



THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

*Promises Made and
Results Obtained*

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FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE



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At the beginning of his second term as Director General, Chelston W. D. Brathwaite, called together the staff of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to review the work carried out during his first four years.

Dr. Brathwaite has been Director General since 2002 and was re-elected, by acclamation, by the Ministers of Agriculture of the hemisphere for a second term (2006-2010)

I am pleased to welcome all of you today to the first meeting of our Institute for 2006. I trust that each of you had an enjoyable and restful holiday season and I wish you all a year of peace, happiness and prosperity.¹

As we enter the second half of the first decade of the 21st century and the second term of this administration, I wish to take a few moments to reflect on the past as a basis for helping us define the future. On January 15, 2002, when I assumed responsibility for the management of this noble Institute, I indicated in my acceptance speech that IICA of the 21st Century “must embrace a new style of technical cooperation, which emphasizes operational efficiency, prudent financial management, better use of our human resources, expanded international strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors and a new relationship with our Member States based on participation, transparency and accountability.”

Today, exactly, four years later, I am pleased to share with you the results of our work over the past four years. This report which is entitled “The first four years. Promises made and results obtained” is a summary of our achievements.

Today, therefore, I wish to speak about efforts to promote:

- 1) A new relationship with our Member States based on participation, transparency and accountability.
- 2) Operational efficiency

¹ Message from Director General. First Staff Meeting. January 16, 2006

- 3) Prudent Financial Management
- 4) Better use of our Human Resources
- 5) Expanded Strategic Partnerships

RELATIONS WITH THE MEMBER STATES

Let me begin by speaking of “A new relationship with our Member States based on participation, transparency and accountability”.

Through Offices in the Members States, we developed national technical cooperation agendas based an ongoing dialogue with national authorities and other key stakeholders in the agricultural sector (public organizations, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, academia, etc.). The aim here was to bring our actions in the countries in line with national priorities and development plans, taking into account the Institute’s strategic areas of action and strengths.

Preparation of these agendas represents a new approach to technical cooperation, one that emphasizes participation, partnership, cooperation and demand-driven efforts.

National Agendas

The National Agendas recognize the unique nature of each of the Institute’s Members States, and the approach used in preparing them is holistic and inter-thematic. They afford an opportunity for the principal actors in agriculture and rural development to contribute significantly to developing our technical cooperation programme, and take ownership of the program, based on mutually agreed upon human and financial resources.

Regional Agendas

The second major component of the model is the development of Regional Agendas for Technical Cooperation, which also involves a broad-based process of consultation and consensus building. Every effort is made to encourage the active participation of the key stakeholders involved in our technical cooperation actions at the regional level. Existing institutional regional mechanisms, such as CORECA in Central America, the CAS in South America and the Caribbean Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Caribbean, are key players in this process.

Preparation of the Regional Agendas includes two important components:

- Analysis of the National Agendas of the countries in each given region in order to develop and promote actions of regional scope to solve problems shared by a group of countries, and
- The Institute's commitment to continue supporting integration processes through existing mechanisms operating at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Taking into consideration the specific characteristics and needs of each region, the first step in preparing the Regional Agendas is to coordinate the Institute's efforts and to align our actions with regional priorities in order to achieve significant impact.

Our Directors of Regional Operations report to the respective regional Council of Ministers, or their equivalent, and organize an annual seminar to present them with the Regional Annual Report on the actions taken by IICA during the year at the regional level. This opportunity is also used to review and adjust the Agendas.

The specific thematic objectives of the National and Regional Agendas were:

- Promotion of Agribusiness Development
- Support to Trade Policies and Trade Negotiations
- Promotion of Technology and Innovation in Agriculture
- Support to Agricultural Health and Food Safety Programs
- Promotion of Sustainable Rural Development

Como resultado de esta nueva estrategia, hemos:

- **Improved Relationship with Member States**

The development of the National Agendas, the preparation of national annual reports, the presentation of these national reports in an annual seminar and the incorporation of ideas and suggestions from the seminar into our work plans for the next year have greatly improved our relationship with Member States. This approach generates partnership, accountability and transparency, and builds confidence and trust.

- **Increased Technical Cooperation Actions**

We successfully changed the actions in several of our Offices. Instead of being primarily offices for the administration of financial resources, they are now providers of technical cooperation services. Almost all new agreements we have signed incorporate technical cooperation elements.

- **Increased Technical Cooperation in Canada and the United States**

Increased technical cooperation activities in biotechnology, information and agricultural health were carried out in Canada and the United States, countries that were once only providers of financial resources to the Institute. In addition, we have promoted greater regional integration between the NAFTA countries by strengthening regional mechanisms such as PROCINORTE and the Trinational Council.

