

**RESOLUTION No. 540**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON  
ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (ICOA)**

The INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (IABA), at its Twenty-first Regular Meeting,

HAVING SEEN:

Document IICA/JIA/Doc. 416 (21), “Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws of the Inter-American Commission on Organic Agriculture (ICOA),”

CONSIDERING:

That organic agriculture has been experiencing continuous growth, in response to the accelerated growth in the demand for these types of agricultural products in national and international markets;

That via Resolution IICA/CE/Res. 484 (XXVIII-O/08), the Executive Committee resolved to establish the ICOA and requested that the General Directorate of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) provide it with the services of a Technical Secretariat;

That the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), at its Fifteenth Regular Meeting, via Resolution IICA/JIA/Res. 455 (XV-O/09), approved the Bylaws of the ICOA, which was established as a special committee, in accordance with Article 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA;

That the ICOA has proposed the updating of its Bylaws to improve the regulatory framework that governs it, and thus strengthen organic agriculture;

That the Executive Committee, by way of Resolution IICA/CE/Res. 668 (XL-O/20), entrusted the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with the task of preparing, in consultation with the ICOA Member States, proposed modifications to the Bylaws of the Commission for submission to this governing body of IICA for its consideration;

That, at its Forty-first Regular Meeting, the Executive Committee, via Resolution IICA/CE/Res. 683 (XLI-O/21), requested that the Director General of the Institute submit the proposed modifications to the Bylaws of the ICOA to the Member States of the Executive Committee for their review; and

That, pursuant to the above, the Director General sent the proposal for the new ICOA Bylaws to the Member States for their consideration,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the ICOA Bylaws, incorporating them as an annex to this resolution.
2. To request that the Director General of the Institute, by way of ICOA's Technical Secretariat, inform the ICOA Member States, of the approval of its revised Bylaws, and also to inform them that ICOA continues to be a Special Committee of the IABA, under Article 52 of the IABA Rules of Procedure.

**BYLAWS OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE  
(ICOA)**

**CHAPTER ONE: ORGANIZATION, FUNCTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP**

***Article 1: Nature***

1. The Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture (ICOA) is a Special Commission established by the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), in accordance with Article 52 of its Rules of Procedure.
2. The ICOA shall have technical autonomy in the discharge of its functions, within the parameters established in the Convention on the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, these Bylaws and the resolutions of the IABA and the Executive Committee. The ICOA is subordinate and answerable to the Executive Committee and has no legal relationship of authority with IICA.

***Article 2: Structure***

The ICOA shall accomplish its objectives through:

- a. The Assembly of the ICOA;
- b. The Board of Directors (BD/ICOA); and
- c. The Executive Secretariat.

***Article 3: Objectives and Functions***

**Objectives**

The objectives of the ICOA are:

- a. To contribute to the development of organic agriculture in ICOA Member States, serving as a technical body for knowledge management and the sharing and dissemination of appropriate information in a timely manner;
- b. To contribute to the strengthening of the institutional structures of the Competent<sup>1</sup> Authorities for the Control<sup>2</sup> and Development<sup>3</sup> of organic agriculture in the ICOA Member States;
- c. To coordinate and promote the development and harmonization of standards and procedures to stimulate and regulate the production, control and development of and trade in organic foods in the ICOA Member States; and

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<sup>1</sup> The term, Competent Authority, will be used indiscriminately to refer to Competent Authorities for both the Control and the Development of organic agriculture, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>2</sup> Competent Authorities for the Control of Organic Agriculture are those entities that are responsible for regulating and managing activity and guaranteeing the organic status of products.

<sup>3</sup> Competent Authorities for the Development of Organic Production are those entities tasked with the development, promotion and advancement of the organic sector.

- d. To serve as a mechanism for consultation, liaison and reciprocal cooperation among the competent governmental bodies that promote and establish standards for the development and control of organic agriculture in each ICOA Member State.

