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The World – and the Americas – Ramp up Climate Leadership including in Agriculture

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Colaboradores

Margaret M. Zeigler (/taxonomy/term/143)

Mobilizing the necessary political will to stop climate change requires determined and collaborative efforts. With the current pandemic crisis, ingenuity and commitment will be required to fight climate change while simultaneously building back healthy communities.

The coming decade will be the most important on record if we are to reach the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2050 as well as to save lives and economies from Covid-19. There is no time for hesitation or complacency on either front.

The Leader's Summit on Climate (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/23/leaders-summit-on-climate-summary-of-proceedings/), held April 22 and 23 virtually by President Biden, served as a call to action to sharpen the world's attention on climate change and its devastating effects on our planet. The summit convened over 40 heads of state and global leaders to ramp up climate leadership and to demonstrate robust U.S. participation in the Paris Agreement after its withdrawal in June 2017.

At the summit, the **United States** reaffirmed its commitment to reaching the **goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050**. It also announced a new target (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/22/fact-sheet-president-biden-sets-2030-greenhouse-gas-pollution-reduction-target-aimed-at-creating-good-paying-union-jobs-and-securing-u-s-leadership-on-clean-energy-technologies/) (Nationally Determined Contribution, NDC): **to achieve a 50-52% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, just nine years from now**.

The U.S. Congress is also stepping up. Members of both political parties in the House and Senate are embracing the reality of climate change and are sensing the opportunity to harness new technologies to create jobs. The U.S. Congress is now working "across the aisle" in a bipartisan fashion to advance and pass various pieces of legislation and funding for more clean energy, climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

While much of the Leader's Summit discussion targeted the energy and transportation sectors, which are the largest emitting sectors of greenhouse gas, **President Biden mentioned the role agriculture** and nature-based solutions must play in the fight against climate change.

"I see farmers deploying cutting-edge tools to make the soils of our heartland the next frontier in carbon innovation."

President Joe Biden

Leader's Summit on Climate

The Biden administration views the agriculture and forestry sectors (https://www.usda.gov/topics/climate-solutions) as vital components of a holistic strategy to beat climate change. Presently, bipartisan bills in both the U.S. House of Representatives (https://spanberger.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3721)and the U.S. Senate (https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/dem/press/release/in-case-you-missed-it-heres-what-theyre-saying-about-the-growing-climate-solutions-act) are **building momentum for farmers,** ranchers and foresters **to participate in carbon markets** and **to be rewarded** for sequestering carbon through climate-smart practices.

Building a sustainable breadbasket in the Americas

The Western Hemisphere has developed into a regional powerhouse of agriculture, food, biofuels and biodiversity. With well over a third of the world's fresh water and nearly half of the world's medium to high potential farmland, the hemisphere supplies food, feed, fiber and energy for its own needs and exports these products through trade to the rest of the world. The nations of the Western Hemisphere can develop advanced solutions as well as harness traditional knowledge and practices that will help **mitigate climate change while creating jobs and supplying food sustainably**.

Summit attendees from the Americas and the Caribbean articulated new targets and innovative policies and programs through agriculture to achieve sustainable climate goals.

Canada is taking action to set a high price on carbon ($170 per ton) and reducing carbon emissions by 40 to 45% by 2030, as well as conserving 30% of Canada's lands and oceans by 2030. **Mexico** is reducing emissions and has implemented Sembrando Vida (https://www.gob.mx/bienestar/acciones-y-programas/programa-sembrando-vida), one of the world's largest reforestation programs, in which Mexicans are paid for environmental services by planting fruit and timber trees. To date nearly 700 million trees have been planted with a goal of reaching 1 billion trees planted in the coming years, with potential for expansion to Central America.

Colombia and Brazil have pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; **Colombia** will focus on clean energy technology and reforestation programs and has pledged to plant 180 million trees by 2022. With an important pledge to stop illegal deforestation by 2030, **Brazil** appealed for investments of up to $1 billion annually from the international community to implement this goal. Brazil also shared examples of

how clean energy technology from biofuels and highly productive agriculture systems are providing food, feed and fuel more sustainably.

At the summit, **Argentina** pledged to use more renewable energy, reduce methane from fuel and livestock production and, like Brazil, end illegal deforestation. Along with Argentina, **Chile** is proposing major initiatives to protect Antarctic marine waters which supply food for fish and sequester carbon in the Antarctic ocean and ice fields.

Herd of cattle in Tabasco, Mexico

And Caribbean nations such as **Jamaica**, **Antigua and Barbuda** shared their experiences as they face increasingly powerful hurricanes and their need for clean energy finance and capacity to adapt to a changing climate. A possible solution could come from debt for climate credit swaps (https://climateanalytics.org/media/debt_for_climate_swap_impact_briefing.pdf)in which small island states are forgiven debt and instead invest those payments into clean energy programs or climate adaptation measures.

