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Committee on Agriculture

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**IICA IN THE WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE WORK PLAN IV:  
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2014**

**SUBMISSION BY IICA**

The following submission, dated 11 December 2013, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

**1 BACKGROUND**

1.1. In October 2009, the Director-General of IICA submitted a request to the Chair of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, seeking observer status for the Institute. The WTO Membership examined the request in March 2010 and the Committee on Agriculture granted IICA ad hoc observer status in its regular meetings.

1.2. As part of the work carried out jointly by IICA and the WTO, on 21 June 2012 a WTO Regional Reference Centre was opened at IICA. Here, public- and private-sector officials and academics can access reference and training materials with a view to enhancing the participation of the countries of the Americas in trade negotiations and in decision-making regarding agriculture and international trade.

1.3. Accordingly, IICA submitted three joint Work Plans between 2010 and 2013 (documents G/AG/GEN/92, G/AG/GEN/95 and G/AG/GEN/105).

1.4. In order to ensure the continuity of IICA's commitment, a fourth Work Plan has been drafted. This plan is to be submitted at the forthcoming regular meeting of the Committee on 29 January 2014 for circulation to WTO Members.

**2 ACTIVITIES TO BE DEVELOPED IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

2.1. The following activities are under consideration:

- a. Coordinated identification with the WTO Secretariat of possible areas of cooperation to be envisaged in the Work Plan for 2014. For example:
  - i. Notification of agricultural policies: The Committee has noted that its work is hampered by delays in the submission of agricultural policy-related notifications in accordance with the requirements and formats adopted in 1995 by WTO Members (G/AG/2). The Secretariat has accordingly drafted a handbook on agriculture notification requirements. This handbook will be circulated in the course of training activities. In view of the success of the regional workshops held at the IICA Headquarters in San José, Costa Rica, IICA will continue to provide support for these initiatives, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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- ii. Joint studies: The Committee on Agriculture has an ongoing need to produce technical documents that could be drafted or coordinated by IICA where these relate to IICA's geographical sphere (Latin America and the Caribbean). IICA has experience in preparing this kind of document and could assist the WTO Secretariat in developing activities of this nature at the Committee's request.
  - b. Participation and attendance at meetings of the Committee on Agriculture. IICA, as an observer member of this Committee, undertakes to continue attending the regular meetings held at the WTO.
  - c. Recourse to the WTO as a showcase for IICA's work: IICA could benefit from the WTO's multilateral nature to make products of special interest to its Members better known, such as the IICA/FAO/ECLAC joint report on the state of and outlook for agriculture, which is published each year by these institutions.
  - d. Continued preparation of the paper on IICA's contribution to the Marrakesh Decision and Food Security for the regular meetings of the Committee in November. IICA prepared submissions on this subject in 2010 (G/AG/GEN/93), 2011 (G/AG/GEN/97), 2012 (G/AG/GEN/104) and 2013 (G/AG/GEN/111).
- 2.2. Development of the following activities is under consideration:
- a. Participation of the IICA Director-General or another IICA representative in agriculture-related discussion panels at the WTO public forum held in September each year.
  - b. IICA will support the WTO in its technical cooperation activities directed at ministries of agriculture, at both hemispheric level (Inter-American Board of Agriculture) and subregional level (Southern Agricultural Council; Central American Agricultural Council; Caribbean Alliance; other ministerial bodies).
  - c. Training post-Doha Round and in the light of the outcome of the Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia: Once the text on agricultural modalities has been worked out, Members will be seeking training or guidance in relation to adopting changes in international trade policy and agricultural negotiations. IICA is following the Doha Round negotiations on agriculture and from the technical standpoint is ready to provide Members with such technical training or guidance. Considering the potentially extensive demand for technical guidance, and should the WTO Secretariat require extra technical staff for the purpose, IICA could provide support for this activity in its geographical sphere (mainly Latin America and the Caribbean) when appropriate.

### **3 THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE INSTITUTE**

3.1. IICA's Centre for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture (CAESPA) will be responsible for relations between IICA and the WTO Secretariat and will be the unit in charge of implementing this Work Plan. Implementation of the plan forms part of the CAESPA's functions, which are to follow up on implementation-related issues concerning the Agreement on Agriculture and progress in the negotiations, and to build up capacity in administering agreements that emerge from the Doha Round.

3.2. IICA is represented in 34 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and has an experienced network of experts in agriculture, international trade and trade negotiations, strategically located both in country offices and at Central Headquarters, through whom the technical cooperation activities set out in the Work Plan will be implemented.

3.3. For further information, please contact:

Rafael Trejos Solórzano  
Manager of CAESPA  
Tel.: +506 2216-0218  
Email: [rafael.trejos@iica.int](mailto:rafael.trejos@iica.int)

Adriana Campos Azofeifa  
Trade Policy and Negotiations Specialist and Coordinator of the WTO Regional Reference  
Centre at IICA  
Tel.: +506 2216-0170  
Email: [adriana.campos@iica.int](mailto:adriana.campos@iica.int)

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