

IICA



INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE Third Special Meeting

Addresses by:
Pedro Bonino Garmendia
Eduardo Pesqueira Olea
Martín E. Piñeiro

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Mexico City, Mexico
October 27 to 29, 1986

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“On this day, Monday October 27, 1986, I hereby call to order the Third Special Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture.

Mexico is proud to host this important meeting, which will study the problems affecting agriculture in this hemisphere. Those present here will find new ways to broaden and improve the processes for transferring modern technology, to increase production and productivity in the region, and truly improve the standard of living of our farmers.

Mexico, both its government and its people, wish you all the greatest success in this important gathering.”

*Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado,
President of the United Mexican States.
October 27, 1986.*

INTRODUCTION

This is a compilation of the official addresses delivered at the Third Special Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), held from October 27 to 29, 1986, in Mexico City.

It includes addresses given in the inaugural ceremony by Mr. Pedro Bonino Garmendia, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay, who spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the IABA; Dr. Martín E. Piñeiro, Director General of IICA; and Mr. Eduardo Pesqueira Olea, Secretary of Agriculture and Water Resources of Mexico.

It also includes the closing words by Dr. Martín E. Piñeiro, Director General of IICA.

**ADDRESS BY ING. PEDRO BONINO GARMENDIA
IN THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE THIRD SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
OCTOBER 27, 1986**

Mr. Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries; Mr. President of the United Mexican States; Mr. Secretary of Agriculture and Wafer Resources; Mr. Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture; Distinguished Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great personal pleasure that I extend a warm and friendly welcome to all the representatives of the Member States to this Third Special Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, convened by unanimous agreement of its members at the last regular meeting, held in Uruguay, my own country.

For us, who had the honor to host the Board last year, it is a matter of deep satisfaction to see this meeting taking place. As Chairman, I am proud to be in a position to express our sincerest appreciation to the government of Mexico for the effort made in the preparation and organization of this Board meeting. The hospitality and attention received from the time of our arrival in this legendary and beautiful country augur well for a successful encounter.

The problems of agriculture in the Americas and the activities of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture will be the focus of our attention during our time here. With regard to the situation of agriculture, new developments have occurred this past year that alter the long-term picture.

The effects of external indebtedness, which have limited the possibilities for investment and development in agriculture, have been exacerbated by the appearance of new forms of protectionism and subsidies of agricultural exports by developed countries.

The consequences of these developments have been very detrimental to the countries of the region because of their impact on agricultural prices and the resulting decrease in export earnings. To date in 1986, the price of grain has fallen by 25 percent to 35 percent from last year's level, and the decrease in oilseed prices has been even greater.

This situation, combined with the price slide for raw materials and minerals, has had a major impact on our region and constitutes an additional obstacle to efforts for modernization and technical progress in the agricultural sector.

Despite these difficulties, we have not cut back on our activities. The development and modernization of agriculture hold the greatest promise for our socioeconomic development.

The producers in our countries have a leading role to play in such development. Their task of reactivating the economy should be encouraged, and for this purpose they must be provided with the necessary means to increase production. Investments and the incorporation of new techniques will raise the standard of living of the rural population and ensure the well-being of society as a whole.

I believe it is appropriate at this time to recall the words of our Director General, Dr. Martín E. Piñero, who recently said, "The comparative advantages, and therefore the possibilities for effective intervention in world markets, which were previously defined by the natural resources of our countries, are now determined to a much larger extent by the level of technological innovation."

In recent months the governments of the region have paid particular attention to meeting emergencies in the food supply. The joint declaration issued last February by the presidents of Argentina and Uruguay proposing a treaty of regional assistance for food supply emergencies has received the support of many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and it is feasible to expect that this proposal will be implemented in the near future.

Coordinated and harmonious regional action has also allowed for major progress in international forums. The inclusion of agriculture in the round of GATT negotiations, which is to begin this week in Geneva, is the result of the collective political will of the countries that export agricultural products.

Several countries of the region played a leading role in achieving this objective, which opens new prospects for dealing with existing imbalances in world trade.

Within this context, it is the responsibility of IICA, as the leading institution for cooperation and agricultural development of the region, to assume a predominant role. We note with satisfaction the work accomplished by its Director General and technical experts this past year. By means of a far-reaching and well-planned analysis of the region's present situation, they have drawn up a set of proposals to be considered at this meeting.

