



**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION  
ON AGRICULTURE**

**OFFICE IN THE BAHAMAS**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

---

THE CONTRIBUTION OF IICA TO  
AGRICULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE RURAL SECTOR OF  
THE BAHAMAS  
DURING 2002

**JANUARY 2003**

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>  | <b>2 - 4</b>   |
| 1.0 Introduction  |                |
| 1.2 Strategic Areas   |                |
| 1.3 Other Cooperation Activities                                |                |
| 1.4 Relations with Strategic Partners                           |                |
| 1.5 Plans and Programming of 2003                               |                |
| <b>2.0 Current Status of Agriculture &amp; The Rural Milieu</b> | <b>4 - 9</b>   |
| 2.1 Introduction  |                |
| 2.2 Macro Economic Conditions                                   |                |
| 2.3 Sector Performance  |                |
| <b>3.0 The National Cooperation Agenda</b>                      | <b>9 - 11</b>  |
| 3.1 Introduction  |                |
| 3.2 IICA's Strategic and Support Areas                          |                |
| 3.2.1 Strategic Areas   |                |
| Trade and Agribusiness Development                              |                |
| Agricultural Health and Food Safety                             |                |
| Sustainable Rural Development                                   |                |
| Technology and Innovation                                       |                |
| 3.2.2 Supporting Areas  |                |
| Training and Education  |                |
| Information and Communication                                   |                |
| Horizontal Technical Cooperation                                |                |
| <b>4.0 Results Obtained</b>                                     | <b>11 - 13</b> |
| (a) Trade and Agri-business Development                         |                |
| (b) Agricultural Health and Food Safety                         |                |
| (c) Sustainable Rural Development                               |                |
| (d) Information and Communication                               |                |
| (e) Education and Training                                      |                |
| 5 Other Cooperation Activities                                  | 14             |
| 6 Relations with Strategic Partners                             | 14 - 15        |
| 7 Opportunities for the Future                                  | 15             |
| 8 Conclusions and Recommendations                               | 15 - 16        |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>BAIC</b>     | Bahamas Agriculture & Industrial Cooperation                          |
| <b>BAPA</b>     | Bahamas Agricultural Producers Association                            |
| <b>BCLL</b>     | Bahamas Cooperative League Limited                                    |
| <b>CABA</b>     | Caribbean Agri-Business Association                                   |
| <b>COB</b>      | College of The Bahamas  |
| <b>FAO</b>      | Food and Agricultural Organization of The United Nations              |
| <b>FAVA/CA</b>  | The Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action    |
| <b>GDP</b>      | Gross Domestic Product  |
| <b>HACCP</b>    | Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point                            |
| <b>IBC</b>      | International Business Companies                                      |
| <b>IICA</b>     | Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture               |
| <b>MAFLG</b>    | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Local Government.              |
| <b>NFSB</b>     | National Food Safety Board  |
| <b>PAHO/WHO</b> | Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization            |
| <b>SIDALC</b>   | Agricultural Information and Documentation System for the Americas    |
| <b>SAQS</b>     | Strengthening of Animal and Plant Quarantine Systems in the Caribbean |
| <b>WTO</b>      | World Trade Organization  |

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Bahamian economy is heavily dependent on tourism and financial services to generate foreign exchange and create employment. Tourism provides an estimated 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs about half the Bahamian work force. Financial services, the second-most important sector, accounts for about 15% of GDP.

The Agricultural and Fisheries sectors together account for about 5% of both GDP and employment. Exports from the Fisheries sector, mainly lobsters, account for about 25% of domestic exports. The agricultural sector contributes about 5% to domestic exports, with most agricultural products being consumed on the domestic market. The Bahamas imports more than \$250 million in foodstuff each year, representing about 80% of its food consumption.

### 1.2 Strategic Areas

Results were obtained in five of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture's (IICA's) six strategic and supporting areas, with Technology and Innovation being a critical part of each area.

In the strategic area of Trade and Agri-business Development, the Poultry and Pork industries in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Local Government (MAFLG) took steps to improve quality standards by moving towards the development of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. To this end, a multi-sectoral committee on which IICA is represented was established.

A study documenting the Agricultural Health status of the Poultry and Pork industries was completed. An implementation matrix based on the study was presented to the MAFLG. The importance of the results thus far is that a plan of actions exists to guide discussions with potential donors to determine and rationalize funding for implementation.

