



# REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE AMERICAS AND TWENTIETH REGULAR MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

San Jose, Costa Rica  
29-31 October 2019



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# What is IICA?

More than 75 years ago, a group of visionaries recognized the need to create an agency specializing in agriculture for the American continent, with a purpose that still remains valid today: to promote agricultural development and rural well-being in this region.

As a result, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) was born. Throughout this time, the Institute has succeeded in identifying challenges and opportunities and, most importantly, evolving into an international technical cooperation organization that permanently responds to the new demands of the agriculture sector.

Our **mission** is *to encourage, promote and support our Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through international technical cooperation of excellence.*

Our **vision** is *to be a modern and efficient institution supported by a platform of human resources and processes that are capable of mobilizing the knowledge available in the region and around the world, with the aim of achieving a competitive, inclusive and sustainable agriculture that takes advantage of opportunities to contribute to economic growth and development as well as to foster greater rural well-being and sustainable management of its natural capital.*

We provide cooperation by working closely and continuously with our 34 Member States, addressing their needs in a timely manner. Our most valuable asset is undoubtedly the close relationship we maintain with the beneficiaries of our work.

We have a wealth of experience in areas such as technology and innovation for agriculture, agricultural health and food safety, agribusiness, agricultural trade, rural development, natural resource management and training.

We are also committed to achieving results. Our 2018-2022 Medium Term Plan enables us to develop our technical cooperation model with the aim of consolidating IICA as an organization geared towards accomplishing concrete and visible results through our area of expertise, which is to facilitate positive changes in the agriculture and rural sectors of our Member States.



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Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) 2020



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**MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE OF  
MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE  
AMERICAS AND TWENTIETH REGULAR  
MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD  
OF AGRICULTURE (IABA)**



# **OPENING CEREMONY**



## OPENING CEREMONY

### Opening

The Opening Ceremony of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) began at 17:15 hours on 29 October 2019 at the National Auditorium of the Children's Museum, located in San Jose, Costa Rica, with the presence of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada; the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, Mr. Luis Renato Alvarado Rivera; the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, Mr. Manuel Ventura Robles, and the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Mr. Manuel Otero Justo.

### Remarks by the Director General of IICA, Mr. Manuel Otero Justo

The Director General of IICA extended a cordial welcome to those present at the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) 2019.

He pointed out that the event would permit Costa Rica, host country of the Institute for almost eight decades, to be the epicenter of debates on relevant topics for the future of agriculture, such as integration in regional and international trade, incorporation of more technology and the acquisition of new ability to produce in a more sustainable manner.

He stated that technology-driven and sustainable agriculture contained the solution to the most acute problems facing the planet, such as those related to the environment, energy crises, food and nutritional insecurity, pressure on natural resources and biodiversity, poverty and mass migration, in addition to the challenge of feeding 9 billion people in 2050. He indicated that it was for that reason that the Institute has been emphasizing the central role that agriculture in the Americas must play in the global agenda. In light of this scenario, he called upon the Ministers of Agriculture to work jointly in those efforts.

He expressed his solidarity with the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources of The Bahamas, Mr. Michael Pintard, following the havoc wreaked on the country by Hurricane Dorian in August 2019.

He congratulated the Government of Costa Rica on earning the United Nations system environmental award, “Champions of the Earth”, based on the efforts made by that country for preservation of the biodiversity and for carbon reduction.

He commented that IICA had moved forward in its process of modernization in order to deliver quality solutions to its Member States, through the application of austerity measures, de-bureaucratization, greater flexibility, and implementation of a process culture, which had made it possible to redirect resources towards genuinely productive activities. Furthermore, he added, five hemispheric action programs had been implemented; two cross-cutting issues had been established; greater interaction was being promoted with the private sector, civil society, the scientific community, and academia, thus turning IICA into a network of networks that articulates and strengthens knowledge. Additionally, the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow’s Agriculture (CIMAG) had been inaugurated; and the first *Fab Lab* for agriculture, the *IICA Microsoft Play* platform and the Bioeconomy and AgriTech hemispheric networks had been created.

He concluded by underscoring the fact that, within the framework of the IABA, the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas would be held under the slogan “Cultivating tomorrow’s agriculture today”. He added that the conclusions of that conference would be fundamental in guiding the work of the Institute in three areas that are of relevance for agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean: a) opportunities for rural inclusion in the digital era; b) the new balance between competitiveness and sustainability; and c) health, safety and quality for the future of trade.

Finally, he indicated to the representatives of the Member States that they were being welcomed by a renewed IICA that was ready for the future, and which was moving forward in the delivery of more and better innovative solutions to assist them in facing the challenges of the agriculture and rural sectors in the Americas.

*Remarks by the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, Mr. Luis Renato Alvarado Rivera*

After extending a cordial welcome to the audience, the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica pointed to the need for agriculture to adapt to the new times,

hence the need to develop technology and innovation and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of strategies to feed the world's population.

He indicated that this task belonged primarily to the family agriculture sector, which accounts for approximately 500 million people, hence the responsibility of the States to provide support for family farmers, who international policies expose to competing in unequal conditions. He added that it was necessary to close the gaps that they face on issues such as access to financing, as well as to facilitate new opportunities for women and youth. He underscored the fact that, if trade and fair prices are not present, farmers will continue to drown in poverty.

He indicated that the time had come to rethink the sector, to be disruptive, so that new policies do not exclude family farming. He stated that solutions did not flow from technology alone, but also from the creation of new developmental and trade policies. He affirmed that, if tomorrow's agriculture is to be built today, there must be greater transformation of agricultural activities.

*Remarks by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada*

The President of the Republic of Costa Rica extended a cordial greeting and welcome to all present. He stated that it was an honor to host the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas in Costa Rica and thanked IICA for sponsoring it.

He underscored the importance of agriculture for humankind, pointed to the work of agricultural producers, and recalled that modern civilization arose as a result of agriculture. He mentioned that food was so important that minimum caloric consumption was used as a parameter to divide the poorest population into two groups: basic and extreme poverty.

He noted that agriculture was facing formidable challenges, which, in turn, made it possible to realize tremendous achievements, such as those that would emerge from the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and from the strategic partnerships that were expected to be established, for example with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

He declared that there were challenges to be tackled such as population growth, climate change, and the need to attract new generations to the agriculture sector. He mentioned, as an example, that currently, the average age of a coffee grower is 55 years, a sobering thought when one thinks of who will produce coffee in the future. He mentioned that in

Costa Rica, generally speaking, 12% of employment is generated by the agriculture sector; he pointed out however, that if one were to remove the metropolitan area, that percentage rises 33%, and that there are three regions of the country where more than 50% of formal employment corresponds to that sector. It therefore constitutes a key element in reducing territorial inequalities.

He added that it was time to break away from the idea that agriculture was a thing of the past; for this reason, it was necessary to support the agriculture sector in areas such as access to credit, value-added, transfer of technology, organic agriculture and the inclusion of women, among others. He pointed out that, at this time, the greatest contribution by any government was to provide strong support to the agriculture sector and to agriculture in general.

Finally, he reiterated his support for the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock and for the Conference, the results of which he hoped would lead to actions aimed at the improving agriculture in the Americas.

### *Formalization of agreements*

#### General technical cooperation agreement between 4-H and IICA

A general technical cooperation agreement was signed between 4-H and IICA, for the purpose of strengthening capabilities and training young leaders to fast-track the improvement of agriculture and rural development.

The Executive Director of 4-H Canada, Shannon Benner, explained that the agreement was being signed with IICA with a view to fulfilling the purpose of 4-H: to empower young people to become responsible, committed and supportive leaders who inject positive change into the world that surrounds them.

The Director General of the Institute expressed his gratitude for the signing of this agreement in support of women and young people who play an active role in changing agriculture in the Americas.

Within the framework of the signing of the memorandum, Montserrat Prado presented her experience as a young Costa Rican rural woman. She is partner and cofounder of Ditsö Café, a family business that produces coffee in Tarrazú, Costa Rica, and which has been certified by NAMA Coffee of Costa Rica (a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action) and the Blue Flag Ecological Program for the agriculture sector.



### General technical cooperation agreement between the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and IICA

The general agreement between IICA and the UCR was signed for the purpose of promoting scientific development and the generation of technological innovations that provide better social conditions for the rural populations, through the implementation of impactful projects at the national and regional levels.

The President of the UCR, Henning Jensen, remarked that the signing of this agreement within the framework of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas was a strengthening of the competence of that university in technical cooperation and research in topics related to rural inclusion in the digital age, the achievement of balance between production and sustainability, and the interaction between health, food safety and trade.

The Director General of the Institute commented that, since his arrival for the first time in Costa Rica in 1976 to pursue a graduate-level program at the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Turrialba, he had met many professionals of the UCR and recognized the prestige of the university, which had continued to grow. He assured the president that this partnership would strengthen the commitment of IICA to collaborate with academia in knowledge generation and transfer, in order to rethink the agriculture that was needed in the Americas.

### Memorandum of understanding between Corteva Agriscience and IICA

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Corteva Agriscience and IICA, through which both organizations recognize the important role played by public-private association in agricultural development initiatives, and commit to working in areas of mutual interest on behalf of agricultural development and rural well-being in the Americas.

The President of the Meso-Andean Region of Corteva Agriscience, Ana Claudia Cerasoli, expressed her appreciation for the invitation from the Institute and underscored the importance of the agreement signed in order to support producers, empower rural women and facilitate access to markets, inputs and technologies. She indicated that Corteva Agriscience, an independent agricultural company, had been working since the previous year with IICA, and had provided support for the publication of the book “Warriors: Rural Women Around the World.”

The Director General of the Institute remarked that for IICA it was very important to strengthen ties with companies in the private sector, since they are the ones who assume risks in order to develop technologies.

Memorandum of understanding between the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and IICA

The memorandum of understanding between the UNWTO and IICA was signed, and is aimed at promoting the development of agrotourism as one of the key niches for economic dynamism and environmental sustainability in rural territories, with strategies that lead to the generation of rural employment, attracting investments and the linking of agricultural chains to tourist activity.

The Secretary General of the UNWTO, Zurab Pololikashvili, indicated that this institution was the agency of the United Nations in charge of promoting sustainable and accessible tourism for all. He pointed out that in 2020 the UNWTO would be organizing an event on rural tourism and ecotourism, in which he hoped that ministers of Agriculture and Tourism would participate.

The Director General of IICA mentioned that the Institute would be honored to be the site of that important event, if the IABA sanctioned it. He added that IICA worked in agrotourism, which meant that this partnership was a great opportunity to strengthen institutional actions on that topic.

Close

The Opening Ceremony of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA ended at 19:10 hours on 29 October 2019.

**CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF  
AGRICULTURE OF THE AMERICAS  
“CULTIVATING TOMORROW’S AGRICULTURE  
TODAY”**



## **CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE AMERICAS “CULTIVATING TOMORROW’S AGRICULTURE TODAY”**

### *Opening of the conference*

The Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas, entitled “Cultivating Tomorrow’s Agriculture Today,” began at 08:30 hours on 30 October 2019, in the United States and Canada meetings rooms at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), located in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Technical Secretary of the Governing Bodies of the Institute welcomed the delegations of the Member States of IICA, as well as special guests from various institutions participating in the Conference.

He recalled that, since the year 2010, the Organization of American States (OAS) had recognized the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) as the primary ministerial forum for the analysis of and consensus-building on policies and strategic priorities for improving the agriculture sector and rural life in the hemisphere.

He explained that the Conference would be divided into three thematic forums, and that the Director General of the Institute would share some conclusions at the end. He informed the participants that, following the conference, IICA would prepare a report, including a proposal for a series of commitments that reflected the consensus reached by the Member States regarding the forum topics. He clarified that the commitments were non-binding and would serve to guide IICA’s future efforts to improve agriculture. He explained that this document would be distributed to all Member States of the Institute for comments and feedback, which would be included in the official report of the ministerial meeting.

### *Welcoming remarks by the Director General of IICA*

The Director General thanked the delegations for attending the conference at the Home of Agriculture in the Americas. He underscored the importance of the deliberations that would take place during the event, which would provide crucial input to guide the Institute’s actions.

He began his technical presentation by emphasizing the need to break the vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). He explained that

46.4% of the rural population in the region, or 59 million people, were living in a state of poverty, and that the levels of exclusion that affected women were even greater.

He proposed that the region embark on a process of smart industrialization of agriculture that would add value through the production of high-quality food, that was socially responsible, and that would not isolate the agriculture sector. He remarked that, to this end, the Institute was engaging in strong coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue with other ministries and sectors, including those in the fields of health, trade, social development and the environment.

He warned that it was necessary to fully capitalize on the opportunities that new technologies afforded agriculture, and noted that, in the Americas, the agriculture sector had a market share of 26%, which meant that the hemisphere was the world's largest net exporter of food. He stated that the region accounted for 50% of the planet's biodiversity, generated 16% of total jobs in the world, occupied 33% of available land, and possessed 35% of total water resources, which demonstrated the need to move towards the sustainable intensification of agriculture while protecting the expansion of the agricultural frontier.

The Director General highlighted the importance of the Bioeconomy Program to the Institute and compared the growth rate of bioproducts (7.5%) to that of traditional agricultural products (2.5%). With respect to bioinputs, he noted that the global market was growing at an annual rate of 15%, and that LAC's market share was equivalent to USD 120 million. Furthermore, he indicated that the region accounted for 20% of the world's total land area dedicated to organic farming, and that it enjoyed a significant share of the global market for organic products. He also cited biorefineries as an example of the smart industrialization of agriculture, which was geared towards producing electric energy using cleaner, renewable energy sources. He highlighted the case of countries like Brazil, which was the world's second largest producer of bioethanol after the United States of America, and a leading producer of biodiesel, together with Argentina. He also highlighted the fact that Colombia was the only Latin American country that utilized palm oil diesel.

He noted that the examples he had mentioned reflected what was truly a revolution that had begun more than 20 years earlier in LAC, a region that would need to introduce innovations in the value chains of the pharmaceutical, cosmetics, plastics and nutraceutical industries.

He remarked that, in order to capitalize on the potential of agriculture in the region, and successfully transform the sector into a key protagonist of development, the region would have to resolve the formidable challenges that had historically hindered its performance, such as: a) productivity gaps; b) limited use of biological resources; c) degradation of the environment and natural resources; d) limited availability of and access to support factors and services for family farming; and e) the prevalence of poverty and inequality in rural areas, among other aspects.

Next, he commented on the importance of the three forums that would take place within the framework of the Conference, which were related to the impact of new digital technologies on agriculture and rurality, the manner in which the bioeconomy could resolve the dilemma between productivity and sustainability, and the measures that would prove indispensable in order to capitalize on commercial opportunities.

With respect to the first forum, entitled “Opportunities for Rural Inclusion in the Digital Age”, he underscored the importance of guaranteeing access to new technologies for producers, by offering training opportunities and redesigning extension strategies to include women and youth. He pointed out that new technologies allowed one to anticipate not only new production and economic scenarios, but also important transformations in the settlement patterns of populations, as well as in economic activities. In this regard, he considered that the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), in conjunction with the bioeconomy, had already yielded positive effects on the characteristics and conditions of agricultural and rural employment in the region.

Regarding the second forum, entitled “Towards a New Balance between Productivity and Sustainability”, the Director General noted that, in seeking this new balance, the bioeconomy afforded multiple opportunities to improve the environmental performance of production processes and replace them with renewable carbon alternatives (biomass). He explained that, in addition to recirculating resources, the bioeconomy fostered value-adding and the resulting economic and social benefits for the population. He warned of the crucial need to discuss how to incorporate the bioeconomy into the various strategies and plans for agricultural development. To this end, it would be necessary to consider the agroecological and institutional realities of the hemisphere, incorporate environmental aspects as a source of competitiveness in international markets, as well as ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits of the bioeconomy.

In relation to the third forum, entitled “Health, Safety and Quality for the Future of Trade”, he emphasized the importance of strengthening food and nutritional security

through international market positioning strategies that foster improved food quality. He recalled that IICA had been implementing the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program (AHFS) for 40 years and would continue its work in this area.

The Director General of IICA concluded his remarks by indicating that, in order to transform agriculture in the Americas, it would be necessary to continue strengthening the relationship with the private sector and working jointly today to cultivate tomorrow's agriculture.

### *Forum 1: Opportunities for Rural Inclusion in the Digital Age*

Moderator, Patricia Vildosola, Editor of El Campo magazine and El Mercurio journal in Chile, introduced the topic by listing the various digital tools available to the agriculture sector. She highlighted the primary challenges and opportunities for rural inclusion.

She informed the participants that the objective of the forum was to analyze the following guiding questions:

- What actions should be promoted, at the national and international level, to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital age for the rural milieu and agriculture?
- What are the main barriers, institutional or otherwise, that must be overcome to obtain maximum benefit from these opportunities?
- What should be the priorities of international cooperation to respond to the needs of the countries and the region, so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by ICTs for the development of rural areas and agriculture?

Mrs. Anayda Frisneda, Public Sector General Manager for Microsoft Latin America, highlighted a significant challenge that would need to be jointly faced in the future: feeding an estimated 9.6 billion people by the year 2050, which would require a 70% increase in food production with less farming land and fewer water resources. She warned that agriculture utilized 70% of potable water, generated 25% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and required 2% of global energy, solely for the purpose of generating ammonia.

She mentioned that various technological tools were available to assist in driving the digital transformation of agriculture, the collection of information and decision making.



She explained that these technologies were currently utilized for vertical farming, precision agriculture and the production of smart crops. She also listed a few examples, such as cloud computing, the management of large volumes of data (big data), artificial intelligence, automatic learning, blockchain, mixed reality and the use of drones for monitoring purposes, among others.

She highlighted the opportunities for digital transformation in Latin America, where 30% of transformation initiatives were using artificial intelligence. She noted that, by 2020, an estimated 40% of companies would possess a digital transformation strategy, and that many governments, including those of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Colombia, had developed comprehensive agendas that incorporated technology use and connectivity into various areas, including agriculture, education, employment and the inclusion of youth and women.

She underscored the need for public-private models that could contribute to bridging gaps in terms of access, connectivity, capabilities and opportunities. As an example, she cited Casa Sauza, which had 140 years of experience in the tequila industry and was utilizing drones for monitoring and timely decision-making.

She indicated that the agreement between IICA and Microsoft focused on training as a key element for capitalizing on digital tools. In this regard, she highlighted the importance of the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG). Lastly, she explained that her company's mission was to empower every person and organization on the planet to achieve more.

Mr. Víctor Villalobos Arámbula, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development of Mexico, reflected on the joy of experiencing a transformation period which, together with innovation, would allow society to address topics such as the challenge of feeding a growing population, climate change, political instability, and economic and financial uncertainty. He highlighted the opportunities that would become available once agriculture began to be seen as a key element and driving force for development. To this end, it would be necessary to become familiar with the technological tools and innovations available.

