



IICA Celebrates its 65th Anniversary

Realization of the Inter-American
Dream of 1942

Chelston W.D. Brathwaite



Speech by the Director General
to the Permanent Council of the OAS

**Realization of the
Inter-American Dream
of 1942**

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Director General

IICA Day
Washington D. C.
October 3rd, 2007

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This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format from IICA's Web site at <http://www.iica.int>

Editorial coordination: Patricia León Coto
Mechanical editing: Language Services Office
Layout and cover design: Ana Catalina Lizano
Cover design: Printed: IICA Headquarters

Brathwaite, Ch., W.D.

IICA celebrates its 65th anniversary: realization of the
Inter-american dream of 1942 / Chelston W.D. Brathwaite
– San José, C.R. : IICA, 2008.

26 p. ; 21,5 x 21,5 cm

ISBN13: 978-92-9039-873-8

1. Speech 2. Internacional Organization. I. IICA II. Title

AGRIS
E14

DEWEY
338.181

San Jose, Costa Rica
2008

Realization of the Inter-American Dream of 1942



**Mr. Chairman, Secretary General of the OAS,
Distinguished Members of the Permanent Council, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Let me begin by thanking you for this opportunity to celebrate with you the 65th Anniversary of our Institute.

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

Speech by the Director General to the Permanent Council of the OAS: **Realization of the Inter-American Dream of 1942**

Ceremony to lay the cornerstone of IICA Turrialba, Costa Rica, 1942



Sixth-five years ago, in 1942, while Europe was at war and the threat of global conflict enveloped our world, Dr. Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture and, subsequently, Vice President of the United States of America, 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 Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics."

In 1942, Henry Wallace, in conjunction with the then President of Costa Rica, Rafael A. Calderon Guardia, laid the foundation stone in Turrialba, Costa Rica, for our Institute, then known as the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences. Thus began a new chapter in technical cooperation in agriculture in the Americas and the realization of an Inter-American dream that had been nurtured since 1910.

In the last 65 years, the Institute has evolved from being an institute for tropical agricultural research and education to what it is today, the specialized organization for agriculture and rural development of the Inter-American System, with offices in 34 Member States. This evolution of an institution, which rose from its humble origins to become the premier international agency for cooperation in the agriculture of the Inter-American System, was the result of hemispheric commitment and the resolve of our countries to forge a destiny of cooperation and to fulfill the Inter-American dream of Henry Wallace of the United States, 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. 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. In 1980, the name of the Institute was changed to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

The history of IICA can conveniently be divided into three phases of institutional life.

The first phase lasted from 1942 to 1979 when the Institute was called the Inter-American Institute of Agriculture Sciences. During that period, it promoted research and training in agricultural science in the hemisphere.



Henry Wallace



Mariano Montealegre



Ernesto Molestina

The second phase lasted from 1980 to 2001 when the Institute assumed the role of a technical cooperation agency and provided technical cooperation services to its Member States.

The third phase, from 2002 to the present, is 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 history, not only as a technical cooperation agency, but also as the Secretariat of the Ministerial Meetings and the maximum forum for the discussion and formation of Hemispheric Policies on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

I would now like to give you a brief synopsis of the work of our Institute during these three phases and our projection for the future.



The First Phase: 1942-1979

Inter-American Institute
of Agricultural Sciences

The First Phase: 1942-1979

Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences

At the Eighth Inter-American Scientific Conference, held in 1940, the resolution for the creation of IICA was approved and a technical commission comprising three outstanding scientists from the United States Department of Agriculture was established. They were: Dr. Ralph Allee, Dr. George Boyd and Dr. Wilson Popenoe. The Technical Commission visited 11 countries which had offered to be the Headquarters of the new institution, including Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Ecuador. Based on an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each country, the Commission eventually recommended Costa Rica because the country represented a strategic location between North and South America and had an agriculture that was typical of the American Tropics.



Earl N. Bressman

Country origin:
United States of America
Administration: 1942-1946
Focus of Administration:
Establishment

With the selection of the first Director General, Dr. Earl N. Bressman of the United States of America, the Institute was officially established on October 7, 1942. Bressman was Director General from 1942 to 1946 and the Institute provided technical cooperation services through the 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 countries of Latin America came to obtain their degrees in agriculture.