In the strategic area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety, the Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) established a Committee, chaired by IICA and including representatives from the Ministry of Health and the MAFLG, to draw up a Logical Framework for the design of a National Food Safety system. The Logical Framework, as well as Terms of Reference for a coordinating mechanism have been completed. These will be presented to the Ministries responsible for Agriculture and Health.

In the strategic area of Sustainable Rural Development, the modernization of the Rural Sector is being achieved through working with the Bahamas Cooperative League Limited (BCLL) and the Department of Cooperatives with support from the Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action (FAVA/CA). A strategic analysis of Producer/Supplier Cooperatives with pertinent recommendations was completed.

In the support area of Information and Communication, there has been an Increase in the scope and effectiveness of the MAFLG/IICA Communication Center. Staff received training in the Agricultural Information and Documentation System for the Americas (SIDALC) and have made recommendations for upgrading the technology at the center. A proposal was made for producing a Newsletter three times each year jointly with the MAFLG. The Communications Specialist participated in a workshop to identify IICA's information and documentation resources and the services and products they provide. The aim is the establishment of an IICA Agricultural Libraries System for the countries.

In the support area of Education and Training, improved means of distribution of skills-related material to better prepare the rural sector to deal with a changing environment is being addressed. The Bahamas will participate in a Regional Agricultural Distance Learning Project.

### **1.3 Other Cooperation Activities**

The other Cooperation activities included support to the formation of the Bahamas Agricultural Producers' Association (BAPA). The BAPA is expected to be the Bahamas' link with the Caribbean Agri-business Association (CABA).

With respect to preparation for entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) by The Bahamas, the office participated in a Workshop for the development of Sub-Sector profiles for submission to the WTO and sponsored the Feature speaker at a luncheon associated with the workshop

Support was provided for a seminar on the European Union funded project "Strengthening Animal and Plant Quarantine Systems (SAQS)". This project could contribute to efforts at improving food safety in The Bahamas.

Arrangements were made for a number of persons to attend meetings, training programmes, workshops and Seminars in support of other IICA Units as well as other Organizations.

### **1.4 Relations with Strategic Partners.**

The main strategic partner for the office is the MAFLG which has assigned a senior officer to liaise with the office thereby facilitating the flow of information and feedback on critical issues. A Communications Specialist has been assigned to work at the

MAFLG/IICA Communication Center and this has given the office use of an additional area of expertise.

Strategic relationships also exist with the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC). This latter, as well as the relationship established with the BAPA, have the potential of becoming avenues through which the private sector can be reached. There is ongoing working relations with PAHO/WHO and collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

### **1.5. Plans and Programmes for 2003**

The opportunities for the future are rooted in the stakeholder Consultations and the Declaration and Plan of Actions resulting from them.

The programme for 2003 will continue the development of the Communication Center and the Distance Learning project to improve the information flow to the rural sector. Industries with potential for being competitive will be targeted and appropriate technology introduced. The food safety situation will be addressed as the main sector, Tourism, can be adversely affected if citizens or visitors are exposed to food borne illnesses. Training of personnel within the office and in the public and private sectors will be continued.

## **2.0 Current Status of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 islands. The capital Nassau is located on the island of New Providence. The other islands are called Family Islands and make up most of what can be defined as the rural community.

The population of the country is concentrated on the island of New Providence. According to the Census of Population 2000, the population density on New Providence was 2,655.4 persons per square mile. This compares with 31.9 for the island of Exuma and 2.2 for the island of Acklins. Overall the population density is 56.6 per sq mile. The skewdness in population (See table 2.1), is due in part to rural-urban migration as the greater employment opportunities in the more populous urban areas are perused.

