

Chikelu Mba

Chike has recently joined the Plant Production and Protection Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy. The main thrust of his activities focuses on policy and capacity enhancement interventions aimed at facilitating the sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in member countries of FAO.



Prior to this FAO tour of duty, he spent the last seven years leading the Plant Breeding and Genetics Laboratory of the Joint Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and Seibersdorf, Austria. His main tasks at the Joint Programme involved the application of induced crop mutations facilitated by molecular biology, including reverse genetics strategies, and cell and tissue biology techniques to develop superior crop varieties. The Coordinated Research and Technical Cooperation Projects mechanisms of the IAEA provided the platforms to work closely with scientists on these themes.

His work is amply enriched by his several years of experience working on food security crops, especially cassava. He was a cassava breeder in his native Nigeria and was implemental to developing and deploying genomics tools for the crop; he authored a majority of the simple sequence repeat markers for the cassava genome during his five-year tenure at the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Cali, Colombia. While at CIAT, he also coordinated the activities of the erstwhile Cassava Biotechnology Network for Latin America and the Caribbean.

He holds a PhD (1992) in Plant Breeding and Genetics from the University of Nigeria.