In 1946, Dr. Ralph Allee of the United States of America, was elected Director General and in this period, the institution grew considerably. The postgraduate school was consolidated and field offices were established in Montevideo, Uruguay, for the South, in San Jose, Costa Rica, for Central America, and in Lima, Peru, for the Andean Countries.



Ralph H. Allee

Country origin:
United States of America
Administration: 1946-1960
Focus of Administration:
Consolidation and
Decentralization



Armando Samper

Country origin: Colombia

Administration: 1960-1969

Focus of Administration:
New Dimension

This was made possible through the OAS project 39 for technical cooperation. It should be noted that when the OAS was established in 1948, IICA became the specialized agency for agriculture of the Inter-American System. It thereafter consolidated its work by extending its actions to every country in the hemisphere.

In 1960, the Governing Body of IICA elected Dr. Armando Samper of Colombia as its third Director General. Samper was the Assistant Rector of IICA under Dr. Allee's leadership and, during this period, which was called the "New Dimension", he established offices in almost all the countries of Latin America and transferred the central offices of IICA from Turrialba to San Jose, Costa Rica. During this period many non-European countries became Permanent Observers of the Institute.

In 1969, when Director General Samper resigned from the Institute to become Minister of Agriculture of his country, Colombia, Dr. Carlos Madrid assumed the responsibilities as Director General of the Institute. Dr. Madrid, also from Colombia, was at the time Deputy Director General and had been the Regional Director of the Andean Region previously.

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



Carlos Madrid

Country origin: Colombia

Administration: 1966 – 1967
1969 – 1970



José Emilio Araujo

Country origin: Brazil

Administration: 1970-1982

Focus of Administration:
Humanistic Projection

During this period, a new Convention to change the Institute from the Inter-American Institute of Agriculture Sciences to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture was approved by the Member States on March 6, 1979. The Convention created an Institute to support the agricultural development and rural welfare of the countries of the Americas.



The Second Phase: 1980-2001

Inter-American Institute
for Cooperation on Agriculture

The Second Phase: 1980-2001

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



Francisco Morillo

Country origin: Venezuela

Administration: 1982-1986

Focus of Administration:
Reaching Agreement

The first Director General, elected in the 1980s, was Dr. Francisco Morillo of Venezuela, who promoted consolidation of the new organization and developed general policies to deal with issues of land tenure, farmers' organizations, production and marketing, the role of science and technology and institutional problems in the countries. The Institute also devoted its efforts to developing operating procedures and rules for the management of the new organization. The organization developed new programs in animal and plant health and was a key player in the eradication of African Swine Fever from Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In 1986, the Inter-American Board elected Argentine agricultural scientist, Dr. Martin Piñeiro, as Director General. During this period, emphasis was placed on strengthening the technical leadership of the Institute and 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, held in Ottawa, Canada, in 1987, the Member States of IICA requested the Institute to prepare a strategic plan to revitalize agriculture in the Hemisphere. In cooperation with the Member States, the Institute prepared the Plan of Joint Action for Agricultural Reactivation in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLANLAC), which



Martín E. Piñeiro

Country origin: Argentina

Administration: 1986-1993

Focus of Administration:
Reactivation of Agriculture

promoted joint actions among the countries, at the regional and subregional levels, to resolve concrete problems. The plan also defined new areas for the work of the Institute, including women in development, the environment and training of human resources.

In 1993, the Inter-American Board elected Dr. Carlos Aquino of the Dominican Republic as the eighth Director General of IICA. Dr. Aquino served from 1993 to 2001 and, during this period, the Institute strengthened its relationship with the private sector and engaged in a process of modernization and decentralization. Regional centres were established in each region to promote differentiated strategies in accordance with the characteristics of each region.

The administration promoted four areas of concentration:

- (i) socioeconomic policy, trade and investment;
- (ii) science, technology natural resources and production;
- (iii) agricultural health; and
- (iv) 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.



