

Wednesday 28 November, 2012 Updated 4:37

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### **Improved Agricultural Production to Boost Farmers' Income**

26 Nov 2012

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Cassava products

By Crusoe Osagie

Research for development partners has launched a major new programme called Humidtropics that would help to boost incomes of poor farm families, mostly led by women, from agriculture in the humid tropics while preserving the land for future generations.

The CGIAR Research Programme on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics, otherwise known as Humidtropics, will help tackle the challenge of hunger and poverty in the tropical region.

At an inception meeting in the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, Oyo State, these partners developed a plan to widen participation and to firm up the road map that will advance the implementation of what possibly will become the largest multi-stakeholder initiative to tackle development challenges in the humid tropics.

“Humidtropics helps farm families to make better decisions about making their living and living their lives while caring for the environment they cultivate,” said Dr. Ylva Hillbur, Deputy Director General (Research) with the IITA, the lead Institute for the programme, at the launch highlighted by a ceremonial tree planting ceremony.

Home to the bulk of the rural poor, the humid and sub-humid tropics are the vast hot and wet areas around the equator that are associated with poor household nutrition and soil fertility depletion. More than 2.9 billion people in this region - humid lowlands, moist savannas, and tropical highlands in the tropical Americas, Asia, and Africa - depend on about 3 billion hectares of land for their livelihoods.

The humid tropics span agricultural systems from the integrated tree crops-based systems such as cocoa in West Africa, banana-based systems in East and Central Africa to intensive-mixed systems in Asia and vulnerable integrated crop-livestock systems in Central America and the Caribbean. Intensifying agriculture in these areas offers the best potential to reduce poverty, especially among women and other vulnerable groups.

Researchers said that Humidtropics provides a new integrated agricultural systems approach, a single research-for-development (R4D) plan, and a unique partnerships platform to achieve better impact on poverty and ecosystems integrity.

Over the next 15 years, it is expected that Humidtropics will increase staple food crop yields by 60 per cent, average farm income by 50 per cent, lifting 25 per cent of poor households above the poverty line, reduce the number of malnourished children by 30 per cent, and restore 40 per cent of degraded farms to sustainable resource management. In this way, Humidtropics will serve as a model to other institutions seeking to link agricultural systems research to developmental impact.

Partners collaborating with IITA in implementation of the Humidtropics include the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the International Potato Centre (CIP), Bioversity International, the **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)**, the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), AVRDC – The World Vegetable Centre, and the Wageningen University.

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