



**THE IICA IN THE WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE WORK PLAN VII:
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2017**

SUBMISSION BY THE IICA

The following submission, dated 27 February 2017, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. In March 2010, the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO) granted the IICA ad hoc observer status in its regular meetings. Since June 2012, the IICA has been operating a WTO Reference Centre which provides information services in connection with WTO agricultural issues and is open to individuals, associations and institutions from government, business and academic circles and the general public that are interested in obtaining information to improve their technical capacity in the areas of agriculture and international trade.

1.2. A number of joint technical cooperation activities have been conducted in the framework of the existing alliance between the IICA and the WTO on subjects of particular interest to the two institutions and their member countries, including, in 2016, two technical fora: one on the outcomes in agriculture of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference and certain implications for IICA countries; and the other on the information services provided by the WTO Reference Centres and the IICA Reference Centre.

1.3. In this context, the IICA submitted six joint Work Plans between 2010 and 2016 (documents G/AG/GEN/92; G/AG/GEN/95; G/AG/GEN/105; G/AG/GEN/115; G/AG/GEN/125; and G/AG/GEN/132).

1.4. In order to ensure the continuity of the IICA's commitment, a seventh Work Plan has been drafted. This plan is to be submitted at the next regular meeting of the Committee on Agriculture to be scheduled, for circulation to WTO Members.

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

2.1. The following activities are under consideration:

- a. *Participation in and attendance at meetings of the Committee on Agriculture*: the IICA, as an observer member of this Committee, undertakes to participate in the regular meetings held at the WTO addressing matters within its competence. Following these meetings, the IICA prepares technical bulletins with a view to informing IICA member countries of the most important issues addressed during the meetings.
- b. *Preparation of a paper on the IICA's contribution to the Marrakesh Decision and Food Security*: the IICA undertakes to submit, at the regular meeting of the Committee to be held in October or November 2017, a contribution on what the Institute has accomplished during the year in the food security area. It has published submissions on this subject in 2010 (G/AG/GEN/93); in 2011 (G/AG/GEN/97); in 2012 (G/AG/GEN/104);

in 2013 (G/AG/GEN/111); in 2014 (G/AG/GEN/125); in 2015 (G/AG/GEN/128); and in 2016 (G/AG/GEN/136).

- c. *Support for technical cooperation activities*: the IICA will support the WTO in its technical cooperation activities geared towards ministries of agriculture at both hemispheric level, through the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (JIA), and sub-regional level, through the Southern Agricultural Council, the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Caribbean Alliance and other ministerial bodies. This support is designed to enhance the involvement of the IICA and its WTO Reference Centre in the development of such activities.
- d. *Monitoring areas of common interest*: the IICA will monitor the progress of the agricultural trade negotiations in the WTO and will prepare technically to provide technical training or advice to Latin American and Caribbean countries in connection with the introduction by member countries of changes to their international trade policy. At the same time, should the WTO Secretariat require extra IICA technical staff to deal with demands of this type, it will be able to rely on the Institute's support in its geographical sphere (mainly Latin America and the Caribbean) both for such activities and for other matters related to the agricultural areas in which the Institute works.
- e. *Compliance by countries with agricultural notification requirements*: in light of the fact that the Committee has identified, in document G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.26 of October 2016, countries that have fallen behind in submitting agricultural notifications in accordance with the requirements and formats adopted in 1995 by WTO Members (G/AG/2), the IICA will continue to support the WTO's initiatives to conduct regional workshops for Latin American and Caribbean countries to help them improve and update their agricultural policy notifications. Similarly, it will support and channel national and regional initiatives that require WTO technical cooperation.
- f. *Preparation of technical documents*: given the IICA's extensive and proven experience in this area, it will assist the WTO Secretariat with such activities at the Committee's request.

3 THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE INSTITUTE

3.1. The IICA's activities in the WTO are conducted in the framework of the Flagship Project on the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Agricultural Chains for Food Security and Economic Development, under which this Work Plan will be implemented. The implementation of this plan will help to strengthen IICA Member States' capacity to build relationships and participate in international fora and other mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge and mobilization of relevant resources for inter-American agriculture (in accordance with the IICA's 2014-2018 Medium-Term Plan). Part of this contribution consists of following up on implementation-related issues concerning the Agreement on Agriculture and progress in the agricultural trade negotiations, and building up capacity in administering agreements that emerge from these negotiations.

3.2. The IICA has an experienced network of experts in agriculture, international trade, and agricultural trade negotiations working both in its central headquarters and in its offices located in 34 member countries on the American continent, which will enable it to implement the technical cooperation activities set out in the Work Plan.

3.3. For further information, please contact:

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