He remarked that no technology could eliminate poverty on its own. However, ICTs afforded a wide range of constantly evolving alternatives for improving agricultural conditions. He indicated that, although digital technologies were not a panacea, they nevertheless were a powerful tool to assist in achieving social inclusion, fostering

agricultural development, alleviating poverty and improving living conditions in rural areas.

With respect to the national actions that should be undertaken to capitalize on digital options, he mentioned the need to define the role of the State in facilitating access to ICTs, prior to developing public policies for all areas in the countries. He reported that Mexico was implementing a very aggressive policy to provide all municipalities with Internet access, and that the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development was utilizing ICTs to provide information in real time, and, in turn, contribute to strengthening the country's competitive standing in markets. As examples, he cited the health intelligence system of the National Service for Agrifood Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA), which provides real-time data to prevent pests and diseases, and the Agrifood and Fisheries Information System (SIAP), which provides support in surveying crops in smallholdings, in order to predict yields.

Regarding IICA's role, he considered that the Institute should provide technical cooperation to facilitate the use of and access to ICTs, taking into account matters such as data privacy and protection of intellectual property.

Mr. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, remarked that there was a great deal of information available regarding how to take advantage of the opportunities for rural inclusion afforded by new digital technologies. He explained that the real challenge was how to make inclusion a reality, and that this task was the responsibility of governments, civil society and the private sector.

He indicated that, in his country, public policies played an important role in enabling the government to make the necessary investments to provide the agricultural rural sector with access to new technologies. He noted that the country had implemented an aggressive public investment program in rural areas that included various actions, most notably the "República Digital" initiative, which aimed to incorporate the greatest number of citizens possible into the digital age and had involved an investment of close to DOP 8 billion in its initial phase.

He added that another program that had been implemented was "Programa de Visitas Sorpresa", which delivered resources to the most remote communities in rural areas that lacked access to basic services such as water, electricity and connectivity, among others. He commented that the president had participated in close to 270 visits to those areas, where more than 3,000 development projects had been implemented to install concrete floors in houses with dirt floors, solar energy equipment, and connectivity facilities for

mobile phones, among other initiatives, representing an estimated investment of USD 1 billion.

Lastly, he commented that efforts should be geared towards improving infrastructure in rural areas and providing access roads, electricity, drinking water and access to health and education. He considered that this could be achieved by allocating a large portion of the State budget to initiatives in rural areas. He also stressed the fact that effective digital inclusion could only be achieved if technological resources were accessible to the poorest populations.

Mr. José Miguel Rodríguez, of the Office for Agricultural Policy Studies (ODEPA) of the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile, mentioned that, at that time, the world was experiencing a new scenario and facing challenges associated with agricultural production, especially migration, climate change, drought and the achievement of greater productivity with less water, land and chemicals.

He stated that innovation and new technologies would add value to the rural sector and contribute to overcoming the challenges facing agrifood chains, the production sector and human capital.

He noted that the incorporation of new technologies could modify the organization of value chains due to the emergence of new market factors and interactions, as well as new suppliers of agricultural technology services or data storage. He added that new technologies could affect the production sector in different ways, depending on factors like economic size, farming area or type of production. He considered that access to technology should take into account a producer's size and type of production. Additionally, he commented on the need to consider the potential effect of new technologies on human capital involved in agriculture, given the demand for new jobs, skills and competencies related to specific technologies, such as information analysis.

He mentioned that Chile had implemented a number of actions to foster the use of new technologies, in order to minimize gaps associated with the economic, social and agricultural potential of different production groups, as well as to ensure that these technologies were broadly accessible and generated significant social benefits. He explained that the work areas had focused on the development of management platforms, digital services for data management, precision agriculture, sensors, machinery, monitoring and early warning systems, as well as automation, robotics, and predictive and simulation models.

He underscored the fact that one of the most important innovation initiatives had been achieved through the Foundation for Agricultural Innovation (FIA), which had channeled efforts towards increasing production in a sustainable manner by generating and validating technological tools in three broad areas: information management systems, precision agriculture, as well as automation and robotics.

He added that the National Irrigation Commission (CNR) of Chile had developed projects to foster efficient water use. He also indicated that new tools had been developed for the livestock sector, such as the Livestock Information System (SIPEC), which had allowed for incorporating animal traceability into the rural sector. He listed other technological systems that had been implemented in his country: an information system on beekeeping, a national monitoring system for registered farms entitled SINAP, traceability systems for grapes and wine, an information system to authorize pesticide use, and online registration systems for nurseries and plant shops.

Lastly, he underscored the fact that training in the use of new technologies had enabled Chile to bridge the digital divide between rural areas and cities, as well as create opportunities for the agriculture sector to market its products at the national and international levels.

#### Analysis and comments

The Representative of Canada emphasized the importance of digitalization and connectivity, which had enabled his country to provide producers with more opportunities to improve agrotechnical management, maximize yields, reduce waste and establish market linkages. He mentioned that producers were already familiar with digitalization, which had enabled them to reduce the use of agrochemicals, increase yields, improve sustainability and connect to consumers. He remarked that, although other ICTs, such as the global positioning system (GPS) and satellites, were used extensively, greater coverage and Internet access were necessary in order to obtain information on Canadian and global market trends.

With respect to the issue of rural retention and the ability to attract youth and women to rural areas, he noted that the solution would largely depend on digitalization and connectivity. He added that attracting youth to rural areas would foster the generation of new ideas and boost efficiency in adopting digital tools.

The Representative of Costa Rica stated that it was important to make a distinction between availability and accessibility, given that high-tech tools had great potential but

were very costly. He considered that overcoming this limitation would require the adoption of public policies that facilitated accessibility. He added that making progress with respect to digitalization was difficult when the real price of products did not reflect their production cost.

The Representative of Argentina referred to the need for public policies on big data and open data. He noted that the primary challenge involved striking a balance between data availability and the respect for privacy. To this end, joint work between the public and private sectors would be necessary. He stated that Argentina had already undertaken initial efforts in this regard.

The Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines commented that some economists believed that the Caribbean region should transition from a goods-based economy to a service economy. He added that, in either case, a significant return on investment, for the benefit of individuals, could not be achieved without the added value obtained in value chains. He noted that a goods-based economy could achieve desired productivity levels through the use of modern technologies in the agriculture sector.

The Representative of Grenada stated that her country's National Agricultural Policy emphasized rural development, particularly agrotourism and access to digital technologies. As a result, 75% of the country had digital coverage, and the goal was to reach 100%. This would enable farmers to connect, develop their products, establish more business contacts and receive technical assistance and virtual training related to agrotourism and agriculture. As an example, she mentioned a group of 45 producers who were selling their products to hotels via WhatsApp. Nevertheless, she acknowledged the fact that a great deal of support would be necessary to develop rural and economic policies that could generate conditions conducive to digitalization as well as greater ICT availability, accessibility and use.

The Representative of Brazil agreed with the approach described by the Representative of Canada. He considered that, just as technology could benefit agriculture, agriculture could contribute to technology, but this would require conditions that fostered innovation. He explained that, to this end, various agriculture-focused startups or "AgTechs" had been created in Brazil to assist rural areas in replicating the successful expansion of digitalization that had been achieved in urban areas. He added that contributions from the public, private, and academic sectors would also be necessary.

The Representative of Paraguay commented that his country had developed the "Agro Ayuda" platform, which sought to connect extension workers from the Ministry of

Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) with farmers. He explained that the platform enabled producers to receive updates on agricultural prices and become familiar with purchasing standards and requirements established by State entities. He also stated that analyses were carried out to check soil alkalinity (pH) levels in order to apply adequate dosages of calcium oxide. He added that, in the near future, the platform would allow for creating a single registry of producers, based on information taken from the census that would be carried out in 2021, using digital technologies exclusively. He reported that his country was also working to develop a service platform to teach users how to install tools and receive training in the digital age.

The Representative of Trinidad and Tobago considered that the challenge ahead would be to determine how to achieve the digital transformation of both the government and the population. He explained that transformation and investments were primarily concentrated in cities but were also necessary in rural areas. He noted that an additional obstacle was the fact that those processes were in the hands of bureaucrats who failed to expedite this process. Therefore, he believed that responsibility for this task should be transferred to private stakeholders.

The President of the National Council of Secretaries of Agriculture (CONSA) of Colombia commented that online coverage was limited in his country. As a result, efforts had been undertaken to promote off-line platforms that would enable users to connect with each another and exchange data using various tools, such as QR codes. He underscored the importance of taking family farmers and small-scale farmers into account when devising these types of strategies. He also highlighted the fact that the country was working with IICA to set up a digital innovation center for rurality and agriculture.

The Representative of Jamaica remarked that solutions had been developed but they did not meet the specific needs of countries. He considered that IICA should foster innovation and development, for example, through the partnership with Microsoft, which would afford opportunities to develop technologies and applications that could contribute to achieving progress in the sector. He also remarked that, although technology could assist in bridging the gaps between urban and rural areas, it could also exacerbate them. Furthermore, he believed it was necessary to promote the development of technologies, especially among youth.

### Special message by the President for the Meso-Andean Region at Corteva Agriscience

Mrs. Ana Claudia Cerasoli, President for the Meso-Andean Region at Corteva Agriscience, indicated that the vision of Corteva group was to foster digital agriculture. To this end, it had created a subsidiary company named “Granular,” which provided software and digital solutions for agriculture, based on the understanding that digital agriculture could facilitate improvements across all links of the production chain.

She went on to describe the three linchpins for agricultural transformation: a) data on production, consumption and consumers, for use by farmers; b) multidimensional data to develop a comprehensive vision that contributes to improved decision-making; and c) technologies that foster collaboration between stakeholders, in order to make more assertive decisions. She noted that, in Brazil, the company provided data on genetics, appropriate varieties, climate and prospection, among other fields. She added that the “Mi lote” application in Argentina provided information on appropriate seeds, climate variables and weather alerts, among other areas.

Lastly, she added that a great deal of work remained to be done in terms of developing digital tools for agriculture, and that joint efforts would lead to comprehensive solutions and a transition towards Agriculture 4.0.

### *Presentation of the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture*

The Director General expressed his satisfaction at sharing a dream that began when he came into office in 2018 and that had transformed IICA into a symbol of the future and hope. He indicated that, about a year earlier, IICA had begun working with Microsoft to create the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG), which was aiming to become the most important educational project on agriculture in the Americas. He hoped that, over the next few months, the Center would receive many visitors, especially youth, who would be able to experience an IICA with open doors. He explained that CIMAG formed part of the Institute's transformation plan, which also included the Typical Rural House, the Fab-Lab for digital agriculture, and the Plaza of Agriculture in the Americas.

He added that, in addition to Microsoft, other companies like Bayer and Corteva had shown an interest in this initiative and had expressed their willingness to participate. He noted that the project would allow for educating the younger generations on agriculture, by sharing the most important resource: knowledge. He encouraged the Member States to support the project and to invite new partners to become involved. He commented

that CIMAG would be equipped with virtual reality devices and simulators, among other elements that would pave the way towards Agriculture 4.0.

The Public Sector General Manager for Microsoft Latin America indicated that it was the company's mission to empower people and organizations to achieve more with support from technology. She underscored Microsoft's commitment to Costa Rica and Latin America, indicating that the company was implementing a collaborative model aimed at making technology accessible to everyone, and, in turn, bridging the current technology divide. She considered that CIMAG was a good example of ways in which the public and private sectors could collaborate to make a valuable difference through technology, thereby enabling youth, women and all sectors of society to adopt a new outlook on the present and future of agriculture.

### *Forum 2: Towards a New Balance between Productivity and Sustainability*

Moderator Guido Nejamkis, Advisor to the Director General of IICA, underscored the importance of striking a balance between productivity and sustainability, improving the environmental performance of production processes, incorporating environmental aspects as a source of competitiveness in international markets, and guaranteeing an equitable distribution of its benefits. Next, he introduced each panelist.

Mr. Roberto Rodríguez, Coordinator of the Agribusiness Center of the Getulio Vargas Foundation, indicated that all the issues discussed during the first forum were related to sustainability and productivity, and that it was necessary to strike an adequate balance somewhere in the middle. He added that his presentation would focus on two topics: laws and technology in Brazil.

He mentioned that Brazil had a forest code that regulated land use, as well as the creation of areas in which native vegetation should be preserved. The code included provisions regarding: a) permanent preservation areas (PPAs), which sought to protect biodiversity and water resources, as well as prevent soil erosion; b) legal reserves, which were rural areas covered by natural vegetation that could be exploited through sustainable forest management, within the limits established by the law; c) environmental regularization programs (PRA, according to the acronym in Portuguese), which were of a series of actions or initiatives that rural land owners should carry out to adapt and promote environmental regularization; and d) payment for ecosystem services (PES), through which farmers adopt measures to preserve areas or develop preservation or environmental restoration initiatives on their properties, such as the preservation of a spring, in exchange for financial compensation. He indicated that the government had



made a major effort to comply with this law, with a view to avoiding illegal deforestation.

With respect to technology, he noted that grain production in Brazil had grown by 325% over the previous 29 years, through the use of technologies developed by Brazilian public sector and private enterprises. As a result of that productivity increase, the country avoided the need to clear out about 97 million hectares for farming purposes.

In regard to meat production, he commented that poultry production had experienced the greatest amount of growth, followed by pork and beef in second and third place, respectively. He mentioned that sugarcane ethanol was the biofuel with the lowest carbon footprint in the world. He added that the blending of ethanol with gasoline (27%, E27) had been a legal requirement in Brazil since 2015. This had prevented the emission of 523 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>EQ into the atmosphere. He also underscored the fact that the country had implemented the Low-Carbon Agriculture Plan (ABC), which sought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He concluded his remarks by indicating that the challenge was how to achieve a greater balance between productivity and sustainability, as well as between technology and clear legislation.

Mr. Noel Holder, Minister of Agriculture of Guyana, listed a few actions needed to strike a balance between productivity and sustainability: a) investing in research and development; b) applying good agricultural practices; c) implementing race development programs; d) developing economic incentives and disincentives; and e) applying a cluster group approach to optimize resources, among others.

He added that, in order to better capitalize on opportunities to strike a balance between these two areas, it would be necessary to: a) adopt a cluster group approach that allowed for optimizing resources; b) regulate land zoning in order to apply sustainable practices, such as certified organic farming; c) provide training, advisory and extension services; d) achieve cooperation between public and private sector entities in the agricultural system that could contribute to boosting sustainability, such as public-private partnerships; and e) establish voluntary agreements, such as environmental certification programs aimed at improving environmental productivity and sustainability.

He also indicated that, in order to achieve the desired balance, it would be necessary to overcome a number of obstacles, including limited access to funding, low levels of innovation resulting from knowledge gaps, as well as the limited capacity to regulate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as overfishing. He also underscored

the need to conduct an evaluation of this situation in Guyana, given the fact that the country depended heavily on fishing and marine resources.

Lastly, he considered that, in order for international cooperation to successfully contribute to achieving a balance between productivity and sustainability, it should promote funding mechanisms aimed at supporting public and private sector investments; foster the improvement and adoption of more integrated intersectoral practices, with support from institutions and regional networks; and promote experimentation with and the use of a broad range of agricultural practices that could boost productivity and sustainability.

Mr. Frédéric Seppéy, Assistant Deputy Minister at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, stated that the question that should be answered is, how can we feed the world in a sustainable manner? In this regard, he noted that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was crucial for farmers.

He described the experience of Canada, where science-based regulations had benefited productivity and sustainability. As an example, he mentioned that beef production in the country had remained stable from 1981 to 2011, despite the fact that land dedicated to livestock farming had diminished by 29%. This had been achieved through innovations that contributed to reducing the carbon footprint. He commented that Canada invested more than USD 1 billion per year in innovation.

He pointed out that one of the approaches that had yielded increasingly better results for the country was bringing technology closer to farmers in various ways, including through living labs, which brought together farmers, indigenous communities and experts to capitalize on traditional knowledge. He noted that this concept had continued to grow in the country, given that, recently, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada had established a system of living labs with support from the Group of Twenty (G20).

He expressed his support for the side event that would be hosted by the U.S. Delegation regarding the importance of Maximum Residue Limits, given the fact that, based on Canada's experience, 30% of crops would be lost in the absence of pest control mechanisms.

Lastly, he indicated that sustainability was a topic that should concern not just agricultural producers. He explained that it was important to educate consumers to prevent food waste across all links in the production chain.

Mr. Flávio Bettarello, Deputy Secretary for Trade and International Relations of Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply of Brazil, referred to the challenges that the world would face in the future, particularly: a) a growing population that would require more food, fibers and bioenergy, given that, by 2050, there would be 3.2 billion more people than in 2005; and b) climate change, which would require the agriculture and industrial sectors to reduce their carbon footprint.

Next, he presented the innovative actions that Brazil had carried out to intensify land use, which had enabled the country to reduce fixed costs using the same amount of land, manpower and equipment, while boosting productivity by 380%. He indicated that solutions should be adapted to each country's unique reality. As an example, he noted that agriculture in Brazil had been "tropicalized" through the application of innovative techniques in soy and wheat farming.

He underscored the need to address the concept of sustainability from other angles besides just agriculture, as part of a more comprehensive approach that included environmental, social and economic aspects, among other areas. Next, he referred to productivity, highlighting the need to develop a solid regulatory framework and ensure producers' involvement in its application. He underscored the importance of promoting fair trade, giving special consideration to small-scale producers, to ensure that they become integrated into and able to compete in markets.

He explained that Brazil's Forest Code, which required that landowners maintain legal reserves and permanent protection areas, was one of the world's most advanced legislations in matters pertaining to the environment and agriculture. He concluded his remarks by reiterating the need to engage in open dialogue to foster the application of scientific principles and drive a paradigm shift whereby agriculture would no longer be viewed as an enemy of the environment.

Mr. Jorge Luis Maicelo, Head of the National Institute of Agricultural Innovation (INIA) of Peru, shared his perspective regarding the balance between productivity and sustainability. He explained that, in his country, certain climate risks hindered more accelerated economic growth, and that the leading causes of low productivity were rainfed agriculture, lack of access to funding opportunities, insufficient use of certified seeds and limitations with respect to technical assistance.

He commented that, in 2016, the Peruvian government had established the National Agricultural Policy, which was geared towards achieving a sustained increase in the income and livelihoods of agricultural producers, especially family farmers. He

explained that the policy consisted of 12 high-priority linchpins that were implemented through sectoral strategic plans, aimed at addressing issues such as sustainable water and soil management, forestry development, agricultural funding, innovation, risk management, market access, as well as agricultural health and food safety (AHFS), among other topics.

He emphasized the fact that his country's agricultural agenda fostered integrated land management and listed four priority work areas to increase productivity and sustainability: legal security of land tenure, efficient water use, increased technology use and greater agricultural funding.