### **Functions**

The functions of the ICOA are:

- a. To monitor the international environment that impacts organic agriculture in the region, send out alerts to the Member States of the ICOA and advocate for the adoption of positions by the public and private sectors and the building of common regional strategies on topics that are relevant to organic agriculture;
- b. To encourage the organization of workshops, seminars, fora and virtual or face-to-face training sessions on relevant topics to contribute to the strengthening of the Competent Authorities and the overall development of organic agriculture;
- c. To advise and work with the respective Member States of the ICOA in preparing standards to govern organic agriculture and in implementing and consolidating the offices of the Competent Authorities;
- d. To promote horizontal cooperation among the Member States of the ICOA to facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of experiences to bring development levels with regard to organic agriculture more in line with one another;
- e. To gather, compile and share information of interest to the Member States of the ICOA and maintain an up-to-date database on organic agriculture with official information from the offices of the Competent Authorities and other pertinent information of interest to support the decision-making processes of stakeholders in organic agriculture;
- f. To prepare an annual report on the status of organic agriculture in the Americas, based on information which the Competent Authorities of the ICOA shall provide at the request of the Executive Secretariat;
- g. To report on relevant events that affect the development of organic agriculture and that might be of interest to the Member States of the ICOA;
- h. To coordinate activities and establish positions with international multilateral and other cooperation organizations that support activities in aid of organic agriculture, especially in international fora;
- i. To serve as the main advisory body of the Member States of the ICOA and other related entities that so request, on organic agriculture-related topics;
- j. To consider other matters related to inter-American cooperation in the field of organic agriculture entrusted to it by the IICA Executive Committee;
- k. To submit to the IICA Executive Committee an annual report on its activities, which may include recommendations and draft resolutions for its consideration;
- l. To establish liaison and cooperative ties with other similar entities in the Member States of the Inter-American system, so as to achieve mutual objectives; and
- m. To mobilize resources for the execution of its activities, in accordance with Article 24 of these Bylaws.

### **Article 4: Membership**

1. Members of the ICOA may be:
  - a. Full members:

Full members of the ICOA are those Member States of the Inter-American System that have expressed their desire to be a State Party to the Commission, via a letter from their Ministry of Agriculture, and have provided legal assurance, in accordance with their national laws, of their commitment to abide by the financial obligations established in the ICOA Rules of Procedures as well as the Bylaws of the Commission. The ICOA was established through the initiative, promotion and funding of IICA, which provides it with legal, institutional and financial support. Moreover, IICA, pursuant to the ICOA Bylaws, shall be considered a member of the ICOA.

Full Members States of the ICOA may be:

- i. All Member States of the Inter-American System that are members of the Network of Competent Authorities in Organic Agriculture in the Americas, established in Managua, Nicaragua, in August of 2007;
- ii. Other Member States of the Inter-American System that request inclusion in the Commission through their respective Minister of Agriculture, with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via a letter addressed to the BD/ICOA, which much then request the approval of the ICOA Assembly; and
- iii. IICA as a cooperating organization.

b. Permanent observer members:

Other States that are not part of the Inter-American System but that have Competent National Authorities in organic production duly established to develop, control and regulate organic agriculture. These States shall request inclusion in the Commission, through their Ministry of Agriculture or maximum authority, in a letter addressed to the BD/ICOA, which shall then request the approval of the ICOA Assembly.

2. Withdrawal of a full member or permanent observer:

Any full Member State of the ICOA or permanent observer may withdraw from the Commission, by sending a letter to the BD/ICOA, signed by its Minister of Agriculture or maximum authority. The withdrawal shall take effect ninety days following receipt of the letter by the BD/ICOA, during which time the Member State of the ICOA may reconsider its request and cancel it.

## **CHAPTER TWO: ASSEMBLY OF THE ICOA.**

### ***Article 5: Purpose and Functions***

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Assembly of the ICOA is to serve as an inter-American forum for the Competent Authorities in Organic Agriculture in Member States of the ICOA to exchange views and share experiences, and thereby take appropriate decisions to gear their actions towards fulfilling the established objectives and mandates.

#### **Functions**

The functions of the Assembly of the ICOA are:

- a. To establish policies to achieve the objectives and fulfill the functions established in Article 3 of these Bylaws;
- b. To elect the members of the BD/ICOA;
- c. To approve the Work Plan and Budget of the ICOA prepared and presented by the BD/ICOA;
- d. To propose to the Executive Committee of IICA amendments to these Bylaws for its approval; and

- e. To approve the Rules of Procedure of the ICOA and amendments thereto, if this is considered necessary for the achievement of its objectives and the discharge of its functions.