How can institutions support these efforts?

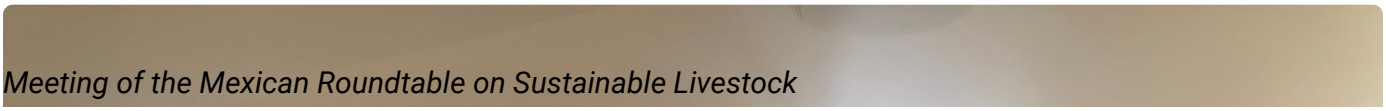
Multilateral institutions and development agencies can help governments prepare and implement climate commitments in agriculture and forestry. **IICA** works to promote such action and public policy for sustainable agriculture and help governments plan climate adaptation and mitigation actions (https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/2021-04-21/que-aporta-america-latina-y-caribe-en-la-cumbre-del-clima-para-preservar-el-planeta.html)within the agriculture sectors of its member states.

"President Biden's summit recognizes the capacity of Latin America and the Caribbean to sustain global food security. As a strategic and transformative activity in which the issues of mitigation and adaptation to climate change converge, agriculture fosters the creation of opportunities like no other."

Manuel Otero, Director General, IICA

This is particularly crucial for Latin America in the **beef sector**, as the region produces more beef than any region and must reduce its carbon impact. In addition to being a member of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (https://grsbeef.org/), IICA co-facilitates the technical secretariat for **the national level roundtables** that promote sustainable livestock in **Argentina** and **Mexico**, as well as participating in and supporting similar convening mechanisms in other countries, including **Uruguay** and **Colombia**.

IICA is helping **Mexico's livestock sector** make progress towards its national climate goals. IICA partners with the Mexican government's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as livestock producers´ organizations and the financial sector to **develop a livestock policy and plan of action** (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action, or NAMA). By implementing this plan, thousands of livestock farms will reduce emissions while simultaneously increasing profit, competitiveness and productivity.



Meeting of the Mexican Roundtable on Sustainable Livestock

Farmers and agribusiness join the effort

Farmer associations and private-sector industry must also be key partners in the region's climate and food solutions.

Climate change has become a leading risk factor for producers and industries along the agricultural value chain. With unpredictable conditions, current business models may become irrelevant, leading to greater market uncertainty. Yet, the need for **climate adaptation and mitigation also provides businesses with a new range of opportunities**.

As the impacts of climate change unfold, more farmers will need crops that have greater tolerance to heat, drought and require less water. Farmer-led private companies such as Bioceres Crop Solutions (https://investors.biocerescrops.com /home/default.aspx?gclid=Cj0KCQjwsqmEBhDiARIsANV8H3b0vEObcSs367NKDbXT1FyVEbzPvxrqHJ8rr cn3EZfCjFfhyhwoMaApOWEALw_wcB) in **Argentina** are supplying these demands for climate-smart and drought-tolerant soy and wheat.

Livestock farmers will need genetically improved breeds and new products such as protease enzymes and supplements (https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/feeding-cows-seaweed-can-fight-methane-climate-change/) that reduce livestock emissions and help manage manure. Innovative agricultural mechanization and precision systems — such as those used by no-till farmers (https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-46409-7_30) in **Argentina** (including those from Aapresid (https://www.aapresid.org.ar/)), **Brazil**, **Paraguay** and **Uruguay** — will conserve soil, and sequester carbon, and possibly provide farmers with carbon offset revenue.

Restoring degraded **soils** in the Americas will help sequester carbon while stabilizing rural food producers. The Living Soils of the Americas (https://iica.int/en/press/news/rattan-lal-and-iica-launch-living-soils-americas-initiative) initiative, launched by **IICA and Professor Rattan Lal**, Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center (CMASC) of The Ohio State University, supports soil health in the region and reverses the degradation that harms family farmers. Bayer Crop Science

(https://www.cropscience.bayer.com/people-planet/climate-change) is the first strategic private-sector partner in this initiative.

With innovation, investment and science-based management, the Western Hemisphere can harness the momentum of the Leader's Summit on Climate and become a productive, sustainable breadbasket for the world.

Farmers working to take climate action in Tabasco

Dr. Margaret Zeigler *is a thought leader and spokesperson in the agriculture, scientific research, trade and international development and food security arena. She has worked for 25 years as executive director and senior manager in organizations focused on public policy, public affairs, communications and stakeholder engagement with a goal of ending hunger and advancing sustainable agriculture. She recently lived for 9 months in Colombia, Peru and Argentina where she explored the interface between agriculture, biodiversity, sustainability and farm productivity. She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Geography and International Development and can be reached at @Harvest2050_MZ*