- **Increased Private Sector Participation**

We have improved relationships with the private sector at the national and regional levels, and the establishment of the 36th office of the Institute in Miami, which is focused on

agribusiness development in the hemisphere, will enhance this relationship in the future.

- **Increased Horizontal Technical Cooperation**

We have increased horizontal technical cooperation between and among countries, between and among the regions as a result of the elimination of the regional centres and the building of the hemispheric team of National Specialists, Regional Specialists, Country Representatives and Directors of Thematic Areas.

- **Increased Inter sector Linkages**

In this regard, we promoted a regional agrotourism linkages centre, based in Barbados, to explore opportunities for effectively linking the tourism market with locally produced food and promoting the concepts of quality and reliability in food production in the Caribbean. This organized relationship has been financially beneficial for both the farmers and hotels. This initiative has far reaching implications. With the necessary governmental and political will and resolve, this model can be replicated in the rest of the hospitality industry and the supermarket chains.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

We implemented a new institutional structure based on an integrated management framework, which was simpler and more horizontal.

We eliminated the regional centers and allocated US\$1.2 million in savings from this exercise to technical cooperation activities in the national offices in 2003 and 2004. We have now been able to institutionalize these allocations in the 2004-2005 budget.

We consolidated units at Headquarters, creating a flatter, more efficient institutional structure, and reduced D Level Management positions from 36 to 20.

We created a new unit for budget preparation and control.

We strengthened the Institute's internal audit function with the appointment of a new internal auditor and a deputy auditor.

We distributed new guidelines for budget preparation and financial accountability to all managers.

We established a Directorate for Performance Management and Evaluation to ensure that proposed actions are implemented in a cost-effective manner.

We created a Directorate for Follow-Up of the Summit of the Americas process to provide appropriate follow-up to the mandates issued at the Quebec Summit and the OAS General Assembly.

We established a new program on trade, agribusiness and food safety, and we established an Office in Miami to coordinate the program.

We created the Agrotourism Linkages Centre for the Caribbean, based in Barbados.

We appointed Regional Directors at Headquarters for the management and coordination of our regional agendas and regional actions.

We created an annual hemispheric forum called "Representatives' Week" to facilitate strategic planning, promote dialogue, facilitate hemispheric horizontal cooperation between and among countries, and build a hemispheric team of professionals.

We prepared national reports in each Member State based on the advances in the implementation of the national agendas.

One of the most important internal factors that supports this new model for technical cooperation is the Institute's monitoring, supervision, evaluation and follow-up system, which

links planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up activities within the Institute. This is managed by our newly established Directorate for Performance Management and Evaluation. In addition, it ensures that the IICA Offices in the countries and relevant Directorates and Units at Headquarters work in an integrated and holistic fashion.

The system is designed to be supportive, and embodies an essential part of the Institute's responsibility to provide leadership, management, coordination, control and accountability in the use of its resources. It is also designed to foster relationships that contribute to improving individual skills and performance, and bringing people and resources together, based on clear objectives and priorities defined in our work plans, and in the National, Regional and Hemispheric Agendas.

The system has the following main responsibilities:

- a. To provide management at the IICA Offices in the countries with relevant orientation and input for achieving results and improving performance.
- b. To provide input in a timely manner for the General Directorate's decision-making process so as to improve the Institute's performance and accountability.
- c. To conduct regular reviews, analyses and evaluation of the actions executed by the Offices in the countries and by the Units at Headquarters.
- d. To support the improvement of the administrative system in the Offices in the countries and Units at Headquarters so as to facilitate achievement of the Institute's goals and objectives.
- e. To support efforts to promote an institutional culture based on performance and the achievement of results.

These functions provide essential support for the implementation of our new technical cooperation model, and promote a results-based organization.

PRUDENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

External Audit

For the first time since 1995, in 2004, the External Auditors approved the financial statement of the Institute without qualification. This reflects in our view that the measures which have been taken to promote financial prudence, including the establishment of the Unit for Budget and Control and the strengthening of the Internal Audit, have produced positive results. It is also a reflection of the responsible attitude of our Representatives, Unit Managers and the Finance Division and I thank all of you, for your cooperation and support.

Payment of Outstanding Quotas

The administration obtained the approval of the Inter-American Board, through resolution No. 392, to implement a number of actions to collect outstanding quota payments. The application of these measures has resulted in several countries paying their outstanding quotas, including Nicaragua, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname and Argentina. In 2002, the Institute received financial support from 25 of its 34 Member States and 13 Member States were in arrears in their payments. I am pleased to report that in 2004 all 34 Member States honoured their financial obligations to the Institute. In fact, in 2004 and 2005, the Institute received 100% of its budget. In spite of these payments, the financial situation of the Institute is still critical and I have asked for a continued commitment to financial prudence in the use of our financial resources.