### **Article 6: *Venue and Frequency of the Meetings***

1. The ICOA shall hold a Regular Meeting of its Assembly each year. The frequency shall be determined by the Assembly. The venue of this meeting shall be determined at the previous Regular Meeting. If more than one country offers to host the meeting, the decision shall be made by a simple majority vote and in the event of a tie shall be decided by the Chairman of the BD/ICOA. When no country offers to host the meeting, the Annual Regular Meeting shall be held at IICA Headquarters.
2. Should they wish to be considered, member countries offering to host the next meeting of the Assembly should do so no later than two days before the meeting of the Assembly in which the matter will be decided. Interested member countries should prepare a letter, issued and signed by their Ministry of Agriculture, and sent to the Board of Directors of the ICOA, through the Executive Secretariat.
3. The Assembly of the ICOA may hold face-to-face Special Meetings, convened pursuant to the adoption of a resolution by a favorable two-thirds majority vote of Member States in the Assembly, or by correspondence or email, at the request of the BD/ICOA, or at least ten of its Member States. In accordance with Article 17 of these Bylaws, the BD/ICOA shall determine the venue of the Special Meeting, taking into account the offers from Member States to host the meeting and the principle of rotation. When no country offers to host the meeting, the venue of the Assembly shall be IICA Headquarters.
4. Where necessary, the BD/ICOA may convene a virtual meeting of the ICOA Assembly

### **Article 7: *Participation in the Assembly of the ICOA***

#### **REPRESENTATION**

1. Each full member, including IICA, has the right to send a Regular Representative to the Assembly of the ICOA, who shall have the right to participate and to vote. Each Permanent Observer Member State, has the right to send a Regular Representative to the Assembly of the ICOA, who shall have the right to participate but not to vote. In both cases, the delegate may be accompanied by alternate representatives and/or advisors, who must be accredited to the Assembly, through the Executive Secretariat of the ICOA.
2. The Regular Representative of each Member State in the Assembly shall be the official in charge of the duly established Competent Authority for the Control or Development of Organic Agriculture in that State or, in his/her stead, an extremely experienced and recognized staff member of that Authority, who has been designated by the official in charge of the Competent Authority in the Member State.
3. The Director General of IICA, or his/her representative, shall have the right to participate and to vote in the deliberations of the Assembly of the ICOA, in both the plenary sessions and those of the committees and subcommittees. The Director General may not participate in the elections of members to the ICOA Board of Directors, nor in the election of the Chairman of the Board.

## **OBSERVERS**

If their participation is requested in writing, sufficiently in advance, the following may be represented by observers at the meetings of the Assembly of the ICOA and shall have the right to participate but not to vote, subject to the decision of the Chair of the Assembly.

- a. Member States of the Inter-American System that are not members of the ICOA, which have asked to participate in the meeting and have received the approval of the BD/ICOA;
- b. Inter-American regional and subregional government entities and organizations involved in organic agriculture;
- c. Specialized bodies and agencies connected with the United Nations and other public international organizations; and
- d. Countries or organizations outside of the Americas with which ICOA has signed collaboration agreements and which, in both parties' opinion, should participate in the Assembly.

## **GUESTS**

Other persons or institutions, including representatives of civil society, not included in this Article, may attend the meetings of the Assembly of the ICOA as special guests, subject to approval by the BD/ICOA, and in consultation with the government of the host country

### ***Article 8: Officers of the Assembly of the ICOA***

1. There shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair of the Assembly of the ICOA. The Chair shall be the Competent Authority in Organic Agriculture in the host country, and the Vice Chair shall be the representative of the Member State that follows the country of the Chair in alphabetical order.
2. In the event that the Assembly is held at IICA Headquarters, the Chairman of the BD/ICOA shall preside in the interim until a Chair is elected by vote.
3. If the Assembly is conducted by virtual means, the Chairman of the Board of Directors will preside over the meeting.