### Analysis and comments

The representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines highlighted his country's experience in leading efforts to prohibit the use of glyphosate. He recalled that glyphosate producers were staunchly opposed to the product's prohibition when it was initially proposed. Furthermore, producers who previously utilized the product would face greater production costs without it. Despite the ban, however, prices for commodities in the country had not increased. With respect to the latter statement, he added that the country was attempting to access organic markets. He noted that he had shared that example to demonstrate the fact that the situation in Caribbean countries was vastly different from that of larger countries. He added that, although the country had not experienced a decline in production, it had seen a slight increase in production costs and no increase in commodity prices. Consequently, the country had received no compensation for its efforts in this regard.

The Representative of St. Lucia acknowledged the fact that one of the challenges facing the Caribbean region was achieving sustainable productivity, as well as educating farmers as a means of achieving this balance. He indicated that the Caribbean required funding in order to undertake agriculture-related activities at various levels. He urged Caribbean countries to engage in greater collaboration, and underscored the need for accessible technologies, in terms of costs and adaptability. Lastly, he emphasized the need to implement programs that could motivate youth to become involved in agriculture.

Next, the moderator addressed the Representative of Brazil to inquire about the progress that his country had achieved in tropicalizing wheat, which was a matter of great interest to the countries in attendance.

The Representative of Brazil referred to the tropicalization of wheat, a process that was being carried out in Southern Brazil. He also described the research that was being conducted to adapt wheat to other regions. He reminded the attendees of systems like double cropping (of soy and wheat, for instance), which could be emulated.

The moderator addressed the Coordinator of the Agribusiness Center of the Getulio Vargas Foundation and inquired about the topics that international cooperation should prioritize in addressing the needs of Caribbean countries, especially with respect to the search for a balance between productivity and sustainability.

The Coordinator of the Agribusiness Center of the Getulio Vargas Foundation acknowledged IICA's decisive efforts to introduce producers to new technologies. He also highlighted the potential role that agricultural cooperatives could play in guaranteeing equal access to these technologies for all producers.

The Representative of Jamaica congratulated the Director General on the inauguration of CIMAG and considered that it was crucial to strengthen research and evaluation capabilities in the region. In this regard, he suggested that IICA work more closely with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). Furthermore, he recommended that IICA channel efforts towards driving knowledge management in relation to productivity and sustainability.

The moderator highlighted the fact that, despite its small size, Costa Rica contained around 6% of the planet's biodiversity. He asked the President of Costa Rica to discuss the importance of the agriculture sector in a country that actively promoted sustainable development.

The Representative of Costa Rica referred to the role of agriculture in a country that fostered sustainable development and underscored the implementation of policies aimed at protecting the environment, such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) related to livestock farming and coffee. He noted that another important factor was the development of smart, inclusive markets in the fields of culture and tourism, which allowed for improving conditions for producers and the retention of women and youth in rural areas.

The moderator requested that the Director General of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) describe how the institution was addressing the topic of striking a balance between productivity and sustainability.

The Director General of CIAT described the Center's approach to fostering a balance between productivity and sustainability, noting that this required expanding digital agriculture. He acknowledged that it was difficult to strike that balance, and stated that, as a result, international centers were conducting research in that area. He underscored the lack of funding for the centers as well as the need to strengthen joint work with the private sector. He mentioned a few topics that he felt should be included in the work agendas of the ministries, such as productivity, management of natural resources, nutrition and health.

The Representative of the Green Climate Fund indicated that it was important to take climate change into account when addressing productivity and sustainability. To this end, she explained, countries should invest in technology and foster greater coordination between programs. She mentioned that the Green Climate Fund had developed a proposal geared towards strengthening the capacity to carry out research and mitigation activities in the Caribbean and Central America, with the involvement of youth and women. She urged the ministers of Agriculture to disseminate the proposal in their respective countries.

The Honorary President of the Argentinean Association of Direct Seeding Farmers (Aapresid) underscored the importance of producing more with less, and felt that productivity and sustainability should go hand in hand with and be based on science and current regulations. She noted that some countries had abandoned the use of certain technologies and, as a result, missed out on the opportunity to capitalize on them to produce in a resource-conscious manner. She considered it necessary to develop more associative undertakings.

### *Forum 3: Health, Safety and Quality for the Future of Trade*

Moderator Kevin Gray, Deputy Editor of LatinFinance, commented that the current context, which was characterized by an increase in the demand for products, a reduction in the gaps between producers, new technologies and climate change, among other factors, raised the need to reconsider current strategies related to trade and health, as well as the safety and quality of agricultural products. He introduced the panelists who would participate in the forum and listed three questions that would guide the conversation:

- What actions should be promoted, at the national and international level, to take full advantage of trade opportunities, taking into account all sectors?

- What are the main institutional barriers that must be overcome?
- What should be the priorities of international cooperation to respond to the needs of the countries in relation to trade in agricultural products?

Mr. Jesús Madrazo, Head of Agricultural Affairs and Sustainability for Bayer's Crop Science Division, commented that the greatest challenge facing agriculture was the need to produce more and better food using less resources—that is, in a sustainable manner, given that it was no longer acceptable to continue producing at the expense of the environment.

He noted that Bayer was committed to transforming agriculture for the benefit of farmers, consumers and the planet. He mentioned that the company was developing projects in a collaborative manner with several of the countries in attendance at the forum. He highlighted the fact that Bayer's business model, which was geared towards developing, producing and marketing innovations for farmers, was in the process of transitioning towards a more inclusive model that would help farmers achieve better results. He added that the model was supported by three strategic pillars: innovation, sustainability and digital transformation, and that Bayer was investing nearly USD 2.5 billion per year in innovation.

He then described some of the goals that the company had committed to achieving by 2030: a) reduce the environmental impact of crop protection by 30%, through the use of digital tools that make it possible to apply products with greater precision, as well as reduce the development cycles of new molecules to less than ten years; b) reduce greenhouse gas emissions from crop production by 30%, through the use of high-yield seeds and protection tools, as well as by saving fuel; and c) empower more than 100 million small-scale farmers through outreach efforts and by facilitating access to innovation and digital technologies, among other things. He added that these commitments should be achieved in a collaborative manner, by working closely with governments, social organizations and farmers.

Lastly, he commented that agricultural trade was a catalyst for development and stressed that it should be equitable, transparent and based on standardized, coordinated regulations.

Mr. Ted McKinney, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs of the United States America, noted that quality was everyone's responsibility, and that standards and regulations had been developed in order to guarantee quality. He

commented that the risk of creating so many standards was that it may hinder trade. Furthermore, he considered that the market should be the first link in the quality assurance process, while making all information available in a transparent manner.

He also stated that matters related to safety required more work. He applauded the creation and approach of Codex Alimentarius, which focused specifically on human health rather than incorporating other topics such as animal well-being and sustainability; based its decisions on scientific analyses; and enabled all countries to participate and make joint proposals. He congratulated IICA on the role that it had played in supporting the participation of its Member States in Codex.

He then stated that the production of high-quality, safe food should be doubled, remarking that technology had contributed to progress in achieving those objectives and that the use of pesticides had been reduced by half, in comparison to ten years earlier. However, he warned that the gap between what should be done and what was being done to feed the world was growing. He mentioned that some countries refused to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by technologies to increase food production, whether for safety or quality reasons. However, he noted that all forms of production were necessary and that producers should select the most suitable type based on their target market.

He remarked that free, reciprocal trade between all countries was necessary, but that achieving this would require redesigning the World Trade Organization (WTO). He underscored the importance of fostering capacity-building at all levels, defining science-based standards, and allowing innovation to flow freely. He stated that a great deal of work remained to be done in the field of trade, and that IICA was the institution that could support free trade in the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Indar Weir, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security of Barbados, began his remarks by inquiring what Codex meant to the most vulnerable farmers. He underscored the importance of standards related to safety, labeling, inspection and analytical methods, among other topics, but considered that their application should be improved by taking into account the current context of the 21st century. He highlighted the importance of regional integration to better capitalize on technologies, trade and the expansion of products, and considered that it was important to understand the current status of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).



He considered that food production was a complex challenge, not only in the case of a few crops, but throughout the entire value chain. He commented that climate change, which generated prolonged droughts, floods and a greater number of pests, represented a complex challenge for food security and quality. He underscored the importance of adopting a cross-cutting approach that integrated agriculture and the environment, with a view to improving quality and safety. As an example, he cited the planting of trees as a way to mitigate agriculture's impact.

He explained that it was not only necessary to increase food production, but also to plant in an intelligent manner and take advantage of the benefits afforded by innovation and technology. This, in turn, would allow for overcoming malnutrition, diseases and obesity through improved access to and a higher nutritional quality of food.

Mr. Andrés Luque, Under Secretary of Crop Production at the Ministry of Agriculture of Ecuador, informed the participants about a program that had been implemented in his country to assist producers of musaceous plants in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to prevent and control Tropical race 4 disease, particularly in Ecuador, where banana alone accounted for 35% of the agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and 2% of the total GDP.

With respect to the inclusion of youth and women in the production sector, he indicated that the Government of Ecuador had undertaken efforts to strengthen agricultural schools, but this had not been sufficient. He added that more resources and mechanisms aimed at driving inclusion were necessary; this could include internships and professional visits. He also commented on the need to build capacities, not only in agricultural topics, but also in matters related to administration and financial education.

He listed additional challenges that should be addressed, such as promoting the development of non-partisan cooperative movements, at the regional level, to drive business undertakings, overcome language barriers and build capacities to retain youth in rural areas.

Mr. Guillermo Bernaudo, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina, explained that, four years earlier, the country's agricultural exports represented 7.2% of the GDP and focused primarily on products like soy and its byproducts; exports of all other products were lower in terms of volume, value and market share. He explained that State policies were primarily responsible for this situation, due to faulty assessments and approaches; however, the country also suffered from insufficient resources, a weak institutional

framework, limited coordination between institutions and with the private sector, limited participation by the private sector, insufficient trade agreements, deficient infrastructure and a low level of connectivity and internal capacities.

He commented that the private sector had been provided with assistance to meet new demands. To this end, 30 competitiveness committees had been established, with a view to assisting stakeholders in boosting their competitiveness. He added that the bureaucracy of the State apparatus had been reduced, agricultural exports had been fostered, and market intelligence had been expanded, in order to provide the market with the best possible product, at the best possible time and in the best possible place, which generated value added.

He stated that the government's objective at the international level had been to reenter the global market by establishing win-win relationships. After four years, the amount of exported meat had doubled, wheat exports had tripled and 279 new products were being exported. He noted that Argentina, as a member of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), had signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU). He commented that, thanks to those achievements, the National Food Safety and Quality Service (SENASA) of Argentina was highly regarded at the international level.

He explained that, cognizant of the importance of international cooperation, Argentina had undertaken efforts to reenter the global market; identify weaknesses, strengths and opportunities; prioritize strategic sectors; and begin to monitor and quantify results. With respect to health, safety and quality, he mentioned that his country had increased its participation in organizations like Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), as well as strengthened linkages with the World Trade Organization (WTO), with a view to eliminating tariff barriers and promoting science-based standards. He also highlighted the fact that Argentina had undertaken binding commitments at the international level in matters related to AHFS.

### Analysis and comments

The Representative of Canada underscored the importance of evidence-based science. He highlighted the need for IICA to provide assistance, both at an institutional level as well as in coordination with other organizations, in overcoming African swine fever in the Americas, especially given the fact that it had already affected island nations like the Philippines. He also stressed the importance of trade in rural areas, noting that it

would be necessary to improve the standards that had been applied over the past 50 years. He applauded the WTO's participation in this regard.

The Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines referred to the critical situation in many Caribbean islands as a result of the inequality faced by producers. As an example, he cited banana farming in his country, which benefited large multinational companies instead of small-scale producers. He thanked the Representative of the United States of America for speaking so candidly about this topic in the forum, which opened up the possibility of engaging in further dialogue after the meeting, especially considering that the U.S. was the largest trading partner of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Representative of Chile agreed with the remarks made by the Representative of Canada with respect to the scientific rigor that should characterize Codex Alimentarius, and thanked the Representative of the United States of America for raising the issue. He added that respect for science-based standards formed part of the development strategy implemented by the Chilean export industry.

The Representative of Mexico called attention to the topic of rural inclusion in the digital age, given its relevance to the topics of discussion in the forum. He noted that all producers, regardless of their size, should have access to information, but countries still owed the poorest farmers greater support in this area. As a result, he considered that it was important that IICA facilitate access to information in a practical and simple manner, for which it would be necessary to develop infrastructure, promote linkages with the private sector, and determine the investment required.

The Representative of Brazil referred to the statement made by the Representative of the United States of America regarding the rules-based trading system. He mentioned that, although the system seemed to be very well organized, it was being attacked and threatened. He noted that there were certain countries in which rules were not applied due to politicization, which was risky. He stressed that organizations that had set the standard in this topic should be given due importance.

The Representative of the Dominican Republic recalled that it had been 40 years since the resolution to create IICA's Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program had been adopted. He commented that, at present, trade barriers were primarily of a sanitary nature, noting that when countries like his attempted to export to developed countries, their products were rejected; therefore, he highlighted the need for IICA to provide them with support. He proposed drafting a resolution in which the member countries of the

Institute would agree to provide economic and technical support to strengthen its work in matters related to AHFS. He expressed his country's willingness to provide IICA with financial support so that its AHFS Program could assist the country in meeting market demands.

The Representative of Grenada noted that there was an agency in the Caribbean region that provided countries with support in matters related to AHFS. He acknowledged the need to provide producers with training to enable them to comply with market standards, and considered that the Institute should collaborate with its Member States in this regard.

The Representative of the Bahamas urged IICA to meet with various multilateral agencies to address cross-cutting issues affecting the Member States. He noted that those who participated in international meetings on these topics would agree that, over the course of a decade, a great deal had been discussed but very little progress had been achieved. He disagreed with the idea that a country should have to abandon a sector if it was unable to compete. He proposed considering each country's unique characteristics and advocating for differentiated standards.

The Head of the Latin American and Caribbean Program of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) described the activities that the institute carried out in matters related to health, safety and quality, and indicated that, although they had determined that sufficient resources were available to develop projects, no proposals had been made. He added that the institute was working to change that situation with support from other multilateral agencies.

The Director of Codex and International Regulatory Affairs at the United States Dairy Export Council called for joint work with national committees and the private sector in matters related to science-based standards. He indicated that the Council would offer its support to any country that required it.

The Executive Director of the Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA) described the objective of his organization. He explained that the organization conducted work in four technical areas: animal health, quarantine services, plant health and food safety. He mentioned that, at that time, the organization was focusing its attention on two important threats: Tropical Race 4 disease and African swine fever.

The Coordinator of the Center for Knowledge Management and Horizontal Cooperation Services at IICA mentioned several initiatives through which the Center provided support to the AHFS Program, including various digital platforms and support in establishing closer ties with the private sector, specifically with companies like Bayer, Microsoft and Corteva.

*Close of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas: Commitments for the Future of Agriculture in the Americas*

The Director General remarked that the conference had generated a high-level debate, and that it was possible to capitalize on differences to build a stronger agriculture sector. He specified that agriculture required a great deal of intersectoral coordination between the ministries of agriculture, the environment and social development, among others.

He stated that digital technologies were essential to the future of production, as well as to create a virtuous circle of growth, foster human development and ensure the inclusion of the most disadvantaged rural populations. He added that it was necessary to promote a new generation of governance systems, public policies and international cooperation strategies that could guarantee sufficient levels of public and private investment, particularly for the research, development and innovation (R+D+I) required to strike a balance between the productivity and sustainability of agricultural production.

He expressed his agreement with the statements made regarding the need to provide small-scale farmers with access to technology, which represented a formidable challenge. He added that agriculture should become an appealing activity once again, in order to demonstrate its strategic role in achieving economic growth and well-being in the countries.

Next, he provided a summary of the main aspects of the forums:

Forum 1: Opportunities for Rural Inclusion in the Digital Age

- Three topics were emphasized during the forum: technology availability, access and use. The discussion focused on ways to make technology available to the smallest agricultural producers.
- The drafting of policies to be implemented over time is relevant, considering the fact that technologies, on their own, cannot solve all of the problems facing rural areas.

- It is important to identify opportunities to invest in connectivity and education, not only in the public sector, but also in the private sector.
- New approaches to education and new extension strategies are necessary. IICA's partnership with Agri Tech is fundamental in this regard.

#### Forum 2: Toward a New Balance between Productivity and Sustainability

- The interaction between productivity and sustainability is crucial, given their interdependence. It is important to preserve resources and boost productivity in production; to this end, innovation and development agendas are crucial.
- The topic of the bioeconomy is crucial for the inclusion of ecosystem services in agriculture, which have not been sufficiently explored. Production processes should venture into new value chains and capitalize on the biomass yielded by rural systems.
- The dissemination of good practices through initiatives with the private sector is of vital importance. One such example is the IICA Play tool, which was launched as part of a partnership with Microsoft and provides users with access to 500 videos aimed at disseminating good practices that can be applied in the primary production chains.
- Sustainability is not solely related to environmental aspects; it should also take into account social and economic dimensions.

The Director General thanked the Representative of the Green Climate Fund for her participation and expressed his gratitude for the projects that the Fund was carrying out in Central America and the Caribbean. He stated that IICA was very interested in participating in some of them, given its capacity to implement projects and make substantial contributions to the countries.

#### Forum 3: Health, Safety and Quality for the Future of the Trade

- Trade is a determining factor for food safety; it defines where food is produced and where it is consumed. As a result, the role played by Codex Alimentarius is essential. This mechanism can be further perfected through the participation of countries and with support from IICA, to ensure that it addresses the interests of countries and producers.

- AHFS institutions must be restructured by taking into account topics such as prospective surveillance and sanitary intelligence through joint efforts between countries.

The Director General expressed his gratitude for the comments made by the delegations regarding the 40-year history of IICA's AHFS Program. The Institute was determined to work hard on the topic of health, quality and safety together with the countries and producers and in coordination with other international organizations, in order to contribute to trade and the development of the countries.

The Director General informed the participants that IICA would distribute a non-binding document on the commitments of the conference. He thanked the representatives of the Institute's member countries and other guests for their participation in the forum.

#### *Close of the conference*

The Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas "Cultivating Tomorrow's Agriculture Today" ended at 18:30 hours on 30 October 2019.

#### *Side event "Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in Perspective"*

The event, sponsored by the IICA Delegation in the United States of America, began at 18:30 hours on 30 October 2019 in the Sala Magna (United States and Canada meeting rooms) at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The Technical Secretary explained that the purpose of the event was to inform the delegations about a draft resolution of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) presented by the United States of America, entitled "Ministerial Commitment to pesticide-related provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures."

