

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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3 octubre 2007

ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 3 DE OCTUBRE DE 2007

Aprobada en la sesión del 18 de marzo de 2009

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DOCUMENTO CONSIDERADO EN LA SESIÓN
(SE PUBLICA POR SEPARADO)

CP/doc.4243/07, Proyecto de resolución: Conmemoración del 65° aniversario del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)

CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 3 DE OCTUBRE DE 2007

En la ciudad de Washington, a las tres y veinticinco de la tarde del miércoles 3 de octubre de 2007, celebró sesión extraordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Rodolfo Hugo Gil, Representante Permanente de la Argentina y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistió el excelentísimo señor Bernardo López Figueroa, Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación de Guatemala y Presidente de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Manuel María Cáceres Cardozo, Representante Permanente del Paraguay
y Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados
Embajador Izben C. Williams, Representante Permanente de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Francisco Villagrán de León, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Osmar Chohfi, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Roberto Álvarez, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador Carlos Sosa, Representante Permanente de Honduras
Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Camilo Alfonso Ospina, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Graeme C. Clark, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Reynaldo Cuadros Anaya, Representante Permanente de Bolivia
Embajador Ántero Flores-Aráoz, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Jacques R. C. Kross, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Efrén A. Cocíos, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador Gustavo Albin, Representante Permanente de México
J. Robert Manzanares, Representante Interino de los Estados Unidos
Ministra Consejera Rhoda M. Jackson, Representante Interina de las Bahamas
Ministra Consejera Clenie Greer-Lacascade, Representante Interina de Santa Lucía
Tercera Secretaria Judith Anne Rolle, Representante Interina del Commonwealth de Dominica
Ministra L. Ann Scott, Representante Interina de Jamaica
Embajador Luis Menéndez-Castro, Representante Interino de El Salvador
Ministra Consejera La Celia A. Prince, Representante Interina de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador Luis Guardia Mora, Representante Alterno de Costa Rica
Ministra Consejera Ann-Marie Layne Campbell, Representante Alterna de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Nelson Pineda Prada, Representante Alterno de Venezuela
Embajador Antonio Rodrigue, Representante Alterno de Haití
Ministro Consejero Francisco Bernales, Representante Alterno de Chile
Ministro Martín Gómez Bustillo, Representante Alterno de la Argentina

También estuvo presente el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert R. Ramdin, Secretario del Consejo Permanente.

APROBACIÓN DEL PROYECTO DE ORDEN DEL DÍA

El PRESIDENTE: Declaro abierta la presente sesión extraordinaria del Consejo Permanente, que ha sido convocada para conmemorar los sesenta y cinco años del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura, organismo especializado de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. El programa para esta sesión aparece publicado en el proyecto de orden del día [CP/OD.1611/07].

[El proyecto de orden del día contiene los siguientes puntos:

1. Palabras del Embajador Albert R. Ramdin, Secretario General Adjunto de la OEA
2. Palabras del Embajador Rodolfo Hugo Gil, Representante Permanente de Argentina y Presidente del Consejo Permanente
3. Palabras del señor Chelston Brathwaite, Director General del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)
4. Resultados de la Cuarta Reunión Ministerial de Ministros de Agricultura, por el excelentísimo señor Bernardo López Figueroa, Ministro de Agricultura de Guatemala y Presidente de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura (JIA)
5. Presentación general de las iniciativas regionales del IICA por el señor Christopher Hansen, Subdirector General Adjunto y Representante del IICA en los Estados Unidos de América
6. Intervenciones de las delegaciones
7. Presentación del proyecto de resolución: “Conmemoración del 65° aniversario del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura” (CP/doc. 4243/07).]

De no haber objeción al proyecto de orden del día, lo daríamos por aprobado. Aprobado.

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DE LA ARGENTINA AL ASUMIR LA PRESIDENCIA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Al inaugurar la Presidencia de este período del Consejo Permanente es de rigor decir unas palabras, y eso voy a hacer.

Siendo esta la primera vez en que hago uso de la palabra como Presidente de este Consejo, intentaré imponerme una impronta: la brevedad en mis intervenciones, convencido, como Baltasar Gracián, de que “lo bueno, si breve, dos veces bueno”. Nunca Gracián dijo qué pasaba con lo malo.

Trataré también que la austeridad, entendida en su sentido más lato, no solo sea un estilo del discurso, sino que impregne todos los actos de este Consejo durante los siguientes tres meses. Privilegiaremos la eficiencia y la diligencia en el manejo de los asuntos a nuestro cargo. Desde ya, sé

que voy a contar, como siempre la he tenido, con la inestimable ayuda de todos y cada uno de los señores Representantes.

Como aporte propio a este esfuerzo de trabajo solidario y cooperativo ofrezco una presidencia participativa, de puertas abiertas a todas las inquietudes, consultas e iniciativas de los señores Representantes, de tal modo que la relación directa, que debe ser de la esencia del manejo político entre la Presidencia y las representaciones de los Estados Miembros, no se vea mediada por instancia burocrática alguna.

Como manifesté al asumir este alto cargo el pasado lunes, nuestra Organización y su Consejo en particular, como uno de sus dos máximos órganos políticos, tienen el desafío de impulsar la agenda hemisférica, procurando que esta tenga una vinculación concreta con las reales necesidades y aspiraciones de nuestros pueblos. Estoy persuadido de que las acciones de la OEA son relevantes para la vida institucional de nuestras patrias, y que los principios y propósitos consagrados en nuestra Carta fundacional siguen teniendo una particular trascendencia, debiendo ser afianzados día a día a través de la solidaridad interamericana.

En efecto, nuestra Organización ha recorrido un largo camino en materia de fortalecimiento de la democracia a través de la adopción de la Carta Democrática Interamericana; ha sido pionera en la defensa y promoción de los derechos humanos a partir de la consagración de la Declaración Americana de los Derechos del Hombre y la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos, y está abocada a iniciativas que demuestran su preocupación por algunos de los temas relacionados con el desarrollo económico-social.

En este último sentido, hay que destacar los trabajos articulados a partir de la Cuarta Cumbre de las Américas, que se llevó a cabo en Mar del Plata, y las negociaciones que estamos llevando a cabo para cristalizar la inexplicablemente demorada sanción de la Carta Social.

Pero nuestras sociedades demandan a nuestros gobiernos, de manera creciente, mayores esfuerzos tendientes a la consolidación de la democracia representativa que, en lo general, apuntan a la mejora de la calidad de las instituciones en un mundo de permanentes cambios y, en lo particular, a la generación de esquemas institucionales que fortalezcan los partidos políticos; preserven el insustituible equilibrio entre los poderes del Estado; alienten la tolerancia y la búsqueda de los consensos y protejan el inalienable derecho de los ciudadanos a la expresión libre de sus ideas sin más restricciones que las impuestas por la Constitución y por las leyes; también, y primordialmente, al logro de un desarrollo económico y social sustentable y sin exclusiones, así como el derecho a vivir en un ambiente sano, seguro y sin violencia, en donde se respeten plenamente el Estado de Derecho y los derechos humanos.

Nuestra Organización debe estar a la altura de las expectativas de los pueblos de las Américas y obrar en consecuencia, profundizando su tarea en pos de generar entendimientos sobre los principales temas de interés común en los ámbitos político, de derechos humanos, económico-social y de seguridad y de defensa.

Estimados colegas, teniendo presente estas reflexiones, y siendo consciente del más que breve período que me toca como Presidente, haré mis mejores esfuerzos para centrarme en los mandatos pendientes encomendados por la Asamblea General a este Consejo Permanente, a saber:

- convocar una sesión especial con organizaciones de la sociedad civil, a fin de examinar los aportes de estas organizaciones al fortalecimiento de la cultura democrática en el Hemisferio;
- impulsar la realización de una reunión, por vez primera, de altas autoridades nacionales en materia de reducción de desastres naturales y gestión de riesgo, y
- apoyar los trabajos preparatorios para la sesión extraordinaria de la Asamblea General, que deberá establecer una metodología propia para el cálculo de la escala de cuotas de los Estados Miembros al-Fondo Regular.

Finalmente, quisiera aprovechar esta ocasión para agradecer a todo el personal de la Organización la valiosa colaboración y el apoyo que seguramente de ellos recibiré.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO

El PRESIDENTE: Volviendo, ahora sí, al programa aprobado por esta sesión, me es grato ofrecer el derecho de palabra al Embajador Albert Ramdin, Secretario General Adjunto de la OEA. Embajador Ramdin, tiene usted el derecho de palabra.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much, Ambassador Gil, for your statement with regard to your tenure as Chairman of the Permanent Council. The General Secretariat certainly looks forward to working with you very closely in achieving the objectives you have set for your tenure.

Your Excellency, Bernardo López Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala and Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA); Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); distinguished permanent representatives; distinguished permanent observers; representatives of international and regional organizations; ladies and gentlemen:

This special meeting of the Permanent Council has been convened to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, and I am honored to offer some brief opening remarks.

In paying tribute to IICA's 65 years of service to agriculture in the Hemisphere, I wish to reiterate the importance the Organization of American States attaches to the Institute as the main inter-American vehicle to expand the productive capacity of the agriculture sector and to improve rural life.

In March 2006, IICA's Director General, Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, presented the Institute's annual report to the Permanent Council, thus informing the Permanent Council of IICA's activities in the Hemisphere in the context of deepened OAS/IICA collaboration over the last few years. At that time, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Panama to the OAS, Ambassador Aristides

Royo, requested that IICA return to the OAS to present a more detailed account of the work of the Institute in the Hemisphere.

The Permanent Council will recall that the strategic vision of IICA, as presented by the Director General, is based on:

- developing and promoting the use of biotechnology;
- fostering agri-industrial and agritourism linkages;
- modernizing agricultural practices; and
- supporting, at the macro and micro levels, strategies and implementation policies for boosting agricultural productivity and trade competitiveness, ensuring food security, alleviating poverty, and enhancing rural life.

As is well known, Dr. Brathwaite took over the leadership of IICA in 2002. His tenure since then has been distinguished by a process of modernization at the Institute that has enabled it to lead the way in the provision of technical cooperation in the rapidly transforming agricultural sector across the Hemisphere and, thereby, to be a key institutional partner in the inter-American system and the Summits of the Americas process.

Allow me to express my satisfaction with the ongoing deepening of OAS/IICA collaboration, as signified by the signing of a cooperation agreement last year. The Organization has been pleased to work with IICA towards a hemispheric partnership for rural development that focuses on adding value to traditional agricultural pursuits in order to support economic progress and sustainable development.

Strategic investments and innovations in the agricultural sector are an integral component of a new paradigm for the Americas that emphasizes a more holistic approach to development; one that focuses strongly on fostering and strengthening human capacity; one that takes account of the social realities and vulnerabilities of the countries of the Western Hemisphere; and one that addresses inequalities in terms of opportunity, access, and income in our societies, especially with regard to women, indigenous peoples, and youth.

