

# PUBLIC Invitation



## PROFESSORIAL LECTURE

*TOPIC: Improving resilience of Namibian soils to withstand enduring environmental challenges*



Date: Wednesday, 21 September 2016

Time: 14h30

Venue: Auditorium, Eng. José Eduardo dos Santos Campus, Ongwediva

### Prof. Fisseha Itanna

*Professor of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Ogongo Campus, University of Namibia*

#### ABSTRACT

Namibian agriculture is largely beset with problems associated with drought and flooding. This situation has impacted food security and environmental sustainability. There are both local and international efforts underway to mitigate problems of drought and flooding as has been witnessed through the Rice Project.

Other outstanding issues pertaining to soil and water quality in Namibia include, contamination of agricultural soils around old mine sites and decline in water quality due to salinity and animal wastes. Such incidences not only affect crop yields but also reduce the quality and safety of edible products from Namibian farmlands. This therefore calls for urgent measures that need to be taken to arrest such appalling situations in our ecosystems.

Other major soil related problems in Namibia include: the prevalence of widespread impoverished soils and incidence of salinity and alkalinity all of which are known to reduce crop yields and deteriorate soil quality. Judicious amelioration with organic and inorganic amendments and appropriate measures to reduce salinity and sodicity, should be solutions for the way forward.

This lecture will attempt to address some of the conceivable strategies and measures that need to be taken to come up with a swift solution that can reverse the current scenario of environmental degradation affecting the quality of Namibian soils.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Prof Fisseha Itanna an Ethiopian national obtained his BSc (Plant Sciences) in 1978 and MSc (Agronomy/Soils) in 1982, from Alemaya College (Ethiopia). In 1992, he graduated from the

University of Hohenheim in Germany with a PhD in Soil Science.

Prof. F. Itanna served as an academic staff of Addis Ababa University (AAU) from July 1978 to July 2013 in the ranks of: Graduate Assistant (1978/79); Assistant Lecturer (1979-1982); Lecturer (1982-1986); Assistant Professor (1992-1999); Associate Professor (1999-2010); and Professor (2010-2013). In July 2013 he was employed at UNAM as Professor of Soil Science.

Hitherto administrative positions held by Prof. F. Itanna include:

- 2004-2007 Associate Dean of Students; Faculty of Science, AAU
- 2009 Academic Vice President, Hope University College, Addis Ababa
- 2010-2012 Assistant Dean for Regular and Academic Program; Faculty of Life Sciences, AAU
- 2012-2013 Associate Dean for Graduate Program, College of Natural Sciences, AAU
- 2014-present HOD: Crop Science; UNAM

Other public services of Prof F. Itanna include: Vice-President of Ethiopian Soil Science Society (1996-2000); Board Chairman of the Forum for Environment (2012-2013/4); Editorial Board Membership of (SINET, EJAS, JBS, etc.)

Prof F. Itanna has played key roles as Director/Co-Director, consultant or Principal investigator of several international research grants from (CIDA; SIDA/SAREC; OPCW; AGRIS MUNDUS; GIZ, etc). Prof F. Itanna has supervised over 50 postgraduate students and published and co-published over 57 scientific papers, book parts, monographs and proceeding papers.

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