The proposed 1987-1991 Medium Term Plan, approved at the Sixth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Institute, will unquestionably be the most important topic in our discussions.

This Plan has been prepared through a process initiated by a group of experts who carried out their task in February and March of this year. The evaluation of activities and the recommendations made provided the basic criteria for the Director General and his staff to carry out the necessary consultations and studies for writing the Plan. Accordingly, I wish to state publicly my appreciation for the work of the group of experts and the Director General, who fully complied with the mandate of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture.

At this time I will not discuss the details of the Medium Term Plan, which will be considered later, but I believe it is appropriate to stress the high quality and depth of its approach, which opens new prospects for the activities of the Institute and a realistic adjustment to the agricultural problems of the region in the next few years.

The aims of fostering the development of the agricultural sector as the source of economic growth, of advancing with modernization, of increasing the productive efficiency of the agricultural sector, and of moving ahead with regional integration adequately sum up the desires of the peoples and governments of the region.

We must not forget other topics of major importance in this Third Special Meeting, such as the modifications to the Charter of the Tropical Agriculture Research and Training Center (CATIE), the initiative considered by the Executive Committee on the allocation of resources to furnish technical assistance for urgent problems and emergency tasks, and adjustments to the Program Budget for 1987, which will permit rapid implementation of the Medium Term Plan.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, we have a lengthy agenda before us, which will require a sustained effort in order to achieve the results that we all desire for the success of this meeting. We are persuaded that the results will be beneficial for our peoples and will allow for effective renewal of IICA, transforming it into a fitting and effective agency for responding to the grave problems of agriculture in the world of today and the near future.

I do not want to conclude these brief words of welcome without making reference to the political will for cultural, technological and trade integration that increases day by day in our Americas.

I ask of you that this mandate, which comes from the deepest wellsprings of our common history, shall guide our discussions today.

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate our appreciation to the people and government of Mexico, that have assumed the responsibility for carrying out this meeting with dedication and a true spirit of hemispheric solidarity.

Thank you very much.

**ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IICA,
DR. MARTIN E. PIÑEIRO, IN THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
THIRD SPECIAL MEETING OF INTER-AMERICAN BOARD
OF AGRICULTURE, OCTOBER 27, 1986**

Mr. President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado; Mr. Secretary of Agriculture and Water Resources, Mr. Eduardo Pesqueira; Mr. Chairman of the Third Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, Mr. Pedro Bonino Garmendia; Messrs. Ministers, Secretaries of State and Heads of Delegation; Distinguished representatives of the Member States and Observer organizations; Ladies and Gentlemen.

Once again, The Inter-American Board of Agriculture, IICA's highest governing body, is meeting to consider items of major importance to the Institute.

I would like to begin by expressing our sense of gratitude and respect to Mexico for its generous hospitality and its tradition of identifying with the principles and values that distinguish international organizations.

Recently, in his Fourth State of the Nation Report, the President of Mexico, Mr. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, stressed the importance of multilateral forums in solving international problems and working to strengthen cooperation among nations. His presence here today, and that of other high level dignitaries, reaffirms these precepts and bears witness to the importance Mexico attaches to its agricultural sector and to the action of IICA, the instrument and expression of cooperation among the countries in this hemisphere.

I wish to express special gratitude to the President for joining us at this inaugural session, and to the important delegations from the Member States for their interest and support.

I would also like to take a moment to express our heartfelt solidarity with El Salvador, at this very difficult time for that nation.

Last year, when I was elected as IICA's Director General, I made mention of the serious economic problems faced by our countries. These problems originated in the slow growth of the world economy, monetary instability, the foreign debt of the Latin America countries, and, more recently, the sharp decline of international markets for primary products.

These international economic conditions call for new strategies that include joint actions by our countries and a subsequent readjustment in the priorities and approaches of international organizations.

We believe there are two major causes of the difficult conditions being experienced by the agricultural sector in our countries.

The first is the service on foreign debt coupled with the slow growth rate of the world economy, which had depressed our capacity for savings and investment. This has made it increasingly difficult for the countries to invest the necessary resources for developing the agricultural sector and promoting well-being in the rural community.

The second major cause, more recent in origin and less well understood, is linked to changes in the international market of agricultural products. World demand has declined for certain agricultural products of special importance to the regions; as a result, prices have fallen. For example, wheat and sugar have seen price slides proportional to those of petroleum itself. It is important to note that even though this phenomenon might benefit importing countries, it will eventually jeopardize agriculture and impoverish rural peoples everywhere.