By reviving rural life, particularly by engaging the youth, IICA, in partnership with the OAS, can help in a meaningful way not only to increase the productive capacity for domestic food security, as well as for exports and foreign earnings, but also to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

IICA Day 2007 is particularly special because of the celebration of the Institute's 65th anniversary, and this year's theme, "Realizing the Inter-American Dream of 1942," is indeed appropriate. We look forward to the presentations, which will give us an opportunity to learn more about IICA's accomplishments over the last 65 years and, perhaps more importantly, to hear about the way forward.

Additionally, IICA Day has become firmly institutionalized in the Organization's calendar, and we will continue to work together towards advancing a hemispheric development agenda that

takes into consideration the needs of the countries and the peoples of the Americas, with particular attention to the unique needs of the smaller economies.

In early August, in Georgetown, Guyana, the OAS, IICA, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) collaborated on the groundbreaking First High-level Seminar on Expanding Bioenergy Opportunities in the Caribbean. I am also pleased to note that last week, in El Salvador, IICA joined with the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) to hold the II Latin American and Caribbean Biofuels Seminar. Bioenergy and biofuels offer exciting possibilities for further collaboration between our two institutions in the context of the 2007 "Declaration of Panama: Energy for Sustainable Development," particularly since energy is an important growth sector in Central America, the Caribbean, and other member states.

As the relationship between the Organization of American States and IICA continues to grow, I offer sincere and heartfelt congratulations to IICA on this landmark anniversary and look forward to deeper and broader cooperation with Dr. Brathwaite and his highly capable and dedicated team.

Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Embajador.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: En primer lugar, en nombre de los miembros del Consejo Permanente y en el mío propio permítanme dar la más cordial bienvenida al excelentísimo señor Bernardo López Figueroa, Ministro de Agricultura de Guatemala y Presidente de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura.

Igualmente, me complace dar la bienvenida a los miembros del IICA: al Director General, doctor Chelston Brathwaite; el Subdirector General, doctor Jim Butler, y al Subdirector General Adjunto para el Desarrollo de Alianzas Estratégicas y Representante del IICA en los Estados Unidos, señor Christopher Hansen.

El IICA y la OEA comparten una larga trayectoria. Sesenta y cinco años después de su fundación, el organismo especializado del sistema interamericano, mediante su trabajo con los Estados Miembros, continúa promoviendo el desarrollo agrícola sostenible, la seguridad alimentaria y la prosperidad rural. La actual conducción del Instituto ha contribuido al fortalecimiento de la alianza del IICA con esta Organización y otros socios internacionales y estratégicos.

Nos complace mucho ver la importancia que se otorga a la agricultura y al desarrollo rural en el diálogo hemisférico. Actualmente el IICA se enfrenta no solo al reto de producir alimentos, sino también al de producir, desde el punto de vista de la competitividad, alimentos de buena calidad, seguros y que respondan a las demandas del mercado, además de crear empleo y generar ingresos para la población rural. Hoy en día el desafío de la agricultura no es solamente producir alimentos, sino también fibra y energía. La agroenergía se ha convertido en un tema muy complejo que merece la atención integrada de las instituciones.

Hoy tendremos la oportunidad de conocer el excelente trabajo que ha estado realizando el Instituto en materia de desarrollo agrícola en todo el Hemisferio. Quisiera aprovechar esta oportunidad para felicitar al IICA por sus constantes esfuerzos para reducir la pobreza y expresarle, desde ya, nuestro agradecimiento por brindarnos su visión sobre la importancia crítica de la agricultura en nuestro continente, los desafíos que enfrenta y su futuro.

PALABRAS DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL DEL
INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE
COOPERACION PARA LA AGRICULTURA (IICA)

El PRESIDENTE: Permítanme ceder la palabra al doctor Chelston Brathwaite, Director General del IICA, quien se referirá al punto “Hacer realidad el sueño interamericano de 1942”. Doctor Brathwaite, usted tiene la palabra.

El DIRECTOR GENERAL DEL INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA: Thank you very kindly, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Rodolfo Gil, Permanent Representative of Argentina and Chair of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States; His Excellency Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS; the Honorable Bernardo López Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala and Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA); excellencies, permanent representatives to the OAS; excellencies, permanent observers to the OAS; Mr. Jim Butler, Deputy Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); Mr. Chris Hansen, Associate Deputy Director General of IICA for Strategic Partnerships and Representative in the United States; my wife, Rosanna; IICA staff; special guests; ladies and gentlemen: good afternoon!

Let me begin by thanking you, sir, and the Permanent Council for this opportunity to share with you the celebration of the 65th anniversary of our institute.

IICA, like the OAS, was born out of an inter-American dream to promote hemispheric solidarity, cooperation, and economic progress in our hemisphere.

In 1942, while Europe was at war and the threat of global conflict enveloped our world, Henry Wallace, the then Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, and, subsequently, Vice President of the United States, stated:

It is our sincere belief that the establishment of an institute of tropical agriculture is vital if Western Hemisphere agriculture is to develop as it should. This proposal, which we in the Department of Agriculture have been considering for a couple of years, has been endorsed by President Roosevelt’s Inter-Departmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics.

In 1942, Henry Wallace, with the then President of Costa Rica, Rafael Calderón Guardia, laid the foundation stone in Costa Rica for our institute, then known as the Inter-American Institute of

Agricultural Sciences. Thus began a new chapter in technical cooperation on agriculture in the Americas and the realization of an inter-American dream that was nurtured since 1910.

In the last 65 years, the Institute has evolved from an institute for tropical agricultural research and education to being today the specialized organ of the inter-American system for agriculture and rural life, with offices in 34 member states. This evolution of an institution from humble origins to become the premier international agency for cooperation on agriculture of the inter-American system was achieved through hemispheric commitment, as well as the resolve of our countries to forge a destiny of cooperation and to fulfill the inter-American dream of Henry Wallace, Mariano Montealegre of Costa Rica, and Ernesto Molestina of Ecuador.

The Institute has come a long way since 1942 and has made significant contributions in a wide range of fields in agriculture. Over the years, its role has taken on new dimensions and new responsibilities. From an institution that was originally founded to provide research and training in agriculture, it has assumed a leading role in agricultural development, cooperation and integration in the Western Hemisphere, and in 1980 it became the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

The history of our institute can be conveniently divided into three phases.

In the first phase, from 1942 to 1979, the Institute was called the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences.

From 1980 to 2001, the second phase, the Institute assumed the role of a technical cooperation agency and provided technical cooperation services to our member states.

In the third phase, from 2002 to the present, based on the mandates of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Americas, in Quebec, in 2001, the Institute assumed new responsibilities and entered a new phase of institutional life. It began to serve not only as a technical cooperation agency, but as the Secretariat of the ministerial meetings on agriculture and the maximum forum for the discussion and formation of hemispheric policy on agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

I would like, Mr. Chairman, to say a few words about these three phases.

At the Eighth Inter-American Scientific Conference, held in 1940, a resolution on the creation of the Institute was approved and a technical commission, comprised of three outstanding scientists of the Department of Agriculture of the United States, Dr. Ralph Allee, Dr. George Boyd, and Dr. Wilson Popenoe, was established. The technical commission visited 11 member states, including Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador, that offered to be headquarters of the new organization. Based on its analysis, the commission recommended that Costa Rica be the headquarters of the Institute because of its strategic location between North and South America and its agriculture, which was typical of the American tropics.

With the selection of the first Director General, Dr. Earl Bressman of the United States, in 1942, the Institute was officially established. Dr. Bressman provided the Institute with a base for technical cooperation through research carried out in Turrialba, Costa Rica. The most significant

achievement of this period was the establishment of the postgraduate school in agriculture, to which many students from the Americas came to obtain their degrees in agriculture, and still do today.

In 1946, Dr. Ralph Allee of the United States was elected Director General, and in this period the Institute grew considerably. The postgraduate school was consolidated, and field offices were established in Montevideo, Uruguay; in San José, Costa Rica, for the central region; and in Lima, Peru, for the Andean countries. This was made possible through Project 39, a technical cooperation project of the OAS, because when the OAS was established in 1948, the Institute became the specialized agency for agriculture of the inter-American system.

In 1960, the governing body of IICA elected Dr. Armando Samper of Colombia as its third Director General. He was, in fact, Assistant Rector of IICA under the leadership of Dr. Allee, and he started a period called the “New Dimension.” He established offices in almost all Latin American countries and consolidated the work of the Institute, transferring the central offices of the Institute from Turrialba to San José, Costa Rica.

In 1969, when Dr. Samper resigned from the Institute to become Minister of Agriculture of Colombia, Dr. Carlos Madrid became Director General of the Institute. Dr. Madrid, who was also from Colombia, had been Deputy Director General of the Institute.

In 1970, Dr. José Emilio Araujo of Brazil was elected Director General and served from 1970 to 1982. Many Caribbean countries joined the Institute during this period, which was called the “Hemispheric and Humanistic Projection” and which visualized the development of the agricultural sector from the perspective of the farmer and the social circumstances of the rural area.

During this period, a new convention to change the Institute from the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation of Agriculture was signed and approved by the member states on March 6, 1979. The convention created an institute that was more focused on development issues, on creating prosperity, and on supporting rural welfare in our countries.

The first Director General under the new institutional arrangement was Dr. Francisco Morillo of Venezuela, who promoted consolidation of the new organization, developed general policies to treat issues related to land tenure, production and marketing, the role of science and technology, and institutional problems in the countries. The Institute also devoted itself to developing operating procedures and rules for the management of the new organization and new programs in animal and plant health, and it was a key player in the eradication of African swine fever from Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In 1986, the Inter-American Board of Agriculture elected Argentine agricultural scientist Dr. Martín Piñero as Director General of the Institute. During this period, emphasis was placed on strengthening the technical leadership of IICA. Five programs were defined:

- agricultural policy analysis and planning;
- technology generation and transfer;

- organization and management for rural development;
- trade and integration; and
- animal health and plant protection.

At the Ninth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Agriculture (ICMA), held in Ottawa, Canada, in 1987, member states requested the Institute to prepare a strategic plan to revitalize agriculture, and so originated the Plan of Joint Action for Agricultural Reactivation in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLANLAC).

In 1993, the IABA elected Dr. Carlos Aquino of the Dominican Republic as the eighth Director General of IICA. Dr. Aquino served from 1993 to 2001. During this period, the Institute strengthened its relationship with the private sector and engaged in a process of modernization and decentralization. Regional centers were established in order to promote the differentiated strategies in accordance with the characteristics of each region. Four specific areas were defined:

- socioeconomic policy, trade, and investment;
- science, technology, natural resources, and production;
- agricultural health; and
- sustainable rural development.

The Institute became more widely recognized as the agricultural agency of the inter-American system, and the multisectoral dimension of agriculture was emphasized.

The third phase began in 2001 and can be called “Repositioning IICA to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century.” The Declaration and Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec, Canada, in April 2001, clearly defined the strategies and programs to be pursued by the countries in order to create greater economic prosperity and expanded economic opportunity and international relations among the countries. In both the Declaration and the Plan, the heads of state and government of the Americas recognized the importance of agriculture as “a way of life of millions of rural families of the Hemisphere” and as “a strategic sector in our socioeconomic system.”