Carlos E. Aquino

Country origin:

Dominican Republic

Focus of Administration:

Beyond a Sectoral Vision



The Third Phase: 2001 - Present

Secretariat of the Ministerial Meetings
of Agriculture and Rural Life
and Technical Cooperation Agency

The Third Phase: 2001 - Present

Secretariat of the Ministerial Meetings of Agriculture and Rural Life and Technical Cooperation Agency

The third phase of institutional life began in 2001. This phase can be called “Repositioning IICA to meet the challenges of the 21st Century”.

The Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec City in April 2001, produced a Hemispheric Declaration and a Plan of Action which clearly defined the strategies and programs to be pursued by the countries of the Hemisphere to create greater economic prosperity, expanded economic opportunity and further international relations among the countries of the Americas in the foreseeable future.

In both the Declaration and the Plan of Action, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas recognized the importance of agriculture in the Hemisphere. They declared the sector as:

- a) the livelihood of millions of rural inhabitants, and
- b) a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system for generating prosperity.

Having recognized the importance of agriculture, the Heads of State and Government agreed to promote a joint hemispheric effort, involving all the actors of the agricultural sector. The aim was to achieve the sustainable improvement of agriculture and rural life, and at the same time develop medium- and long-term national strategies for their sustainable improvement, based on a dialogue that would include government ministers, parliamentarians and different sectors of civil society.

The decision by the Heads of State and Government at the Quebec Summit to recognize and promote the 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”, within the framework of the Summit Process.



In a complementary manner, IICA was designated as an institutional partner in the Summits Process, along with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for the purpose of supporting countries with the implementation of the mandates, forming part of the follow-up mechanisms and participating in the fora of the Heads of State and Government. IICA thus became the Secretariat for the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life within the Summit Process.

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, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Hemisphere approved the Bavaro Declaration at their first Ministerial Meeting in Bavaro, Dominican Republic, in 2001.

The Bavaro Declaration expressed the Ministers’ commitment to promote joint actions aimed at improving agriculture and rural life, as stated in the Plan of the Third Summit of the Americas. The agreement calls for efforts to make progress in food security, the reduction of rural poverty and the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, while simultaneously addressing the aspects of competitiveness, equity, environmental sustainability and democratic governance. In essence, it recognizes the need to renew the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The Ministers' efforts to build consensus around a shared hemispheric agenda, defined at the First Ministerial Meeting, led to the continuation of the dialogue and to the definition of the second Ministerial Agreement. This initiative was formalized at the Second Ministerial Meeting in Panama where the Ministers approved the AGRO Plan 2003-2015 -A Shared Vision for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas. The Plan defines the strategic actions required to advance towards the achievement of key goals by 2015. They also approved the renewed concept of agriculture, which enables us to understand that successful agricultural development depends on equity, sustainability, competitiveness and good governance.

The Plan recognizes that agricultural development and the promotion of rural welfare are critically important for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of reducing extreme poverty by 50% by the year 2015. In fact, the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved unless and until there is a sustained effort to reduce rural poverty and promote rural prosperity.

At the Third Meeting, in the Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005, and at the Fourth Meeting in Guatemala in 2007, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and updated it with complementary strategic actions for the biennia 2006-2007 and 2008-2009. Priority was accordingly given to: (i) promoting a national policy for agriculture and rural life, based on public-private and multisectoral coordination, (ii) regional integration in the context of the hemispheric Ministerial Process and (iii) the development of an information system for the follow-up and evaluation of the AGRO Plan.

At the Special Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2004 and 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 of Agriculture. In both Summits they undertook to make a sustained effort to improve the living conditions of rural populations and, in that context, decided to support the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan as a "national commitment", defined in paragraph 35 of the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit.