BETTER USE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Appropriate Human Resources Management Policies

As an institution promoting the development, transformation and transmission of knowledge, the Institute developed a three-year plan for the improvement of our human resources including:

- a. Reviewing the Institute's classification and compensation system and its recruitment practices.
- b. Developing a language training program to strengthen staff's language capabilities, and an orientation program for new employees.
- c. We have reduced international management positions at Headquarters from 36 to 20 and reduced Headquarters costs by 10%.
- d. There has been an increase in the number of national professional personnel who have been promoted to international professional positions, and several national professional staff now lead key support units of the Institute.
- e. We have reduced the average age of the professional staff of the institution by retiring all staff above sixty five years old. This has allowed us to recruit younger professionals who are more agile, dynamic and well prepared professionally. The average age of those who left the Institute in this period was 61. The average age of those we recruited to replace them is 51.
- f. We established an emergency fund to help our staff in emergency situations not covered by our insurance policies.

- g. There is a new sense of purpose, commitment and dedication among our staff, and there has been more alignment with the mission, vision and objectives of the Institute among our personnel.
- h. We have linked the new individual performance appraisal system to the work plans of the units of the Institute to ensure coordination of individual performance with institutional goals.
- i. We have appointed new professionals in Agribusiness Development, Biotechnology, Agrotourism, Trade Policy and Trade Negotiations and Food Safety to support programs in the countries in these technical areas.
- j. We redefined the role of our Representatives at country level emphasizing leadership and management capacity and, based on this new profile, we appointed new Representatives in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Jamaica, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, USA, Canada and Spain.

Promotion of a Culture of Excellence

One of the cornerstones of the new IICA model is the pursuit of excellence at all levels. To this end, the Director General's Award for Excellence Program was created to contribute to shaping an institutional culture of recognition for creativity, outstanding performance, leadership and teamwork.

For many years, the Institute has provided awards to its staff for years of service. It is the view of this administration that in addition to awarding years of service, we needed to award superior performance of our staff. We therefore initiated in 2002 the Director General's awards for excellence.

During the last four years we have provided these awards for excellence to 143 people on our staff.

EXPANDED STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The problems that hinder agricultural and rural development in the Americas are so vast and complex that they surpass the efforts and capabilities not only of national governments, but also of any single development agency or international organization. This is why international organizations and agencies must combine their capabilities and experience with those of their allies and partners in order to optimise contributions and bring solutions that have real impact on the Community of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas.

We consider the “working-together” approach as indispensable to achieving our objectives. To this end, we established the Directorate of Strategic Partnerships in Washington, D.C. to strengthen our work with international strategic partners as part of the fundamental strategy for promoting sustainable agricultural development, food security and prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

Strategic Partnerships

We have strengthened our strategic partnerships with the World Bank through the Global Development Learning Network, with the Inter-American Development Bank through FONTAGRO, with the Pan-American Health Organization through joint actions on BSE (mad cow disease) and FMD (foot and mouth disease and Avian Flu) and with FAO through joint actions, at the national and regional levels, in information and agricultural health and food safety.

Relations with the Organization of American States

We returned the Institute's Office in Washington D. C. to the OAS building as part of a strategy to build a new relationship with the OAS, and we are developing specific initiatives at the operational level.

IICA-CATIE Relations

We have improved our relationship with CATIE as we seek to ensure greater complementarities in our actions in the areas of education, technology and innovation and rural development. We continue to pursue the ultimate goal of CATIE and IICA working together strategically in the interest of our Member States.

Trade and AHFS

We have facilitated increased participation by Member States in the meetings of the World Trade Organization in Geneva to promote greater awareness of the global trading system, and we have launched a new instrument for modernizing agricultural health and food safety systems in the Hemisphere.

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

Let me mention five other aspects which are vital to our work.

Updating Institutional Norms

We have reviewed the norms of the Institute, eliminating outdated executive orders and updating the regulations and procedures in order to promote more effective management of the Institute.

Meetings Management

We introduced an on-line System for Meetings Management which has resulted in a 12% reduction in the cost of official meetings, especially the cost of sending several kilos of paper to the Member States.

Promotion of Corporate Communication and Corporate Image

Under the new model, we attach special importance to information, communication and the projection of the institutional image. The promotion of the Institute's new global dimension and image is of fundamental importance in efforts to position the Institute as an international development organization that is recognized and respected as a reliable strategic partner that can make a major contribution to the development of agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

Our new information and communications policy facilitates dialogue with the Community of Agriculture and the Member States and keeps them informed of the activities and results of the Institute's work.