Having recognized the importance of agriculture, the heads of state and government agreed to promote a joint hemispheric effort involving all actors in the agricultural sector in order to achieve the sustainable improvement of agriculture and rural life, together with medium- and long-term national strategies for their sustainable improvement, based on a dialogue that would include government ministers, parliamentarians, civil society, and academia.

The decision by the heads of state and government at Quebec to recognize and promote hemispheric ministerial meetings as mechanisms for the implementation of their mandates led to the establishment of the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

In a complementary fashion, IICA was designated an institutional partner in the Summit process, along with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the OAS, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), for providing appropriate follow-up to the mandates of the heads of government. IICA thus became the Secretariat for the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

Faced with the task of shaping a renewed vision for agriculture and rural life in the Hemisphere, and taking into consideration the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the ministers of agriculture held the First Ministerial Meeting in 2001 in the Dominican Republic. They produced the Bavaro Declaration—a commitment to joint action, to finding common solutions, and to cooperation.

The ministers' efforts to build consensus around a shared hemispheric agenda, as defined at the First Meeting, led to a continuation of their dialogue. At the Second Ministerial Meeting, held in Panama in 2003, the ministers approved the AGRO Plan 2003-2015 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas. The Plan defined the strategic actions to advance towards the achievement of key goals in 2015 and recognized that agricultural development and the promotion of rural welfare are critical for the achievement of the MDGs, especially that of reducing extreme poverty by 50 percent by 2015.

At the Third Ministerial Meeting in Guayaquil in 2005 and the Fourth Ministerial Meeting in Guatemala in 2007, the ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the AGRO Plan, updated it with complementary strategic actions for the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 periods, and provided guidance to the agriculture sector in terms of:

- promoting national policies for agriculture and rural life, based on public-private sector partnerships and multisectoral coordination;
- fostering regional integration in the context of the ministerial process; and
- developing an information system to follow up on and evaluate the AGRO Plan.

At the Special Summit of the Americas, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2004, and at the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2005, the heads of state and government pledged their firm support to the process to improve agriculture and rural life, led by the ministers. At both Summits, they undertook to make a sustained effort to improve the living conditions of the rural population and supported the implementation of the AGRO Plan.

The Institute also assumed its strategic role at the regional level by serving as the secretariat for regional integration processes: in the Southern Cone, the Southern Agricultural Council; in the Caribbean, the Alliance for Sustainable Development; in Central America, the Central American Agricultural Council; and in the North, the Trinational Council—all coordinated by IICA.

Within the context of the new vision for agriculture, the Institute has strengthened relations with institutions, such as the OAS, the IDB, PAHO, ECLAC, and the World Bank, as a follow-up to

the Summit process, and IICA continues to promote greater cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

The administration that began on January 15, 2002, and that I have the honor to lead, responded swiftly with full commitment to the new challenges and mandates, initiating an institutional modernization process that clearly defined IICA's dual role as secretariat of the ministerial meetings, as well as its conventional but renewed role as an inter-American cooperation organization. The modernization process was led by a proposal entitled "Repositioning IICA to Face the Challenges of the 21st Century," in which we defined a new mission for the Institute: supporting the member states in their pursuit of progress and prosperity in the Hemisphere through:

- the modernization of the rural sector;
- the promotion of food security; and
- the development of an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed, and socially equitable for the peoples of the Americas.

In accordance with this vision, IICA pursued, in collaboration with our strategic partners, a new style of technical cooperation that emphasized operational efficiency; prudent financial management; appropriate use of our human resources; expanded strategic partnerships; and a new relationship with our member states based on participation, transparency, and accountability.

In each country, we define a cooperation agenda based on a relationship between the Institute and the member state in which there was shared responsibility. That agenda resulted in the provision of a national annual report to each country and the development of accountability seminars in which we report to each member state on the progress made in the implementation of the agenda.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to say a few words about the challenges we face. In our view, our countries today face six basic challenges:

- to eradicate poverty and hunger;
- to ensure environmental sustainability and respond to climate change;
- to combat transboundary diseases, such as avian influenza, foot-and-mouth disease, mad cow disease, and others;
- to promote competitiveness of our economies in the face of international competition;
- to resolve the problems associated with the high cost of energy and the availability of water; and
- to promote a global partnership to development, including, in our view, completion of the Doha Development Agenda.

Our medium-term plan for 2006 to 2010 seeks to help our countries face these challenges by:

- promoting a new institutional framework for agriculture in the rural sectors;
- promoting trade and competitiveness of agribusiness;
- strengthening rural communities;
- promoting the incorporation of technology and innovation in agriculture, addressing the issues of biotechnology and agrienergy;
- promoting the sustainable management of our natural resources; and
- promoting agricultural health and food safety.

Permit me to say a few words, Mr. Chairman, about the eradication of poverty. Yesterday, 16,000 people died in our world from poverty, malnutrition, disease, HIV/AIDS, hunger, and the lack of the basic necessities of life. By the end of today, another 16,000 will die.

The precarious condition under which the majority of our Latin American and Caribbean rural dwellers live limits their access to food supplies and keeps them in a state of insecurity. In fact, according to ECLAC, 530 million people in our hemisphere are still in poverty. This is unsustainable in a sea of global prosperity. The recent report of ECLAC, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Programme (WFP) indicated that 10 percent of our population—53 million inhabitants—are undernourished. More worrisome is the fact that nine million of them are children.

The World Bank statistics confirm that ours is the most inequitable region in the world. The richest 10 percent of the population earned 48 percent of the income, and the poorest 10 percent earned only 1.6 percent of national income.

Poverty in our countries is mainly concentrated in the rural areas, so economic activity in the rural areas is critical to reduction of poverty. The major economic activity in the rural areas is agriculture, which plays a major role in the lives of the poor as the main source of livelihood and a source of food.

Mr. Chairman, there is a prevailing misconception in development literature that agriculture's importance in an economy declines as a country moves from developing to developed status. We beg to disagree. We believe that agricultural importance increases.

First of all, all of our population has to eat, but in addition, the linkages that agriculture develops with other sectors of the economy—processing, agri-industry, agritourism, transport, and banking—indicate that the real contribution of agriculture to development has not been told. Our information suggests that when all of these backward and forward linkages are considered, agriculture's contribution to economic development is three to seven times that reported in national

statistics. We are convinced, therefore, that the promotion of a modern agricultural sector and rural prosperity hold the key to development, if our goal is the reduction of poverty.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, at 65 years old, IICA is not ready to retire. We are ready to begin a new life. We will continue to pursue goals and strategies to ensure that the Institute will become a world-class institution and the partner of choice for the member states of the Americas in the provision of technical cooperation services to the agricultural sector.

The last five years have been a journey of success and achievement. We have shared the joys of an institution that is renewed, refocused, reinvigorated, and poised for the future. Let us continue to do our part to make IICA and the world a better place.

Today, as we celebrate 65 years of life of this noble institution, I wish to announce a new initiative for the future: the Forum for Leaders in Agriculture. Leaders in agriculture in the 21st century face many challenges, including:

- the changing role of agriculture and development;
- the need for global vision;
- the need to balance food security, energy security, and environmental concerns;
- the need for leadership that is ethical, transparent, and accountable; and
- the need to manage multicultural situations and to cope with diversity.

The future suggests that there will be a need for new leaders who can balance work and family life.

The Forum for Leaders in Agriculture seeks to present to new leaders:

- the role of agriculture and agribusiness in economic development;
- the challenges and opportunities for agriculture in the 21st century;
- the need for new thinking about development;
- the need for a holistic approach;
- the need to consider not only the urban, but the rural, as an important part of development; and
- the need to create a global vision about agriculture and development among our new ministers and leaders of the agricultural sector.

We will also establish a program for young leaders. Half of the world's population is under the age of 25. An investment in young people is fundamental to achieving the MDGs. We must invest in bright young minds in order to develop leadership for the future. Lack of attention to the development of young leaders can lead to a wasting of the talents of the younger generation in our countries and, thus, the potential of losing the best agents of social change. The development of young leaders in the agricultural sector must be an important part of the agenda of IICA as we seek to create a new vision for agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

The proposal, in brief, Mr. Chairman, is to invite 34 young leaders from our member states to IICA annually to assist them in obtaining a global vision of agriculture. As funding permits, we would like for them to spend one year in one of our offices outside of their home country to obtain a new language, to obtain a new culture, and to obtain a new dimension of the world. I invite members of the Permanent Council to join us in this new initiative, which will assist in producing the future leaders of agriculture in the Americas.

Chairman of the Permanent Council, ladies and gentlemen, the management and the staff of IICA recommit ourselves to the achievement of the inter-American dream of 1942 and will continue to promote hemispheric solidarity, sustainable agricultural development, and food security in the countries of the Americas. Thank you for your presence here today, and let us celebrate the 65th anniversary of IICA!

Thank you.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Doctor Brathwaite, realmente muchas gracias por sus palabras.

RESULTADOS DE LA CUARTA REUNIÓN MINISTERIAL
“AGRICULTURA Y VIDA RURAL EN LAS AMÉRICAS” PRESENTADOS POR
EL MINISTRO DE AGRICULTURA, GANADERÍA Y ALIMENTACIÓN DE GUATEMALA Y
PRESIDENTE DE LA JUNTA INTERAMERICANA DE AGRICULTURA

El PRESIDENTE: Tengo ahora el honor de ofrecer la palabra a nuestro siguiente invitado, el excelentísimo señor Bernardo López Figueroa, Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación de Guatemala y Presidente de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura (JIA). Señor Ministro, tiene usted la palabra.

El MINISTRO DE AGRICULTURA DE GUATEMALA: Señor Presidente del Consejo Permanente, señor Secretario General Adjunto, señor Director General del IICA, señores Embajadores, representantes de organismos internacionales, invitados especiales, damas y caballeros:

Agradezco mucho la invitación y la oportunidad de participar en esta sesión.

Siguiendo el mensaje y el ejemplo del Presidente del Consejo Permanente, pretendo ser muy breve. Si no alcanzo a ser bueno, cuando menos quisiera ser claro y contundente, si es posible.

Ante todo, quisiera que se me permita felicitar al Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura por llegar a sus sesenta y cinco años de existencia, pero más que felicitarlo por llegar a sesenta y cinco años de existencia, quisiera aprovechar la oportunidad para reconocer, tal y como hemos visto en la presentación de su Director General, la habilidad y la capacidad de adaptación que, en sus tres distintas etapas, ha tenido esta institución. No es lo mismo vivir sesenta y cinco años que vivir sesenta y cinco veces el mismo año, y el IICA ha sido muy eficiente en poder adaptarse a los cambios.

El objetivo original de esta intervención es compartir con ustedes los resultados de la Cuarta Reunión Ministerial “Agricultura y Vida Rural en las Américas”, que se realizó en la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, la última semana de julio de este año. Voy a hacerlo a partir de la experiencia que un servidor de ustedes ha tenido en este proceso de las Cumbres Ministeriales, primero como Delegado Alterno, después como Delegado Titular por parte de mi país y, por último, como Presidente de este proceso.