### ***Article 9: Agenda***

1. With support from the Executive Secretariat, the BD/ICOA shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each session of the Assembly of the ICOA and shall submit it for the consideration of Member States at least three months prior to the inauguration of the meeting of the Assembly. Member States shall have 30 consecutive days to submit their observations on the preliminary agenda to the Chairman of the BD/ICOA. The BD/ICOA shall prepare the final agenda on the basis of these observations.
2. The agenda thus approved may only be modified or amended during the meeting of the Assembly of the ICOA by a vote of two-thirds of the Member States present.

### ***Article 10: Sessions and Meetings***

Each meeting of the Assembly of the ICOA shall consist of the plenary sessions and as many presentations as may be necessary to cover the entire agenda of the meeting.

## **Article 11: *Committees***

1. The Assembly of the ICOA may establish committees, subcommittees and working groups, as required. The committees may be standing committees or may be for a limited time.
2. The Assembly of the ICOA shall designate coordinators for each committee, subcommittee and working group, who shall be responsible for following up on the work entrusted and presenting reports on the results to the General Assembly.
3. The meetings of the committees, subcommittees and working groups may be virtual or face-to-face, depending on the nature of the work to be accomplished and the availability of resources.
4. Wherever possible, IICA member countries shall provide technical, human and financial resources, etc., to undertake the work entrusted by the Assembly and/or by the BD/ICOA.

## **Article 12: *Quorum***

1. The quorum of the plenary sessions shall consist of more than one-half of the Member States of the ICOA.
2. The quorum of the committees, subcommittees and working groups of the Assembly of the ICOA shall consist of more than one-half of the Member States sitting on each of those bodies.
3. The presence of the IICA Representative will not count towards the number needed to constitute the quorum.

## **Article 13: *Voting***

1. The decisions of the Assembly of the ICOA shall be adopted at the plenary sessions, except for special cases when it is necessary to vote by correspondence, or by email, in which case this procedure shall be determined by the Assembly and coordinated by the Executive Secretariat of the ICOA. Each Member State shall have the right to one vote, which the Competent Control and Development Authorities of the Member State should agree on, in the event that both Authorities are taking part in the Commission. The IICA Representative shall have the right to one vote.
2. If no consensus is reached in the deliberations, decisions of the Assembly of the ICOA shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the Member States present.
3. In the committees, subcommittees and working groups, decisions shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of Member States present.
4. Voting in a meeting of the Assembly, committee, subcommittee or working group, as the case may be, shall not take place unless the requirements with respect to the corresponding quorum have been met and Member States have been duly advised to participate in advance of the meeting.
5. As used in these Bylaws, the term “absolute majority” means over half of all ICOA Member States, whether or not they are present at a meeting of the Assembly. The term “simple majority” means that a topic under debate in any session of a committee, subcommittee or working group has received a favorable vote from the majority of those present at the meeting.
6. If decisions need to be made concerning urgent matters and the Assembly is not in session, the correspondence or email voting procedure may be employed. In such cases, at the written request of the BD/ICOA, presented through its Chairman, or at the request of more than half of the representatives of the Member States, by means of a signed petition, the Executive Secretary shall send all the Member States the information related to the matter in question,



including a proposal to resolve the issue. He/ she shall also ask the Member States to cast their votes and inform them of the deadline for receipt of the votes submitted in writing or by email. Once the deadline has passed, the Executive Secretary shall count the votes, certify the result and inform the Member States of the outcome. The decisions of the Assembly taken using this procedure shall be adopted by an absolute majority vote of the Member States.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BD/ICOA)**

### **Article 14: *Membership***

1. The Board of Directors (BD/ICOA) is the governing body of the ICOA and comprises five members:
  - a. Three of the members of the BD/ICOA, shall be elected by direct vote from among the full members of the ICOA.
  - b. The fourth member of the BD/ICOA shall be the representative of the Full Member State that is designated to host the next Regular Meeting of the ICOA Assembly.