**Table 2.1 Population of the Bahamas according to the census 1980, 1990 & 2000  
(‘000)**

| Island                         | 1980    | 1990    | 2000    |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Abaco                          | 7,271   | 10,003  | 13,174  |
| Acklins                        | 618     | 405     | 423     |
| Andros                         | 8,307   | 8,177   | 7,615   |
| Berry Islands                  | 509     | 628     | 707     |
| Bimini                         | 1,411   | 1,639   | 1,601   |
| Cat Island                     | 2,215   | 1,698   | 1,548   |
| Crooked Island &               | 553     | 412     | 341     |
| Long Island &<br>Spanish Wells | 10,631  | 10,584  | 11,269  |
| Exuma                          | 3,670   | 3,556   | 3,575   |
| Grand Bahama                   | 33,102  | 40,898  | 46,954  |
| Inagua                         | 924     | 985     | 970     |
| Long Island                    | 3,404   | 2,949   | 2,945   |
| Mayaguana                      | 464     | 312     | 262     |
| New Providence                 | 135,437 | 172,196 | 212,432 |
| Ragged Island                  | 164     | 89      | 69      |
| Rum Cay & San<br>Salvador      | 825     | 518     | 1,028   |
| Total                          | 209,505 | 255,049 | 304,837 |
|                                |         |         |         |

The status of the Agricultural Sector and the Rural Economy has to be seen in the context of the economic structure of The Bahamas. The Bahamian economy is heavily dependent on tourism and financial services to generate foreign exchange and create employment. Another important sector, especially as regards employment creation is the construction sector. The agricultural sector, although relatively weak, is an important source of livelihood for the rural communities.

## **2.2 Macro Economic Conditions**

Domestic macroeconomic conditions deteriorated during 2001, as the slow down which preceded the September 11th unprecedented attacks on the United States, was further aggravated by the attendant adverse implications for tourism output in the final four months of the year (see Table 2.2). Provisional estimates up to June 2002 indicate a decline in sector performance compared with performance for the same period in 2001. Construction Sector output was steady throughout most of 2001, with significant support from increased bank financing of residential mortgages. Indicators for the first quarter of 2002 suggest a decline in both new and planned future investments that signal a slow down in construction activity during 2002. Fisheries output was hampered by a decline in the volume of the lobster catch. As the economy's weakness impeded the government's

revenue performance, the targeted level of budgetary consolidation was not achieved during FY2000/01 and a larger deficit was recorded for the first half of FY2001/02. In financial sector developments, a more restrictive stance by the Central Bank occasioned a moderation in domestic credit expansion, which nevertheless exceeded deposit base growth and influenced some tightening in average liquidity and deposit rates. On the external side, the impact of more subdued economic conditions, led to a reduction in the estimated current account deficit.

**Table 2.2: Selected Indicators of Economic Activity (% Change)**

|                                 | 1998   | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Occupied Hotel Room Nights      | (5.9)  | 13.3  | 5.3   | (4.0) |
| Total Arrivals                  | (3.1)  | 9.0   | 15.2  | (0.4) |
| Construction Starts- Value      | (64.3) | (0.6) | 9.0   | (8.0) |
| Construction Completions- Value | 187.9  | (7.4) | (0.1) | 8.0   |
| Electricity Generation (mwh)    | 8.7    | 5.1   | 6.9   | 3.9   |
| Water Consumption (gals)        | 3.0    | (0.1) | 1.2   | (1.4) |
| Retail Price Index              | 1.3    | 1.3   | 1.6   | 2.0   |

**SOURCE: The Central Bank of the Bahamas**

Capital spending, at \$39.2 million for the first six months of FY2001/02, was \$7.8 million (24.8%) above the comparative FY2000/01 outlay. Growth mainly corresponded to a \$9.9 million advance in capital formation expenditures (largely on road infrastructure) and a \$1.2 million outlay for acquisition of assets (land). Capital transfers to non-financial public enterprises declined by \$3.3 million, but net lending to the public corporations intensified by \$17.1 million (79.2%) to \$38.7 million.

### 2.3: Sector Performance

Tourism provides an estimated 60% of the GDP and employs about half the Bahamian work force. In 2001, over 4 million tourists visited The Bahamas, approximately 83% being from the United States See Table 2.3. Preliminary and partial information on hotel occupancy rates and visitor arrivals suggest a 3.5% decline in expenditure, to an estimated \$ 1.814 billion for 2001. Decreased room night sales (4.4%) eclipsed an abated 2.9% appreciation in average nightly room rates to \$ 153.03 and caused estimated room revenues to decline by 1.7%. As this occurred amid a 6.6% boost in available capacity, largely influenced by Grand Bahamas' 15.4% restoration of room inventory, the average occupancy rate was reduced to 60.3% from 67.2%.