Más que hacer una lista de resultados o de percepciones centrado en términos agrícolas, quisiera poder transmitir a este Consejo una visión enfocada, primero, en el tema de cómo ha madurado este Proceso Ministerial “Agricultura y Vida Rural en las Américas”. Quisiera señalar las distintas escalas –como hemos escuchado en la presentación anterior del doctor Brathwaite–, que ha habido, partiendo desde la reunión de Bávaro en 2001, donde se construyeron las bases del Proceso Ministerial; después la reunión de Panamá en 2003, donde el tema de discusión se centró en la seguridad alimentaria y en aprobar el Plan AGRO 2003-2015 para la Agricultura y la Vida Rural en las Américas, estableciendo visiones conjuntas. Pasamos por la reunión de Guayaquil en 2005, donde se hace énfasis en la necesidad de contar con políticas de Estado para la agricultura y la vida rural, cuáles iban a ser las estrategias regionales y los sistemas de información para seguir y evaluar todo el proceso. Llegamos así a la reunión Ministerial de Antigua Guatemala en 2007, en la cual nos encontramos un escenario de la agricultura mundial que había variado completamente en los últimos veinticuatro meses, a raíz de la aparición de los nuevos temas y del nuevo posicionamiento de la agricultura en el concierto de la economía mundial. Esto obliga, entonces, a profundizar los llamados nuevos temas: el tema de la agricultura ya no solo como productora de los alimentos, sino el tema de la agricultura centrada en la producción de la energía y cuál debía ser su contribución a la reducción de la pobreza, de la sostenibilidad de los recursos naturales.

Podemos decir que la Cuarta Reunión Ministerial “Agricultura y Vida Rural para las Américas” se diferencia de las otras tres reuniones no solo en el hecho de los nuevos temas, sino de participación de nuevos actores. Por primera vez se incluyen un foro de discusión y conclusión de los sectores privados, de los sectores productivos en la agricultura, y un foro de la sociedad civil relacionada con la agricultura y la vida rural.

Se suscribe un Acuerdo Ministerial Hemisférico para los mismos temas que sienta las bases del afinamiento de los objetivos del Plan AGRO 2003-2015. Es aquí particularmente donde la tarea que nos toca temporalmente desarrollar como Presidente de la Reunión Ministerial y de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura se vuelve más fácil que la de mis antecesores en una cuestión sustancial. Ya no es tan difícil convencer del posicionamiento real, social, económico y político del sector agrícola, porque los hechos del entorno mundial lo están haciendo por sí mismos y, entonces, nuestros humildes esfuerzos son de mucha menor cuantía.

Quisiera referirme puntualmente y en el tema que atañe a este foro, a tres aspectos:

Primero, estamos en la ruta concluyente en la que el Continente ahora es visto más allá del concepto básico de un territorio. El Continente es visto ahora como un pueblo con un mismo afán que puede tener visiones o cursos de acción diferentes, pero convergentes. Por ejemplo: primero, en la necesidad del combate a la pobreza; segundo, en la necesidad de sostenibilidad del ambiente de los recursos naturales; tercero, en la necesidad de desarrollar nuevas prácticas de producción y distribución que mejoren las condiciones de vida en general de nuestras poblaciones.

Segundo, el entorno de lo que son los retos mundiales y el papel de la agricultura al producir alimentos, combustible; los subtemas de los biocombustibles, la biotecnología, que nos prepara para poder enfrentar estos retos; el cambio climático, tema en el cual nos encontramos en la situación de cuáles son nuestras acciones para minimizar sus efectos, ya que no es posible salirle al paso, y el comercio internacional en el orden multilateral y cuál será nuestra posición como continente. ¿Cómo vamos a enfrentar estos nuevos temas en el comercio internacional que no han tomado nunca en cuenta la vulnerabilidad de nuestras naciones como, por ejemplo, el tema de los Estados insulares, los nuevos temas que van más allá de los aranceles de los contingentes y de las cuotas? ¿Cómo vamos a tener la capacidad de poder juntar este nuevo entorno y poder crear una posición que nos lleve a obtener los tres objetivos de visión compartida que mencionaba antes?

Por último, el tema de la institucionalidad. Ahora más que nunca el sistema interamericano debe ser fortalecido en función de estos nuevos entornos. Es urgente, antes que nada, la coordinación interinstitucional dentro de este sistema.

Plantearía, entonces, la siguiente conclusión: en los últimos dos años el entorno de la agricultura mundial ha cambiado. Podríamos decir que ha cambiado drásticamente y espectacularmente y el sistema interamericano, representado en este caso por el IICA, creemos que está ajustando el rumbo apropiadamente.

Insistimos –y pensaría que es la parte central de mi mensaje el día de hoy– en la necesidad de fortalecer la coordinación interinstitucional para poder soportar y enfrentar de mejor forma estos nuevos retos. El nuevo papel que le toca jugar a la agricultura en este entorno mundial incide directamente en la gobernabilidad de nuestras naciones.

Por último, quisiera dar una buena noticia. Señores, tras la experiencia que me ha tocado vivir en estos años y dentro de este proceso y la presentación que nos ha hecho el IICA de su historia y planes, creo que la parte buena es que estamos preparados apropiadamente para enfrentar estos retos.

Muchas gracias a todos por su atención.

El PRESIDENTE: Señor Ministro López Figueroa, muchísimas gracias por su exhaustivo informe y al final optimista.

PRESENTACION GENERAL DE LAS INICIATIVAS REGIONALES DEL IICA POR
EL SUBDIRECTOR GENERAL ADJUNTO Y
REPRESENTANTE DEL IICA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA

El PRESIDENTE: Ofrezco ahora la palabra al señor Christopher Hansen, Subdirector General Adjunto del IICA y Representante en los Estados Unidos. Señor Hansen, tiene usted derecho al asiento y a la palabra.

El SUBDIRECTOR GENERAL ADJUNTO DEL IICA: Ambassador of Argentina and Chairman of the Permanent Council; the Honorable Bernardo López Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala; Your Excellency Ambassador Albert Ramdín, Assistant Secretary General; your excellencies, ambassadors and permanent representatives to the Organization of American States; distinguished representatives of OAS permanent observer states; the Honorable Chelston Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); the Honorable Jim Butler, Deputy Director General of IICA; special guests; ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to reiterate the gratitude expressed by our Director General to the Permanent Council of the OAS for the opportunity to share with you a few facts about the situation of agriculture in the Hemisphere and about the results of IICA's technical cooperation, at the regional level, as a follow-up to the resolution approved by the Permanent Council on October 25, 2006 [CP/RES. 909 (1567/06)], the objective of which was to promote dialogue on agriculture and rural development in the Hemisphere.

It is a great honor for me to be here in representation of all the technical staff of the Institute and its directors, all of whom have participated in the biennial production of the "Report on the State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas." The 2007 report focuses on agriculture and the new challenges of development and summarizes overall conditions in this sector and those concerning rural life in the Hemisphere.

If you recall the presentation of the Institute's 2006 annual report several months ago, we asked you all a key question: is agriculture important? Today, I would like to reaffirm our answer then, which was in the affirmative, while also suggesting, based on the latest situation report, a very positive scenario regarding this fundamental sector of our countries' economies.

The progress shown by the region, as measured by the standards set in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, signed by the ministers of agriculture of our hemisphere, is characterized at present by higher levels of competitiveness, equity, sustainability, and democratic governance.

Regarding these four aspects, we can briefly state that agriculture is enjoying its best economic and social performance in 25 years, with growth in agricultural production and trade, contributions to poverty reduction, a decline in unemployment, and in some countries, improvements in the distribution of wealth.

The recovery of international prices, the alternative uses for agricultural products, such as agroenergy and agrobiotechnology, as well as the consolidation of market niches for processed and healthy products, are the best news that hundreds of thousands of farmers in our countries could hear.

The Hemisphere's production continued to grow in 2004–2005 although at a lesser pace than 2003. There have only been a few exceptions in the Caribbean, as can be seen in the lower part of this chart. On average, gross domestic product (GDP) grew about 2.2 percent, to a significant extent due to the positive performance of member states in the Southern region.

The situation is not that different in terms of trade. The Americas is the largest exporter of agricultural products in the world and has enjoyed a 7.1 percent growth rate. Commodity exports are falling, but the export of processed products is growing. The South showed some of the best results, while the Caribbean had a tendency to fall behind. The Central, Northern, and Andean regions have remained stable.

As I already mentioned, international prices are very favorable, with an average increase of 6.5 percent. The price of coffee and sugar rose by more than 13 percent. Tropical products are the ones enjoying the greatest price increases in percentage points. All of this points to a very encouraging outlook for agriculture and food demand.

Other market trends have to do with the continuing evolution and growing sophistication of consumer tastes and preferences. In that context, agricultural health and food safety are increasingly a key factor in remaining competitive. For instance, more than \$190 billion in imports and \$130 billion in exports in the region had to meet human health or plant and animal health regulations of one kind or another.

The Hemisphere is doing what it must to maintain a satisfactory agricultural health status, aware of the negative impacts on markets, employment, consumption, and prices of such diseases as mad cow, foot-and-mouth, and rinderpest. The vast majority of countries in the region remain free from these scourges.

Another significant market trend is the integration of agrifood supply chains involving groups with common objectives and a high capacity for negotiation and improving the possibility of buying directly from producers. Many value-adding activities on local production, such as seals of quality and differentiation through denominations of origin and other certifications, are increasing returns to small-scale or traditional producers.

With regard to technology, Latin America and the Caribbean invest a little over ten billion dollars a year on scientific research, slightly less than South Korea. That is clearly insufficient if one wishes to bridge the gap between the region and the rest of the world and, particularly, to increase yield per hectare. About 96 percent of this investment in science, moreover, is concentrated in just six countries: Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Cuba.

Scientific efforts focus mostly on traditional areas. Some alternative production methods are being incorporated, such as direct sowing, precision agriculture, and organic production, but it is still very far from what is being accomplished in industrialized nations. Agrobiotechnology advances and the introduction of genetically modified varieties show that it is possible to obtain increased yields and reduce costs at the same time. It is necessary, however, to continue exploring ways for the benefits of these efforts to be spread more equitably among producers and consumers and not just amongst the developers of these technologies.

Agrobiotechnological research is funded mostly with public resources and focuses on fighting diseases, genetic mapping, and improving breeding methods through the application of molecular markers. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela stand out in this field of research, although none of their products have reached the marketing stage. Greater efforts are being made to define biosafety regulatory frameworks with regard to research, production, marketing, labeling, and traceability for the benefit of those researchers.

The expectation that the price of fossil fuels will continue to rise in tandem with the demand for energy worldwide encourages the countries in the region to promote the production of biofuels. This has led to a broad discussion across the Hemisphere about the impact of such production on agricultural prices, crop substitution, food security, and the availability of animal feed. Between 2000 and 2006 alone, world ethanol fuel production grew by more than 100 percent and biodiesel by nearly 400 percent.

For the first time in nearly three decades, poverty and extreme poverty in the region fell below 1980 levels. While Latin America and the Caribbean continue to suffer from the greatest inequity in income distribution worldwide, 11 out of 13 countries on which data is available have experienced reductions in poverty and extreme poverty. Paraguay, El Salvador, Mexico, and Brazil enjoy the greatest reductions in poverty levels. Moreover, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, and Panama are well positioned to meet the poverty reduction objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a target that has so far only been reached by Chile.