In cases in which,

    - i. IICA is the host;
    - ii. no country has been designated by the Assembly to host the next Regular Meeting;
    - iii. the host country of the Assembly meeting is one of the three members elected by direct vote;
    - iv. the host country of the upcoming meeting of the Assembly is an observer state; or
    - v. the next meeting of the Assembly is slated to be virtual with no physical venue,the fourth member shall be elected by a simple majority vote during the Regular Meeting of the Assembly in which the next venue will be decided or by a simple majority vote during a virtual or face-to-face Special Meeting of the Assembly subsequently convened for that purpose.
  - c. IICA, through the Director General, shall appoint the fifth member of the Board of Directors. This fifth member shall not be elected by the Assembly, but shall be appointed by the IICA Director General for three-year periods. This cannot be the same IICA staff member designated to oversee the Executive Secretariat of ICOA.
2. The members of the BD/ICOA elected by direct vote by the Assembly shall serve for a three-year term. One of the members shall be replaced each year at the Regular Meeting of the Assembly.
3. The term of the member of the BD/ICOA who is the representative of the host country of the next Regular Meeting, and the term of the member appointed within the framework of the exceptions indicated in Article 14(1b), shall begin at the end of the Assembly in which his/her country was chosen as the host of the next meeting, or at the end of the Assembly in which the country was elected within the framework of the exceptions outlined in Article 14(1b), respectively, and shall finish at the end of the Assembly hosted by his/her country, or at the end of the Assembly that took place within the framework of the exceptions indicated in Article 14(1b), respectively.
4. The representative of each Member State on the BD/ICOA shall be the official in charge of that State's duly established Competent Authority in Organic Agriculture or, in his/her stead, an extremely-experienced and recognized official in that field, who has been accredited to the BD/ICOA, through the Executive Secretary, by the official in charge of the Competent Authority of the Member State.

5. If, due to some unforeseen event, no Regular Meeting of the Assembly is held during the calendar year, the terms of the members of the BD/ICOA shall be extended until the next Regular Meeting, so that no more than one member is elected at that next Regular Meeting and in subsequent Regular Meetings.
6. If a Member State resigns its membership on the BD/ICOA, the BD/ICOA shall appoint another member to take its place until the next Regular Meeting, when a special election will be held to choose a member to serve out the remainder of the term of the member that resigned. Special elections of this kind shall not be taken into account for the purposes of the application of paragraph 5 of this Article.

### ***Article 15: Designation of the Board and Election of Officers***

1. The Assembly of the ICOA shall elect the members and officers of the BD/ICOA during its final plenary session, except for the IICA Representative on the ICOA Board of Directors, who shall be appointed by the Director General of the Institute, and who cannot serve as Chairman of the BD/ICOA.
2. Any full member, except IICA, may propose itself as a candidate for membership and/or chairmanship on the Board of Directors, which will require that the delegate of that Country be specifically endorsed for that purpose, by way of credentials or an accreditation letter addressed to the Assembly.

### ***Article 16: Chairman of the Board of Directors***

The Chairman of the BD/ICOA shall have the following specific responsibilities:

- a. To chair the sessions of the Board of Directors;
- b. To supervise and coordinate the discharge of the functions of the BD/ICOA, especially during the period between its Regular Meetings; and
- c. To represent the ICOA in its dealings with the IABA and the Executive Committee of IICA, and with other organizations that participate in the development of organic agriculture within and outside of the region.

### ***Article 17: Functions of the Board of Directors***

The functions of the BD/ICOA are as follows:

- a. To carry out the decisions of the Assembly of the ICOA, taking into account the rules governing the operation of the IABA and the Executive Committee of IICA;
- b. To achieve and enforce the objectives specified in Article 3;
- c. To decide the dates of the Regular and Special Meetings of the Assembly of the ICOA and the venue for Special Meetings, and modify the dates and venues of either, as and when necessary;
- d. To prepare the draft agendas of the Regular and Special Meetings of the Assembly of the ICOA and submit them to the members of the ICOA for consideration, through the Executive Secretary, to comply with the provisions of Article 9;
- e. To propose to the Assembly of the ICOA any amendments it deems necessary to these Bylaws and, should any be adopted, to its Rules of Procedure;