The Director General underscored the importance of this topic for agricultural production. He reported that, with support from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and through an annual investment of USD 1 million, IICA would hold several technical workshops in the coming years, to assist the Member States in strengthening their capacity to access crop protection tools.

The Representative of Argentina reiterated his country's commitment to ensuring that the trade system was fair and transparent, benefited countries and strengthened food security. He expressed his concern that some countries were disregarding the commitments undertaken within the framework of WTO agreements on Maximum Residue Limits, as well as the fact that they had ceased to use certain products without a sound scientific basis. He referred to the negative impact of rejecting certain substances without identifying adequate replacements. He reiterated his country's commitment to engage in coordinated work with other countries and urged the delegations to support the draft resolution.

The Representative of Brazil expressed his support for the draft resolution. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that provisions regarding Maximum Residue Limits were based on scientific information and drafted using very concrete terms, in a way that could be easily understood by farmers, in order to avoid "regulatory populism" and taking into account technical and scientific studies in this regard.

The Representative of Canada commented that the American hemisphere was a production center in which consumer countries demanded both quality and quantity; as a result, it was necessary to increase production, assist producers in achieving economic prosperity and offer products in a sustainable manner. He considered that failure to implement Maximum Residue Limits could have a very negative impact on food security; therefore, he reiterated the importance of supporting the draft resolution.

The Representative of the United States of America noted that farmers in the Americas faced the challenge of producing food safely and sustainably, and should therefore have access to the full range of tools and technologies available for agricultural production. He mentioned that agricultural production involved certain acceptable risks associated with the toxicity of pesticides, on the one hand, and exposure to pesticides, on the other hand. He noted that pesticide risk was determined based on what is known as the precautionary principle, which takes into account the above factors along with certain biosafety considerations. He added that failure to factor in any of these elements would generate a risk and result in a lack of tools to eradicate pests. He urged the delegations to support the draft resolution and asked that they inform IICA of the person who would serve as the contact point on behalf of their country. He thanked the delegations and the Director General of IICA for the opportunity to present the draft resolution.

The event "Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in Perspective" ended at 19:00 hours on 30 October 2019.



**TWENTIETH REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF  
AGRICULTURE (IABA)**



## PREPARATORY SESSION

### 0.1 Opening of the session

0.1.1 The preparatory session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) was called to order at 08:35 hours on 31 October 2019, in the Sala Magna (United States and Canada meeting rooms) at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The session was chaired by Mr. Luis Renato Alvarado Rivera, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, the country serving as the Chair of the IABA.

0.1.2 Delegations representing 33 of IICA's Member States were present.

### 0.2 Agreements

#### 0.2.1 Election of the Chair and Rapporteur of the meeting

0.2.1.1 The Chair informed the delegates that, in accordance with the current rules and regulations, the election would be conducted by a simple majority vote. Votes were to be cast by the Regular Representatives of the Member States. He added that, for this meeting of the IABA, 33 Member States had been duly accredited, with full voting powers.

0.2.1.2 The Representative of Honduras proposed that Mr. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, serve as the Chair of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA. The Chair was elected by acclamation.

0.2.1.3 The Representative of the Dominican Republic then proposed that Mr. Luis Renato Alvarado, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, be elected to serve as Rapporteur.

0.2.1.4 The Representative of Mexico proposed that Mrs. Yolande Bain-Horsford, Minister of Agriculture and Lands of Grenada, serve as Rapporteur, a proposal which was endorsed by the Representative of Nicaragua. The Representative of Grenada, while grateful for the nomination by the Representative of Mexico, begged to decline and proposed that Mr. Clarence

Rambharat, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries of Trinidad and Tobago be the Rapporteur, a recommendation which was supported by the Representatives of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Guatemala.

- 0.2.1.5 The Representative of Costa Rica thanked the Dominican Republic for his proposal but stated that he agreed that the position of Rapporteur should be occupied by a Caribbean country.
- 0.2.1.6 The Chair put to the vote the proposal that Mr. Clarence Rambharat, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries of Trinidad and Tobago, should serve as Rapporteur. The nomination was unanimously supported.
- 0.2.1.7 The following persons were elected as officers of the meeting:

Chair:	Osmar Benítez
Rapporteur:	Clarence Rambharat
Secretary, <i>ex officio</i> :	Manuel Otero Justo

0.2.2 Agenda of the meeting

- 0.2.2.1 Pursuant to Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA, the Chair asked the representatives of the Member States to consider the agenda of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA.
- 0.2.2.2 The Technical Secretary advised that the original version of the agenda included the topic, “Incorporation of Countries that are not OAS Permanent Observers as IICA Permanent Observers (amendments to Articles 8 and 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA and Articles 3, 12, and 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Committee”, in keeping with the mandate of the Thirty-ninth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, where the issue was discussed. He explained that a number of Member States had requested additional time to discuss the matter and that only one country had submitted its observations.
- 0.2.2.3 In respect thereof, the Director General requested that the Chair agree to put to the vote the proposal to remove the topic from the agenda, while work continued on drafting a document that would satisfy the interests of Member States, for presentation at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

- 0.2.2.4 The Chair put the Director General’s proposal to the vote, and it was unanimously approved.
- 0.2.2.5 The Representative of the United States of America asked that, given the previous day’s conversation regarding pesticide risk assessment, he was proposing that this matter be added to the agenda for further discussion.
- 0.2.2.6 The Technical Secretary reminded the plenary that during the side event, “Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in Perspective”, hosted by the United States of America, a draft resolution had been distributed, which was prepared by the delegation of that country, in conjunction with various other Member States. He suggested that, subject to the agreement of the Chair, if there were any comments or observations, the resolution be discussed upon resuming after lunch, for the purposes of preparing a revised version.
- 0.2.2.7 The Representatives of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Brazil, St. Lucia and Argentina endorsed the suggestion of the United States of America, who thanked them for their support and stressed the importance of discussing the matter during the meeting.
- 0.2.2.8 The Chair put the proposal of the United States of America to the vote and it was unanimously supported.
- 0.2.2.9 The Technical Secretary advised that the new version of the agenda would be distributed during the meeting.
- 0.2.2.10 The Chair then indicated that the working and information documents had been made available in electronic format, in Spanish and English, 30 days prior to the start of the meeting, as stipulated in Article 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA.
- 0.2.2.11 The Technical Secretary explained the procedure for discussion and approval of the draft resolutions.
- 0.2.3 Duration of the meeting
- 0.2.3.1 The plenary decided that the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA would conclude on Thursday, 31 October 2019 at 17:30 hours.

0.2.4 Setting up of committees

0.2.4.1 Pursuant to Article 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA, the Chair asked the representatives whether they considered it necessary to set up committees to examine any of the matters included in the agenda of the meeting.

0.2.4.2 No proposals had been received regarding the establishment of committees, but the Chair informed the delegates that these could also be set up during the meeting, if the representatives of the Member States so decided.

0.2.5 Deadline for submitting draft resolutions

0.2.5.1 Thursday, 31 October at 15:00 hours was set as the deadline for submitting draft resolutions.

0.2.6 The right to vote in meetings of the IABA

0.2.6.1 The Director General of IICA asked the Legal Advisor to explain the scope and application of the rules governing the right to vote in meetings of the IABA.

0.2.6.2 The Legal Advisor explained that cases of those Member States owing more than two annual quotas to IICA needed to be discussed, to determine whether their right to vote should be suspended under Article 24 of the Convention on IICA. He provided details on the status of quota payments to date, which indicated that Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia and Venezuela were behind in their obligations.

0.2.6.3 He explained that each of these countries was facing specific challenges and that the usual approach of the Institute was not to suspend the rights of a member that was in arrears, if and when the country provided a justification, as specified in the rules and regulations, expressed a willingness to bring payments up to date and received the authorization of the IABA.

0.2.6.4 The Director General thanked all the Member States for the extraordinary effort that they had made to support the Institute.

0.2.6.5 The Representative of Argentina asked the Legal Advisor about the voting situation with respect to Venezuela.

- 0.2.6.6 The Legal Advisor indicated that he had not received credentials accrediting representatives of the Government of Venezuela to the meeting.
- 0.2.6.7 The Representative of Argentina requested that the possibility of granting Venezuela the right to vote be considered, should the country decide to attend the meeting. The Chair made note of Argentina's request.
- 0.2.6.8 The Representative of Colombia asked the Legal Advisor if her country maintained its right to vote, given its particular situation with respect to the Institute.
- 0.2.6.9 The Legal Advisor reiterated that if a country is in the process of negotiating in good faith with IICA, to find a way to bring its quota payments up to date, it would retain its right to vote, subject to the approval of the IABA.
- 0.2.6.10 The Director General confirmed the willingness of the President of Colombia and authorities of the country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to engage in discussions, something which was highly appreciated by the Institute.
- 0.2.6.11 The Legal Advisor underscored the fact that Antigua and Barbuda was still suffering the after effects of the passage of Hurricane Irma in 2017, and thus had been unable to pay the quota. He added that the Representative from that country had indicated her country's willingness to settle the outstanding amount as soon as the situation improved.
- 0.2.6.12 The Representative of Mexico requested that the Chair ask the plenary to consider granting Antigua and Barbuda and Colombia the right to vote. The proposal was endorsed by the Representatives of Nicaragua and Argentina, with Argentina emphasizing that only these two countries should be given this consideration.
- 0.2.6.13 The Chair put the proposal of Mexico to the vote and the motion was accepted unanimously.
- 0.3 *Close of the session*
- 0.3.1 The preparatory session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA was adjourned at 09:15 hours on 31 October 2019.





## FIRST PLENARY SESSION

### 1.1 Opening of the session

1.1.1 The first plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) was called to order at 09:26 hours on 31 October 2019 in the Sala Magna (United States and Canada meeting rooms) at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The session was chaired by Mr. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic.

### 1.2 Remarks by the Director General of IICA

1.2.1 Mr. Manuel Otero, Director General, indicated that the 2018–2022 Medium-term Plan is synthesized in ten Strategic Statements. He then reported on actions undertaken in the 2018-2019 biennium in the context of the Statements.

1.2.2 Statement 1: *To provide technical cooperation of excellence through its network of offices, within the framework of five programs aimed at fostering sustainable agricultural and rural development, following interdisciplinary and focused work principles.* He indicated that 287 technical cooperation initiatives had been undertaken: a) 81 initiatives executed using the Institute's quota and human resources, under the five hemispheric action programs (HAP) and two cross-cutting areas of focus; b) 26 initiatives funded through rapid response actions (RRAs) for a total sum of USD 437,805, with the Caribbean Region being the greatest beneficiary of these measures, for example, The Bahamas which received assistance in addressing the emergency situation in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian; and c) 180 externally-funded initiatives in the regions, in particular the Andean and Southern Regions, where most of these types of initiatives were undertaken.

1.2.3 He explained that the Institute's knowledge base had been condensed into a toolkit of 182 technical cooperation solutions, most of which fall under the HAP and the two cross-cutting issues. He outlined the HAPs, emphasizing the creation of the Bioeconomy and Production Development Program and the renewal of the International Trade and Regional Integration Program.

- 1.2.4 *Statement 2: To evolve towards an integrated and specialized knowledge management platform for the countries, through the use of information and communication technologies in agriculture, capacity building, the dissemination of good practices and lessons learned, communication for development, the promotion of networks, and horizontal cooperation.* He remarked that the available technological platforms had been integrated through the use of *Workspace*, as a means of providing Member States access to relevant and up-to-date information on the agriculture sector and activities of the Institute. He emphasized that there was now a new webpage with a section dedicated to *IICA Play*, a platform containing videos on good agricultural practices that was developed with the support of Microsoft.
- 1.2.5 He advised that through its Center for Knowledge Management and Horizontal Cooperation Services, the Institute had secured 1700 scholarships to strengthen the capacities of individuals in the countries, thanks to partnerships forged with the Carolina Foundation and the Ibero-American University Foundation (FUNIBER). He took the opportunity to recognize the efforts of the Administration of Director General Emeritus, Víctor Villalobos, which through an agreement with Mexico's National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT), had managed to train more than 200 individuals in the Member States.
- 1.2.6 *Statement 3: To develop public-private strategic partnerships and agreements for the benefit of the agriculture sector in the member countries, by implementing projects of common interest based on shared values.* He announced that 63 new academic, private and public sector partnerships had been formalized. He underscored the Institute's commitment to digital technology, and thus the establishment of its Information/Communication Technologies and Digital Agriculture Division that was responsible for activities such as the *Agri Hackathon*, which would take place in November at IICA Headquarters, and also collaborated with institutions such as CENFOTEC University, with which the Institute would launch the first course on the Internet of Things for agriculture.
- 1.2.7 *Statement 4: To address the needs of regional and interregional cooperation in support of the agriculture sector, in a timely and effective manner.* He remarked that supranational projects represented the future of technical cooperation and that one of the objectives of the Institute was to become the Headquarters of a forum of Ministers of Agriculture of the Caribbean

Community (CARICOM), and to play a similar role as the Secretariat of Ministers of the Pacific Alliance countries. This would enable IICA to better serve the needs of these countries. He indicated that strengthening the relationship between IICA and the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) would be essential in providing greater support to tropical agriculture.

- 1.2.8 Statement 5: *To carry out efficient administrative management based on a process culture, decentralization and results-based continuous improvement.* He specified actions taken to add value, rationalize resources, bolster finances and reinforce IICA's vision: a) the introduction of a process culture; b) integrated planning; c) implementation of a voluntary separation program, which had allowed Headquarters to reduce its payroll by 20%; d) development of an information system for processes related to travel, consultants and correspondence, which had cut down on paper use by 60%; and e) a 36% reduction of the size of the vehicle fleet. He emphasized that all of these measures made it possible to establish the Institutional Pre-investment Fund for the Management of External Funding Opportunities (FonPRI), an instrument that facilitates securing of external resources. He added that USD 200,000 had been invested, with the possibility of attracting USD 28 million in the medium term.
- 1.2.9 Statement 6: *To strengthen the Institute's finances by optimizing operations, utilizing institutional resources in a rational manner, increasing the amount of external resources secured, as well as executing development and investment projects.* The Director General advised that IICA's financial statements had been given an unqualified opinion, which was something that would be a strong calling card for counterparts.
- 1.2.10 Statement 7: *To foster a conscious leadership style that strengthens staff members' capabilities and collaborative work in a safe and healthy work environment.* He reported on actions that had been pursued in line with this Statement, including the following: a) restructuring of the Human Talent Division; b) creation of a Leadership Hub; c) implementation of the Individual Performance Map; d) conducting of an Organizational Climate and Culture Survey; and e) application of the personality assessment (DISC).

- 1.2.11 Statement 8: *To modernize the governing bodies by fostering broad public dialogue, transparency and private-sector participation.* The Director General remarked that in the future he would wish to establish an IABA Group, which would allow the Ministers to explore in greater depth issues of interest to the sector, promoting discussion forums and establishing linkages with other institutions that could provide additional resources.
- 1.2.12 Statement 9: *To drive affirmative institutional actions that foster an inclusive and diverse workforce.* With respect to this Statement, he explained that actions have sought to ratify the Institute's gender policy; to push for an increase in the number of women occupying key positions; to facilitate an inclusive environment and to implement measures to reduce gender-based salary disparities.
- 1.2.13 Statement 10: *To become an IICA with "open doors", that is environmentally responsible and involved in the community.* He listed initiatives in line with this Statement, such as: a) the building of the Plaza of the Americas, through private funding; b) the inauguration of the Fab Lab for Agriculture, which offers state-of-the-art technology solutions to complex problems, and that had already developed actions with Nicaragua and The Bahamas; c) the inauguration of the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG) – a project that he considered to be an extremely valuable educational project for the 34 Member States; d) the construction of the Typical Rural House, in tribute to traditional agriculture; e) the inauguration of the IICA-CATIE Forest of the Americas, for the purpose of increasing the forest cover for carbon sequestration; f) the creation of the Agriculture, Color and Culture Mural; and e) the development of the Blue Flag Ecological Program<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2.14 The Director General concluded his remarks by reminding the plenary that the Institute had been established 77 years before and that in order to improve the services offered to its member countries, it would have to adapt to the reality of the international context, by tapping into new ideas that would strengthen agriculture in the Americas.

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<sup>1</sup> Costa Rica confers this award each year, in recognition of conservation and development efforts and voluntary work aimed at protecting natural resources, implementing actions to tackle climate change, improving hygienic and sanitary conditions, as well as improving the public health of its people.

### 1.3 Analysis and comments

- 1.3.1 The Representative of Argentina expressed support for IICA's modernization process, and its emphasis on technological development, greater openness and transparency, as key areas of focus for its work. He also indicated that his country recognized and supported the implementation of austerity measures.
- 1.3.2 The Representative of Canada congratulated the Institute for the work it had done and indicated her country's willingness to support IICA and the countries in their efforts to facilitate market access, create climate change adaptation strategies for value chains, promote natural resource conservation, increase technology access, drive innovation and research, as well as halt the spread of African swine fever.
- 1.3.3 The Representative of Colombia congratulated the Director General of the Institute on his presentation. She expressed her desire to align IICA's five HAPs with her country's Agriculture Policy for the 2018-2022 four-year period, especially in the following priority issues: peasant and family farming, property ownership in rural areas, regional trade and integration, and agricultural health and food safety.
- 1.3.4 The Representative of the United States of America, in stressing the importance of planning, commended the Institute for its efforts in this area. He also indicated that he supported the priorities defined by the Institute.
- 1.3.5 The Representative of Honduras praised the Director General for having defined a clear roadmap. He pointed out the extremely diverse levels of agriculture and livestock activities that co-exist within the region, emphasizing that notwithstanding international aid programs, 60% of the rural population was experiencing poverty or extreme poverty.
- 1.3.6 The Representative went on to say that given that no definitive solutions had been found to these problems, many had been prompted to migrate to other countries. He asked that a differentiation be made between the agriculture sectors of the different countries, particularly regions like Central America, which were in need of access to technology, knowledge transfer, market access and capacity building for small farmers involved in the production of

coffee, palm oil, shrimp, melon and other products that generate income for thousands of families.