Regional Integration

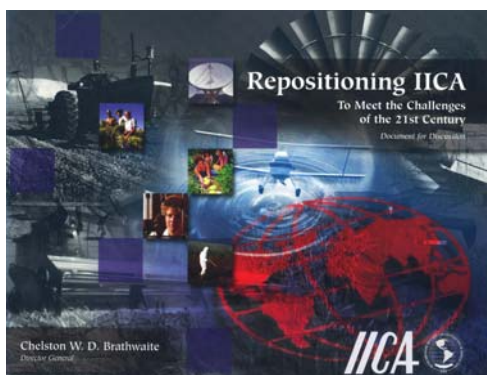
At the regional level, the Institute became the Secretariat for regional mechanisms for the integration of agricultural policies and decisions. These mechanisms: the Southern Agricultural Council in the South, the Alliance for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean, the Central American Agricultural Council and the Trinational Council in the North are all coordinated by IICA.

Strategic Partnerships

Within the context of the new vision for agriculture, the Institute has strengthened relations with institutions for the follow-up to the Summit Process: OAS, IDB, PAHO, ECLAC and the World Bank. It also continues to promote greater cooperation with the FAO of the United Nations.

Repositioning IICA to face the challenges of the 21st Century

The administration, which began on January 15, 2002 and which I have the honour to lead, responded swiftly and with full commitment to these new challenges and mandates, initiating an institutional modernization process which clearly defined the Institute's dual role: (i) a new role as the Secretariat of the Ministerial Meetings, within the framework of the Summit Process and (ii) a conventional but renewed role, as the Inter-American cooperation organization attuned to the new institutional dynamics of the Americas.



The modernization process was guided by the document “Repositioning IICA to face the challenges of the 21st Century”, which formed the basis for the Medium-Term Plan for 2002-2006. That document defines the mission of the Institute, which is to support 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.

The New Style of Technical Cooperation

Mission

To support the Member States in their pursuit of progress and prosperity in the hemisphere by modernizing the rural sector, promoting food security, and developing an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed, and socially equitable for the people of the Americas.

Medium-Term Plan 2002-2006

Accordingly, our vision is to transform IICA into a development organization that promotes sustainable agricultural development, food security and prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

The administration was also of the view that to achieve these objectives, IICA, in the 21st Century, must embrace 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.

The results of the reforms in the Institute have been recognized by the Member States and the administration was reconfirmed for office for the period 2006-2010.

Mr. Chairman, permit to say a few words about the challenges facing our countries today. In our view, our countries face six major global challenges.

1. To eradicate poverty and hunger;
2. To ensure environmental sustainability and respond to climate change;
3. To combat transboundary diseases, e.g., Avian influenza, Foot and Mouth disease, Mad Cow Disease;
4. To promote competitiveness of their economies in order to face international competition and participate in the global economy;
5. To resolve the problems associated with the high cost of energy and the availability of water; and
6. To promote a global partnership for development, including completion of the Doha Development Agenda for global trade.

Our Medium-Term Plan for 2006-2010 seeks to help our countries face these challenges by:

1. Promoting a new institutional framework for the agricultural and rural sectors;
2. Promoting trade and the competitiveness of agribusiness;

3. Strengthening rural communities;
4. Promoting the introduction of technology and innovation in agriculture;
5. Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment;
6. Promoting agricultural health and food safety.

Permit me to say a few words about the challenge to eradicate poverty and hunger and the strategic role of agriculture in the pursuit of this goal.

Yesterday, about 16,000 people in the world died of poverty, malnutrition or disease --some from AIDS, some from hunger, others from lack of the basic necessities of life, including food. By the end of today, another 16,000 will die.

The precarious conditions under which the majority of our Latin American and Caribbean rural dwellers live limit their access to food supplies and keep them in a state of food insecurity.

In fact, according to statistics from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), of the 530 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, 40.6 per cent of the population, that is to say, 213 million people in 2005, live in poverty, and 17 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty, i.e., 88 million people.

A recent report from ECLAC, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), indicate that close to 10 per cent of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean (approximately 53 million inhabitants) is under-nourished. Of concern is the fact that the same report indicates that almost nine million children, or 16% of LAC children under 5 years old, are undernourished.



The World Bank statistics confirm that this region –where the richest 10% of the population earns 48% of the income, whereas the poorest 10% earns a mere 1.6% - is **the most inequitable in the world.**

Poverty in developing countries is concentrated in rural areas. More than 66% of the poor live in the rural areas.