The inevitable links between agriculture and the environment remind us of the existence in Latin America of 915 million hectares of forest or 23.2 percent of the world total. It is estimated that 4.3 million hectares of forest are lost each year. In the region, only the United States, Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica have managed to increase their forest cover.

In addition, the region accounts for 45 percent of available fresh water. Its genetic wealth and biodiversity make it one of the regions where the greatest care must be taken to prevent the extinction of animal and plant species and the overexploitation of marine resources. Good practices must be promoted to reduce desertification, soil degradation, and deforestation.

Due to the pressures to meet the food requirements of a population that has doubled in 50 years, 37 percent of the world's land surface continues to be exploited agriculturally in ways that are at odds with the sustainability of ecosystems. Climate change will have a varying impact, depending on geographic location. Some developed countries in middle and especially northern latitudes may enjoy net gains, while countries in the tropics may experience greater weather-related problems due to such factors as rainfall variability.

Increasing environmental vulnerability will undoubtedly affect the poorest populations the most. The Andean region accounts for more than 50 percent of the deaths related to natural phenomena that occur in the Americas, chiefly due to the consequences of flooding. It is followed in terms of severity by the Central region and the Caribbean.

If I may, I would like to end this first part of my presentation regarding the status of agriculture in the Hemisphere by focusing on the political-institutional issues.

Governance in the region has been strengthened by the greater participation of the various social players in the formulation and execution of policies, as well as by the contribution of markets to social objectives. Trade negotiations have shifted to the bilateral realm, given the stagnation suffered by the Doha Round and the indefinite interruption of the efforts to build the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Most notable are the regional negotiations with major economies like the United States, the European Union (EU), and Asia.

Still, in the institutional field, it is alarming to note that the average government spending per capita in the rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean has fallen more than 36 percent in real terms over the past two decades, and public spending aimed at the rural milieu remains far below what it should be, given the real contribution of agriculture to the economy.

Reaffirming the importance of the farming and agriculture sectors, IICA continues to address the challenges facing agriculture and rural life. They may be summarized as follows:

1. achieving a competitive agriculture;
2. securing greater equity;
3. shifting towards a sustainability paradigm; and
4. promoting the good governance of rural territories by those territories themselves.

Several examples of IICA's actions at the regional level underscore our commitment to achieving these goals as part of the Institute's mission of providing innovative technical cooperation.

In terms of competitiveness and reinforcing positive results in the region in areas like production, trade, and access to markets, IICA has focused its collaboration with member states on enhancing food safety and plant and animal health through a variety of initiatives based on the respective priorities of the region.

In the Andean region, for instance, a virtual traceability network was launched. Moreover, IICA supported the implementation of prevention, control, and eradication measures regarding transborder pests and diseases, such as avian influenza and fruit fly infestations.

In the Central region, one of the sectors that benefited the most was the meat sector. A project improving the productivity, quality, safety, and marketing of beef in Central America was launched, and IICA executed the project's training components in such areas as quality control, data analysis, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), good agriculture and manufacturing practices, and food safety system audits.

In the Southern region, workshops were held on traceability in the beef chain. The results of the current status of traceability systems for beef production and livestock in the Southern Cone countries were published this year.

In the field of health standards enhancement, significant efforts were made to prevent an outbreak of avian influenza. IICA offices helped to organize a Caribbean meeting on animal disease

monitoring. Along with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS), a regional drill to test systems aimed at fighting an outbreak of bird flu was executed in Jamaica. A similar activity, organized with the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA) and the Federation of Poultry Farmers of Central America (FEDAVICAC), made it possible to evaluate the degree of preparedness among Central American countries and to produce a food safety plan for the poultry sector. IICA is working with the World Bank to develop a project to fight the potential threat of bird flu, first in the Southern region and eventually in other regions.

With regard to trade promotion, IICA provided support for an analysis of the complementary agendas to the trade agreements signed with the United States, as well as the implications of the treaties and of their agendas for the agricultural sector. This will serve as a basis for proposing institutional changes to the ministries of agriculture and other agricultural agencies involved in the implementation and administration of trade agreements. Assistance has been provided, amongst others, to the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the Organization of Sugar Producers of the Central American Isthmus.

IICA's institutional efforts meshed with U.S. national capacity-building activities for promoting country participation in meetings of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The U.S. Government also made it possible to follow up on the Doha Round negotiations involving agriculture and to support horizontal cooperation.

For example, Central America and Caribbean countries were informed, in depth, about the lessons learned by Mexico as it negotiated, implemented, and managed its free trade agreement with Canada and the United States. The Canada-Mexico Bean Congress also received support, as did veterinarians from the Northern region with Colombian and Chilean professionals. A forum was organized with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in 2006 to disseminate Brazil's experiences in agribusiness development.

Assistance was provided to The Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and other Eastern Caribbean States in the drafting of policies, standards, regulations, and protocols. The same was done in the Southern region, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the European Union (EU), mainly through a seminar on methodologies for the analysis of agricultural policies. In collaboration with Chile's Ministry of Agriculture and France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, another seminar was held on the liberalization of agricultural trade. In the Southern region, in the light of globalization and ongoing trade negotiations, several conferences were organized, including one in Paraguay on agribusiness in international trade and another in Uruguay on international insertion and the future of agriculture in the region.

A partnership with the WTO, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Inter-American Bank (IDB), the Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL), and the Spanish Government made it possible to organize the sixth course on trade policy for ALADI member countries.

As to the promotion of agribusiness and enhanced access to markets, IICA collaborated with the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Caribbean, the

Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, and the FAO in support of a “new agriculture” that is more dynamic and competitive and that includes the adoption of organic agriculture and technologies with little or no impact on global climate change. This effort included direct support for regional bodies like the Caribbean AgriBusiness Association (CABA), the Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE), and the Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth (CAFY).

One of the activities worth mentioning in this regard is the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), held this time in The Bahamas. It included five workshops, a trade fair, and several field trips to forge links between local stakeholders across the region.

Central American actions included an institutional effort to strengthen alliances between the private sector, governments, and international bodies for promoting deals, identifying business opportunities, and formulating trade strategies on the basis of solid export platforms. Other activities included facilitating Central American participation in the Biofach Germany trade show and organizing the III International Forum on Tropical Fruit Agribusiness, which was held at IICA headquarters.

As an example of regional-level work in the Caribbean, IICA assisted the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in supporting the Caribbean Business Association. In addition, an assessment was made of the capacity of 16 producers’ associations to improve their competitiveness and approach new markets.

With regard to technology promotion, the various regional cooperative research programs, known as PROCIs, are still active and underway. They have become specialized regional networks, integrated systems, and convergence nodes for capacity building and exploration of opportunities for technical cooperation.

The Regional Cooperative Program for Technological Development and the Modernization of Coffee Cultivation (PROMECAFE), which brings together the various stakeholders from Central America and the Dominican Republic involved in coffee production and marketing, continues to apply new technologies, specifically for the biological control of the coffee berry borer, characterization of nematodes, integral pest management, and the use of new varieties, most recently Nemaya, for grafting and pesticide volume reduction.

In the field of biotechnology, two workshops were held in the Caribbean in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI). One of them was on the marketing of varieties developed through the application of these technologies. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Biotechnology Industry Organization on such issues as the regulation of biotechnology and commerce in biotechnological products.

In response to the challenges faced by the Caribbean with regard to commodities, such as bananas, sugar, and rice, IICA continued to explore economic opportunities for the region by commissioning a study on agroenergy opportunities. IICA, the OAS General Secretariat, the IDB, and the CARICOM General Secretariat, with the support and active involvement of the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, joined forces to organize the first high-level Caribbean seminar on furthering the region’s entry into the era of bioenergy by promoting efficient and effective

renewable energy projects linked to the agricultural sector. The seminar, entitled “Expanding Bioenergy Opportunities in the Caribbean,” was held in Georgetown, Guyana, and served not only as a framework for encouraging a high-level conceptual debate of great value, based on actual experiences, but also as an opportunity to sign a letter of understanding between the sponsors of the Summit, the Government of Guyana, and the Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Programme (CREDP).

An interinstitutional commitment was also made to further the strategic development of bioenergy in the Caribbean. In addition, the Institute published the *Agro-energy and Biofuels Atlas of the Americas*, a copy of which you should have at hand.

With respect to the promotion of greater sustainability, IICA and ECLAC worked together to assess the damage caused by adverse weather phenomena in the Caribbean in order to develop long-term sectoral plans for attracting investment; stimulating agribusiness; promoting food security; and reducing social, economic, and environmental vulnerability.

IICA also committed itself to working with the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) to organize a technical forum and coordinate research projects.

In the Southern region, the results of the evaluation of two regional projects, one on direct sowing and the other on ecocertification indicator modules, were made public.

With regard to greater equity, which is an essential goal for any international body concerned with development, IICA applied the territorial approach to proposals and actions that have emerged as a result of endogenous models developed by countries like Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

The Andean Forum for Rural Development was set up, support was provided for the establishment of an Andean network on the same issue, and rural development territorial observatories were set up to disseminate and follow up on lessons learned and successful experiences.

In the Caribbean, IICA continued to support the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) and, in partnership with the OAS, helped the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) to consolidate their efforts to link tourism with agriculture in rural areas in Barbados.

Finally, regarding governance, IICA focused on greater participation by the various stakeholders, a more social vision of markets, and institutional and policy modernization. The first phase of efforts led by the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) to devise a new Central American agricultural policy have been completed, and the policy will now serve as the main instrument for strategic regional planning in the agricultural field.

The Institute also supported the launching and operation of the Andean Forum for Dialogue and Integration of Agricultural and Rural Education (FRADIER) and the Web portal of the faculties of agricultural sciences of the Andean region, both of which allow easy access to information about the educational services available in the region. Other countries where curricula were reviewed and modifications were suggested include Chile, Argentina, and Paraguay, leading to improvements in the overall educational programs in the Southern region.

Also, by applying an integrated vision of development in the Caribbean, IICA continues to support the Jagdeo Initiative, which provides a platform for overcoming the limitations confronting the Caribbean in the development and diversification of its agriculture within the framework of the CARICOM Single Market (CSM). Typical activities in this area involve capacity building on good agricultural and environmental practices, natural disaster preparedness and mitigation, the improvement of agricultural health and food safety systems, and, as already mentioned, the implementation of regional strategies for biotechnology and agrienergy.

In the Trifinio border area joining Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, support was provided for the design and implementation of three territorial development projects.

Just as our country officers in the 34 member states have produced national agendas and reports, the operations directorates have produced a regional report, a copy of which has been provided to you. I am sure it will be of great interest, since it goes into much greater detail than I have had the time to cover this afternoon in the course of this presentation.

I will conclude by repeating my initial question: is agriculture important? The 2006 IICA annual report, presented in April of this year, reiterates that it is, indeed, very important, and the challenges we have confronted and the tasks that we have set for ourselves in recent years at the regional level confirm it. The cooperation we offer provides a small degree of relief from the enormous pressures exerted by the urgent development needs of our societies. These pressures call for a solid and permanent international alliance aimed at expanding the important role agriculture plays in our communities, and, particularly, its enormous potential in the rural territories of the Americas.

