



Prof Appolinaire Djikeng, new ILRI, Director General. Photo Credit: ILRI



Dr Eliane Ubalijoro, the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CIFOR-ICRAF and Director General of ICRAF. Photo Credit: ICRAF.



Dr Simeon Ehui, the new IITA Director General. Photo Credit: IITA.

Three Africans to head CGIAR research centres

By Murimi Gitari

THE International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has tapped Dr Simeon Ehui, a senior executive at the World Bank, as its next Director General, making him the second African to lead the 55-year-old research and innovation institution.

Dr Ehui, a national of Côte d'Ivoire, will also double as the Regional Director for Continental Africa of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) a global partnership of 15 international organisations involved in food security research.

His appointment is effective August 1, when he will formally take over from IITA's long-serving Director-General Nteranya Sanganyo, who is retiring.

Dr Ehui has over 30 years' experience in agriculture and sustainable development and was, until his latest appointment, the World Bank's Regional Director for Sustainable Development in West and Central Africa.

The IITA Board of Trustees and CGIAR, in a statement announcing Dr Ehui's appointment, said the new Director General is expected to build on the organisations' proven track record of impact, working with teams and partners to improve livelihoods, enhance food and nutrition security, increase employment, and preserve natural resources across Africa.

Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, the IITA Deputy Director General and Director for Research for Development (R4D), will serve as the interim Director General before Dr Ehui takes over.

Dr Ehui's appointment at IITA is one of three major management changes at CGIAR centres recently, which have seen Africans take the top positions.

The Board of Trustees for CIFOR-ICRAF has also recently appointed Dr Eliane Ubalijoro as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CIFOR-ICRAF and Director General of ICRAF.

Dr Ubalijoro becomes the first African woman Director General of a CGIAR research centre and CEO of two centres in CGIAR's 52-year history.

Executive Director of Sustainability in the Digital Age, and Professor of Practice for public-private sector partnerships at McGill University's Institute for the Study of International Development. Over the past two decades, her research has focused on innovation, gender, and sustainable development.

"I see CIFOR-ICRAF as a critical institution, poised to accelerate its research and impact, leading the way to achieving the 2030 goals by harnessing the potential of forestry and agroforestry to create ecosystems that generate prosperity, sustainably," said Dr Ubaljoro, whose appointment is effective May 2023.

Dr Robert Nasi, CIFOR-ICRAF's acting CEO, will take up the position of Chief Operating Officer.

Dr Nasi is a globally recognised forestry scientist who has been researching the ecology and management of tropical forests for the past four decades, including the sustainable use of forest resources and the intersection of conservation and development.

At the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Cameroonian Appolinaire Djikeng is set to take up his new role as the Director General on April 3, replacing Dr Shirley Tarawali, who has been serving in the position in an acting capacity following the retirement of Dr Jimmy Smith in December 2022.

Prof Djikeng, a globally recognised development expert, will also serve as CGIAR Senior Director of Livestock-Based Systems.

Speaking after the announcement of his appointment, Prof Djikeng said: "Livestock development is close to me personally and it is a huge honour and privilege to take the helm of the world's leading livestock research and development organisation, focused on improving outcomes for farmers, addressing challenges related to our environment and the sustainable use



Professor Appolinaire Djikeng. Photo Credit: CTLGH

of natural resources, and delivering solutions to our increasingly vulnerable food systems."

He joins ILRI and CGIAR from the University of Edinburgh, where he is currently a Professor and Chair of Tropical Agriculture and Sustainable Development, as well as the Director, Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health (CTLGH) based at the Roslin Institute.

He will retain his affiliation with the Roslin Institute of the University of Edinburgh to strengthen the

partnership with ILRI and the CGIAR system. Prof Djikeng previously worked with ILRI from 2009-2016 as Technology Manager and then Director of the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa (BeCA)-ILRI Hub. He has received numerous awards, including the 2020 Nelson Mandela Justice Award. He was also recognised by the Decade of Health as one of the 10 people in the United Kingdom changing health.

Photo Credit: ILRI.