Press release

BiK-F plays host to International Climate Protection fellow

Frankfurt am Main, July 21, 2011. Andrew Chibuzor Iloh, a Nigerian environmental biologist, will be visiting the Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre (BiK-F) from September 1, 2011 onwards. His one year stay at BiK-F is dedicated to assessing the genetic diversity of West African plants. This will help to develop better conversation strategies for plants which are endangered by climate change. The project is funded by the prestigious International Climate Protection fellowship of the German Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation and will further knowledge transfer with developing countries.

Andrew Chibuzor Iloh is an assistant research fellow at the Biotechnology Advanced Laboratory, Sheda Science and Technology Complex in Abuja, Nigeria, and PhD student at the Department of Botany at the University of Lagos. One of his major research interests is the use of molecular methods in plant conservation. At the Frankfurt-based BiK-F, Germany, he will do research on Chasmanthera dependens, a plant which is to be found in his homeland Nigeria. The traditional medicinal plant is endangered, climate change being one of the reasons. An analysis of the plant’s genome with the help of molecular-biological methods will provide further insight into the genetic diversity and distance within and among populations of the species.

The genetic composition forms the evolutive pool by which the plant is able to adapt to environmental change. The analysis will thus help to improve the conservation of the species by means of appropriate strategies. The young scientist will be guided in this research by Alexandra N. Muellner, professor at the Department of Biological Sciences at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, and head of the project area "Evolution and Climate" at BiK-F. In this project area, biodiversity, evolution over time, and the influence of climate change on these processes are explored by using molecular biological and other methods.

International Climate Protection Fellowships are awarded to a maximum of 20 outstanding prospective leaders from developing countries each year (14 for the term 2011/2012), enabling them to conduct a research-related project of their own choice during a one-year stay in Germany. The Fellowship aims at establishing a network of German and international experts, as well as promoting the transfer of knowledge, methods and technology with which climate change and its effects may
be tackled. For BiK-F and its partners, cooperation with institutions from developing and emerging countries is an important issue, with a particular emphasis being placed upon the transfer of methods. The center therefore welcomes the fellowship being awarded to the Nigerian biologist.

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LOEWE Biodiversität und Klima Forschungszentrum, Frankfurt am Main
With the objective of analysis the complex interactions between biodiversity and climate through a wide range of methods, the Biodiversität und Klima Forschungszentrum [Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre] (BiK-F) has been funded since 2008 within the context of the Landes-Offensive zur Entwicklung Wissenschaftlich ökonomischer Exzellenz (LOEWE) of the Land of Hessen. The Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung and Goethe University in Frankfurt as well as other, directly involved partners, co-operate closely with regional, national and international institutions in the fields of science, resource and environmental management, in order to develop projections for the future and scientific recommendations for sustainable action. For further details, please see [www.bik-f.de](http://www.bik-f.de)