It has been a pleasure to present these points to you, and I thank you for your attention.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, señor Hansen, por esta presentación sobre los desafíos que enfrenta el sector y las iniciativas regionales del IICA.

Es interesante remarcar que, ante tantos desafíos y nuevos mandatos, la institución, que cumple sesenta y cinco años –que para las instituciones de nuestra región no es poco tiempo–, ha logrado posicionarse como un socio comprometido con el desarrollo integral. Por lo tanto, señor Brathwaite y señor Hansen, los felicito por el éxito obtenido.

Siguiendo con nuestro programa [risas], me permito... Mientras que los felicitaba a ustedes me perdí el *real show*. [Risas.] Me permito ofrecer, ya la han tomado, la palabra a los señores Representantes. Ahora, por favor les pido que tratemos de ser lo más breve posible en las intervenciones, visto la cantidad de señores Representantes que se han anotado para intervenir. Desde ya, muchas gracias.

Tiene la palabra el nuevo Vicepresidente de este Consejo, don Manuel Cáceres, Representante del Paraguay.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL PARAGUAY: Muchas gracias, Presidente.

En nombre del grupo de países miembros de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), queremos expresar nuestra alegría y satisfacción por verlo a usted presidir este distinguido Consejo. Presidente, sepa usted que tiene todo nuestro apoyo y estamos seguros de que con su sentido del humor, su capacidad y su experiencia en esta Organización serán unos tres meses muy agradables. Así que éxito y cuenta con nosotros.

En nombre de los países del Grupo ALADI, también queremos felicitar al IICA por esta presentación, así como por su sexagésimo quinto aniversario. Desatacamos, por supuesto, su decisivo aporte al desarrollo económico y social en el Hemisferio a través del mejoramiento de la agricultura y de las condiciones de vida en las comunidades rurales.

Durante todos estos años, el Instituto ha acompañado y apoyado a los países a enfrentar los cambiantes desafíos y demandas en el sector agrícola. La capacitación que ha brindado a las instituciones públicas y privadas ha sido fundamental para la aplicación de sistemas y procedimientos sanitarios en la producción y manejo de alimentos, logrando así buenas prácticas de producción y manufactura.

El IICA está llamado a seguir apoyando a nuestros países, sobre todo en los nuevos desafíos que tenemos ante nosotros. En ese sentido, el Instituto es esencial para avanzar en las orientaciones del Plan AGRO 2003-2015 para la Agricultura y la Vida Rural de las Américas, compromisos que fueron recientemente reafirmados por los Ministros de Agricultura de las Américas en Guatemala.

Igualmente, quiero agradecer la presentación del día de hoy del Director General del IICA, doctor Chelston Brathwaite, y, por supuesto, también la del Ministro de Agricultura de Guatemala; muchísimas gracias.

Agradecemos también la larga presentación que nos hizo esta tarde el Subdirector General Adjunto del IICA, señor Christopher Hansen. Él hablaba de la prosperidad rural y el objetivo de la agricultura en las Américas. Realmente fue muy interesante y es bien recibida, pero creo yo, y no quiero ser provocador, que a esos *charts* que ha presentado les falta un elemento. Es que nos encantaría ver la influencia de los subsidios agrícolas en la producción y el impacto que estos tienen en nuestros países.

Los países del Grupo ALADI son productores agrícolas. Muchos de nosotros tenemos un sector importante en nuestra economía, que es la agricultura, la agroindustria. Cuando se habla de agricultura, de mejorar el nivel de vida de nuestros pueblos y de hacer la agricultura más competitiva y no se habla de los subsidios, creo que el cuadro no está completo. Los escandalosos subsidios nos someten a la pobreza y al atraso cuando nos cierran mercados, cuando nos sacan las exportaciones de terceros mercados. Ojalá que se pueda hacer frente también a esto dentro del IICA.

Hoy día nos quieren imponer nuevas nociones de la multifuncionalidad en la agricultura, el bienestar animal. En referencia a los subsidios, podemos afirmar que, gracias a los mismos, en el mundo industrializado hay un gran número de vacunos que viven mejor que cien millones de latinoamericanos. Por ejemplo, la vaca de Kobe recibe siete dólares al día de subsidios, una vaca europea recibe cuatro y una vaca en los Estados Unidos recibe tres, mientras que cien millones de indigentes latinoamericanos viven con un dólar al día. Ojalá que en el próximo informe del IICA esto se vea reflejado.

Nuevamente felicidades por un trabajo bien realizado. Gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias por sus inspiradoras palabras, Embajador. Tiene ahora la palabra el señor Representante de los Estados Unidos.

El REPRESENTANTE INTERINO DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me, too, begin my intervention by congratulating you on your chairmanship and pledging to you the support of my delegation during your tenure.

Assistant Secretary Ramdin; Director General Brathwaite; Minister Bernardo López Figueroa: thank you for your presentations today. My delegation is pleased to be here today to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). I have listened with great interest to the reporting on IICA's activities and on the Fourth Ministerial Meeting "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas," as I had the opportunity to participate in that meeting in Antigua Guatemala a few months ago.

Henry Wallace, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and later Vice President, had a key role in the development of IICA and sought to foster mutual understanding among leaders in agriculture. IICA's vision of promoting food security and prosperity of the rural sector of the Americas guides us as our governments collaborate with the private sector and civil society to share best practices, develop new technologies, and participate more fully in the global economy.

Over the past 65 years, IICA has played an important role in improving the lives of people throughout the Americas. Through its 34 country offices, the needs of members have been met in the areas of trade and agribusiness development, sustainable rural development, agricultural health and food safety, and technology and innovation. IICA has worked to build the capacity of its members to take part in meetings of international standard-setting bodies and, thereby, increase their ability to engage in global trade.

The Institute has also developed a hemispheric strategy on biotechnology and biosafety that will contribute to increased understanding and awareness of the benefits of agricultural biotechnology and its contributions to food security, economic development, and agricultural productivity in the Hemisphere. We encourage IICA to remain focused on these important areas.

Agriculture and rural life have an essential role in reducing poverty in our increasingly integrated economies. The work of IICA must continue and be energized as we seek prosperity and economic development for all member states.

The United States looks forward to continuing our work with IICA and member states in advancing a common agenda within the Hemisphere.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, señor Representante de los Estados Unidos. Tiene la palabra ahora el señor Representante de Guatemala.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE GUATEMALA: Gracias, señor Presidente.

En nombre del Grupo Centroamericano, en primer lugar, permítame felicitarlo y saludarlo por el inicio de su gestión como Presidente de este Consejo. Nos complace mucho que le corresponda ahora ocupar esta importante posición en representación del Consejo y de nuestra Organización. Escuchamos con la mayor atención su mensaje inicial, que nos invita a la reflexión. Ha identificado usted los grandes temas de la agenda hemisférica y el papel que le corresponde a nuestra Organización dentro de esa agenda que usted ha descrito.

En segundo lugar, deseo agradecer las palabras del Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert Ramdin, y las presentaciones del Director General del IICA, señor Chelston Brathwaite, del Ministro de Agricultura de mi país, señor Bernardo López Figueroa, quien es, además, Presidente de la Junta Interamericana de Agricultura, y del Subdirector General Adjunto y Representante del IICA en los Estados Unidos de América, señor Christopher Hansen. Estas presentaciones nos han dado un panorama claro y, por cierto, muy satisfactorio del trabajo del IICA y nos permite conocer mejor la proyección de ese trabajo hacia el futuro.

La presentación del Director General del IICA nos ha recordado la historia de la institución, ha pasado revista a los logros más importantes y nos ha dado una visión de lo que piensan desarrollar a futuro, que ha incluido la propuesta sobre el Foro de Líderes en Agricultura. Lo felicitamos por esas iniciativas, por el éxito en su gestión y tenemos la mejor disposición de darle siempre el apoyo de esta Organización.

El Ministro de Agricultura de Guatemala se ha referido al Proceso Ministerial que se inició en 2001 y se ha traducido en logros importantes para la agricultura y el medio rural en todos los países a nivel regional y a nivel hemisférico. El Subdirector General Adjunto del IICA, por su parte, nos ha hecho una presentación muy completa sobre todas las actividades de la institución, la que nos ha parecido muy importante.

En nombre de los países del Grupo Centroamericano, así como de la República Dominicana, Panamá y Belize, me complace presentar nuestra felicitación al Instituto por la celebración del sesenta y cinco aniversario de su fundación. El IICA antecede en su existencia a nuestra Organización, a la OEA, y se constituyó como el organismo especializado en agricultura del sistema interamericano.

El IICA, como miembro del sistema interamericano, ha facilitado la cooperación para promover el progreso agropecuario y el desarrollo rural. Ha realizado su función en Centroamérica con dedicación y siempre en estrecha colaboración con los Ministerios de Agricultura, las instancias regionales de integración, tales como el Consejo Agrícola Centroamericano, otras entidades de cooperación, los actores productivos y otros sectores de la sociedad civil.

Desde la creación del IICA, la agricultura en las Américas se ha fortalecido mediante la cooperación hemisférica. Sabemos que hoy en día sus treinta y cuatro oficinas, a lo largo de todo el Hemisferio, apoyan y responden a las necesidades de los países en áreas tales como el comercio y desarrollo de los agronegocios, el desarrollo rural sostenible y la sanidad agropecuaria.

Señor Presidente, antes de concluir, permítame hacer una breve relación, a propósito de esta conmemoración, de lo que han sido las acciones más importantes del IICA en la región

centroamericana. Muchas de ellas se encuentran en ejecución en la actualidad. Me refiero, entre otras, al apoyo al proceso de consolidación de una política agrícola centroamericana que el Consejo Agrícola Centroamericano desarrolla en cumplimiento de los acuerdos adoptados en las Cumbres de Presidentes en el marco del Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana; también al apoyo técnico al proceso de desarrollo rural en la región y específicamente en áreas fronterizas, como el Trifinio, al que se ha referido el señor Hansen, y las fronteras entre Costa Rica y Nicaragua, así como entre Costa Rica y Panamá.

También quiero mencionar el apoyo al desarrollo de una producción frutera regional coordinada, con fines de exportación, en el marco mesoamericano y en el marco del Plan Puebla Panamá.

El IICA, a la vez, apoya al Consejo Agrícola Centroamericano y a los Ministerios de Agricultura en temas relacionados con el Tratado de Libre Comercio entre la República Dominicana, Centroamérica y los Estados Unidos y, con el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, apoya la formación de capacidades técnicas para la implementación de dicho Tratado.

Por otra parte, el IICA ha logrado captar recursos del BID y de la Agencia Española de Cooperación para apoyar a los pequeños productores de café de calidad en la región, agrupados en PROMECAFE, proyecto que tiene como propósito plasmar la denominación de origen y la identificación geográfica.