**Table 2.3: Visitor Arrivals**

| Period | Air Arrival | % change | Sea Arrivals | % change | Total     | % Change | Occupied Rooms Nights | % Change |
|--------|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1998   | 1,304,851   | (4.8)    | 2,042,814    | (2.1)    | 3,347,655 | (3.1)    | 1,848,,092            | (5.9)    |
| 1999   | 1,438,887   | 10.1     | 2,209,241    | 8.2      | 3,648,291 | 9.0      | 2,097,029             | 13.3     |
| 2000   | 1,481,545   | 3.0      | 2,722,286    | 23.2     | 4,203,831 | 15.2     | 2,201,825             | 5.3      |
| 2001   | 1,439,030   | -3.0     | 2,749,251    | 1.0      | 4,188,281 | -0.4     | 2,104,643             | -4.0     |

SOURCE: Ministry of Tourism

A major contribution to performance in the tourism sector is Sun International's Atlantis Resort and Casino, which took over the former Paradise Island Resort. There is a plan in the pipeline for the resort's further expansion. The opening of Breezes Super Club and Sandals Resort also contributed to growth. Tourism expansion is also occurring in the Family Islands. Examples are the opening of Club Med on the Family Island of San Salvador in the fourth quarter of 2002 and the new Emerald Bay resort on the island of Exuma. The Bahamian Government is likely to improve Airports and other infrastructure of critical importance to the development of the sector on those Family Islands with potential for development.

In the area of policy, the privatization of government owned hotels is likely to continue as well as the proactive approach to courting foreign investors through the conduct of major investment missions overseas to maintain the reputation of The Bahamas in key markets.

Financial services constitute the second-most important sector of the Bahamian economy, accounting for up to 15% of GDP, due to the country's reputation as a tax haven and offshore banking center. The Bahamas promulgated the International Business Companies (IBC) Act in January 1990 to enhance the country's status as a leading financial center. The act served to simplify and reduce the cost of incorporating offshore companies in the Bahamas. Within the decade of the 1990's, more than 84,000 IBC-type companies had been established. In 1991, the government also legalized the establishment of Asset Protection Trusts in the Bahamas. During the 1990's, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the G-7 introduced initiatives affecting the use of tax havens and the management and regulation of financial systems. In December 2000, the government enacted a legislative package to better regulate the financial sector, including creation of a Financial Intelligence Unit and enforcement of "know-your-customer" rules. Since the enactment of new regulations, the number of IBCs operating in The Bahamas has declined.

Provisional estimates for 2001 suggested broadly leveled trends in construction sector output, with an elevated level of project continuation from the previous period counter-balanced by reduced investments in new projects. Activity continued to be principally supported by strong underlying demand for residential housing, amid marginally softened mortgage rates and marked by further strengthening in housing demand and commercial investments in Grand Bahama. By contrast, commercial activity contracted further from

the record levels posted in recent years, which was concentrated in capacity expansion in the tourism sector. Data on planned future investments signal a continuation of this mix of activity into 2002, as evidenced by the significant upturn in residential approvals, particularly for upscale, second home developments in New Providence (Paradise Island)

Support for the domestic housing sector was evidenced in a \$119.0 million (22.0%) increase in outstanding residential mortgage lending for new construction and building repairs among banks, insurance companies and the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation and a softening in the average lending rate on these facilities to 9.0% from 9.4% in 2000.

The Agriculture and Fisheries sectors together account for 5% of GDP. From the fisheries sector, The Bahamas exports lobsters and other seafoods. From the Agricultural sector, there is a mix of large-scale and subsistence agriculture with most locally produced agricultural products being consumed in the domestic market. The Bahamas imports more than \$250 million in foodstuff each year, representing about 80% of its food consumption. The government aims to expand food production to reduce imports and conserve foreign exchange. It actively seeks foreign investment aimed at increasing agricultural exports, particularly specialty food items, thereby generating foreign exchange.

The year 2000 was a good year for the Fisheries sector. Exports totaled \$87 mn or 27% of domestic exports. This compares with \$14.7 mn of agricultural exports or only 4.6% of domestic exports. For details on the composition of domestic exports see table 2.4.