- 1.3.7 He also stressed how valuable the creation of the Fab Lab for Agriculture had been, given that it would provide a means of accessing low cost and cutting-edge technology that could be made available to producers and export cooperatives in Central American countries.
- 1.3.8 The Representative of Jamaica encouraged IICA to seek funding for an innovation and technology fund that could be established in collaboration with Google, Facebook and Microsoft, with a view to harnessing additional resources that would allow young people to access different projects and generate technology solutions in their countries. He felt that the Institute should continue its focus on the environment to tackle climate change, relying on the support of international organizations established for this purpose, such as the Green Climate Fund, among others.
- 1.3.9 The Representative of Brazil commended the Director General for his efforts, particularly the implementation of austerity measures and the streamlining of IICA's management. He read a message from his country's Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, who expressed the need to implement measures and establish policies to: a) promote an inclusive agriculture sector, serving the needs of large-, medium- and small-scale farmers and taking into account women, young people and indigenous people, thus enabling minorities to participate in global value chains and international trade; b) encourage a commitment to free and fair international trade; c) foster an environment that fuels innovation; and d) encourage adherence to scientific principles. He expressed Brazil's support and willingness to work jointly to ensure that the region would become the gold standard for the world in agricultural matters.
- 1.3.10 The Representative of Nicaragua provided some data on the context in which the agriculture sector operates: a) Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) produces 14% of the world's food; b) 60 million of its people live in poverty; and c) family farming supplies 80% of its food. He explained that this data revealed a contradiction in the fact that despite being the largest producer and exporter of food in the world, much of LAC's population was poor. He indicated that policies and programs in these countries should promote family farming.

- 1.3.11 The Representative indicated that Nicaragua had reduced its poverty rate by 50% and was working to further reduce it, and thus was open to the use of appropriate technologies to support farmers, such as the solutions provided by the Fab Lab for Agriculture. He underscored the problem of the unfair and unequal distribution of wealth, urging countries to work to resolve this. He emphasized that the IABA meeting should promote a fair trade movement to combat hunger and poverty, while fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He felt that it was critical that the organizations present at the meeting align and coordinate their efforts.
- 1.3.12 The Representative of Grenada thanked IICA for its continuous support to her country, while remarking that the average age of farmers in her country was on the increase and that many of them were reluctant to adopt new practices. Therefore, it was critical that the sector seek to attract young people. On the other hand, she explained that pests and diseases were afflicting farmers in the country. So widespread was the problem that even fruit trees planted in family gardens were dying. As such, the Representative reiterated that the country was relying on the support of IICA to address these problems.
- 1.3.13 The Representative of Dominica mentioned that as the problems affecting the sector and the measures to tackle them were already known, it was time to combine efforts to put the solutions into practice. He indicated that Dominica supported the Institute's implementation of programs, particularly in the areas of innovation and climate change, expressing confidence that IICA could serve as the driving force for agricultural transformation in the hemisphere. He used the opportunity to thank the Institute, on behalf of the Government and people of his country, for the support provided in recent years in the aftermath of Hurricane María.
- 1.3.14 The Representative of Costa Rica reflected on the need to ensure that farmers and producers would have a voice in these forums, and therefore suggested that producer organizations be invited to upcoming meetings and their participation encouraged.
- 1.3.15 The Representative of Uruguay thanked IICA, on behalf of his Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, for generating new knowledge, harnessing technology, as well as building bridges and partnerships for the benefit of the agriculture sector. He expressed appreciation to the Institute

for its work in Uruguay and the support it had provided to the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS).

- 1.3.16 The Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines joined the others in congratulating the Director General and IICA for the excellent work undertaken in his country, in the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and throughout the hemisphere. He remarked that there were two important regional integration mechanisms in the Caribbean - the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the OECS, and thus, he expressed his desire that they be given support, given that they had done an excellent job in furthering the development of the agriculture sector.
- 1.3.17 The Chair, speaking as the Representative of the Dominican Republic, reiterated the proposal made in the previous day's session to adopt a resolution to reinforce actions undertaken by the Institute in the framework of its Hemispheric Program on Agricultural Health, Safety and Food Quality. He explained that his country would ask that the team of experts in this area be expanded and strengthened, enabling countries to address the new safety and quality market requirements, and thus suggested that the issue be included in the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA.
- 1.3.18 He endorsed the appeal of the Representative of Jamaica for the Institute to focus on innovation and technology, as critical issues in facilitating the incorporation of youth into agriculture. To this end, he encouraged IICA to become a technology and innovation center for agriculture in the Americas.
- 1.3.19 Furthermore, he supported Costa Rica's suggestion that the IABA explore the possibility of inviting representatives of LAC producers to participate in its meetings in the future.
- 1.4 *The situation in The Bahamas in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian*
- 1.4.1 The Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources of The Bahamas gave a detailed account of the tragedy that ensued in the country with the passage of Hurricane Dorian, considered to be the second strongest hurricane recorded since records were being kept. He remarked that these tragedies should be faced by acting collectively to rebuild tangible and intangible structures, thereby honoring those who died, protecting the survivors and passing on to



upcoming generations a message regarding the need to be resilient. He thanked everyone for their support and messages of solidarity, as well as for the support lent by IICA, CARICOM, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

- 1.4.2 He indicated that the hurricane, which caused the death of 67 people and the disappearance of more than 200 others, provided a lesson on the impact of climate change. The Minister pointed out that, despite being among those contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, the small island states were the ones suffering the impact. As such, he appealed for the solidarity of the rest of the world.
- 1.4.3 He went on to explain that the most populated islands, Abaco and Grand Bahama, were the ones that suffered the greatest devastation, with infrastructural damage exceeding USD 200 million. The Minister indicated that the agriculture and fisheries sectors also experienced massive losses. For example, in Abaco, more than 60,000 animals were wiped out, with some farmers losing as much as 90% of their livestock, and there were also immense losses of citrus and avocado. He underscored the fact that, despite its vulnerability, his country did not benefit from international aid, due to its high per capita GDP.
- 1.4.4 He indicated that, in a bid to tackle these enormous challenges, The Bahamas would host a regional hackathon and establish an AgTech laboratory in 2020, addressing issues such as hydroponics, greenhouse cultivation, sanitary and phytosanitary practices and sustainable management, among others. He explained that fourteen of the islands remained open to investors wishing to establish projects through public-private sector partnerships.
- 1.4.5 Finally, the Minister insisted that his country would have to overcome the tragedy, but that the aim should not solely be to re-establish the situation that existed prior to Dorian, but to make the necessary changes at the national, regional and global levels that would contribute to combatting climate change.
- 1.4.6 The Chair then asked the meeting to observe a minute of silence in honor of The Bahamas.

1.5 Opening of the Typical Rural House

1.5.1 The Coordinator of the Legal, International Affairs and Protocol Unit announced that the Rural House was developed in tribute to Costa Rica and its more than 70-year history with IICA. He emphasized that the national companies, Turvisa and Tío Pelón, had contributed to the project. He invited the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, the Mayor of the canton of Vásquez de Coronado and the Director General to proceed with the opening ceremony.

1.5.2 The Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica expressed his appreciation for the gesture, as it paid homage to agricultural producers and was testament to their importance to Costa Rica.

1.5.3 Mr. Rolando Méndez, Mayor of the canton of Vásquez de Coronado, commended the display of the traditional architecture of the country's farming families, remarking that the community of Coronado identified with the agricultural vocation of all the participants in the meeting, and thanking the Institute for its efforts for the benefit of agriculture and rural development.

1.5.4 The Director General said, IICA, by defining itself as an institution of open doors, had devised a master plan in collaboration with various architects. One of the underlying ideas was that in looking to the future, one must understand one's past, and out of this was born the idea of the Typical Rural House. He advised that the project was executed by the architect Bernadette Esquivel, who employed traditional building techniques, and indicated that the items inside the house were provided by the people of Coronado.

1.6 Opening of the Dominican Republic Room

1.6.1 The Dominican Republic Room at the Headquarters of the Institute was officially opened in the presence of the Director General of IICA, the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic and that country's Ambassador to Costa Rica.

1.6.2 The Director General remarked that the room was being named in honor of a country that had played a pivotal role in the Institute's history, explaining that although the Dominican Republic became an official member of IICA in

1984, it had worked with the organization since 1969. He described it as a key country, a hub of synergies between Central America and the Caribbean, characterized by the warmth and friendliness of its people.

1.6.3 The Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic stated that the dedication of this room in recognition of his country was a great honor for his Government and people. He recalled the longstanding relationship between his country and IICA and remarked that the past is important for planning the future. Finally, he expressed the gratitude and appreciation of the Dominican people for the privilege of having a room in their name in the Home of Agriculture of the Americas.

1.7 *Receipt of the Ecological Blue Flag in the category of special events*

1.7.1 The Technical Secretary advised that the Blue Flag Ecological award had been conferred on the Institute for the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas and the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA.

1.7.2 Mr. Julián Rojas, representative of the Blue Flag Ecological Program, congratulated the participants on having achieved a perfect score and receiving this award in the special events category.

1.7.3 The Director General expressed satisfaction for having received the Ecological Blue Flag, maintaining that achieving sustainable development requires action and that this award was proof that IICA was acting in harmony with and for the benefit of the environment.

1.7.4 The Representative of Costa Rica thanked the Institute and the IABA for their efforts.

1.7.5 The Chair, speaking in his role as Representative of the Dominican Republic, congratulated IICA for its efforts in obtaining the Ecological Blue Flag, while expressing his hope that his country's Ministry of Agriculture could also do the same.

1.8 *Launch of the AgTech Inter-American Network*

1.8.1 Mr. Federico Mayer, CEO and co-founder of Club AgTech delivered a presentation on the AgTech Inter-American Network. He remarked that

producers had been able to feed a growing population, using existing technology, but that this has created problems such as environmental degradation and climate change, leading to an exponential growth in the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and the loss of species. He pointed out that currently there were technologies that were also growing exponentially, for example, those related to digital processing and the generation of information.

1.8.2 He then explained that the application of various technological tools such as big data, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, genomics, biotechnology, the Internet of Things, robotics, machine learning and information security had served as the basis for the development of ag techs, which had attracted investments of USD 17 billion in 2018.

1.8.3 He warned that the adaptation, development and implementation of ag tech tools in the sector would require an intensive learning process, which would only be possible through the collective work of entrepreneurs, incubators, universities, investors, promoters and producers, among others. He emphasized that this notion was the inspiration behind the establishment of the AgTech Inter-American Network – an effort which had been joined by private sector players in the region.

1.8.4 Finally, he extended an invitation to the Member States to participate in the co-creation of the network and indicated that a collaborative document would be prepared to determine the objectives and governance of the Network.

1.9 *IICA's financial and programming-budgetary situation*

1.9.1 2020-2021 Program Budget

1.9.1.1 The Director of Corporate Services outlined the basic principles used in developing the Institute's Program Budget for the 2020-2021 two-year period: a) the IICA quota scale had been defined on the basis of the percentages approved by the Organization of American States (OAS); b) the budget funds the 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan, the hemispheric programs, cross-cutting issues, as well as the technical cooperation and support instruments; c) the Program Budget is aligned with the Institute's strategic planning and programming and with the 2018-2022 MTP; d) the Regular Fund is financed from the quotas of Member States and miscellaneous

income generated; and e) miscellaneous income declined by 28.57% (USD 1,000,000) with respect to 2019, when it amounted to USD 3,500,000.

1.9.1.2 He indicated that the income budget for the 2020-2021 period was USD 32,074,100. Of this amount, USD 29,574,100 had been derived from quotas and USD 2,500,000 from miscellaneous income. He advised that the percentage allocation of the resources of the Regular Fund, according to budgetary chapter, was as follows: a) Direct technical cooperation services: 90.2% in 2020 and 90.0% in 2021; b) Management costs: 5.5% in 2020 and 5.7% in 2021; c) General costs and provisions: 3.7% for the biennium; and d) Renewal of infrastructure and equipment: 0.6 % for the biennium. Finally, he gave details on IICA's allocation of resources, by programming center and major object of expenditure.

## 1.9.2 Report on the collection of quotas

1.9.2.1 The Manager of the Financial Management Division presented the report on the collection of quota contributions from Member States, updated as at 30 October 2019. She referred to Article 23 of the Convention on IICA and Resolution No. 414 of the IABA, "Revised Measures for the Collection of Quotas Owed to the Institute", which states that Member States shall contribute to the financial support of the Institute through annual quotas established by the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), in accordance with the calculation system for OAS quotas.

1.9.2.2 She reported that as at 31 December 2018, USD 27.6 million had been received, which was equivalent to 93.81% of the annual quota budget. As at 30 October 2019, 18 countries were up to date, 13 were in regular status (owing payments for two years or less) and 3 were in arrears (owing payments for more than two years). She mentioned that with the recent payments, the Institute had collected enough resources to cover its quota budget for the year, although as at that date there were still USD 15 million owing from previous years. Finally, she asked Member States to lend their support and make every effort to pay their quotas, as these resources were essential in enabling the Institute to undertake technical cooperation actions and adhere to its work plan, for the benefit of the countries.

1.9.3 2018 and 2017 Financial statements of the Institute and report of the external auditors

1.9.3.1 The Manager of the Financial Management Division advised that the financial statements had been prepared, audited and approved in strict adherence to generally accepted accounting principles in the United States (US GAAP). She presented the results of the 2017 and 2018 external audits, carried out by the audit firm Deloitte, which concluded that “(...) the financial statements of IICA present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of IICA as of the years ended 31 December 2018 and 2017”.

1.9.3.2 She mentioned that in previous years the Institute had received a qualified opinion, due to the absence of actuarial studies for some of the termination benefits for personnel and of information for the valuation of outstanding quotas for periods of more than a year.

1.9.3.3 The Manager mentioned that both situations had been addressed by the Institute during the year, which allowed IICA to achieve a clean opinion on its financial statements for the years ended 31 December of 2018 and 2017.

1.9.4 Twenty-fifth report of the Audit Review Committee (ARC)

1.9.4.1 Mr. Steven Rickrode, in his capacity as a member of the ARC, presented the Committee’s report on the review of IICA’s financial statements and the external audit in 2018.

1.9.4.2 He highlighted the efforts by the Institute’s administration to obtain additional actuarial studies and encouraged them to pursue timely collection of outstanding quotas. Moreover, with respect to the Agro Ingreso Seguro (AIS) program in Colombia, he remarked that the Institute had considered the risk associated with the matter and was addressing it in an appropriate manner. Finally, he congratulated IICA for having obtained a clean opinion from the external auditors.

1.9.4.3 The Manager of the Financial Management Division advised the meeting that Steven Rickrode of the United States of America had served on the ARC since 1 January 2014. She said that during that time he had discharged his functions with great responsibility and dedication and would end his term on

the ARC on 31 December 2019. The Manager thanked the Government of the United States of America for the support that Mr. Rickrode had provided as a member of the Committee. Finally, she presented him with a keepsake in recognition of his work on the Committee.

1.9.5 Analysis and comments

- 1.9.5.1 The Representative of Bolivia asked the Member States to consider not adjusting the quota scale for the 2021 accounting period. Thus, the amounts would remain the same for all Member States and any adjustment would only be considered at the next Regular Meeting of the IABA.
- 1.9.5.2 The Representative of Argentina congratulated the Member States for the support provided to IICA, as evidenced in their payment of quotas, and announced that Argentina would soon pay its quota contribution for 2019.
- 1.9.5.3 The Representative of Mexico felt that the breakdown of the expenditure budget should be presented in greater detail, particularly with respect to resources earmarked for technical cooperation in each of the hemispheric programs. He felt that it was extremely important to have comparative data on budgeted resources versus executed resources. He pointed out that 65% of resources from the Regular Fund were allocated for salary payments and appealed for more resources to be channeled into technical cooperation, specifically, to strengthen the programs. He requested information regarding the management of externally funded projects.
- 1.9.5.4 The Representative of the United States of America expressed satisfaction regarding the financial reports that were presented. He endorsed the request of the Representative of Mexico to obtain additional details, particularly with regards to the management of external resources.
- 1.9.5.5 The Representative of Canada stressed that, in light of discussions during the Conference of Ministers on 30 October, he was requesting further information on the additional activities to be undertaken. He mentioned that there were still outstanding balances from countries that were in arrears with quota payments.
- 1.9.5.6 The Legal Advisor explained that the quota scale was established pursuant to Article 23 of the Convention on IICA and that historically the scale was

determined in keeping with the OAS system for calculating quotas, which is based on each Member State's ability to pay. He added that the use of this scale was adopted in 1962 and was endorsed again by the IABA meeting of 1981.

- 1.9.5.7 He emphasized that OAS quotas were last updated in 2018, at the end of a two-year negotiation period, which focused on the matter of adjusting the quota of the United States of America, reducing it from 59.47% to 49.90% by the year 2021. He stressed that the distribution of quotas for the 2020-2021 biennium reflected the historic interpretation by the IABA of Article 23 of the Convention on IICA.
- 1.9.5.8 The Director of Corporate Services explained that the budget for the fiscal year was being fully implemented. He stated that, according to the available data, and pending figures at the close of October, the execution of the USD 141 million of external resources was at 65% and the projected execution was close to 90%. He added that provisions have been made to improve those indicators in the future. He provided the meeting with the regular reports detailing the execution of the budget.
- 1.9.5.9 The Manager of the Project Management Unit mentioned that, in seeking to attract external funding, the Institute did not rely solely on donors, but also participated in tendering processes. He confirmed that, as at that date, 223 project opportunities had been identified, which would allow the Institute to obtain a total of USD 768 million in external resources. He explained that efforts to take advantage of these opportunities were at different stages, ranging from identification, to formulation and approval. According to him, at the time IICA was 9% below its target to secure USD 206 million dollars in external resources for the year, explaining that project resources are not handed over all at once, but are received as the funds are being executed.
- 1.9.5.10 The Representative of Mexico asked that the information presented by the Project Management Unit be made available to the delegates. He reiterated his request that the meeting consider the recommendations regarding the presentation of details on programmed and budgeted resources versus executed resources.



1.10 *Close of the session*

- 1.10.1 The first plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA was adjourned at 13:20 hours on 31 October 2019.



## SECOND PLENARY SESSION

### 2.1 Opening of the session

2.1.1 The second plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) was called to order at 14:30 hours on 31 October 2019, in the Sala Magna (United States and Canada meeting rooms) at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). It was chaired by Mr. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic.

### 2.2 Strategic Proposal for the Future of the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)

2.2.1 The coordinator of the ad hoc working group tasked with preparing the strategic proposal gave a brief overview of the process that had been taking place to strengthen CATIE and of the joint actions between the Center and IICA. He referred to IABA Resolution No. 507 “Report on the results of the IICA-CATIE Program of Joint Action and extension of the Contract between the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) on the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)”, which had instructed the Directors General of both institutions to prepare a strategic proposal, detailing scenarios and alternatives for restructuring and strengthening the organizational, scientific, academic and financial platform of the Center, as well as its legal basis.

2.2.2 He indicated that, in response to that mandate, the Directors General had established an ad hoc group, which had prepared a document with 16 recommendations that was presented to IICA’s Executive Committee at its Thirty-ninth Regular Meeting. The Committee had approved 13 of the recommendations; rejected one and asked that two of them be reviewed and presented at the next IABA meeting.

2.2.3 He explained that, further to the request of the Executive Committee, the document had been made available to the Member States on the information system of the meeting.