El IICA, asimismo, apoya los esfuerzos de los países por plasmar la unión aduanera centroamericana en relación con los temas sanitarios, fitosanitarios y de inocuidad de alimentos. Participa en la estrategia regional ambiental y en el Sistema de Información Centroamericano en Tecnología Agropecuaria (SICTA). También está presente cuando se dan desastres naturales, situaciones de emergencia, tales como sequías, inundaciones, huracanes, terremotos y, por supuesto, en temas de emergencia fitosanitaria.

En particular, conocemos su trabajo para prevenir la gripe aviar, el que ha desarrollado con otros organismos multilaterales, como la Organización Panamericana de la Salud, con los sectores productivos, los medios de comunicación, las organizaciones no gubernamentales y, desde luego, también con los gobiernos.

Por último, señor Presidente, el IICA ha sido un factor positivo en la atracción de cooperación internacional a la región centroamericana y la República Dominicana, así como en el desarrollo de programas y proyectos coadyuvantes del progreso en las comunidades rurales más desposeídas de nuestros países.

He querido hacer esta síntesis en la que he tratado de identificar las áreas de acción más importantes del IICA en nuestra subregión. Me ha parecido que es oportuno hacerlo en esta conmemoración.

Una vez más presento, en nombre de nuestro Grupo, un saludo al Director General, señor Cheslton Brathwaite; al Subdirector General Adjunto, señor Christopher Hansen, y, desde luego, saludo la presencia, que nos honra mucho, del Ministro de Agricultura de Guatemala, señor Bernardo López Figueroa.

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente, por sus –como siempre– ajustadas y agudas palabras. Tiene ahora el uso de la palabra el Embajador Michael King, Representante de Barbados.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE BARBADOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, let me congratulate you on assuming the Chair of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States. You can be assured of the continued cooperation of the Delegation of Barbados.

Today, Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries that are member states of the OAS, in spite of the fact that several of my colleagues have also requested the floor. I think what they have to say will be very important.

I want to welcome Director General Brathwaite and his team and, in particular, the Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala, His Excellency Bernardo López Figueroa.

Dr. Brathwaite, you indicated that in 1942, the world was at war. Sixty-five years later, the world is still at war. This time, we are all at war in the fight to end poverty; not to alleviate poverty, but to end it.

Poverty remains a serious threat to the security of many states of this hemisphere to this day. The role that the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has played and continues to play in rural life and in the food security of our people is very much appreciated. Over the last 65 years, such a role has been very important in the economic development of all our member states, including the wealthier ones among us.

Many countries, especially small states, have witnessed in the past 65 years a move of many of their citizens from rural communities to bustling urban centers. Such a move created inherent social problems that we all face in our capitals and other parts of our suburban communities.

All of this has happened at a time when the global trading system has changed and trade preferences in agricultural goods in particular, as my colleague from Paraguay indicated, have all but disappeared, especially for small developing countries. The impact, as you know very well, has been devastating in some countries, especially the smaller states of the Eastern Caribbean that are member states of the OAS and that have been producers of bananas and sugar, which we were encouraged to grow and to cut down our forest to satisfy the needs, the thirsts, and the hunger pangs of our colonial masters several years ago.

I wish to point to the fact that there is a serious problem that we all confront in the Caribbean, and that is the issue of food security. I'll repeat what I told you in 2006: when the events of September 11, 2001, occurred in the United States, many countries that are neighbors of the United States only had nine days of food supply—the maximum—in their reserves. One can only imagine what would have happened if our sea routes were also shut off at that time. Given the number of

people that we have to feed in our own countries, as well as the visitors who come to enjoy the pleasures of the Caribbean, imagine how they would have survived such an action.

Mr. Chairman, the OAS must continue to work assiduously with IICA to encourage the use of sustainable agriculture and food production, not only in fighting poverty, but in encouraging sustainable livelihoods for our people. I think it is scandalous that in the Caribbean, 80 percent of the food consumed in the tourism sector is imported from outside of the Caribbean, in spite of the fact that many of our economies were based upon agriculture for many years of our colonial experience and in the post-independence period.

It is important for us, as two institutions, to look at developing among the youth of the Hemisphere an entrepreneurial spirit so that the young entrepreneurs of our region can be encouraged to become actively involved in agribusiness. That would allow the two institutions to make sure that agriculture, as an industry, would remain competitive in the world trading system, certainly for the benefit of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Although bioenergy and biofuels seem to be important in the production of new and renewable sources of energy, let us not make it more difficult for poor people to feed themselves while the wealthier ones move away from depending on traditional sources of energy. At the same time, we do not want to quench their thirst for consuming energy on a daily basis. There must be a balanced approach, and I think IICA can provide that balance. The Organization of American States, through its different organs, especially those that are linked to the development agenda, must play its part in encouraging the sustainable development of our countries.

Mr. Director General, you can be assured of the continuous support of the governments of Barbados and of the rest of the Caribbean. We look forward to helping you celebrate, in a few minutes, your 65th anniversary. Congratulations!

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias al señor Embajador de Barbados. Tiene ahora el uso de la palabra el señor Representante del Canadá.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL CANADÁ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Like others, I would like to congratulate you warmly on assuming the austere heights of the chairmanship of the Permanent Council. I will make mine your watchword to be brief in interventions and in meetings of this sort.

I commend the efforts of Dr. Brathwaite, previous directors general of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the IICA staff for their work in shaping the Institute into a knowledge organization and leader in technical cooperation throughout the Hemisphere.

I recognize IICA's work in promoting technology and innovation, agricultural health and food safety, sustainable agricultural development, agribusiness development, and food security.

As we look to the future, Mr. Chairman, we can envision the Institute working to enrich areas, such as bioenergy and agrotourism, in partnership with the Organization of American States and other international organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Canada wishes IICA success in the coming years as it continues to play a leadership role in modernizing rural communities in the Americas.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Embajador, y encomio su aprecio por la brevedad. Tiene la palabra el señor Representante de Costa Rica.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE COSTA RICA: Gracias.

Felicitaciones, señor Presidente, y mucho éxito en su gestión. Seré muy breve en esta exposición, cumpliendo con su pedido y también porque el Embajador de Guatemala, don Francisco Villagrán, a quien pido disculpas, ya ha pronunciado unas palabras, con gran elocuencia, en nombre del GRUCA. Sin embargo, por ser nuestro país sede de este importante organismo desde su inauguración, en nombre del Gobierno de la República y del Embajador Javier Sancho, que se encuentra en misión oficial en Costa Rica, quisiera dejar testimonio de que para Costa Rica ha sido, es y será un alto honor el haber tenido y continuar teniendo en su territorio la sede del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA). Felicitamos al IICA en sus sesenta y cinco años.

Agradecemos todo el apoyo brindado por este ejemplar organismo a todos los gobiernos de mi país a partir del año 1942. Finalmente, destacamos una vez más la brillante labor que cumple el doctor Chelston Brathwaite como Director General del IICA.

También felicitaciones al Embajador del Paraguay como Vicepresidente del Consejo.

Gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Embajador de Costa Rica. Tiene ahora el uso de la palabra la señora Representante de las Bahamas.

La REPRESENTANTE INTERINA DE LAS BAHAMAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish to identify with the comments already expressed by Ambassador King of Barbados on behalf of the delegations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). I also wish to thank the distinguished presenters for their very informative reports on the work of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank Director General Brathwaite and his staff for the exemplary work being undertaken by IICA. The Delegation of The Bahamas remains committed to supporting IICA in its work, and The Bahamas was pleased to host the very successful Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) last October.

I take this opportunity to highlight a number of areas in which we boast of working with IICA. In particular, we would like to place on record our appreciation for the commendable efforts of IICA to assist fishermen in Abaco to identify sustainable fishing techniques and to help farmers on a number of islands, through local cooperatives, to improve their processing capabilities. Youth programs aimed at raising awareness among students of the importance of agriculture were also introduced in several high schools in The Bahamas.

As we celebrate the 65th anniversary of this important hemispheric institution, we wish to thank IICA for its untold contribution to agricultural development throughout the Hemisphere. The Bahamas continues to pledge its support to IICA and looks forward to further collaboration on agricultural matters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias a la señora Representante de las Bahamas.

CONMEMORACION DEL 65° ANIVERSARIO DEL
INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACION PARA LA AGRICULTURA
(PROYECTO DE RESOLUCION)

El PRESIDENTE: Tengo entendido que el Embajador Michael King ha pedido la palabra para hacer una presentación.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE BARBADOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have before us a draft resolution entitled “Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA),” document CP/doc.4243/07, dated September 27, 2007.

My delegation, in collaboration with the Delegation of Panama, would like to present this draft resolution, for the consideration of the Council, in recognition and acknowledgement of the sterling work undertaken by IICA over the past 65 years, not only in support of the activities in member states in promoting the modernization of our societies, but in the area of sustainable agricultural development, food security, and rural prosperity.

I would like, therefore, that you, sir, take the lead in having the Council approve this draft resolution in honor of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of IICA.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Embajador. Noto que hay una nueva ola de oradores. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante de Panamá.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ: Gracias, Presidente.

Aquí va a haber un pequeño problemita de procedimiento, pero sigo adelante porque estoy en el uso de la palabra.

Siendo la primera vez que tomo la palabra bajo su recién inaugurado mandato, no puedo menos que expresarle mis mejores deseos para que tenga éxitos en esta delicada misión. La verdad, Presidente, cuando yo veo los rostros de los que aquí estamos sentados, sé que usted es un poquito más veterano que aquellos que ya somos veteranos en estos cargos aquí. Usted ha presentado muy pocas iniciativas, pocas, pero importantes. Espero que todos lo acompañemos y lo apoyemos para que podamos cumplir esas iniciativas, que son su programa de trabajo, en este corto período de tres meses.

La Delegación de Panamá desea agradecer a usted, señor Presidente, por la inclusión de este tema en el orden del día de esta sesión del Consejo Permanente, así como reconocer y agradecer la presencia de los distinguidos representantes del IICA que se encuentran con nosotros en la tarde de hoy, encabezados por su Director General, doctor Chelston Brathwaite.

La Delegación de Panamá se une a este acto de conmemoración del sesenta y cinco aniversario del IICA y tiene el honor de copatrocinar, junto a la Delegación de Barbados, este proyecto de resolución que busca reconocer las iniciativas emprendidas durante la larga existencia del Instituto en la promoción de la modernización de las comunidades rurales en el Hemisferio.

Como es del conocimiento de todos los presentes, señor Presidente, por una iniciativa de la Delegación de Panamá, ampliamente respaldada por las delegaciones de los Estados Miembros, el Consejo Permanente el año pasado acordó celebrar anualmente una sesión extraordinaria para destacar los aportes del IICA a los treinta y cuatro países del hemisferio americano.

El IICA, desde su fundación, ha desarrollado acciones encaminadas a la solución de los problemas de nuestra región. La nueva Convención de 1979 dio al organismo, además de un nuevo nombre, renovados impulsos como organismo especializado comprometido con la prosperidad de las comunidades rurales. Asimismo, el IICA ha asumido un rol protagónico de cooperación técnica y se ha convertido en el principal foro hemisférico, de rango ministerial, para el tratamiento de temas relacionados con la agricultura y la vida rural.