Publications of the National and Regional Technical Cooperation Agendas, IICA's Annual Reports, IICAconnection (an electronic bulletin), ComunIICA on-line and the Director General's Infoletter, together with the improvement of the Institute's new website (www.iica.int), are examples of this policy.

Ethical Principles and Values

We also developed a new code of ethics, which takes into account the standards of the Institute, as set out in the Rules of Procedure of the General Directorate, the Staff Rules and the Financial Rules.

The purpose of this code is to build an ethical system that recognizes the value of the individual and of diversity, and to foster an environment characterized by high moral integrity so that staff members can realize their full potential.

It also highlights those IICA values which govern staff members' work at the Institute so that all members observe the highest values of ethical conduct, namely: impartiality, integrity, professionalism, flexibility, discretion, loyalty, financial prudence and responsibility to the Institute.

It sets standards for staff members' conduct within and outside the Institute, relations at work, personal business and moral issues, as well as the use and disclosure of information, conflicts of interest, and political activity.

The code must be interpreted as a clear signal that this administration will not tolerate corruption, improper conduct or political activity within the Institute.

Social Responsibility and a New Vision for the Institute

The Institute cannot dissociate itself from the social problems of unemployment, lack of shelter, education and health care, poverty and social injustice that afflict the majority of our peoples. These social problems are reflected in urban and rural crime, trafficking in illicit drugs, personal insecurity and lawlessness, all of which represent a threat to peace and prosperity and the process of democratic governance.

Consequently, in the future, the Institute must embrace greater social responsibility and a development agenda that allows it to play a more dynamic and strategic role in the promotion of prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

Such a role takes us beyond the traditional support to agricultural production and makes us partners in the development process of increasing the competitiveness of the entire agrifood chain, and fostering linkages between the chain and other sectors of the economy, such as tourism, health, nutrition, infrastructure, education and the environment.

A recent report by the World Bank indicates that “During the 1990’s, researchers and policy-makers largely neglected the agricultural sector, while favouring modernization through the development of the manufacturing and service sectors. Declining official investment in agricultural development provides evidence for this trend. Interestingly, this shift away from agriculture went hand in hand with a lower rate of poverty reduction. The main reasons why the sector’s potential has been relatively ignored for a decade appear to be a steady decline in commodity prices, in tandem with the increased competition that developing economies face from large agricultural subsidies in the developed world and the related problems of market access”.

NEW VISION FOR AGRICULTURE

We have promoted the concept that agriculture is more than primary production, and we have shown in our studies that when all the backward and forward linkages are taken into consideration, agriculture’s contribution to national development is greater than reported in national statistics. According to this analytical model, agriculture’s contribution to national development is 3 or 7 times higher than the percentages reported in national statistics, when all the backward and forward linkages in the commodity chain are considered.

In Argentina, the official statistics indicate that agriculture’s contribution to GDP is 4.6%, but when we consider all the backward and forward linkages, this figure increases to 32.2%.

In Brazil, the figure grows from 4.3% to 26.2%; in Chile, from 5% to 32.1%; in Mexico, from 4.6% to 24.5%; and in Costa Rica, from 11.3% to 32.5%. We are currently extending this study to all countries of the Hemisphere.

In addition, these analyses demonstrate that approximately 74% of the primary products of agricultural production are input for other sectors of the economy, such as agro-industry and manufacturing.

These results are documented in our report “More Than Food on the Table: Agriculture’s True Contribution to the Economy”.

A Common Hemispheric Agenda for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas

We have also assisted the Ministries of Agriculture with the development of a strategic futuristic vision for Agriculture and Rural Life in this hemisphere through the Agro 2003-2015 Plan of Action which, when implemented, can assist the Americas in achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, promoting environmental sustainability and fostering of a global partnership for development.

AN IICA BETTER PREPARED

Our goal is to make IICA the premier institution in agricultural technical cooperation in the Americas and the partner of choice for Member States.

We will succeed in these efforts when all our staff work as part of a team that is dedicated and committed to the goals of the Institute.

IICA today is better prepared to:

- Support the countries in the implementation of the 2003-2015 Plan of Action and modernization of the agricultural and rural sector;
- Promote hemispheric integration and horizontal cooperation;
- Monitor the state and outlook for agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere;
- Promote an interagency agenda in support of sustainable rural development.

