

DG Sanginga celebrates 11 years of transforming African agriculture at the helm of IITA

Dr [Nteranya Sanginga](#) became the Director General at [IITA-CGIAR](#) on 1 November 2011. During his term of 11 years, he has brought about a tremendous transformation in the Institute and the African agricultural landscape.

His leadership tenure has strategically positioned the Institute to contribute to achieving 150 million fewer hungry people, 100 million fewer poor people, improving food and nutrition security, as well as improving natural resources and ecosystem services as part of the [CGIAR Strategy 2016–2030](#).



Dr Sanginga has overseen tremendous transformation in IITA and the African agricultural landscape.

Under the youth agripreneurs program initiated by Dr Sanginga in 2012, IITA has created jobs for thousands of youths by making agriculture and agribusiness appealing to young people in many

African countries. The program has now evolved into a movement across the continent and since been integrated into the Business Incubation Platform (BIP), the technology delivery arm of IITA.

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IITA to partner with CPTI on technology transfer

[IITA-CGIAR](#) recognizes the importance of agriculture in Africa's development; hence, it is open to transferring technology to private and government institutions. In line with this, IITA hosted Mme Mamadou Djiwo Barry, the Director General of Centre Pilote de Technonolgie Industrielle (CPTI), Guinea, at the Institute's headquarters from 8 to 11 November. She visited to explore possible areas of partnership with a focus on potential knowledge and technology transfer.

CPTI has a mission to facilitate the work of farmers for increased yield through mechanization. The organization went through a phase that exposed them to the



Mrs Barry on a tour of SAH where cassava planting materials are multiplied in IITA.

importance of technology in agricultural development. Hence, CPTI came seeking a partnership with IITA for technology transfer. Mme Barry gained access to IITA through IITA Post-Harvest Engineer Diallo Thierno, who had previously partnered with CPTI while in his previous organization.

Mme Barry visited the IITA Communication Office, where Digital Librarian Soji Oloyede highlighted the activities of the Communication Office and Knowledge Center in supporting and showcasing IITA and researchers' work. Stating the various activities to support scientists through their publication cycle, Oloyede mentioned research literature review, manuscript, guidance on the correct process for work submission, publication and archiving, and general inquiry on research resources.



Digital Librarian Soji Oloyede sharing with Mrs Barry the ways Communication Office support researchers and IITA in general.

Mme Barry shared how impressed she was with the excellent service being offered by IITA Communication Office. "From what I have learned here, I can see the importance of a communication center in an organization," she added. Mme Barry also toured other units, including the Genetic Resources Center, Virology Laboratory, Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics (SAH), Cassava Processing, and [Aflasafe/Nodumax](#). She also visited IITA facilities in collaboration with Oyo State, such as schools under the [Start Them Early Program \(STEP\)](#) and Oyo State Youth Agribusiness Park in Awe.



Mrs Mamadou Djiwo Barry at Bishop Philips Academy to assess the agribusiness training under STEP for secondary school students.

In a wrap-up meeting with IITA Management staff, Mme Barry appreciated the Institute's warm welcome and enlightening tour. Highlighting areas of her interest, she mentioned Capacity Development, Knowledge Management, Virology, SAH, and [Youth in Agribusiness](#) programs, including STEP. She stated that CPTI has been training and setting up youths as mechanics and electricians, but IITA has opened her eyes to a broader area of training in agribusiness and mechanization.



Mrs Barry in a meeting with the IITA management team.

IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#), indicated his support for all the areas she highlighted for collaboration. He added that this could be the beginning of a healthy partnership between IITA and CPTI while suggesting that Mme Barry could be the link between IITA and Guinea. "I recommend that you start up with the youth program in your country since we have a model that will make the set-up prompt. My colleagues will work out the details of the partnership, and I will follow up," he concluded.

Contributed by Ochuwa Favour Daramola

CGIAR discusses One Health approach as key to improved planetary health

CGIAR organized a webinar to discuss [One Health](#). IITA-CGIAR Associate Scientist Titilayo Falade, who works with Mycotoxin/Pathology and Aflasafe Unit, co-led the webinar with [Vivian Hoffman](#), Senior Research Fellow, [International Food Policy Research Institute \(IFPRI\)](#). The webinar featured presentations by IITA Molecular Entomologist [Rousseau Djouaka](#), [Arshnee Moodley](#), Team Leader Antimicrobial Resistance Hub, [International Livestock Research Institute \(ILRI\)](#), and other international experts.