Estimates compiled by the Department of Fisheries suggest a decline in fisheries output for 2001, primarily as a result of a contraction in lobster landings and sales. The volume of products landed decreased by 7.2% to 10.3 million pounds, with a 19.9% fall-off in value to \$64.8 million. The lobster catch, although accounting for 60.0% of the weight, represented 87.3 % of estimated value. This represented a decline on both accounts, by a quarter to 4.9 million pounds valued at \$53.0 million and an average gain of only 10 cents to \$10.75 per pound. Scale fish, at 25.7 % of landings and 6.2% of value, increased by nearly one-third in both cases to 3.8 million pounds priced at \$6.8 million. The conch catch was lower in weight by 1.4% and in value by 2.0% to \$4.3 million.

Earnings from fisheries exports fell by an estimated 18.8% to \$71.9 million, led by a 20.2% contraction to \$67.7 million for lobster sales, which fetched a slightly higher average price of \$13.66 per pound. Conch exports continued to recover, with earnings by 42.2% to \$1.4 million, supported by a 1.9% price hike to \$3.84 per pound. Increased earnings were also recorded for sponges and crab exports

**Table 2.4: Composition of Domestic Exports 1996-2000**

| Year | Lobster | Other Sea Foods | Fruits and Vegetable | Aragonite | Rum and Liqueurs | Crude Salt | Others | TOTAL   |
|------|---------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|--------|---------|
| 1996 | 69,44   | 4,979           | 2,536                | 828       | 4,700            | 17,430     | 14,667 | 114,554 |
| 1997 | 59,461  | 3,044           | 3,089                | 760       | 5,208            | 21,587     | 8,85   | 102,000 |
| 998  | 57,473  | 12,907          | 1,173                | 602       | 12,295           | 12,878     | 40,892 | 138,220 |
| 1999 | 71,857  | 4,783           | 10,394               | 388       | 31,027           | 13,580     | 67,075 | 199,104 |
| 2000 | 84,847  | 2,087           | 14,676               | 26,086    | 19,002           | 12,447     | 61,449 | 320,594 |

### **3.0 THE NATIONAL COOPERATION AGENDA**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The Government of The Bahamas recognizes the weakness of pursuing a policy whereby the economy is being driven by a limited number of sectors. It is also mindful of the need to support economic development in the Family Islands so as to contain the migration of the population to the more densely populated Islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama. However, development of the rural sector on several islands can be costly and therefore the strategies and actions to achieve the goal of economic diversification will require a measure of selectivity.

#### **3.2 IICA's Strategic and Support Areas**

The activities identified in the National Cooperation Agenda are consistent with IICA's strategic areas as follows:

##### **3.2.1 Strategic Areas**

#### **Trade and Agri-business Development**

The Government of the Bahamas recently requested membership in the WTO and is in the process of meeting the requirements of membership. The intention to establish a mechanism for facilitating trade and encouraging linkages between sectors can have positive implications.

In the area of Agri-business, the focus is on developing industries and improving industry performance in area where there are good market prospects and opportunities to produce a diversified product.

Support will be provided to the fledging BAPA. The BAPA is registered and will serve as a focal point for intensified collaboration with the Agri-business sector. The BAPA will in time, be expected to become a member of CABA.

The IICA Office in The Bahamas has agreed to provide Secretariat support and a venue for meetings of the BAPA.

### **Agricultural Health and Food Safety**

Most of the Islands of The Bahamas are flat with the source of water for multiple usage being underground. Protecting human health through the management of waste disposal and prevention from contamination is important.

There is also a need to prepare industry to compete on Food Safety bases. In this regard the Office is participating in a committee for the introduction of HACCP in Meats and Poultry and a report on the food safety status in those industries with recommendations for improvements was submitted to the MAFLG.

### **Sustainable Rural Development**

Areas of cultivable lands are found on several of the Family Islands. Farm systems range from relatively large to small-scale subsistence types. The main markets for produce are either the export markets or New Providence. However constraints of limited infrastructure and unavailability of labour makes development of these islands a major challenge.

The emphasis for achieving Sustainable Rural Development is to improve the competitiveness of commodities with market potential and for the smaller operations, to encourage the diversification of sources of income.

The reorganization of the Ministry responsible for Agriculture to provide optimal support is crucial.

### **Technology and Innovation**

Appropriate technology has been identified as a major constraint to achieving competitiveness along the commodity chain.

Some commodities have been identified as candidates for value adding through further processing and the choice of processing technology will be crucial. Appropriate technology for selected production systems will have to be identified as well.