Although urbanization is shifting more poor people to the urban areas, the majority of the poor will continue to live in the countryside.

Urban poverty is, to a large extent, a result of rural deprivation, which causes rural people to come to the city and the cities of our hemisphere cannot absorb more of the rural poor.

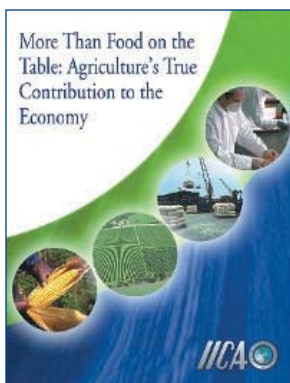
No sustainable reduction in poverty is possible without the sustainable development of the rural areas.

The Role of Agriculture

In most countries, the major economic activity in the rural areas is agriculture and activities related to agriculture.

Agriculture plays a major role in the lives of the poor as the main source of livelihood, and food is the major consumption expenditure of poor people.

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. This concept is only true if we see agriculture as primary production, however, if we see agriculture as agribusiness



with all its linkages to other sectors of the economy, then the agricultural sector's contribution to development increases. This is clearly demonstrated in our document "More than Food on the Table: the Real Contribution of Agriculture to Development".

It is within this context that, in the last five years, IICA has promoted a systemic concept of the agricultural sector that takes the sector beyond primary production and incorporates all the backward and forward linkages to other sectors of the economy. When this approach is taken, then agricultural contribution to economic development is three to seven times greater than what is reported in national statistics.

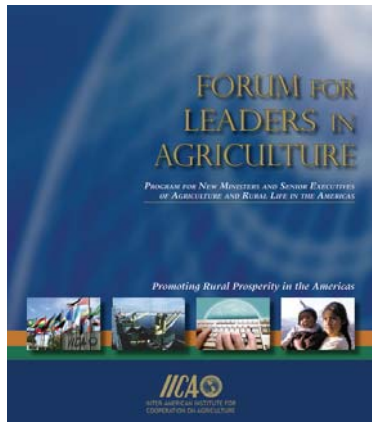
We are convinced, therefore, that in the promotion of a modern agricultural sector and rural prosperity lies the key to our countries' achievement of the millennium development goals of reducing poverty by 50% in the year 2015.

The Future

In conclusion, at 65, the Institute is not ready to retire; rather, it is poised to begin a new life. We will continue to pursue goals and strategies to ensure that the Institute becomes 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 and rural sectors.

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

Today, as we celebrate 65 years in the life of this noble institution, I wish to announce a new initiative for the future. This initiative is called the "Forum for Leaders in Agriculture".



Leaders of the agricultural sector in the 21st century face many challenges. These include the changing role of agriculture in development; the need for a 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 organizations and cope with diversity. The future suggests also the need for a healthier balance between work and family life.

The program will provide information on:

- The role of agriculture and agribusiness in economic development;
- The challenges and opportunities for agriculture in the 21st century;
- IICA and its role in agriculture and rural development in the Hemisphere;
- The role of the Minister of Agriculture as a member of the Ministerial process within the framework of the Summit of the Americas process; and
- The bases for the establishment of a new agenda for cooperation between IICA and its Member States.

We will also establish a Young Leaders Development Initiative.

Half of the world's population is under 25 years old and investment in young people is fundamental to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We must invest in bright young minds in order to develop the leadership of the future.

Lack of attention to the development of young leaders can result in a waste of the great talents of the younger generation and thus in a loss of the best agents of social change.

The development of young leaders in the agricultural sector must be an important part of the future agenda of the Institute as we seek to create a new vision for agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

The proposal is to invite 34 young leaders from our 34 Member States to our Institute annually to assist them in obtaining a global vision of agriculture and then to spend one year in one of our offices that is not in their home country. I invite you to join us in this new initiative, which will assist in producing the future leaders of the agricultural sector.

And so, ladies and gentlemen we, the management and 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.

Thanks for your presence here today and let us celebrate the 65th Anniversary of IICA.

