Foreword

The year 1980 was one of financial uncertainty for the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. A high rate of inflation, a doubling of the minimum wage, and a strengthening of the Nigerian naira against the American dollar had a very serious and negative impact on the real research capacity of IITA.

Research program budgets and staff had to be reduced, and a general belt tightening left the remaining scientists with insufficient supporting staff and operating allocations to enable them to work in a fully effective and productive manner.

It was through a very generous special contribution of 1 million naira, equivalent to 1.9 million U.S. dollars, by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in December 1980 that this precarious financial situation could be redressed.

Despite the disruptive economic conditions, IITA’s research community produced a scientific product of commendable quality and quantity as reflected in this Annual Report.

As in previous years, the 1980 Annual Report is a compendium of salient research conducted in cereal, root, tuber, and grain legume improvement programs, and in farming systems for the humid and subhumid tropics. This report and its sister publication, 1980 Research Highlights, together provide a comprehensive summary of findings for both the scientist and the generalist.

This year also marks the first time the Annual Report is being published in French. Long overdue, we are confident it will be enthusiastically received by our French-speaking colleagues.

The structure of the Institute’s research program remained unchanged in 1980, but the focus of the work was somewhat modified.

Farming systems research was reorganized to focus on three major components—land clearance and development, post-clearance management, and cropping systems. The maize improvement program included some exploratory work on the development of in- brids. The development of lowland rice varieties and the problems of production in central and eastern Africa were given greater emphasis. Breeding for resistance to insect pests of cowpeas was intensified, and cassava research was concentrated on host plant resistance to the green spider mite and mealybug.

In the resolution of the etiology of virus diseases, techniques of indexing the presence of sweet potato virus was developed. As a result, it is now possible to export virus-free sweet potato clones in tissue culture form internationally.

Previously, the Institute’s research was almost exclusively pointed toward the small, traditional, resource-poor African farmer. But because of increasing interest in commercial farming in many African countries, the Institute is devoting a greater share of its research effort toward the solution of problems encountered by medium and large-scale farming enterprises.

We are sure you will find this Annual Report informative, and we will be pleased to respond to all requests for additional information about on-going research at the Institute. A listing of journal articles and IITA’s scientific staff is appended to this report to assist you.

Dr. E. H. Hartmans
Director General