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## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

### **Purpose of the conference**

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in partnership with the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Bioversity International, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS), is organizing an Africa-based conference that will focus on banana and plantain research across Africa: lessons learnt and the way forward. Fostering international partnerships is a major objective of the conference, with particular emphasis on establishing the role of research in promoting future commercial activities and trade in banana, plantain and enset. There is an urgent need to target basic and applied research that connects to existing and emerging markets. This unique conference will be the first pan-African meeting to link research to markets in an African context. Key priorities of the conference are:

- Develop an African strategy for the next decade to exploit banana and plantain research
- Strengthen research partnerships to overcome production bottlenecks
- Harmonize research with production trends, emerging markets and trade networks

### **Importance of the conference**

An Africa-based conference focusing on banana and plantain production improvement is long overdue. Banana and plantain are key staple crops in rural households in Africa. In addition, these crops are increasingly being targeted for income generation, through improved linkages with the private sector. Research aimed at improving banana and plantain production urgently needs to be streamlined in order to fully exploit the potential of this important crop for poverty alleviation and income generation. The conference also intends to foster research and trade experiences from other commodities.

### **Likelihood of success and impact**

The conference is being organized by a committed group of key players in Africa and beyond: IITA, KARI, Bioversity International, FARA and ISHS. As such, we have a formidable team of experienced researchers in banana and plantain and other commodities with relevant and transferable knowledge, spanning the full research spectrum. By emphasizing novel partnerships and stronger networks, constraints can be overcome and opportunities for the commercialisation of banana and plantain realised.

This conference aims to guide future directions for banana and plantain research on the continent. Conference contributions will be published as follows:

- A book of abstracts, which will feature all contributions during the conference.
- A special issue of *Acta Horticulturae*, which will contain all peer-reviewed contributed papers.
- A strategy document (*Scripta Horticulturae*), harnessing outputs from plenary discussions and specific sessions, to provide a foundation for directing banana and plantain research in the future.

## Conference outline

The conference will focus on three major themes: **markets and trade**, **production**, and **innovation systems**. Each theme will consist of a plenary session featuring keynote and invited speakers, breakout sessions to cover a broader range of key topics within the theme, in addition to special discussion forums to promote dialogue and an interactive environment. Internationally recognized experts will provide keynote and invited talks, ensuring the highest quality of speakers, presentations and papers covering both scientific and commercial issues. Further interaction will be stimulated by comprehensive poster sessions and field visits.

Sessions within the themes will be organized by a Scientific Committee comprised of international leaders in the field as follows:

- *Markets and trade*
  - Competition and competitiveness on international banana markets
  - Consumer preferences: what do buyers want?
  - Banana markets and market segments: from global market dynamics to niche markets
  - Trade policies and market regulations
- *Production*
  - Responding to climate change
  - Genetic improvement for markets
  - Seed delivery systems
  - Plant health management
  - Intensification versus complexity
  - Post-harvest
- *Innovation systems*
  - How to get technology to the growers
  - Turning farmers into businessmen
  - Connecting farmers to markets
  - Boosting entrepreneurship
  - Privatizing the extension service
  - Lessons learnt from other commodities and continents

During the conference, each theme will be led by a Moderator and supported by Conveners, who will lead the breakout sessions. During the final day of the conference, summary reports will be presented and used to develop a future strategy for banana and plantain research in Africa. This strategy will be published in a special issue of *Scripta Horticulturae*.

