



UNU-INRA *Sparkle*

Volume 2, Issue 1

Enhancing Capacities for Managing Africa's Natural Resources

UNU-INRA Strategies for 2015-2018



Dr. Elias T. Ayuk, UNU-INRA Director

UNU-INRA, the only institute of the United Nations University based in Africa, has for the past 28 years been poised to addressing key challenges of natural resource management (NRM) in Africa. In spite of the institute's numerous research efforts and the activities of other similar research institutions, the challenges on the continent still remain relevant.

In view of the above, UNU-INRA, in the course of the next four years (2015-2018), will strategically continue to provide the needed platform to strengthen the capacity of African universities and other research institutions to undertake research to inform policies on the proper management of the continent's natural resources. The institute will also position itself to provide support to the UN system and other regional organisations. In this regard, UNU-INRA identifies three main directions that will guide

its activities from 2015 to 2018. During the plan period, the aim of the institute will be to:

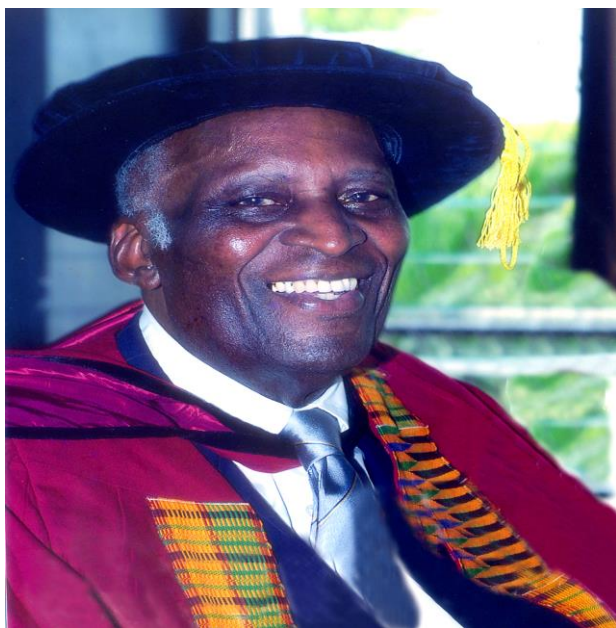
1. Empower researchers at African Universities and other research institutions (to undertake research to inform policies on sustainable, efficient and equitable management of natural resources in Africa)
2. Support member states and other UN agencies in generating knowledge on emerging natural resource management issues
3. Strengthen the internal capacity and networks of UNU-INRA

Within the context of the new proposed strategic directions, there is therefore the need to refine the institute's existing programmes to reflect the new focus and take advantage of emerging opportunities. As a result, UNU-INRA shall work in the following programme areas:

- Harnessing Renewable Natural Resources for Efficient and Sustainable Use;
- Promoting a Green Economy; and
- Facilitating Good Governance and Management of Non-Renewable Natural Resources in Africa.

In terms of structure, the institute will continue to strengthen its Visiting Scholars' programme. UNU-INRA shall also restructure its College of Research Associates (CRA) in order to align it to the new priorities. Similarly, the institute will review the location and establishment of its Operating Units.

The Birth of UNU-INRA, the Story as Narrated by Prof. Alexandra A. Kwapong



Prof. Alexandra A. Kwapong, a Founding Member of UNU-INRA

As Vice-Rector for Institutional Planning and Resource Development at the United Nations University, it was my responsibility to oversee the creation of two new institutions: WIDER – the World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki, Finland and UNU-INRA – the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa.

The setting up of UNU-INRA as the second UNU research and training institution in Africa was a priority that had been identified by African research scientists and scholars during our various UNU consultations. The path to its eventual full realisation was long, arduous and chequered and demanded a lot of perseverance, confidence and resilience on our part.

We were fortunate in getting the African members on the UNU Council led by Professor Walter Kamba, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe and the then Chairman of the UNU Council, (the other members were Dr. Marie-Therese Basse - Senegal, Dr. Martha Mvungi - Tanzania and Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo - Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso) to throw their formidable

weight behind UNU-INRA at the crucial 28th session of the UNU Council which then formally voted on 18th December, 1986 to establish UNU-INRA as the second research and training centre.

We now had to find a home and the funding for the approved Institute. After several visits to Cote D'Ivoire, I was able to meet with President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who agreed that Côte d'Ivoire would host UNU-INRA at the lavish facilities of l'Institut National Supérieur de l'Enseignement Technique (INSET) at Yamoussoukro. Due to political and other reasons, there was a stalemate on the Ivorian side. It was at this stage that the UNU Rector, Dr. Gurgulino de Souza, invited me to help find a home for UNU-INRA in Ghana, which had been a stalwart supporter of the UNU right from its inception.

We then called upon the main Government Ministers (Secretaries as they were then called) of the Rawlings Government, who agreed to host UNU-INRA in Ghana and accord it all the necessary diplomatic and other supportive facilities.