Deseamos destacar, señor Presidente, la capacidad de innovación del IICA para respaldar las nuevas demandas y desafíos del sector rural del Hemisferio, que se ve traducida en el apoyo que da a los países de la región en diversos programas destinados a promover la bioenergía y los agrocombustibles.

Es también de reconocer el liderazgo del IICA para establecer alianzas estratégicas con el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, los países de la región y España, a fin de fortalecer la capacidad de investigación e innovación para elevar la producción, reducir la pobreza y mejorar el medio ambiente, a través del Fondo Regional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (FONTAGRO), cuyo Consejo Directivo, integrado por catorce países, se encuentra reunido en estos momentos en la ciudad de Panamá.

Antes de concluir, señor Presidente, permítame hacer un comentario que considero importante. Durante estos últimos años hemos tenido la oportunidad de conocer más a fondo las

actividades del IICA gracias a las diversas presentaciones que hemos escuchado y los intercambios que hemos tenido, tanto con el Director General, Chelston Brathwaite, como con otros funcionarios del Instituto.

No obstante, creo que es justo que yo reconozca que, en el caso mío en particular, he tenido la oportunidad de saber bastante más sobre el IICA y sus actividades gracias a un funcionario de la institución que recién se ha retirado del Instituto luego de una brillante carrera de más de tres décadas al servicio del IICA, y es el ingeniero Guillermo Grajales.

Quiero hoy aprovechar la oportunidad para hacer este reconocimiento a una persona que, dicho sea de paso, pese a que se encuentra disfrutando de su jubilación, está hoy presente en esta sala. Me ayudó, como ya dije, a saber más del Instituto y a valorar la importante tarea que día a día realiza en el cumplimiento de sus nobles objetivos. A él, a Guillermo Grajales, mi agradecimiento.

Para finalizar, ahora sí, señor Presidente, quisiera reiterar el pleno apoyo de mi Gobierno a la labor del IICA y hacer un reconocimiento al liderazgo de su Director General, doctor Chelston Brathwaite. Quisiera reiterar también el interés común de nuestros países de lograr, junto al IICA, los objetivos de un desarrollo agrícola sostenible, la seguridad alimentaria y la prosperidad rural para nuestra región.

Quisiera decir que yo había pensado pedir que se aprobara por aclamación este proyecto de resolución, pero como veo que mi querido amigo Nelson Pineda va a hacer uso de la palabra, si usted desea hacerlo, con mucho gusto yo le cedo a usted ese alto honor.

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Presidente Royo. Don Nelson, ¿se va a referir usted a este tema o a otro?

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE VENEZUELA: Presidente, al tema del proyecto de resolución que se nos va a presentar.

El PRESIDENTE: Perfecto, tiene usted la palabra.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE VENEZUELA: Tengo por costumbre violar muy poco el orden del día, pero, al igual que mis colegas que me han precedido en el uso de la palabra, debo decir que mi Delegación también le desea a usted el mayor de los éxitos en esta jornada de tres meses que va a cumplir. Estoy convencido de que para desearle éxito a usted sobran las palabras, porque conocemos su abnegación, su sindéresis y la voluntad que le pone al trabajo. Estamos seguros de que dentro de noventa días vamos a estar felicitándolo.

Grande es América, no hay duda. Quinientos quince años flagelando el suelo americano y, sin embargo, vemos que el IICA en estos sesenta y cinco años nos presenta un informe donde, de nuevo, como el *Itinerario* de Octavio Paz, nos encontramos con que el sector primario de la economía sigue siendo la principal fuente para alcanzar la felicidad de nuestro pueblo. Largo el camino de América en ese sentido.

Les expreso, en nombre del Gobierno y de la Delegación de Venezuela, a los compañeros del IICA, a los amigos del IICA y al ciudadano Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación de Guatemala las felicitaciones y el agradecimiento por estos informes que nos han presentado.

Como quiera que el tiempo apremia, mi Delegación también se une a la aprobación de este proyecto de resolución que tan dignamente nos han presentado las Delegaciones de Barbados y Panamá. Sin embargo, le quisiéramos hacer una enmienda en correspondencia con lo que consideramos que constituye una razón fundamental.

El segundo considerando lee: “Que la Declaración de la ciudad de Quebec toma nota de la importancia de desarrollar el potencial de la agricultura de una manera que sea compatible con el desarrollo sostenible y permita la debida atención al sector rural”. Al respecto me permito señalar que el párrafo 20 de la Declaración de Quebec, que es al cual puede estar haciendo referencia este segundo considerando del proyecto de resolución, dice lo siguiente: “Nos comprometemos a impulsar programas para mejorar la agricultura y la vida rural y promover la agro-industria como contribución esencial a la reducción de la pobreza y el fomento del desarrollo integral”.

Mi Delegación solicitaría que se incorpore de manera textual el párrafo de la Declaración de Quebec al cual hacemos referencia y no una interpretación de dicha Declaración. Proponemos, entonces, que el segundo considerando del presente proyecto de resolución sea sustituido por el párrafo 20 de la Declaración de Quebec que acabo de leer para que diga lo siguiente: “Que en la Declaración de Quebec los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno se comprometieron a impulsar programas para mejorar la agricultura y la vida rural y promover la agroindustria como contribución esencial a la reducción de la pobreza y el fomento del desarrollo integral”.

Por esa razón la Delegación de Venezuela ha intervenido esta tarde para sugerir, de la manera más respetuosa, a las distinguidas Delegaciones de Barbados y de Panamá que sustituyamos el segundo considerando por el párrafo textual que está establecido en la Declaración de Quebec.

Gracias, Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Embajador Nelson Pineda.

Antes de concederle el uso de la palabra al Embajador de Colombia, quisiera preguntarle al Embajador King o, en su defecto, al Embajador Royo, si la referencia de este segundo considerando es al artículo 20 que ha mencionado nuestro colega o es a otro artículo o a otra parte de la Declaración de Québec.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE BARBADOS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Pineda is correct; the reference is to the Declaration of Quebec City of 2001, so we can support the inclusion, verbatim, of the language he suggested. Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Embajador. Tiene la palabra don Camilo Ospina, Representante de Colombia.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE COLOMBIA: Señor Presidente, para solicitar que aprobemos por aclamación el proyecto de resolución con las modificaciones propuestas por la Delegación de Venezuela.^{1/}

[Aplausos.]

EL PRESIDENTE: Muy bien. Como último tema en referencia a este homenaje a los sesenta y cinco años del IICA, me es grato concederle la palabra al señor Jim Butler, Director General Adjunto del IICA, para que diga unas palabras.

EL DIRECTOR GENERAL ADJUNTO DEL INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA: Distinguished representatives, thank you for your time, your attention, and your comments. We once again have enjoyed interacting with you.

I would also like to express the gratitude of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to the staff of the Organization of American States, who worked with us to plan and implement our program this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, most importantly, we would now like to extend a hearty invitation to you all to join us upstairs as we celebrate the 65th anniversary of IICA.

Thank you.

EL PRESIDENTE: Muchísimas gracias por su amabilidad, señor Butler. Señor Director General, tiene usted el uso de la palabra.

EL DIRECTOR GENERAL DEL INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA: Thank you very kindly, Mr. Chairman.

I want to take this opportunity to thank member states and all delegations represented here for their congratulations and continuous support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The Institute makes a commitment to continue to work steadfastly to promote rural prosperity in the Hemisphere, knowing that it is only through collaboration with member states that we can achieve success. Collaboration with member states is a partnership, and only through partnership can we really achieve our objectives.

And so, I thank you very kindly for your support. I thank you for approving this resolution, which gives us the impulse and the support to continue this grand work of trying to create a prosperous rural sector in the Americas.

With respect to one comment made by the Ambassador of Panama, I wish to emphasize that our human resources are, in fact, our most important asset. In a knowledge institution, human resources are critical to our success. IICA is aware of the contribution of Mr. Grajales and will recognize it formally. I therefore wish to reassure the Ambassador that the distinguished Mr. Grajales will be recognized appropriately.

1. Resolución CP/RES. 923 (1611/07), anexa.

Thank you very kindly, and it was good to be here.

El PRESIDENTE: Señor Director General, nuevamente, muchas gracias.

Estamos llegando al final de esta sesión de reconocimiento realmente muy merecido a una institución que tiene sesenta y cinco años de vida en nuestro continente. Quiero reforzar y resaltar esto: sesenta y cinco años al servicio del desarrollo de un sector económico que es central para absolutamente todos los países de la región. Creo que si hay una cosa que nos une es la importancia del sector agrícola en las Américas.

Entonces, quisiera aprovechar la ocasión para agradecer a todos los presentes y muy especialmente al excelentísimo señor Ministro Bernardo López Figueroa y al señor Director del IICA, Cheslton Brathwaite.

Creo que no tenemos que dejar pasar de largo la generosa invitación que nos hizo el señor Butler y nos encontramos para un ágape para celebrar estos sesenta y cinco gloriosos años del IICA.

Muchas gracias, muy buenas tardes.

Se levanta la sesión.

ANEXO

RESOLUCIÓN APROBADA

OEA/Ser.G
CP/RES. 923 (1611/07)
4 octubre 2007
Original: español

CP/RES. 923 (1611/07)

CONMEMORACIÓN DEL 65° ANIVERSARIO DEL
INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA (IICA)

(Aprobada en sesión celebrada el 3 de octubre de 2007)

EL CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS
AMERICANOS,

OBSERVANDO CON SATISFACCIÓN que el Consejo Permanente celebró una sesión extraordinaria el 3 de octubre de 2007 para conmemorar el 65° aniversario del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA);

CONSIDERANDO:

Que el proceso de Cumbres de las Américas ha reconocido la importancia vital de la agricultura como un medio de vida para millones de familias rurales en el Hemisferio Occidental y el papel de la agricultura en la creación de prosperidad;

Que en la Declaración de la ciudad de Quebec los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno se comprometieron a impulsar programas para mejorar la agricultura y la vida rural y promover la agroindustria como contribución esencial a la reducción de la pobreza y el fomento del desarrollo integral;

Que en la Declaración de Nuevo León, los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno se comprometieron a mantener un esfuerzo sostenido para mejorar las condiciones de vida de las poblaciones rurales;

Que en la Cuarta Cumbre de las Américas, celebrada en Mar del Plata, los Estados se comprometieron a crear un marco global para el desarrollo del sector rural y agropecuario que promueva la inversión, la generación de empleo y la prosperidad rural, y solicitaron al IICA que continúe con sus esfuerzos; y

Que el IICA, como una institución especializada del sistema interamericano, impulsa, promueve y respalda los esfuerzos de los Estados Miembros para lograr el desarrollo agrícola y el bienestar rural,

RESUELVE:

1. Reconocer las iniciativas emprendidas durante los últimos 65 años por el Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA) con el fin de respaldar a sus 34 Estados Miembros en la promoción de la modernización de las comunidades rurales.
2. Reconocer la importancia de la cooperación técnica que brinda el IICA en respuesta a las necesidades de los Estados Miembros y la contribución del IICA al desarrollo agrícola sostenible, la seguridad alimentaria y la prosperidad rural.

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