### **3.2.2 Supporting Areas**

The supporting areas of the National Agenda for the Bahamas are necessary for the successful implementation of the agenda and are consistent with IICA's supporting areas.

#### **Training and Education**

The training identified for the period is mainly in the area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety. Discussions have been entered into with the College of the Bahamas (COB) for developing a distance learning facility. The COB has a keen interest in this area, as the CD ROM driven programme of the project being prepared, will compliment their proposed web-based facility.

It is expected that the course selection will be supportive of all the strategic areas.

#### **Information and communication**

This area is mainly devoted to carrying out studies and analyzing information that will pave the way for the strategic actions to be implemented. The Communication Center, which is managed and operated jointly by the MAFLG and the IICA office, will be pivotal for this area.

Staff of the Communication Center received additional training in electronic document preparation in May 2002. Their report has identified the equipment required for upgrading the center.

#### **Horizontal Technical Cooperation**

This has to do mainly with IICA's strategic alliances with other international agencies. Collaboration with PAHO/WHO on the establishment of an Agricultural Health and Food Safety system is ongoing. There has been preliminary discussion with the Organization of American States (OAS) office on a youth training programme as well as the possibility for collaboration with the FAO. As the FAO Representative is not resident in the Bahamas, intense collaboration is more difficult.

## **4.0 RESULTS OBTAINED**

The results that were obtained are discussed under the relevant strategic and supporting areas as follows.

### **(a) Trade and Agri-business Development**

The results achieved in this area relate to:

- (i) The desire on the part of the MAFLG and the Poultry and Pork sub-sectors to improve quality standards by moving towards the attainment of HACCP status.

A multi-sectoral committee was established on which IICA is represented. A study to move these industries to HACCP compliant status was conducted by IICA's Technology and Innovation specialist with collaboration from MAFLG staff as well as producers and processors from the industries. The study documents the Agricultural Health status of the Poultry and Pork industries and advances recommendations that will lead to HACCP compliant status in these industries.

The report, dated July, 2002, was submitted to the MAFLG. In addition the Committee designed an implementation matrix based on the report and made a presentation to the Poultry Committee, which is chaired by the MAFLG. The importance of the results thus far is that a plan of actions exists which is implementable. The matrix can be used by the MAFLG in discussion with potential donors to determine and rationalize the funding for the various activities.

### **(b) Agricultural Health and Food Safety**

- i) Establishment of a National Food Safety System for the Bahamas.

This is an activity that is led by PAHO/WHO. A multi-sectoral Committee was established to draw up a Logical Framework for the design of the system. The Committee is chaired by IICA and includes participation from the Ministry of Health and the MAFLG. A Logical Framework specifying the goal, specific objectives, outputs and activities has been developed. The proposal recommends that the system be coordinated by a National Food Safety Board (NFSB). Terms of Reference have been drafted for the NFSB.

PAHO/WHO is in the process of procuring consultants to cost the activities to be carried out under the system prior to making a presentation to the Ministries responsible for Agriculture, Health and the Environment.

### **(c) Sustainable Rural Development**

- (i) Modernization of the Rural Sector.

This result is being achieved through working with the private sector and with support from the Department of Cooperatives of the MAFLG. A strategic analysis of Producer/Supplier Cooperatives was completed. The request was made by the BCLL to the Department of Cooperatives of the MAFLG and IICA. A small team comprised of representatives from the BCLL, Department of Co-operatives and IICA was supported by consulting input provided by FAVA/CA.

The report, dated August 2002, has been presented to the BCLL and contains a number of recommendations, some of which are reflected in the 2003 work programme. It should also be noted that the recommendations reflect many of the ideas expressed by individual co-operators.

**(d) Information and Communication**

- (i) Increase the effectiveness of the IICA office in the Bahamas as well as the MAFLG/IICA Communication Center.

Both the Secretary at the IICA office and the Communication Specialist received training in the SIDALC system and have made recommendations, based on that training, for upgrading the Communication technology at the center. A proposal has also been made for producing a Newsletter three times each year jointly with the MAFLG.

The Communication Specialist participated in a workshop to identify IICA's information and documentation resources and the services and products they provide. The ultimate aim is the establishment of an IICA's Agricultural Libraries System for the countries.