- f. To adopt any urgent measures that cannot wait until the next meeting of the Assembly of the ICOA, which shall remain in effect until the Assembly of the ICOA can consider them;
- g. To represent the ICOA, through its Chairman or another member of the BD/ICOA, in international, regional or national meetings or conferences devoted to organic agriculture or collateral activities;
- h. With the collaboration of the Executive Secretariat, to prepare studies, draft agreements and inter-American treaties and other documents related to organic agriculture in the hemisphere;
- i. To examine and approve the annual report on the activities of the ICOA prepared by its Executive Secretariat;
- j. To present the annual report on the activities of the ICOA to the General Assembly of the ICOA;
- k. To present the annual report on the activities of the ICOA to the Executive Committee;
- l. To create any technical committees and working groups that it deems necessary and establish their work programs;
- m. Within the framework of the objectives of the ICOA, to plan and coordinate the inter-American activities within its purview, related to organic agriculture;
- n. To study and approve the Work Plan of the ICOA and the proposed budget prepared by its Executive Secretariat, ensuring the greatest possible economy, but bearing in mind the ICOA's obligation to achieve satisfactory results in its work programs;
- o. To present the Work Plan and operational budget for consideration and approval by the ICOA at the Regular Meeting of its Assembly;
- p. To oversee implementation of the Work Plan and budget of the ICOA approved by the Assembly.
- q. To administer and leverage financial resources to maintain the organization.
- r. To adequately ensure that members abide by their commitments and pay their quotas.

### ***Article 18: Meetings and Venue of Meetings of the Board of Directors***

- 1. The BD/ICOA shall hold a Regular Meeting each year—whether face-to-face or virtually—preferably in the country where the Regular Meeting of the Assembly is to take place. The meeting may be held two days before the Regular Meeting of the Assembly.
- 2. The BD/ICOA may hold special face-to-face or virtual meetings when necessary, subject to the availability of resources. The Executive Secretary shall convene special meetings at the request of the Chairman of the BD/ICOA or at the written request of two or more members.

### ***Article 19: Quorum***

The quorum to convene a meeting of the BD/ICOA shall consist of more than one-half of its members. The participation of the Board member appointed by IICA shall not be taken into account in the quorum count.

### ***Article 20: Voting***

- 1. In the deliberations of the BD/ICOA, each member shall have one vote and decisions will be adopted by a simple majority vote.

2. Voting in a meeting of the BD/ICOA shall not take place unless the corresponding quorum requirements have been met and the members of BD/ICOA were duly notified prior to the meeting.
3. If decisions need to be made concerning urgent matters and the BD/ICOA is not in session, the procedure of voting by correspondence or email may be employed. In such cases, at the written request of the Chairman of the BD/ICOA or at the request of two or more of its members, through a signed petition, the Executive Secretary shall send the members of the BD/ICOA the information related to the matter in question, including a proposal for resolving the issue. He/ she shall also ask the members to cast their votes and inform them of the deadline for receipt of the votes, in writing or by email. Once the deadline has passed, the Executive Secretary shall count the votes, certify the result and inform the members of the BD/ICOA of the outcome.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**

### ***Article 21: Objectives and Functions***

1. The Executive Secretariat is the permanent, central, technical, administrative and executive entity of the ICOA. It shall coordinate the technical, administrative and executive services needed to implement the decisions of the Assembly of the ICOA and the BD/ICOA, and shall perform the functions assigned to it by those bodies.
2. The General Directorate of IICA shall serve as the Executive Secretariat of the ICOA, which will be established through the signing of a General Cooperation Agreement between ICOA and IICA. This will enable ICOA to operate in the inter-American sphere and to receive technical and administrative support for its operations, within the scope of the competencies and capacities that IICA may assume.