Experts at the webinar also discussed the trade-offs at the interface of plant health with animal, ecosystem, and human health and the need to maintain a healthy planet as crucial for sustainability.

The webinar highlighted sustainable intensification that allows increased food production without jeopardizing natural habitats, avoiding excessive greenhouse emissions, and the responsible use of agrochemicals that minimize

antimicrobial and insecticide resistance risks to human and animal health to promote One Health.

In addition, the webinar stressed the need to protect plants without leaving excessive pesticide residues that are harmful to the environment, humans, and animals. Participants highlighted strategies for plant protection from natural toxins like aflatoxins that negatively affect human and animal health using effective pre-harvest solutions like Aflasafe and accessible postharvest strategies like tarpaulin. They also noted the role of gender inclusivity in One Health.

The webinar revealed the need for interdisciplinary collaboration in the generation of innovations in the delivery of plant health services, such as establishing plant health clinics through trained extension workers with a One Health lens. This would solve the farmers' problems and ensure food security and safety for the consumers.



IITA Associate Scientist Titilayo Falade co- led the One Health webinar.

Following the webinar, an opinion piece was published in the Center for Agricultural and Bioscience International (CABI) Agriculture and Bioscience titled "[A One Health Approach to Plant Health](#)". This webinar and the publication contribute to knowledge on the importance of plant health in the One Health discussions, which is normally de-emphasized in other approaches.

Contributed by Anita Akinyomade

Leading IITA conservationist boosts urban ecology research in Africa

Urbanization converts natural areas into built environments, and scientists are keenly investigating how this global human-induced activity affects biodiversity to propose actionable plans for amelioration purposes. Adewale Awoyemi, Head of [IITA Forest Center](#), delivered a seminar on 19 October titled "Status of urban ecology in Africa: A systematic review". The presentation was based on his PhD research supervised by Juan Diego Ibanez-Alamo of the University of Granada in Spain.

Awoyemi and Ibanez-Alamo conducted a rigorous literature search in Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar to determine what is known regarding African urban ecology in the last century (1920-2020) and found only about 800 relevant peer-reviewed scientific papers.

Compared to other regions such as North America and Europe, the publication rate on urban ecology from Africa was meager, with less than 10 papers published per year from the entire African continent up

to the 1990s. About 28% of countries in Africa were never studied in terms of urban ecology, whereas South Africa alone accounts for about 40% of all published papers, already suggesting mismatches in the research effort. In addition, all the studies were either conducted at the city (55%) or local/country (34%) level, suggesting the lack of transnational research collaboration among African urban ecologists.

Awoyemi said, "We had expected that countries with high current or future urban expansion would be significantly more studied as such research effort could contribute important data needed for sustainable urban development in Africa. This is very important because those rapidly urbanizing countries are mainly found in the Afro-tropical region with huge but dwindling biodiversity for which urbanization is a leading cause. We need to re-orientate our research efforts to cover unrepresented African countries, regions, and taxa we found in our study. This is crucial to achieving the



Head of IITA Forest Center, Adewale G. Awoyemi, is an ornithologist and biodiversity conservationist.

11th Sustainable Development Goal in the rapidly urbanizing African continent."

The author made several suggestions that could boost urban ecology research efforts in Africa, such as training and capacity building of African urban ecologists, strengthening collaboration between researchers and institutes, and increased funding and awareness creation. Awoyemi said their review has already shown that African urban dwellers are willing to promote urban nature, which could be leveraged to promote urban nature in Africa.

Contributed by Folake Oduntan

IITA and partners organize SISCA baseline study restitution workshop in Cameroon

From 8 to 10 November, [IITA-CGIAR](#) organized a workshop to validate the results of the diagnostic and evaluation of the maize seed market and cassava planting materials of the Strengthening the Supply of Improved Seeds and Improved Public-private Partnership in Central Africa (SISCA) project in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The workshop was attended by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Cameroon, represented by Stanislas Bila, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Regulation and Quality Control of Agricultural Inputs and Products (DRCQ); the Regional Representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Emime Ndiokubwayo; the representative of the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD), Mike Akem; the representative of the extension service, Ndam Njiemessa Mournir; and representatives of several companies and local structures involved in the production and distribution of seeds and private companies and cooperatives of producers and processors of corn and cassava.