**(e) Education and Training**

- (i) Improved means of distribution of skills related material to better prepare the rural sector to deal with a changing environment.

The office has continued discussions with both the MAFLG and the COB in this area. The Bahamas will participate in a Regional Agricultural Distance Learning Project. At this point the discussions are of a preliminary nature, but all parties have agreed to pursue the initiative further.

The secretary of the IICA office received training in the operation of the SIFO accounting System.

## **5. Other Cooperative Activities**

The other Cooperation activities in which the office in The Bahamas was involved include (a) Support to BAPA ; (b) Support to the Agricultural Sector of the Bahamas as it prepares for possible entry into WTO; (c) Support to the Project Implementation Unit of the European Commission/CARIFORUM Caribbean Agricultural and Fisheries Programme for the hosting of a Workshop in The Bahamas to introduce the project "Strengthening Animal and Plant Quarantine Systems in the Caribbean (SAQS); and (d) arranging for training and attendance at Workshops and Seminars.

- (a) The office provided support towards the formation of the BAPA, which is now registered. The BAPA is expected to function as one of the main private sector Organizations through which smaller private groups and individuals will be reached. The BAPA is also expected to be The Bahamas' link with CABA.
- (b) Preparation for entrance into the WTO by the Bahamas. The office participated in a Workshop for the development of Sub-Sector profiles for submission to the WTO and sponsored the Feature speaker at a luncheon associated with the workshop
- (c) Support for a seminar on the SAQS project. This seminar is scheduled for January 15<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary work for its implementation was completed with support from staff of the MAFLG.
- (d) Arrangements were made for a number of persons to attend meetings; training programmes, workshops and Seminars in support of other IICA Units as well as other Organizations.

## **6. Relations with Strategic Partners.**

The main strategic partner with which the office is involved is the MAFLG. The MAFLG has been very supportive of and responsive to the work and initiatives being undertaken by IICA. In fact most of the activities are the result of joint discussions and collaboration.

Apart from the relative ease with which senior officials can be contacted, the MAFLG has initiated two actions in the absence of which the work of the office would have been adversely affected. These are:

- (a) Appointment of a liaison officer- A senior officer of the MAFLG has been assigned to provide support to the office. This has facilitated the flow of information to the Directorate of Agriculture and allowed for timely feedback on critical issues; and



- (b) The appointment of the Communication Specialist to work at the MAFLG/IICA Communication Center for two days per week. This has allowed the office use of an area of expertise that would not have been available otherwise except at additional expense.

Apart from the Department of Agriculture, a strategic relationship also exists with the Department of Cooperatives and the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Cooperation (BAIC). This latter, as well as the relationship established with the BAPA, have the potential of becoming avenues through which the private sector can be reached.

There is ongoing working relations with PAHO/WHO and agreements to collaborate with the FAO. There is potential for collaboration with the IDB and OAS in the future.

## **7. Opportunities for the Future**

The opportunities for the future are in large measure rooted in the stakeholder Consultations, which took place in November 2001 and the Declaration and plan of Actions resulting from those consultations.

The plan of action was the basis on which IICA's four-year work programme was developed.

What is required for successful implementations are (a) Transparency in the relationships between the stakeholders in the sector; and (b) the ability and willingness to be flexible and to accommodate required changes in a timely fashion.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the national stand point, it has to be recognized that the service sectors will always be dominant in the economic life of the country. However the Government of the Bahamas has recognized the need for all sectors to contribute to growth and development. In fact, if optimal levels of contribution are not being made by all sectors, then to that extent opportunities to exploit linkages can be missed.

In that regard it is very important that the agricultural sector be developed to the extent possible. Because the resources for agricultural development in the Bahamas are scattered among several Islands separated by miles of water, unless careful planning is undertaken, development can be expensive and infeasible. Therefore the thrust has to be selective and focused. This will allow scarce resources to be spent in areas and on commodities that are high in value (not necessary large volumes) and for which there are special market niches. The underlying objective should be to improve the competitiveness of those areas or commodities

From the stand point of IICA as an institution, support in the area of Distance education

and information Communication will be very useful in bridging the miles of ocean separating the islands with production potential and the farming and rural community from the capital where the main communication and educational resources are located.

The IICA office will be seeking support from Headquarters in the areas of Information and Communication technology, particularly since there are no IICA staff specialists in these areas in the Caribbean.