- 2.2.4 In reference to Recommendation 11, which proposed complementary actions to generate more income from the physical assets that CATIE owns or holds in usufruct, the Coordinator explained that the recommendation proposed the development of a Master Plan to manage those real estate assets available for lease, purchase or sale and which were not being used for research, teaching or production. He added that the money received would be used to create a trust fund to fund joint activities.
- 2.2.5 He explained that Recommendation 12, which refers to the governance of CATIE, was proposing that a two-tier governance structure be created, with IABA being the political body and a 15-member Board of Directors playing a scientific and managerial role. Board members would undertake these roles *ad honorem*, and the Board would be comprised as follows: a) the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica or his/her designated representative, who would preside over the Board of Directors; b) a representative of the Director General of IICA, who would be the Deputy Chairman; c) a representative named by the IABA; d) four experts on agriculture and natural resources or related sciences from CATIE member countries, selected by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture of the country that proposed them; e) an expert in agriculture and natural resources or related sciences from each region of the Americas (North, Central, Caribbean, Andean and Southern) and selected by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture of the proposing countries; f) and three members of the international scientific community of the agriculture sector with experience in research and training centers, who would be selected by the Board of Directors. Moreover, the Coordinator indicated that the Director General of CATIE would be the *ex officio* Secretary of the Board of Directors and would attend and participate in meetings, but without the right to vote.
- 2.2.6 The Director General of IICA stressed the importance of strategically aligning CATIE's activities with the technical cooperation provided by the Institute, due to the recognition that the Center had gained in the area of research and training.
- 2.2.7 The Director General of CATIE indicated that since assuming office three years before he had introduced modernization measures. He concurred with the proposed recommendations to strengthen the Center.

- 2.2.8 He emphasized that a new strategic plan should be developed for CATIE with actions that were aligned with the Institute’s actions, as a means of fostering synergy and complementarity between both Institutions. He commented that the Center had expertise in forest management and sustainable development and was contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by implementing Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) to protect natural resources and sustainable livestock activities. He indicated that CATIE had invested millions of dollars in the conservation of genetic coffee and cocoa collections.
- 2.2.9 He emphasized that 90% of projects were executed with external resources and highlighted the forging of strategic alliances with new partners, such as the University of Texas, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and Biodiversity International, among others.
- 2.2.10 Analysis and comments
- 2.2.10.1 The Representative of Mexico congratulated the Director General of CATIE for his efforts in rescuing the Center from financial crisis. He felt that selling the property of the Center was not the way to resolve its financial situation, and therefore asked that other solutions be explored. For this reason, he asked that a study be conducted, in consultation with the Government of Costa Rica, regarding the incorporation of CATIE into IICA, as a division to address issues such as youth, training, climate change, contact with producers, science, knowledge transfer and the environment, *inter alia*. He recognized the work of both Director Generals in preparing the proposal.
- 2.2.10.2 The Representative of The Bahamas referred to an initiative of North Carolina State University, through which alliances had been forged between academic and technical communities to collaborate with private sector companies, which would provide resources to fund joint actions. He agreed with the Representative of Mexico that other options should be studied, including the establishment of partnerships with private sector companies and other international organizations.
- 2.2.10.3 The Representative of the United States of America thanked both Directors General for the work done in preparing the proposal and he asked about the timeframe for implementation. He expressed agreement with the Representative of Mexico on the need to incorporate CATIE into IICA, and

with the Representative of The Bahamas with respect to the importance of establishing private sector partnerships. He mentioned, by way of example, partnerships with the University of Texas in the area of cotton and the signing of an agreement with the US organization, 4-H.

- 2.2.10.4 The Representative of St. Lucia thanked both Directors General for the presentation. He indicated that in his 12 years of attending IABA meetings he had always noted the synergistic working relationship between IICA and CATIE. He disagreed with the proposal to create a trust fund from the sale of lands, as land creates value. He inquired which lands would be sold and what income the sale would bring. He requested information on why the structure of the CATIE Board of Directors was to be modified. He added that he agreed with the need to strengthen the Center, but not by way of the proposed recommendations.
- 2.2.10.5 The Representative of Costa Rica felt that the proposal by the Representative of Mexico to incorporate CATIE into the Institute was unlike the approach discussed in previous meetings, which was to reorganize the relationship between both Institutions. He recommended that the proposal be analyzed more carefully, in terms of its content and scope.
- 2.2.10.6 The Representative of Haiti thanked both Directors General and indicated that during the visit that had been organized to CATIE he had noted with interest projects focusing on forest conservation, the carbon dynamic in certain ecosystems and plant germplasm banks, among other areas.
- 2.2.10.7 The Representative of Honduras congratulated the Director General of CATIE for his efforts in rescuing the organization financially. He expressed support for the proposal by the Representative of Mexico to incorporate CATIE into IICA, since it would allow the Member States to have access to a range of technical and research services. He underscored the importance of not postponing the decision to strengthen CATIE.
- 2.2.10.8 The Representative of Mexico was grateful for the support expressed for his proposal. He remarked that each year the Institute allocates USD 1,000,000 of its budget to CATIE. Therefore, the possible incorporation of CATIE into IICA would be economically beneficial to those IICA countries that were not members of CATIE, and thus would recognize their contribution to the Center.

- 2.2.10.9 The Representative of Nicaragua commended CATIE's Director General for his work. In his opinion, the proposal of the Representative of Mexico was in keeping with the proposed objectives and he agreed that it should be studied in greater depth. He felt that the option to sell the land was not viable, given that the organization's assets may open doors when requesting loans in the future. Thus, he proposed that other solutions to use the land more productively be explored. He also expressed disagreement with the proposal to change the structure of the Center's governing bodies.
- 2.2.10.10 The Director General of IICA explained that the land in question was idle land, which was at risk for squatting. Thus, he emphasized the need for the Government of Costa Rica, CATIE and the Institute to collaborate in establishing a Master Plan and emphasized that there should be no delay in coming to a decision.
- 2.2.10.11 The Representative of the United States of America recalled the origins of IICA and CATIE. He agreed that the proposal of the Representative of Mexico merited more careful study. He added that his country stood ready to assist in strengthening CATIE.
- 2.2.10.12 The Representative of Mexico thanked the Representative of Costa Rica for his comment, pointing out that the recommendation that was being made was not seeking integration, but rather the incorporation of CATIE as a division of the Institute.
- 2.2.10.13 The Representative of Argentina indicated that his country was not a member of the Center but was an IICA member. He referred to Resolution No. 507 of the IABA, clarifying that the resolution had requested that a study be conducted on CATIE's assets and not that they be sold.
- 2.2.10.14 The Representative of Costa Rica suggested that the studies regarding the land continue, and that Mexico present a more detailed proposal on how to incorporate CATIE into the Institute.
- 2.2.10.15 The Chair, in his capacity as Representative of the Dominican Republic, proposed that the meeting consider approving a resolution requesting the preparation of a Master Plan to study the sale of assets and the incorporation of CATIE into IICA. He added that, should the incorporation be approved, the restructuring of the governing bodies of the Center could then be

analyzed. He suggested that a short period be determined for the review of the Master Plan.

- 2.2.10.16 The Representative of The Bahamas indicated that he did not feel it was necessary to study the sale of the assets, since, based on the discussions, there were only two options to strengthen CATIE - the incorporation into IICA and the restructuring of the Center's governing bodies.
- 2.2.10.17 The Chair, in his capacity as Representative of the Dominican Republic, clarified that the proposal presented by the coordinator of the ad hoc working group indicated that lands to be sold were idle lands in an urban area where they were at risk of squatting. He recommended the establishment of a work committee, comprising the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica and representatives of three IICA member countries and three CATIE member countries, to prepare a Master Plan within a time period of six to twelve months.
- 2.2.10.18 The Representative of The Bahamas felt that the period suggested for preparation of the Plan was excessive, as the necessary studies had already been done.
- 2.2.10.19 The Representative of Mexico suggested that a resolution be prepared to clarify the issues discussed and should include the word "incorporation" as a strategy. He concurred that a twelve-month time period would be excessive and counter-proposed that it should be a six-month period and that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee should be called to present the Master Plan.
- 2.2.10.20 The Representative of Honduras recommended reducing the time to prepare the plan to five months.
- 2.2.10.21 The Director General of CATIE explained that different options to retain the lands had been studied. However, he indicated that the Center was spending USD 250,000 annually to cover costs for security and for lawyers' fees.
- 2.2.10.22 The Representative of St. Lucia asked the Director General of CATIE if he agreed that the lands should be sold, considering the high maintenance costs.



- 2.2.10.23 The Director General of CATIE acknowledged that he did support the sale, pointing out that this would enable the creation of a trust fund, which could cover some costs such as salaries for professors and scholarships for students, among other expenses.
- 2.2.10.24 The Representatives of Jamaica and Nicaragua endorsed the proposal by the Representative of the Dominican Republic to form a committee to develop a Master Plan to identify options for the use of the land.
- 2.2.10.25 The Chair summarized the comments and agreements of the Member States, indicating that a resolution would be drafted to request that, within a period of no more than six months, a Committee prepare a proposal regarding the new institutional structure of CATIE, considering two scenarios: the incorporation of CATIE into IICA or its continued existence as a separate body. He added that the resolution would also instruct the committee to include some recommendations on increasing the productivity of the land owned by the Center. He asked the Representatives to volunteer to serve on the working committee, which in the end was comprised of Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico, as CATIE member countries, and Ecuador, Jamaica and the United States, as IICA member countries.
- 2.2.10.26 The Chair asked the meeting to approve the suggestion that the working committee present their proposal at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 2.2.10.27 The Representatives of Brazil and St. Lucia asked if it was necessary to convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee, given that a regular meeting is usually held each year. Furthermore, the Representative of St. Lucia requested clarification on whether the members of the working committee would also be members of the 2020 Executive Committee.
- 2.2.10.28 The Technical Secretary reported that the twelve members of the 2020 Executive Committee were Argentina, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, the United States of America and Venezuela. He clarified that all IICA Member States were invited to the meeting of this governing body, but only the countries mentioned would have the right to vote.

- 2.2.10.29 The Representative of the United States of America asked that further clarification be given on the scope of the committee's functions, for example, if its role would involve decision making or only the formulation of proposals. He recalled that the Executive Committee is empowered to review proposals and submit recommendations to the IABA. He suggested that the plenary consider the upcoming meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI) to analyze and review the proposal on strengthening CATIE.
- 2.2.10.30 The Director General of IICA mentioned that the Institute would cover costs for the participation in the meeting of those countries serving on the working committee but that were not members of the 2020 Executive Committee. He added that, to reduce costs, discussions regarding the proposal would be done via online meetings. He indicated that, effectively, the meeting of the SACMI was a preparatory meeting for the Executive Committee meeting and agreed that it was an important forum to analyze and review the proposal.
- 2.3 *Discussion of the draft resolution "Ministerial commitment to pesticide-related provisions of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures"*
- 2.3.1 The Rapporteur read out the draft resolution "Ministerial commitment to pesticide-related provisions of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures".
- 2.3.2 The Representative of the United States of America referred to the previous day's side event, where the draft resolution had been presented. He recalled that various countries had expressed the need to work together within the region to reduce the impact of the absence of or misaligned Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in the Americas. He therefore encouraged the meeting to promote greater food security and improved trade access through this resolution.
- 2.3.3 The Representatives of Costa Rica, Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Ecuador made various suggestions about changes and additions to the draft resolution text.

- 2.3.4 The Technical Secretary suggested that these countries create a working committee, which would include the United States of America, to define and agree on a text to be submitted to the IABA for its approval.
- 2.3.5 The Representatives of Nicaragua, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Brazil expressed their support for the draft resolution as presented by the United States. However, they added that they would agree to the adjustments that the countries wished to make to the text.
- 2.3.6 The Representative of the United States of America expressed his willingness to work together with the other countries to finalize the wording of the draft resolution.
- 2.3.7 The Representative of Canada asked that, in making the modifications, countries not lose sight of the primary objective of the draft resolution, so as to arrive at a satisfactory text that contributes to the issue of MRLs.
- 2.4 *The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean*
- 2.4.1 IICA's Director of Technical Cooperation presented the publication "The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean 2019-2020", now in its eighth edition. He mentioned that, as had occurred in the past, the document was the result of technical cooperation and collaboration between the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IICA.
- 2.4.2 The document, he said, was based on an assessment of the current situation and trends, enabling the authors to determine the outlook for the agriculture sector and rural areas in the Americas. He indicated that specialists at the highest level in all three organizations had contributed to the preparation of the document. He commented that the publication outlines the main challenges facing the regions and countries, while proposing key actions to spur rural and agricultural transformation and in turn sustainable and inclusive development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 2.4.3 Mr. Julio Berdegué, FAO Deputy Director General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean explained that the

report, which would also be available in electronic form, contained two major sections. The first tracks the developments in agriculture and the rural world towards the achievement of the SDGs, whereas the other expands on the topic of the bioeconomy. Among the other institutions contributing to the publication was the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Deputy Director General Berdegué then played a video on the issue of the bioeconomy.

## 2.5 Formalization of agreements

### 2.5.1 General technical cooperation agreement between the CODESPA Foundation and IICA

2.5.1.1 Mrs. Michelle Riestra, Executive Director of CODESPA, and the Director General of IICA signed a general technical cooperation agreement between both institutions.

2.5.1.2 The Executive Director welcomed the signing of the agreement, which would aim to benefit the rural communities of the Americas, by providing opportunities to people living in extreme poverty, to enable them to improve their lives through their work. She explained that the agreement would focus on employment generation, improvement in market conditions, professional training and inclusive businesses, among other areas. She pointed out the importance of this agreement to positively impact rural communities.

2.5.1.3 The Director General of IICA expressed his satisfaction, remarking that IICA and CODESPA share objectives, values and agendas. He made a commitment to the Ministers to abide by the agreement, for the benefit of rural communities in the Americas.

### 2.5.2 General cooperation agreement between CENFOTEC University and IICA and launch of the IoT Platform for Agriculture

2.5.2.1 The President of CENFOTEC University and the Director General of IICA signed a general cooperation agreement between both institutions.

2.5.2.2 The President of CENFOTEC explained that the agreement aimed to generate knowledge and products for the digital transformation of agriculture in IICA member countries, as a means of democratizing access to

information, knowledge and technologies in rural areas, thereby transforming the sector through process improvement and increased productivity and competitiveness. He announced that the University and IICA were organizing a hackathon to explore digital solutions to agricultural challenges, making use of the Internet of Things and data. According to him, the two entities would begin a face-to-face training program in January of 2020, to equip graduates to develop low or moderate investment solutions, while also contributing to the development and implementation of digital solutions on a larger scale. He advised that the online version of the program would be available later in the year, allowing the entities to offer it internationally.

- 2.5.2.3 The Director General of IICA celebrated and welcomed the signing of the agreement, which would contribute to making an Internet of Things platform in agriculture a reality. He stressed that it demonstrated that legal instruments were very useful for improving the standard of living of inhabitants in rural areas.
- 2.6 *Report of the IABA representative to the Governing Council and Board of Directors of the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) covering the 2018-2019 period*
- 2.6.1 The Technical Secretary reminded the meeting that since 2013, the IABA had appointed its representative to the governing bodies of CATIE, based on a geographic rotation mechanism. In line with that approach, Ecuador was the country currently assuming that role. He explained that in 2018 the country had appointed its Vice-Minister for Production and Agricultural Development as the designated representative. However, in July of 2019, IICA was advised that she had demitted office and her replacement was not appointed until September. Thus, the IABA had sent no representative to the governing bodies of CATIE and the relevant report had not been submitted.
- 2.7 *Status of the resolutions of the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA and the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee*
- 2.7.1 The Technical Secretary pointed out that the reports on the status of the resolutions adopted at the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA and the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee had previously been made available to the Member States via the

online information system of the meeting. He explained that the reports provided details on the status of the implementation of each resolution adopted at the aforementioned meetings. The meeting agreed to accept the reports.

## 2.8 *Date and venue of the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the IABA*

2.8.1 The Technical Secretary informed the delegates that up to that time no Member State had offered to host the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the IABA, and thus the meeting would be held at IICA Headquarters in the second half of 2021.

2.8.2 The Chair, in his capacity as Representative of the Dominican Republic, extended an invitation by his country to host the Fortieth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee towards the middle of 2020. The Member States accepted the offer.

## 2.9 *Reading and approval of draft resolutions*

2.9.1 The Rapporteur read the draft resolution “Strengthening of the Agricultural Health, Safety and Food Quality Program”.

2.9.2 The Representative of the United States of America asked that in the second operative paragraph, the word “funding” be replaced by the words “directing IICA’s internal resources to”.

2.9.3 The Chair, in his capacity as Representative of the Dominican Republic, proposed a modification to the suggestion made by the Representative of the United States of America, stating that if funding was limited to IICA’s resources, the Institute would not be able to accomplish more than it was currently achieving. Therefore, he suggested that the text should state: “the resources of IICA and all other resources that IICA may be able to attract from the member countries or from other international organizations”.

2.9.4 The Representative of Brazil pointed out that the end of the operative paragraph refers to the establishment of a voluntary fund. Therefore, he suggested that, given the concern of the United States of America, the phrase “and funding” should be removed and the end of the paragraph adjusted to state “establishment of voluntary funds for this purpose”.

- 2.9.5 The Representatives of the United States of America and the Dominican Republic agreed with the suggestion made by Brazil.
- 2.9.6 The draft resolution was approved with the modifications to be included by the Technical Secretariat.
- 2.9.7 The Rapporteur read out the following draft resolutions “2020-2021 Program Budget”, “Date and venue of the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture”, “Report on the Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean”, “Strengthening of the strategic alliances of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)”, “Report on the collection of quotas”, “2017 and 2018 Financial statements of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Report of the external auditors and Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth reports of the Audit Review Committee (ARC)” and “Status of the resolutions of the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture and the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee”. The draft resolutions were approved without modifications.
- 2.9.8 The Rapporteur read out the draft resolution “IICA leadership in coordinating development activities in Small Island Developing States”, proposed by the Representative of The Bahamas.
- 2.9.9 The Representative of Nicaragua requested that the following phrases be eliminated: in operative paragraph one, “the leadership role of IICA in”; in operative paragraph two, “led by IICA”; and in operative paragraph three, “for consolidating IICA’s leadership role in this area”.
- 2.9.10 The Representative of Guyana suggested that small island and low-lying developing states be included at the end of the second “considering”.
- 2.9.11 The Representative of The Bahamas asked that the resolution not be confined to the Caribbean, suggesting that the phrase “of the Caribbean” should be removed from the second “considering”.
- 2.9.12 The Director General of FAO informed the meeting that recently his organization had created a special office to increase work in support of small island and low-lying developing island states.