Concerning the location for UNU-INRA, all agreed, after some delicate negotiations on our part that the best place was the University of Ghana in Accra and we were able to persuade the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, to provide UNU-INRA with all the necessary support.

The first two directors, Dr. Bede Okigbo and Dr. Uzo Mokwunye, with the direction and help of the UNU-INRA Board, firmly established UNU-INRA as an important United Nations University research and training centre. It is a great source of pleasure and pride for me that this novel and distinct institution has been able to celebrate its 25th Anniversary, and that currently under the very able Directorship of Dr. Elias T. Ayuk, the UNU-INRA is fulfilling its mandate as a centre for research and advanced training on the effective use and management of Africa's natural resource endowment.

UNU-INRA Receives Support from ACPC

The United Nations University – Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) has received a grant of US\$ 850 000 from the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). This grant will allow UNU-INRA to carry out a two year research project on climate change, agricultural trade and food security in ECOWAS.

The overall objective of the project is to assess whether or not agricultural production systems and trade policies in ECOWAS can be adjusted to alleviate the impact of climate change on food security, and promote sustainable development in the region.

The outputs of the research project will support the effort of ACPC in increasing the capacity of Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for climate change management.

UNU-INRA's Director Participates in a Regional Sustainable Development Transition Workshop

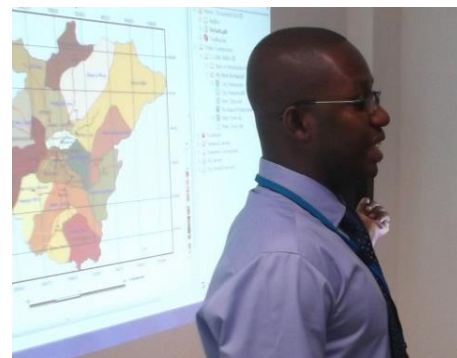


Dr. Ayuk, UNU-INRA's Director, (1st from the left – front roll) in a group photograph with other delegates of the workshop

The Director of UNU-INRA, Dr. Elias T. Ayuk, took part in a three-day regional workshop, dubbed “*Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through transformative governance practices and vertical alignment at the national and sub-national levels*”, in Nairobi. The workshop was organized by the African Technology

Policy Studies Network (ATPS) in collaboration with SDPlanNet partners from Latin America and Caribbean region, and Asia & Pacific. It brought together 27 participants including government planners, policy-makers, civil society organisations, and experts from across Africa to advance a community of practice (CoP) and create a knowledge base and capacity building agenda for national and sub-national strategy-making, planning and implementation in preparation for the delivery of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

UNU-INRA Enhances the Capacity of Ghanaian Students in GIS in Tokyo



Mr. Kwabena O. Asubonteng, Facilitating the GIS Training

UNU-INRA's Geo-Information Fellow, Mr. Kwabena Owusu Asubonteng, was one of the key facilitators of a training that aims at improving the capacity of selected post-graduate Ghanaian students of the United Nations University Institute for Sustainability & Peace (UNU-ISP), in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The students, who are also working on the project “*Enhancing Resilience to Climate and Ecosystem Changes in Semi-Arid Africa: An Integrated Approach*” (CECAR Africa Project) were trained on using ArcGIS to process field data from the project scientists.

The training, held in Tokyo- Japan, was organised under the CECAR Africa Project with the support of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – Ghana.

UNU-INRA's Researcher to Mentor AWARD Fellow



Dr. Effiom Oku, UNU-INRA Senior Research Fellow for Land & Water Resources

A Senior Researcher at UNU-INRA in the area of Land and Water resources, Dr. Effiom Oku, has been appointed by the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) to mentor one of its Fellows. This was communicated to the UNU-INRA Researcher during a 5-day Mentoring Orientation Workshop (MOW) organised by AWARD, from February 17 – 21, 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr Oku's mentee, Nikiruka Celestina Odoh is a lecturer at the Department of Soil Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

UNU-INRA Welcomes a Green Economy Research Fellow for Gender



Dr. Euphrasie Kouame of UNU-INRA

UNU-INRA has welcomed a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Dr Euphrasie Kouame, a

Gender Expert for its Green Economy programme area. Dr. Kouame joined UNU-INRA on 3rd March, 2014. She is an Economist, specialized in Development Economics, and Environmental Economics. Her research interests include gender issues and applied econometric modelling.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GIS Training for Professionals in Natural Resources Management

Date: **12th -23rd May, 2014**

Register Now @ UNU-INRA Office or

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About UNU-INRA

UNU-INRA enhances the capacity of African researchers to conduct research on natural resources management so as to inform policy formulation and implementation.

Although UNU-INRA is an institute of the UNU system, it was an African concept developed by some committed top African scientists. Its establishment is supported by the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the Organization of African Union (OAU). On this strong political and moral support, UNU-INRA was established in 1986.

Sparkle is a quarterly newsletter of UNU-INRA.

Sparkle means Sustainability through Partnership in Africa where Resources are optimally utilized using Knowledge that is holistic, Leadership that is inclusive and Economy that is green.

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