

**One Day Dialogue on addressing the yield gap in Cassava during COVID-19 Era:
The Role of Cassava Seed System and The Six Steps to Weed Management &
Best Planting Practices of Akilimo**

24 November 2020

IITA, Ibadan.

Communiqué

The meeting was attended by 30 participants including Commissioners for Agriculture from Delta, Ekiti and Osun States; Permanent Secretaries and Directors in the ministry of agriculture of Kogi, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Ogun and Lagos States. The meeting which received a welcome address from the IITA Deputy Director General (Partnerships for Delivery), Dr. Kenton Dashiell on behalf of IITA Director General, focused on presentation of the six steps to weed management & best practices tool, which has been embedded into AKILIMO, and other digital tools. Seven presentations were made: six on digital tools by IITA scientists and one on the need to ban Paraquat by Prof. Mohammed Yahaya of the University of Ibadan. Emanating from the robust discussions on the presentations by all participants are the following understanding and resolutions:

1. Cassava productivity (less than 10 tons per hectare) in Nigeria is comparatively poor and is responsible for the low performance of the Country in cassava export in spite of being the global leader in cassava production (59 million tons per annum).
2. Given the prime position of cassava to food security and as raw material to industry, efforts should be intensified to improve productivity to attract more people into cassava production.
3. The six steps to weed management and best planting practices tool developed by Cassava Weed Management Project/African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (CWMP/ACAI) has shown good results helping farmers to increase productivity to about 20 tons per hectare. Also, the cassava seed system, AKILIMO, Seed tracker and other digital tools developed by IITA have good potentials to help improve cassava productivity.
4. Effort must be intensified to out scale these tools to farmers in different States of Nigeria.

5. The State governors must be involved in out scaling the tools to the farmers across Nigeria.
6. Delta, Ekiti, Lagos and Osun States are ready to collaborate with IITA to out scale the six steps to weed management and best planting practices.
7. Formal request for collaboration with IITA should be submitted through Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated Cassava Seed System Phase 2, (BASICS-II) Project.
8. Given the toxicity, misuse, and the global rejection of paraquat, the advocacy by the Coalition Against Paraquat (CAP) for the ban of paraquat is a worthy cause and should be supported by all State Governments.
9. The governors' forum should be directly approached to give active backing to the ban of paraquat. Also, the commissioners for agriculture who have direct oversight control on herbicide purchases should be fully intimated and involved in the campaign to ban paraquat.
10. Farmer groups (end users) and agro dealers (distributors) should be fully involved in the campaign to ban paraquat.
11. This advocacy or campaign should be extended to other identified toxic chemicals in the near future.

Signed:

-----Date: -----

Honorable Julius Egbedi

Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture,

Delta State

Signed:

-----Date: -----

Honorable Dr Olabode Adetoye
Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture,
Ekiti State

Signed:

-----Date: -----

Honorable Adedayo Adewole
Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture,
Osun State