## Conference schedule

	<b>Early morning 8.30-10.30</b>	<b>Late morning 11.00-13.00</b>	<b>Early afternoon 14.00-16.00</b>	<b>Late afternoon 16.00-18.00</b>	<b>Evening 19.30-21.00</b>
Sun 6 April					Opening
Mon 7 April	<b>Theme 1: Markets and trade</b> Global banana trends affecting Africa: keynote (1) Markets and trade: Keynote (2), invited (3)		Breakout sessions (4): contributed papers	Posters / stands (structured around breakouts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion panels</li> <li>▪ Special sessions</li> </ul>
Tue 8 April	<b>Theme 2: Production</b> Keynote (2), invited (3)		Breakout sessions (3): contributed papers	Posters / stands (structured around breakouts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion panels</li> <li>▪ Special sessions</li> </ul>
Wed 9 April	<b>Theme 3: Innovation systems</b> Keynote (2), invited (3)		Breakout sessions (3): contributed papers Posters / stands (structured around breakouts) will be combined with lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free</li> <li>▪ Scientific excursion</li> <li>▪ Leisure excursion</li> </ul>	
Thu 10 April	<b>Strategy</b> Keynote (2), invited (3)	Reporting by Chairs and Conveners from the themes (incl. posters): summary and link to overarching conference goal	Breakout sessions (unknown number): moderated discussions	Plenary session: conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Banquet</li> <li>▪ Prizes and awards</li> </ul>

## **About the venue**

The conference will be hosted by Leisure Lodge Beach & Golf Resort ([www.leisurelodgeresort.com](http://www.leisurelodgeresort.com)) on a spectacular stretch of the Kenyan coast south of Mombasa town, with access to some of the most stunning marine sites on the East African coast. The Resort is of the highest standard with state-of-the-art conference and recreational facilities, and guarantees total privacy and tranquillity. A superb package of pre- and post-conference tours is available for delegates and their families.

Conference facilities of the Resort are excellent. All of the six conference rooms are fully air-conditioned, and range from the intimate Oasis Villa, seating 15 people, to the grand Dr. Meister Hall, seating 700 people. During the conference, high-speed wireless internet will be made freely available to participants.

Leisure Lodge Beach & Golf Resort is the only world class hotel on Kenya's south coast with a championship golf course, a choice of first class accommodations, entertainment and recreational facilities to suit the most discerning guests. Other sport facilities include: four large pools, a diving school, deep-sea fishing, dolphin safaris, snorkelling, two flood-lit clay tennis courts, a windsurfing school, a health club, beach volleyball, water polo and table tennis.

From the Resort, excursions to experience the African wildlife are plentiful and can be easily arranged using the in-house tour office.

## **Costs and registration**

Costs for attending this conference have been kept to an absolute minimum. Early registration costs 250 USD, while accommodation costs 70 USD per person sharing and 102 USD for a single, full-board, all-inclusive. Early registration will be open until 30 November, 2007, after which the fee will rise. We therefore encourage you to register as soonest via our website ([www.banana2008.com](http://www.banana2008.com)). Our registration desk will be in contact with you and happy to answer any further inquiries or special requests.

## **Call for abstracts**

We are looking forward to receiving your abstract for an oral or poster presentation, which can be strategic or scientific in nature. Abstracts will be reviewed by the Scientific Committee. Accepted abstracts will be published and available during the conference. Based on the selection of the Scientific Committee, authors of outstanding abstracts will be invited to write full papers. These papers will be presented orally and published in a peer-reviewed issue of *Acta Horticulturae*. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words and include full addresses of authors. Abstracts will not be accepted after 31 October, 2007. Abstracts should be submitted using our website ([www.banana2008.com](http://www.banana2008.com)).

We also welcome further participation from institutions, companies or individuals for special sessions, keynote speakers and sponsorships.

Sincerely,

The Organizing Committee

Steffen Abele, Fen Beed, Eric Boa, Daniel Coyne, Thomas Dubois, Dominique Dumet, Mark Hassenkamp, Stefan Hauser, Sarah Hearne, Margaret Karembu, Fiaboe Komi, Jim Lorenzen, Richard Markham, Frances Onyango, Charles Staver, Abdou Tenkouano, Leena Tripathi, Wilberforce Tushemeweirwe, Piet Van Asten, Bi Vroh, Lusike Wasilwa, Tushemereirwe Wilberforce

Details for further contact: please use the feedback form on our website ([www.banana2008.com](http://www.banana2008.com))