On the IITA side, Marie Claire represented IITA-Cameroon Resident Representative [Masso Cargele](#), who closed the workshop. Three IITA experts, SISCA Coordinator [Pheneas Ntawuruhunga](#), SISCA Project Coordination Team Member Alfred Mutundi, and IITA Impact Economist [Paul Dontsop](#) also participated.

In her opening remarks, Ndiokubwayo said that SISCA is working in the three countries of the central Africa region—Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo. It aims to improve the access of smallholder farmers (women, men, and young people) to quality maize and cassava seeds in a sustainable manner and at an affordable price, based on strengthening a “research-administration private-sector partnership”.

The stakeholders expressed joy at being associated with this activity which constitutes a baseline and the clarification of the starting points for the

improvement of the Cameroon seed sector as established in the roadmap proposed based on the results of the study.

After validation of the study's results, a platform of seed actors was formed for a collaborative framework between the public and private sectors of the seed industry in Cameroon. The platform's representatives at the regional level have been temporarily appointed by the various actors of the regions represented in this workshop, the Littoral, the South, and the Centre regions.

This platform will constitute a framework for consultation, exchanges, and orientation on implementing the seed law and regulation to create a favorable environment allowing farmers

to access quality seed in quantity and at the desired time. At the end of the exchanges, a seed roadmap and a model of collaboration between the Cameroon seed stakeholders were adopted.

With a view to technical capacity building, priority has been given to the capacity building of researchers, certification agents, seed producers and distributors, and extension agents. The capacity development would focus on seed regulations and certification, varietal maintenance, production and quality assurance of certified basic seed, and seed business management.

Contributed by Ntawuruhunga Pheneas (PNtawuruhunga@cgiar.org) and Mutundi Alfred Nseleka (A.Mutundi@cgiar.org)



IFAD Regional Representative, Mrs Emime Ndiokubwayo, speaking at the workshop opening.



Four members proposed to temporarily lead the platform.

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The [IITA Youth Agripreneurs](#) program focuses on mentoring and building the capacity of young people, particularly in science, entrepreneurship, and agriculture/agribusiness in Africa.

DG Sanginga started BIP in 2013 to oversee the delivery of IITA's science and technologies in breeding and variety screening, genetics, cultivation techniques, plant health, disease control and biopesticide development, growth stimulation, and vegetative and generative multiplication to end-users across Africa.

IITA-BIP serves as a model to stimulate product development and to provide opportunities for market expansion in the continent.

BIP is helping smallholder farmers improve their livelihoods through technologies such as Aflasafe, a safe and natural solution to the aflatoxin problem, and Nodumax, an inoculant and biofertilizer that boosts the yield of crops like soybeans.

Adopting the use of ICT, the GoSeed initiative under IITA-BIP is producing and marketing quality breeder and foundation seeds to private seed companies for distribution and sale to farmers.

The ground-breaking results from IITA's research are helping to strengthen national agricultural research and extension systems. These outputs are also strengthening Africa's seed sector, scaling models—public-private partnerships, engaging youth in agriculture, and developing improved varieties, agronomy, and crop protection.

During Dr Sanginga's tenure, IITA's research has also helped establish sustainable intensification and diversification, link smallholder farmers to markets, and promote mechanization, postharvest processing, and value addition. His leadership has established the importance of gender and youth while developing safe and nutritious food, which will strategically impact the

progress of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

Under Dr Sanginga's 11 years of leadership, IITA received the Al-Sumait Award for Food Security in 2016 and the Africa Food Prize in 2018. The institute has transformed from a pan-African research organization into the largest international agricultural research center in tropical Africa, developing solutions to agricultural and development challenges and contributing to food and nutrition security in the region.

In 2021, he was conferred the title of Aare Afurugbin Ola of the Source (Lead Sower of Wealth and Prosperity of the House Oduduwa) by the Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Enitan Adeyeye, Ojaja II. The conferment recognized Dr Sanginga's achievements as one of the illustrious sons of Africa who has contributed immensely to the development and promotion of the continent's financial and economic stability and growth.

Contributed by Katherine Lopez



Bird's eye view of the Business Incubation Platform (BIP) at IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Got a story to share?

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