### ***Article 22: The Executive Secretary of the ICOA***

In consultation with the BD/ICOA, the Director General of IICA shall appoint the Executive Secretary of the ICOA, who shall have the following functions:

- a. To carry out the institutional, technical and administrative tasks entrusted to the Secretariat and to coordinate the administrative services provided by that Secretariat;
- b. To prepare and present an Annual Work Program and budget for the consideration and approval of the BD/ICOA in the first instance, and subsequently for final approval by the Assembly of the ICOA;
- c. To assist in the coordination and collaborate in the execution of the work plans of any working groups established by the Assembly of the ICOA and the BD/ICOA;
- d. To make the preparations for the Regular and Special Meetings of the Assembly of the ICOA and the BD/ICOA;
- e. To verify the credentials of the participants in the Assemblies of the ICOA and the BD/ICOA, and ensure that the minutes and resolutions of the meetings of those bodies meet IICA's requirements in terms of form and style.
- f. To prepare annual reports on the situation of organic agriculture with the information provided by the Competent Authorities that are members of the Commission, and any other data deemed to be pertinent;
- g. To prepare an annual report on the activities carried out by the ICOA.
- h. To perform his/her functions in accordance with the regulations and other rules of IICA and ICOA.

- i. To follow-up on agreements made and commitments undertaken in regular meetings and sessions, special meetings and other sessions convened by the BD/ICOA, the Assembly, the committees, working groups and others bodies.
- j. To propose and/or prepare topics for the annual work of the Commission.
- k. To oversee the administration of the necessary resources to achieve the work plan of the Assembly and/or the BD/ICOA in coordination with IICA, other cooperation organizations, institutions and/or cooperating countries that have similar interests to the ICOA.
- l. To provide, through its status as a legal entity, the framework for the receipt of contributions from ICOA Member States.

### **Article 23: Secretariat Services**

In accordance with the funds allocated in IICA's Program Budget, the Director General of IICA shall provide the ICOA with Executive Secretariat services and any other services required to achieve the objectives established in Article 3.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESOURCES OF THE ICOA.**

### **Article 24: Sources of Financing of the ICOA**

The main resources of the ICOA shall come from:

- a. Funds from the annual quotas contributed by Member States to defray expenses for activities approved by the Assembly of the ICOA, the amount and payment schedule of which shall be determined in the Operating Regulations of the ICOA;
- b. Funds from ICOA Member States to defray the expenses of representatives and the activities for which they are responsible;
- c. Funds from IICA to defray expenses for activities related to Article 23 of these Bylaws.
- d. Financial assistance, donations and specific contributions from technical and financial cooperation agencies;
- e. Financial assistance, donations and specific contributions from institutions, individuals and legal entities.
- f. Financial assistance, donations and contributions from the host and other countries to defray the costs of meetings.

These specific funds shall be managed and accounted for pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the General Directorate and the Financial Rules of IICA.

### **Article 25: Other Resources**

The Member States of the ICOA and other institutions may channel and offer other resources, materials, facilities and equipment, and temporarily assign personnel to the Executive Secretariat for internships and to provide professional support services.

## **CHAPTER SIX: OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGES**

### ***Article 26: Languages***

If sufficient resources are available, and if it proves necessary, interpretation services and translations of pertinent documents shall be provided at the meetings.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE BYLAWS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### ***Article 27: Governing Provisions***

The ICOA shall be governed by the present Bylaws, any Rules of Procedure that may be adopted, and the pertinent resolutions of the IABA and the Executive Committee of IICA

### ***Article 28: Amendments***

These Bylaws approved by the Executive Committee, pending final approval by the IABA, may only be amended by the IABA or the Executive Committee of IICA, on their own initiative or at the request of the ICOA.

### ***Article 29: Rules of Procedure of the ICOA***

1. The ICOA may adopt Rules of Procedure, provided that they are consistent with these Bylaws. If Rules of Procedure are adopted, the Executive Secretary shall present them to the Executive Committee of IICA for informational purposes.
2. Procedural issues related to the Assembly, not provided for in these Bylaws or in any Rules of Procedure that may be adopted, shall be resolved by the Assembly. Procedural issues related to the BD/ICOA, not provided for in these Bylaws or in any Rules of Procedure that may be adopted, shall be resolved by the BD/ICOA.

### ***Article 30: Entry into Force and Duration***

1. These Bylaws shall enter into force on the date of their approval by the Executive Committee, pending final approval by the IABA.
2. The ICOA and its Bylaws shall remain in force for an indefinite period of time and may be abolished by a resolution of the Executive Committee, pending final approval.