy, especially in providing food and nutrition and as a source of livelihood. She also talked about the government’s support for farmers: “We are improving the agricultural value chain to unlock value for farmers.”

The Ekiti State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr Olabode Adetoyi, encouraged farmers to participate in politics. He explained that when farmers are involved, they can work with the government to come up with policies that favor farmers. The Oyo State Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Adeniyi Olabode Adebisi, represented by Olufunke Adediran, advised farmers to go beyond traditional agriculture and launch into

agribusiness because agriculture is now more of a business. “Let us join hands to promote agriculture and agribusiness,” she said.

Representing the Governor of Oyo State, Engr Seyi Makinde, Special Adviser to the Governor on Agribusiness and Head of Mechanization and Agribusiness at IITA, [Dr Adebowale Akande](#), spoke about the mission of the Oyo State government to turn the state into an agribusiness hub. Highlighting the ongoing projects, Akande mentioned the [Start Them Early Project \(STEP\)](#), a collaboration between the state and IITA that engages secondary school students in agriculture and agribusiness. He also mentioned the Oyo State Youth in Agribusiness program and the transformation of farm settlements in the state into Industrial Agribusiness Hubs. “Farmers should partner with agribusiness programs in Oyo State so that we will have a rich agribusiness hub,” he added.

Concluding the event, awards were presented to companies that have done well in the poultry industry. Chi-Limited, headed by Chief Sunday Eze Obiora, won the prize of best poultry in 2022. Dr Akande won the award for Best Agribusiness Ambassador. It was also announced that by 2023, the award presentation would extend to other countries in Africa.

The IITA stand highlighted the Institute’s innovations, activities, projects with other agricultural organizations, and final products from cassava and other mandate crops such as tit bits, chin-chin, chips, and cake. *Contributed by Favour Eleta*



*Top: IITA staff showcasing IITA products to participants during the exhibition.  
Bottom: Participants standing for the National Anthem.*

# Forest conservationists converge in Olokemeji for third reforestation plantathon

The [IITA Forest Center](#) organized the third marathon tree planting (plantathon) at Olokemeji in June as part of the Olokemeji Reforestation Project. Representatives from project sponsor [Nigerian Breweries Plc](#) participated in the scheduled plantathon to reforest the degraded Olokemeji Forest Reserve. They joined seasoned conservationists from the University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin, Emerald Forest, and Waste Museum, Ibadan, in the tree planting exercise.

In his welcome remarks, IITA Forest Center Patron Dr David Ladipo spoke about research offering scientific data to ensure reforestation is done sustainably. He highlighted a mixed plantation as the proven model for re-creating a forest against monoculture or planting one kind of specie to reforest

degraded forestlands. He lauded IITA Forest Center for adopting the mixed planting system for the reforestation of Olokemeji Forest Reserve.

Prof. Saka Jimoh, Director, [Center for Sustainable Development, University of Ibadan](#), said, “Human needs are being addressed as we take care of biodiversity. We should also harness the cultural wealth of the indigenous residents of the land and incorporate their contributions into the planning of the restoration of Olokemeji Forest Reserve.”

In his response, Field Supervisor at IITA Forest Center Kunle Olasupo, said their contributions informed the choice of the species being replanted.

In a natural forest, different tree species are responsible for the biodiversity

of flora and fauna in the wild. Ladipo said, “With the mixed plantation system adopted by IITA Forest Center, trees can mix the way they are in nature. Meaning we can mimic a natural forest system.” He went further to say, “When we have mixed tree species in a reforested area, the wild animals will come. Birds, who are good pollinating agents, will return too because certain species prefer certain trees to feed on or shelter in. In another ten years, people will consider this reforested area a natural forest.”

Tree species planted include *Terminalia superba*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Erythrophleum suaveolens*, *Cola gigantea*, *Tetraplura tetraphera*, and *Treulia africana*.

Annabelle Umoetuk, Sustainability & CSR Manager at Nigerian Breweries PLC, said, “This reforestation project helps protect the watershed and balance the water we use in production in our four breweries situated in South-West Nigeria—Lagos, Ibadan, Ota, and Ijebu-ode breweries. These breweries sit in the Ogun-Osun river basin, a severely water-stressed region.”

Ladipo applauded [IITA](#) for keeping the Forest Center alive since its inception and for continuing the excellent work of planting trees for ecosystem restoration. He said, “IITA Forest Center is a three-tier forest and a haven for birds.” Birds from Switzerland, Poland, and Russia come to IITA Forest to take refuge there. *Contributed by Folake Oduntan*



*Top left: Nigerian Breweries representatives and invited conservationists with a newly planted seedling.*

*Bottom: Dr David Ladipo, IITA Forest Center Patron, addressing conservationists and invited guests on best practices for reforestation.*