- 2.9.13 The Representative of Brazil asked that the word “formal” in the third operative paragraph be eliminated, so that the paragraph would then read “convening of a meeting of strategic partners”.
- 2.9.14 The draft resolution was approved with the requested adjustments.
- 2.9.15 The Rapporteur read out the draft resolution “Interpretive Center for Tomorrow’s Agriculture”, proposed by the delegation of Brazil.
- 2.9.16 The Representative of Jamaica asked that a fourth operative paragraph be added to urge the General Directorate of IICA to work with Member States to identify new public and private partners to support the creation of other Interpretive Centers for Tomorrow’s Agriculture in other regions of the hemisphere.
- 2.9.17 The Representative of Dominica endorsed the proposal of the Representative of Jamaica.
- 2.9.18 The draft resolution was approved with the requested modification.
- 2.9.19 The Rapporteur read out the draft resolution “Ministerial commitment to pesticide-related provisions of the WTO agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures”, proposed by the United States of America and adjusted by the special committee that revised it. It was approved without modifications.
- 2.9.20 The Representative of the United States of America conveyed his thanks to the delegations of Haiti, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Colombia, Argentina, Canada, Mexico and Brazil for their cooperation and support in creating the final version of the resolution.
- 2.9.21 The Rapporteur read out the draft resolution “Strategic proposal on the operational framework for CATIE”, which was approved without modifications.
- 2.10 *Remarks by Director General Emeritus Chelston W. D. Brathwaite*
- 2.10.1 The Director General Emeritus highlighted the work carried out by IICA. He stressed the need to establish differentiated strategies for the countries, taking



into account the varying levels of development. He also emphasized the importance of including young people in agricultural development, so that they in turn could implement innovations and technologies to benefit the sector.

2.10.2 He recommended that discussions should be held on the topic of food quality, with a view to understanding the close linkage between this area and consumer health and to tackling current problems such as obesity. Finally, he encouraged the Institute to continue working for the prosperity of the agriculture sector of the Americas.

2.11 *Close of the session*

2.11.1 The Second Plenary Session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA was adjourned at 19:05 hours on 31 October 2019.



## **CLOSING SESSION**

### 3.1 Opening

3.1.1 The closing session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) began at 19:13 hours on 31 October 2019, in the Sala Magna (United States and Canada rooms) of the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), chaired by Mr. Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic.

### 3.2 Remarks by the Director General of IICA

3.2.1 The Director General expressed his delight at the commitment and involvement of all the delegations in each of the discussions. He renewed his commitment to working assiduously towards achieving an IICA 4.0 that is leaner, by optimizing its operations and rationalizing the use of its resources in order to support and promote productive institutional activities and to remain an institution that is close to the countries.

3.2.2 He expressed his appreciation to the minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic for his country's offer to host the next regular meeting of the Executive Committee, and voiced his interest in hearing from farmers at that meeting. He also expressed his appreciation for the broad participation of the international bodies and observers.

3.2.3 He underscored the work of the IICA staff members and the Technical Secretariat in ensuring the success of all the activities undertaken. Finally, he thanked the chair for his efficient management of the meeting.

### 3.3 Remarks by Chair of the IABA

3.3.1 The chair expressed his appreciation to the rapporteur for the reading of the proposed resolutions, as well as to the plenary for selecting him as chair of the IABA.

3.3.2 He expressed his satisfaction with the degree of responsibility and involvement of all the delegations, as well as their contributions to agriculture in the Americas.

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3.3.3 Finally, he reiterated his invitation to the delegations to attend the next session of the Executive Committee, to be held in his country.

3.4 Close

3.4.1 The closing session of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA ended at 19:19 hours on 31 October 2019.

# **RESOLUTIONS**



## RESOLUTIONS

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IICA/JIA/Res. 518 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 518**

**REPORT ON “THE OUTLOOK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS: A PERSPECTIVE ON LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN”**

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

HAVING SEEN:

The report, “The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean,”

CONSIDERING:

That, in the Ministerial Declaration Bávvaro 2001, the countries of the Americas pledged to target the problem of rural poverty and make significant strides in reducing it;

That Article 3.a of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA establishes that this highest-level governing body of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is to take note of the report of the Director General of the Institute on the status of the development of agriculture and the rural milieu in the Americas; and

That the General Directorate has presented to the Member States of IICA the report entitled “The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean,” which was prepared jointly by IICA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which highlights the valuable relationship between rural and agricultural development, the complementarity of which contributes to the creation of employment, the fight against hunger and the reduction of rural poverty,

## RESOLVES:

1. To accept the report, “The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean,” and underscore its importance for the governments of the region as a useful tool for the tasks of analysis and policy-making.
2. To urge ECLAC, FAO and IICA to continue to jointly prepare this report, to operate the platform [www.agrirural.org](http://www.agrirural.org) and to generate additional, complementary products, by allocating the necessary human, financial and other resources to successfully carry out these tasks.
3. To support these efforts by requesting that the member countries provide the official information required for advancing the construction of a competitive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture.

IICA/JIA/Res. 519 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 519****STRATEGIC PROPOSAL ON THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CATIE**

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

HAVING SEEN:

The presentation of the report entitled “Strategic Proposal for the Future of CATIE”, prepared in response to Resolution No. 507 of the IABA, adopted at its Nineteenth Regular Meeting on 26 October 2017,

CONSIDERING:

That, via Resolution No. 507, the IABA resolved, among other matters, to request that the directors general of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) establish, with participation from the Government of Costa Rica, an *ad hoc* working group to prepare a “strategic proposal” for the future of CATIE that details scenarios and alternatives for restructuring and strengthening the Center’s organizational, scientific, academic and financial frameworks, as well as its legal basis;

That the resolution instructed the directors general of IICA and CATIE to ensure that the *ad hoc* working group present this strategic proposal, including its conclusions and scenarios, to the Executive Committee, so that it may issue recommendations at its Thirty-ninth Regular Meeting; and

That, pursuant to this resolution, the *ad hoc* working group presented to the Executive Committee its strategic proposal, whose recommendations were discussed during the present meeting of the IABA;

## RESOLVES:

1. To establish a special committee, pursuant to Article 60 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Committee, in order to study, analyze and make recommendations to the next Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee on the following:
  - a. Measures to make the land belonging to IICA and CATIE more productive;
  - b. The feasibility of incorporating CATIE as a division of IICA in charge of technical and scientific research and post-graduate education in agricultural sciences, as well as other structural options that may lead to more efficient and economical integration and coordination that meet the needs of the Member States.
2. To include the following Member States as members of this special committee: Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica, which are also Regular Members of CATIE, and Ecuador, Jamaica and the United States, as well as thank them for their willingness to participate in the activities of the committee.
3. To request that the Director General of IICA and the Director General of CATIE provide this special committee with the technical, legal and secretariat support it requires to fulfill its mandate.
4. To thank the Director General of IICA, the Director General of CATIE, former Director General of IICA Martín Piñeiro and other members of the *ad hoc* working group for the document entitled “Strategic Proposal for the Future of CATIE”, which has achieved progress in analyzing and evaluating the topics that will be overseen by this special committee moving forward.

IICA/JIA/Res. 520 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: English

**RESOLUTION No. 520**

**MINISTERIAL COMMITMENT TO PESTICIDE-RELATED PROVISIONS OF  
THE WTO AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND  
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

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

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:

The event, “Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in Perspective”, held on 30 October 2019, at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), San Jose, Costa Rica,

CONSIDERING:

That IICA Member States in the Americas continue to face the challenge of producing food in a safe and sustainable way, and that farmers must be able to access the full range of tools and technologies available for agricultural production;

That farmers’ access to agricultural tools and technologies is increasingly limited by non-tariff measures in the target markets, which lack sufficient technical and scientific justification, and therefore have considerable negative impacts on the production, productivity and trade in safe food and agricultural products; and

That in December 2017, two months following the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA held on 25-26 October 2017, several Western Hemisphere Member States endorsed a Ministerial statement in support of the work of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) during the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the WTO<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> WT/MIN(17)/52

## RESOLVES:

1. To affirm the importance of the work undertaken by the WTO SPS Committee to examine pesticide maximum residue limit-related issues that have an adverse impact on international trade in food and agricultural products.
2. To achieve consensus in the Western Hemisphere on collaborative actions to address pesticide-related issues that impact agricultural trade including from developing countries, for example, through the promotion of collaboration in the generation of necessary data for setting trade-facilitative and regionally relevant MRLs, especially for specialty crops.
3. To affirm the importance of the risk analysis process for assessing, managing and communicating risks of concern associated with pesticide exposure in order to protect public health while enabling trade of safe food and agricultural products.
4. To commit to improving transparency and predictability in the establishment and adoption of national MRLs.
5. To strengthen the implementation of the SPS Agreement by working collectively to enhance shared understanding of the provisions, including scientific justification, as they pertain to MRLs.
6. To affirm the importance of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as the relevant international standard-setting body for pesticide MRLs and to actively enable and facilitate regional participation in the work of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues.
7. To apply the same principles stated above to other issues associated with MRLs, such as heavy metals.

IICA/JIA/Res. 521 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 521**

**STRENGTHENING OF THE AGRICULTURAL HEALTH,  
SAFETY AND FOOD QUALITY PROGRAM**

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

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:**

The comments made by the delegations during Forum 3 entitled “Health, Safety and Quality for the Future of Trade” carried out within the framework of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas,

**CONSIDERING:**

That the Agricultural Health, Food Safety and Quality Program is one of the five hemispheric action programs that support the four objectives defined in the 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan (MTP);

That, via Resolution No. 94 (18/79), the IABA acknowledged the importance of agricultural health to trade and health in the Americas, and established the animal health and plant health programs of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which were the precursors to the current Agricultural Health, Safety and Food Quality Program of the Institute; and

That, as part of their remarks during the abovementioned forum, several Member States acknowledged the achievements of the Program and expressed their willingness to strengthen it through voluntary additional funds,

**RESOLVES:**

1. To recognize and congratulate IICA for its achievements through work and actions in the fields of plant health, animal health, as well as food safety and quality over the past forty years.

2. To request that the Director General present, at the next regular meeting of the Executive Committee, a proposal for strengthening cooperation activities related to agricultural health within the framework of this Program, which could include the establishment of voluntary funds for this purpose.



IICA/JIA/Res. 522 (XX-O/19)  
31 October 2019  
Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 522**

**INTERPRETIVE CENTER FOR TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURE**

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

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:

The symbolic opening of the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG), carried out during the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas on 30 October 2019,

CONSIDERING:

That the strategic partnership between the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and Microsoft resulted in the creation of CIMAG, an interactive space for virtual experimentation that enables visitors to learn about agriculture through the use of artificial intelligence;

That CIMAG highlights and educates on the fundamental role of the agriculture sector for human life and sustainability of the planet;

That Anayda Frisneda, Public Sector General Manager for Microsoft Latin America, expressed Microsoft's commitment towards Latin America and the Caribbean with respect to making technology available to societies across the region; and

That it is crucial to raise awareness among new generations, as well as in schools and other education centers, of the key role played by agriculture, so that they may value and honor the essential role of rural producers in modern societies,

RESOLVES:

1. To thank and congratulate the General Directorate of IICA and Microsoft for the initiative of establishing CIMAG.

2. To acknowledge and underscore the strategic role that CIMAG will play in disseminating information on the agriculture sector in the Americas.
3. To urge the General Directorate of IICA to work together with the Member States to generate linkages with new public and private partners that can help to consolidate CIMAG, as well as with the ministries of agriculture, rural development, education and other related areas to promote its use by the Member States of the Institute.
4. To urge the General Directorate of IICA to explore the establishment of other Interpretive Centers for Tomorrow's Agriculture in other regions of the hemisphere.

IICA/JIA/Res. 523 (XX-O/19)  
31 October 2019  
Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 523**

**2020-2021 PROGRAM BUDGET**

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

HAVING SEEN:

Document IICA/JIA/Doc. 396 (19), “2020-2021 Program Budget”,

CONSIDERING:

That the Convention on the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) establishes:

- i. In Article 8.b, that a function of the IABA is “to approve the biennial Program-budget and to determine the annual quotas of the Member States”,
- ii. In Article 14.b, that a function of the Executive Committee is “to examine the proposed biennial Program-budget that the Director General submits to the Board and to make such observations and recommendations as it deems appropriate”,
- iii. In Article 23, that “the Member States shall contribute to the maintenance of the Institute through annual quotas established by the Board, in accordance with the system for calculating quotas of the Organization of American States”;

That the Director General submitted the proposed 2020-2021 Program Budget to the Regular Meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI), held in May 2019; and

That the Director General submitted the proposed 2020-2021 Program Budget for consideration by the Executive Committee at its Thirty-ninth Regular Meeting, in a format consistent with the structure and content established in the rules currently in effect, and that, through resolution IICA/CE/Res. 650 (XXXIX-O/19), the Committee recommended that the IABA approve it,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the overall allocation of USD 32,074,100 per year from the Institute's Regular Fund for the 2020-2021 Program Budget, financed with USD 29,574,100 annually in quota contributions from the Member States, as per the amounts indicated in the scale attached hereto as Annex A, including assessed quotas and over-quota contributions; and with USD 2,500,000 per year in miscellaneous resources, from income that it is estimated will be generated; the assessed quotas will be those computed in accordance with the percentages established in the quota scale approved by the General Assembly of the OAS for that year.
2. To approve the use of resources for the 2020-2021 Program Budget, in the amount of USD 32,074,100 in accordance with the allocations for each of the chapters, headings and programs specified in Document IICA/JIA/Doc. 396 (19), "2020-2021 Program Budget". The summary of allocations by chapter is attached to this resolution as Annex B.
3. To authorize the Director General to effect transfers among chapters of the Program Budget, provided that the total transfers do not significantly affect the priorities approved.
4. To authorize the Director General to make the necessary adjustments in the allocation of resources approved in this resolution, should the combined income for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 fall below estimated levels, and to inform the Executive Committee and the IABA of this situation.
5. To instruct the Director General to ensure that any additional over-quota contribution received that exceeds the total amount approved for the 2020-2021 biennium is applied to the Regular Fund used to finance the 2020-2021 Program Budget.

**ANNEX A**  
**Quota Scales of Member States, Over-Quota Contributions,**  
**and Miscellaneous Income - 2020-2021 (in USD)**

MEMBER STATES	2020				2021			
	IICA				IICA			
	OAS <sup>1</sup>	ASSESSED QUOTA	OVER-QUOTA	TOTAL QUOTAS	OAS <sup>1</sup>	ASSESSED QUOTA	OVER-QUOTA	TOTAL QUOTAS
		%	USD <sup>2</sup>	USD <sup>2</sup>		USD <sup>2</sup>	%	USD <sup>2</sup>
Antigua and Barbuda	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Argentina	3.000	879,500	247,000	1,126,500	3.229	947,000	247,000	1,194,000
Bahamas	0.047	13,800	7,000	20,800	0.051	15,000	7,000	22,000
Barbados	0.026	7,600	5,500	13,100	0.032	9,400	5,500	14,900
Belize	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Bolivia	0.070	20,500	600	21,100	0.075	22,000	600	22,600
Brazil	12.457	3,652,000	0	3,652,000	13.408	3,932,400	0	3,932,400
Canada	9.801	2,873,400	0	2,873,400	10.549	3,093,900	0	3,093,900
Chile	1.415	414,800	14,600	429,400	1.523	446,700	14,600	461,300
Colombia	1.638	480,200	0	480,200	1.763	517,100	0	517,100
Costa Rica	0.256	75,100	2,500	77,600	0.276	80,900	2,500	83,400
Dominica	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Dominican Republic	0.268	78,600	3,500	82,100	0.288	84,500	3,500	88,000
Ecuador	0.402	117,900	3,500	121,400	0.433	127,000	3,500	130,500
El Salvador	0.076	22,300	12,500	34,800	0.082	24,000	12,500	36,500
Grenada	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Guatemala	0.171	50,100	13,800	63,900	0.184	54,000	13,800	67,800
Guyana	0.022	6,500	1,700	8,200	0.029	8,500	1,700	10,200
Haiti	0.022	6,500	4,200	10,700	0.029	8,500	4,200	12,700
Honduras	0.043	12,600	3,200	15,800	0.046	13,500	3,200	16,700
Jamaica	0.053	15,500	5,100	20,600	0.057	16,700	5,100	21,800
Mexico	6.470	1,896,800	0	1,896,800	6.964	2,042,400	0	2,042,400
Nicaragua	0.022	6,500	2,800	9,300	0.029	8,500	2,800	11,300
Panama	0.191	56,000	6,000	62,000	0.206	60,400	6,000	66,400
Paraguay	0.087	25,500	8,800	34,300	0.094	27,600	8,800	36,400
Peru	1.005	294,600	9,400	304,000	1.082	317,300	9,400	326,700
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Saint Lucia	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.022	6,500	1,100	7,600	0.029	8,500	1,100	9,600
Suriname	0.022	6,500	4,200	10,700	0.029	8,500	4,200	12,700
Trinidad and Tobago	0.129	37,800	15,000	52,800	0.139	40,800	15,000	55,800
United States of America	59.470	17,435,300	0	17,435,300	56.310	16,515,000	0	16,515,000
Uruguay	0.298	87,400	7,900	95,300	0.321	94,100	7,900	102,000
Venezuela	1.940	568,800	0	568,800	2.088	612,400	0	612,400
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>99.555</b>	<b>29,187,600</b>	<b>386,500</b>	<b>29,574,100</b>	<b>99.519</b>	<b>29,187,600</b>	<b>386,500</b>	<b>29,574,100</b>
Cuba	0.446	130,800	0	130,800	0.480	140,800	0	140,800
<b>TOTAL QUOTAS</b>	<b>100.001</b>	<b>29,318,400</b>	<b>386,500</b>	<b>29,704,900</b>	<b>99.999</b>	<b>29,328,400</b>	<b>386,500</b>	<b>29,714,900</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS INCOME<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>2,500,000</b>		<b>2,500,000</b>		<b>2,500,000</b>		<b>2,500,000</b>
<b>TOTAL REGULAR FUND<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>31,687,600</b>		<b>32,074,100</b>		<b>31,687,600</b>		<b>32,074,100</b>

Note: 1) The Kingdom of Spain contributes an annual quota of USD 60,000 as an Associate Member, pursuant to the agreement adopted in the First Plenary Session of the Eleventh Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, held on November 26, 2001, in Bávaro, Dominican Republic.

1/ As per Resolution CP/RES. 1103 (2168/18), adopted by means of AG/RES. 1 (LIII-E/18) of the Organization of American States General Assembly.

2/ In USD rounded to the nearest hundred.

3/ The total of the Regular Fund does not include Cuba.