We see the monitoring of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere and the identification of trends, threats, critical emerging issues and opportunities as an important future role for this Institute as we seek to create societies of knowledge. Discharging this responsibility will allow the Institute to accompany Member States in the implementation of the Plan Agro 2003-2015. Consequently, we must continue to monitor the state of agriculture and rural life in each country in order to identify the critical emerging issues, threats, tendencies and opportunities in the sector.

These results can then be consolidated into regional, thematic and hemispheric dimensions in order to define the state of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere. This we hope will result in “Outlook” conferences in the entire hemisphere in the future.

In summary, in this period, we have:

1. Defined a strategic vision for the Institute;
2. Promoted a new relationship with Member States based on the implementation of a new technical cooperation model that promotes participation, transparency, accountability and continuous dialogue with national authorities and key stakeholders in the public and private sectors of Member States;

3. Transformed the Institute into a results-based organization with an integrated management structure and a technical focus;
4. Supported the Member States in repositioning agriculture on the inter-American agenda and developed, with Member States, a Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action);
5. Promoted the principles of financial prudence, accountability and transparency in the operations of the Institute;
6. Implemented a human resources management policy that links individual performance to institutional goals;
7. Improved operational efficiency;
8. Expanded Strategic Partnerships;
9. Promoted recognition of superior performance of our staff;
10. Strengthened the financial base of the Institute.

THE FUTURE

Where do we go from here?

At the recent meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture and the Third Ministerial Meeting on Agricultural and Rural Life in the Americas, the Ministers expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the Institute in this administration and confirmed their

commitment to continuity of this work by re-electing me by acclamation as Director General for the period 2006-2010.

The 2006-2010 Medium-Term Plan will seek to consolidate these achievements and to continue to build the Institute into a modern organization in pursuit of excellence and the partner of choice in agricultural development and rural life in the Americas.

Some of the actions proposed are as follows:

- Adjusting the institutional structure in order to promote greater coordination of hemispheric, regional and national initiatives;
- Further strengthening the relationship with Member States by developing new national and regional agendas that respond to their priorities;
- Strengthening the systems for performance management and evaluation;
- Implementing an integrated management information system in the Institute;
- Implementing knowledge management as part of the institutional culture of the Institute in order to promote the Institute as a knowledge and capacity building institution;
- Developing new technical support programs in environmental management, biotechnology and biosafety, agro-tourism, and agro-energy;
- Strengthening strategic partnerships at national, regional and hemispheric levels;
- Promoting greater transparency and accountability at national, regional and hemispheric levels of operations of the Institute;

- Adopting information and communication technologies in all operational aspects of the Institute in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs;
- Promoting country Offices as centers of specialized information, technology and training;
- Promoting the training and development of our human resources to respond to the new technological challenges of the 21st century;
- Promoting increased horizontal technical cooperation and the exchange of experiences among the countries;
- Positioning the Institute as the leader in agricultural and rural development and the partner of choice for the Member States of the Americas; and
- Responding to regional priorities while maintaining the Institution as a single hemispheric entity.

We believe that with the implementation of these initiatives, the Institute is well repositioned to play a strategic role in the modernization of the rural sector, the promotion of food security and the promotion of prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

Our Institute is now better prepared to continue to support its Member States, which must face the complex challenges of making agriculture more competitive, developing foreign trade, combating poverty and improving living conditions in rural areas as well as strengthening their ability to guarantee food security and economic progress.

I do not wish to conclude this message without mentioning what I said at the Twenty-fourth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee. IICA is an instrument of Member States to serve Member States and we do not work and cannot work as Central Americans, North Americans, Caribbean people or South American people; rather, we must work as citizens of the Americas, committed to the quest for a more just, more prosperous, more united hemisphere that is more aware of its common destiny. This is why we are firmly committed to building a more integrated America that is called upon to be a region of peace and prosperity for all.

I am pleased to report that the results that we have achieved clearly demonstrate that the talent, energy, and enterprising spirit of the Institute have been unleashed and have produced significant results for the countries of the Americas. Each one of you has been a contributor to the achievement of these goals.

We must now take the next step to consolidate and institutionalize these successes for the benefit of the Member States.

Our 2006-2010 Medium-Term Plan, which we are developing in cooperation with the Member States, will provide us with an additional opportunity to consolidate these changes. I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in this exciting journey of building an organization of excellence in agriculture for the Americas.

Whenever an institution successfully accomplishes a common goal, four important qualities must be present: teamwork, loyalty, dedication and commitment. As we celebrate this fourth anniversary of the administration, I wish thank each and every one of you for your loyalty, dedication, commitment and contribution to teamwork which have made these achievements possible.

Together, we are building something very powerful and positive for the people of the Americas, and this can only be done with your help and your support.

May God bless you all and my best wishes to you and your families for 2006 and the years beyond.

Thank you.