**ANNEX B****Allocation of the Regular Fund by Chapter - 2020 and 2021 (in USD)**

CHAPTER	2020		2021	
	REGULAR FUND		REGULAR FUND	
	USD	%	USD	%
CHAPTER I: Direct Technical Cooperation Services	28,926,876	90.2%	28,868,310	90.0%
CHAPTER II: Management Costs	1,766,619	5.5%	1,830,360	5.7%
CHAPTER III: General Costs and Provisions	1,186,000	3.7%	1,186,000	3.7%
CHAPTER IV: Renewal of Infrastructure and Equipment	194,605	0.6%	189,430	0.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,074,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>32,074,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

IICA/JIA/Res. 524 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 524**

**REPORT ON THE COLLECTION OF QUOTAS**

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

HAVING SEEN:

Document IICA/JIA/Doc. 397 (19), “Report on the Collection of Quotas”,

CONSIDERING:

That financing of the operation of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and its technical cooperation projects can only be achieved if Member States remain current with the payment of their annual quota contributions;

That the IABA, at its Thirteenth Regular Meeting, by means of Resolution IICA/JIA/Res. 414 (XIII-O/05), adopted the document “Revised measures for collecting quotas owed to the Institute”; and

That, thanks to the support of the Ministers of Agriculture and other authorities in the Member States, the measures adopted and the efforts of the General Directorate of the Institute, the collection of quotas has contributed to the satisfactory implementation of the technical cooperation services established in the 2018-2019 Program Budget of IICA,

RESOLVES:

1. To thank the Ministers of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, as well as other high-level government officials of the Institute’s Member States, for the efforts they have been making to honor their annual quota payments to IICA in a timely fashion.

2. To maintain in effect the measures established by the Executive Committee and the IABA to encourage the Member States to make their annual quota payments to the Institute in a timely fashion and to pay arrears for previous years.
3. To instruct the Director General of IICA to continue efforts to collect the quotas of the Member States, both for the current year and previous years, and to keep the Member States informed of progress in this area.
4. To strengthen the commitment of the Member States to remain current with the payment of their annual quotas, and to reach an agreement with the Institute, as necessary, for the payment of quotas owed for previous years.



IICA/JIA/Res. 525 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 525**

**2017 AND 2018 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA), REPORT OF THE  
EXTERNAL AUDITORS AND TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH  
REPORTS OF THE AUDIT REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)**

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

HAVING SEEN:

Documents IICA/JIA/Doc. 398 (19), “2017 and 2018 Financial Statements of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and Report of the External Auditors” and IICA/JIA/Doc. 399 (19), “Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Reports of the Audit Review Committee (ARC)”,

CONSIDERING:

That the Executive Committee, pursuant to articles 3.c and 4.d of its Rules of Procedure, examined, at its Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings, the financial statements of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the reports of the external auditors for 2017 and 2018, and, as a result, by means of resolutions IICA/CE/Res. 634 (XXXVIII-O/18) and IICA/CE/Res. 647 (XXXIX-O/19), recommended that the documents in question be submitted to the consideration of the IABA;

That, in its Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Reports, the Audit Review Committee (ARC) states that it examined the reports of the external auditors and found that the General Directorate had properly administered IICA’s financial resources, in accordance with the rules of the Institute and with generally accepted auditing standards; and

That the Executive Committee, at its Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings, resolved to approve said reports by means of resolutions IICA/CE/Res. 634 (XXXVIII-O/18) and IICA/CE/Res. 647 (XXXIX-O/19),

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the 2017 and 2018 financial statements of IICA, as well as the reports of the external auditors.
2. To accept the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Reports of the ARC.
3. To express to the members of the ARC the satisfaction and appreciation of the Member States of the Institute for the work accomplished.

IICA/JIA/Res. 526 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 526**

**STATUS OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE NINETEENTH REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND THE  
THIRTY-EIGHTH AND THIRTY-NINTH REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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

HAVING SEEN:

Documents IICA/JIA/Doc. 401 (19), “Status of the Resolutions of the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA)”, and IICA/JIA/Doc. 402 (19), “Status of the Resolutions of the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee,”

CONSIDERING:

That the abovementioned status reports demonstrate that the General Directorate of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has complied with the resolutions adopted at the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA, and has carried out satisfactorily the tasks required to comply with the resolutions adopted at the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee,

RESOLVES:

To accept the reports “Status of the Resolutions of the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA)” and “Status of the Resolutions of the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee”.

IICA/JIA/Res. 527 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 527****DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

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

HAVING SEEN:

Document IICA/JIA/Doc. 403 (19), "Date and Venue of the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA),"

CONSIDERING:

That, in accordance with Article 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA, regular meetings of this governing body of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) are to be held every two years and, therefore, it is necessary to establish the date and venue of the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the IABA in 2021; and,

That, in accordance with Article 18 of said Rules of Procedure, if no Member State offers to host the regular meeting of the IABA, the meeting is to be held at the Headquarters of the Institute, in San Jose, Costa Rica,

RESOLVES:

To hold the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the IABA at IICA Headquarters, in San Jose, Costa Rica, in the second half of 2021, without prejudice to the possibility of the Executive Committee accepting an invitation to hold the meeting at another site, pursuant to Article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the IABA.

IICA/JIA/Res. 528 (XX-O/19)

31 October 2019

Original: Spanish

**RESOLUTION No. 528**

**STRENGTHENING OF THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCES OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION  
ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)**

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

HAVING SEEN:

The formalization, within the framework of said Meeting, of the different general cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding between the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and 4-H, the World Tourism Organization, the University of Costa Rica, CENFOTEC University, the CODESPA Foundation and Corteva Agriscience, for the benefit of the countries of the Americas,

CONSIDERING:

That the Institute's 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan (MTP) includes strategies to strengthen the Institute's capacities through the development of strategic alliances with similar institutions; and

That strategic alliances with organizations with similar functions and objectives to IICA are extremely valuable, as a means of a) conducting complementary activities with institutions that specialize in research and knowledge-creation; b) driving thematic complementarity with organizations that specialize in a variety of issues related to agriculture and rural life; c) carrying out joint activities; and d) promoting the management of externally-funded cooperation projects,

## RESOLVES:

1. To thank the Director General of IICA and the different strategic partners of the Institute for their efforts in formalizing cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding with IICA, in order to strengthen and bolster international technical cooperation for the benefit of agriculture and the rural territories of the Americas.
2. To urge the Member States to support and promote the joint actions resulting from the Institute's new strategic alliances, in their respective countries and with regional integration mechanisms.

IICA/JIA/Res. 529 (XX-O/19)  
31 October 2019  
Original: English

**RESOLUTION No. 529**

**MULTILATERAL COORDINATION IN SUPPORT OF SMALL DEVELOPING STATES AND LOW-LYING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

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

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:

The discussions of the participants during the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas, held at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) on 30 October 2019,

CONSIDERING:

That IICA's current Medium-term Plan (2018-2022 MTP) calls for the Institute to organize networks and strategic partnerships for the purpose of developing a foundation of shared knowledge, strengthening interagency and joint cooperation activities, fostering horizontal cooperation, as well as improving institutional capabilities for securing external resources from strategic partners and other donors; and

That, in light of IICA's capabilities and record of achievement in Latin America and the Caribbean, several delegations have noted that the Institute is poised to assume a greater leadership role in coordinating the activities of other international organizations, donors, and other strategic partners with respect to the development of agriculture and the improvement of rural life in small developing States and low-lying developing countries,

RESOLVES:

To request that the Director General:

1. Strengthen IICA's coordination of efforts with other public and international organizations, donors, and other strategic partners engaged

in agricultural development and the improvement of rural life in small developing States and low-lying developing countries.

2. Develop and discuss with those strategic partners a proposal for a coordinated approach to effectively address the sectoral challenges and opportunities for agricultural development and the improvement of rural life in small developing States and low-lying developing countries.
3. Present a report to the next Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee on progress in developing and discussing that proposal with the pertinent strategic partners, together with the corresponding recommendations. These recommendations may include, among others, the convening of a meeting of the strategic partners for the purpose of reaching the necessary agreements.



## **SIGNING OF THE REPORT**




**SIGNING OF THE REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN  
BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

Pursuant to Article 85 of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), the Report of the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA is hereby signed at 19:20 hours on the thirty-first day of October of the year two thousand and nineteen, in San Jose, Costa Rica.


This report will be edited by the Technical Secretariat of the meeting. It will then be published in the four official languages of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in the Official Documents Series, all versions being equally authentic and valid.

The Secretariat shall file the original texts in the archives of the Institute, and send copies of the official version of this report to the governments of the Member States, the Associate Countries, the Permanent Observers of the Institute and other participants in the meeting, and will make a digital version of the document available via the IICA website.

San Jose, Costa Rica.



Manuel Otero  
Director General of IICA  
*Ex-officio* Secretary of the  
Inter-American Board of Agriculture  
(IABA)



Osmar Benítez  
Minister of Agriculture of  
the Dominican Republic and  
President of the 2019 Inter-American  
Board of Agriculture



# **ANNEXES**



## ANNEX 1: COMMITMENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE AMERICAS

### *“Cultivating tomorrow’s agriculture today”*

The Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 30 October 2019, fostered productive dialogue within the framework of three thematic forums: “Opportunities for rural inclusion in the digital age,” “Towards a new balance between productivity and sustainability” and “Health, safety and quality for the future of trade.”<sup>3</sup>

The Conference called attention to permanent changes and transformations in the global environment and identified major opportunities available to undertake efforts, at the country and regional levels. In order to capitalize on these opportunities, it was proposed that efforts should be aimed at tackling food insecurity, which still affects millions of people; climate vulnerability and its impact on production, particularly family farming; the technological divide, both between and even within many countries; the fragmentation and weakening of multilateral agreements that affect international trade; as well as domestic, regional and international migration processes, among other areas.

The discussions emphasized the need to foster scientific and technological developments that could be applied in agriculture. A series of existing and available innovations and technological tools were also identified, which could assist in overcoming present and future challenges. The Conference also highlighted the fact that capitalizing on these developments would be an opportunity to ensure the balanced and equitable development of the region’s countries, satisfy the growing demand for their products and improve the standard of living of rural inhabitants.

The importance of strengthening the bioeconomy<sup>4</sup> was also highlighted, given that it would provide an opportunity to drive a development cycle that could preserve and improve natural capital, while at the same time optimizing resource yields and utilization at every level of production. The development should include all kinds of producers, especially those who experience greater difficulties in accessing new

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<sup>3</sup> The document entitled “Agriculture and Rurality in a Future of Permanent Change,” prepared by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), served as the basis for the deliberations during the Conference.

<sup>4</sup> The bioeconomy is the knowledge-based intensive use of biological resources, processes, technologies and principles, for the sustainable provision of goods and services across all sectors of the economy (IICA. 2018. 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan, San Jose, Costa Rica. p. 59).

technologies. Moreover, it was noted that hemispheric initiatives in this area should take into account the diverse realities of countries across the Americas, in terms of their level of development and the specific characteristics of their agrifood systems.

The first forum focused on opportunities for rural inclusion in the digital age, recognizing that information and communication technologies (ICT), universal connectivity and more widespread dissemination of digital technologies would be fundamental in determining the future of agricultural production. Moreover, the Conference underscored the need to achieve progress in developing medium and long-term policies that would generate a virtuous circle of economic growth, environmental balance and inclusive human development.

The second forum addressed the need to achieve a balance between productivity and sustainability. Discussions highlighted the responsibility of creating conditions to foster an adequate balance between these two factors, while ensuring that environmental considerations were integrated into competitiveness policies. In addition to scientific development and technological tools, a few of the conditions mentioned were best practices, clear regulations, access to funding, inter-institutional coordination, extension and education, among others.

The need for the agriculture sector to address the impact of extreme climate events was also underscored, particularly in regions at greater risk, such as the Caribbean and the Central American Dry Corridor. To this end, it would be necessary to establish and strengthen strategic partnerships, such as with the Green Climate Fund.

With respect to the relationship between agriculture and the effects of climate change, there was consensus on the importance of sustainable soil management, protection of water resources, standardization of environmental regulations, forestry development, payment for ecosystem services, agricultural funding, risk management, development of smart markets, as well as agricultural health and food safety, among other issues.

The analysis carried out during the third forum underscored the need to redouble efforts aimed at achieving more equitable, transparent trade, guided by clear, science-based rules, in which all stakeholders would be familiar with rules that would be applied on a level playing field.

On this basis, the Conference welcomed the proposal to continue fostering joint regional participation in international forums related to agricultural trade as well as agricultural health and food safety, with support from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation



on Agriculture (IICA). A few of the forums cited as examples included the World Trade Organization (WTO), Codex Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The participants also remarked that the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, are equally responsible for ensuring quality, as well as for generating and strengthening standards and regulations to guarantee it.

In addition to the specific topics addressed in the respective forums, several cross-cutting issues were repeatedly raised, which must be highlighted.

The need for countries to profoundly transform their national institutional frameworks for agriculture was emphasized throughout the Conference. This would involve a structural change, through which agriculture would assume a strategic role in the development of national and hemispheric economies, in keeping with a cross-cutting and multi-sectoral vision.

Participants welcomed the participation of private-sector representatives in each of the forums, emphasizing the importance of strengthening partnerships between the private and public sectors, and with civil society entities.

It was reiterated that multilateral technical cooperation would continue to serve as a useful and invaluable tool for building bridges between the different countries of the Americas. This would allow for jointly addressing the challenges and capitalizing on opportunities in the future, thereby bolstering individual efforts.

The Conference acknowledged the fact that youth play a crucial role in agriculture, and that they should be offered more and better opportunities, which would call for the design of strategies and the implementation of concrete policies to facilitate their participation in the transformation of the agriculture and rural sectors.

Emphasis was placed on the fact that women experience greater difficulties in accessing production services and assets, despite playing a key role in agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas. Therefore, participants underscored the need for agricultural policies to take women into account and provide them with greater visibility.

The representatives of the participating countries agreed that the Inter-American region provides an ideal context in which to promote an agenda that incorporates the issues

discussed during the Conference. Thus, while not undermining other platforms for bilateral, regional and global cooperation, they reaffirmed their support for IICA.

The foregoing confirms the need to renew this hemispheric and intraregional partnership, for the benefit of agricultural and rural development, by channeling multilateral and multi-agency efforts towards the development of an agenda that proposes concrete actions.

Based on the consensus reached, as well as the concerns, observations and proposals arising from the discussions and exchange of ideas during the Conference, a series of commitments have been drafted. Although not binding, these commitments will prove useful in defining IICA's work and guiding its efforts at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, in order to cultivate tomorrow's agriculture today:

**Commitment 1:** Foster a new generation of institutions, public policies and international cooperation actions that will guarantee sufficient levels of public and private investment, particularly in research, development and innovation (R+D+I) activities, in order to achieve an optimum balance between productivity and the environmental, economic and social sustainability of agricultural production.

**Commitment 2:** Spur the development of connectivity infrastructure, as well as develop new education, training and extension systems that facilitate access to and use of new technologies and opportunities to improve productivity and inclusion in family farming, particularly for rural youth and women.

**Commitment 3:** Strengthen the public sector's partnerships with the private sector, civil society and family farming cooperative systems so that, by means of public policies, strategic investments and collaborative work, all parties may act in synergy to develop the bioeconomy, build and consolidate innovation ecosystems, as well as to incorporate digital and communication technologies. The recent launch of the Bioeconomy and Agritech hemispheric networks represents a step in this direction.

**Commitment 4:** Foster innovative training and capacity-building opportunities that are aligned with the needs of a modern agriculture sector that is connected, active in markets, competitive and sustainable from an environmental, economic and social standpoint.

**Commitment 5:** Strengthen health, safety and quality mechanisms by means of health intelligence systems that utilize science-based tools and apply best practices to ensure

effective standards systems and to anticipate emerging challenges related to pests and diseases.

**Commitment 6:** Promote climate change adaptation and mitigation in vulnerable rural areas, through associations and partnerships with strategic partners, such as the Green Climate Fund.

**Commitment 7:** Foster the creation of development strategies and plans for the application of the bioeconomy in agriculture, while acknowledging the varying agroecological and institutional realities throughout the region, taking into account the environmental dimension as a source of competitiveness in international markets and ensuring the equitable distribution of its benefits.



**ANNEX 2: PROVISIONAL AGENDA**  
IICA/JIA/Doc. 393 (19)

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>1. Provisional Schedule</b>   | IICA/JIA/Doc. 392 (19) |
| <b>2. Message from the Director General of IICA</b>  | No document            |
| <b>3. Conference of Ministers on the Future of Agriculture and Rurality in the Americas</b>                              |                        |
| 3.1. Technical document: Agriculture and Rurality in a Future of Permanent Change  | IICA/JIA/Doc. 394 (19) |
| <b>4. Strategic partnerships</b>   |                        |
| 4.1. Strategic Proposal for the Future of CATIE - IICA/JIA/Res. 507 (XIX-O/17)   | IICA/JIA/Doc. 395 (19) |
| 4.2. The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean | Unnumbered             |
| <b>5. Financial and programmatic-budgetary situation</b>   |                        |
| 5.1. 2020-2021 Program Budget  | IICA/JIA/Doc. 396 (19) |
| 5.2. Report on the Collection of Quotas  | IICA/JIA/Doc. 397 (19) |
| 5.3. Financial Statements of IICA for 2017 and 2018 and Reports of the External Auditors                                 | IICA/JIA/Doc. 398 (19) |
| 5.4. Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Reports of the Audit Review Committee (ARC)  | IICA/JIA/Doc. 399 (19) |

**6. Matters pertaining to the governing bodies of IICA**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 6.1. Report of the Representative of the IABA to the Governing Council and the Board of Directors of CATIE for the period 2018-2019 | Information Document No. 01 (19) |
| 6.2. Incorporation of Countries That Are Not OAS Permanent Observers as IICA Permanent Observers                                    | IICA/JIA/Doc. 400 (19)           |
| 6.3. Report on the Status of Resolutions of the Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA  | IICA/JIA/Doc. 401 (19)           |
| 6.4. Report on the Status of Resolutions of the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Regular Meetings of the Executive Committee          | IICA/JIA/Doc. 402 (19)           |
| 6.5. Date and Venue of the Twenty-first Regular Meeting of the IABA   | IICA/JIA/Doc. 403 (19)           |

**7. Other matters**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 7.1. Discussion of the draft resolution “Ministerial Commitment to pesticide-related provisions of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures” | IICA/JIA/Doc. 404 (19) |
|---|------------------------|

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## ANNEX 4: MEETING STAFF

### **Secretariat of the meeting**

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Logistics	Patricia Ross
Legal advisor	William Berenson

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Carlos Umaña  
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### **Diplomatic and protocol services**

Miguel Herrera

### **Services for delegates**

Registration and secretariat	Mariela Zúñiga Ana Bolaños
Assistance at hotel	Sonia González Marielos Salazar
Assistance at airport	Ronald Hidalgo Randy Alexander Marlon Rodríguez Manuel Lezama

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