There are three major factors responsible for falling prices for agricultural products on the international market.

The first is the increased supply in developing countries in Latin America, Asia, and in some of the industrialized countries. Technology has been the key to this expanded supply, and it has redefined compara-

tive advantages which were once determined by the availability of natural resources.

Second, protectionist policies and government subsidies have enabled certain industrialized countries to increase their productive potential and their share of the international market. These policies have resulted in a marked decrease in international prices, have introduced an element of uncertainty and have led to competitive conditions far more intense and complex than in the past.

The third factor affecting those countries whose economic conditions are particularly difficult is the sharp decline of *per capita* income among the poorest groups, as a result of stagnating wages combined with increased levels of unemployment. This situation has contracted the demand for agricultural products and exacerbated malnutrition among society's poor. In a recent study, FAO indicated that an estimated 56 million people in Latin America suffered from malnutrition. These figures clearly reveal that the standstill of overall economic activity and the subsequent loss of purchasing power by wage earners directly influence nutritional levels.

I consider it important to underscore these conditions because they clearly illustrate a contradiction of our times: an apparent oversupply of agricultural commodities has emerged simultaneously with decreased nutritional levels among the poorest sectors of the population.

This reminds us once again that the issues of poverty and food security continue to be vitally important today.

We must analyze and understand the structure of the international market, especially in light of the recent resistance to investment in the agricultural sector. I am convinced that it would be a historical error with serious consequences to neglect food production in the region as a result of the recent and probably ephemeral oversupply in the international market.

I do believe, however, that even if these adverse conditions prove to be lasting, a number of facts encourage us to be optimistic and adopt a more dynamic posture in terms of agricultural production in our countries.

To begin with, international demand for agricultural production will increase as domestic demand responds positively to the reactivated

world economy, and as cutbacks are made in subsidies of agricultural exports by those countries currently advocating liberalization of the world market. This would be of universal benefit. As was stated by the World Bank, a country's capacity to pay its external debt is closely tied to its ability to export.

Second, the options for renewed industrial development in Latin America are limited by the high level of investment required, and by the restricted access to capital goods resulting from external indebtedness. In light of this fact, and as indicated by UNIDO in its 1986 Global Report, agriculture is one of the best alternatives available to the countries for reactivating economic growth. This view is reinforced when one considers Latin America's comparative advantages over other continents in terms of natural resources for agriculture.

It is vitally important for us to agree with this analysis and to share the conviction that will drive the creative efforts needed for the development and modernization of the agricultural sector. Only in this way can we understand clearly the working areas that will be essential in the coming decade.

Major changes in the world economy, especially in international trade, call for major adjustments in production structure so that the agricultural sector will be able to participate in the reactivation of the economy. In this context, it is important to diversify production and to develop marketing mechanisms that will provide access to new opportunities in the international market. This will require careful formulation of monetary policy so as not to jeopardize the comparative advantages of agricultural production. It is also essential to establish a price and credit policy that provides the incentives needed for farm production. Selecting a proper agricultural policy, including instruments that are generally beyond the control of specific agricultural agencies, is consequently a matter of crucial importance.

I have mentioned the importance of technological innovation as a means of modernizing agricultural production and as a decisive factor in agricultural productivity, as well as in maintaining the relative advantages of the agricultural sector in the international market. In view of the growing interdependence of agricultural production and trade, it is obvious that Latin America and the Caribbean should make special efforts in the field of technology in order to maintain their international competitiveness.

It is, however, increasingly clear that technological development efforts cannot succeed without consistent and planned collaboration among the countries of the hemisphere. The complexity of science and technology, the enormous investments needed to develop and produce technological inputs, and the high levels needed to achieve economies of scale in the production and commercial distribution of such inputs clearly reveal the need to unite efforts and distribute responsibilities on the basis of common interests. Recent agreements signed by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are promising examples of new possibilities for moving ahead toward the regional integration required.

Steps toward regional integration are also important. As pointed out by UNIDO, current conditions call for the establishment of a partnership of resources and technical capacities which, through trade, will enable developing countries to join the new technological and production revolution in other areas, such as computer science, investment and international trade, and place them at the service of food security for the poorest population groups.

The magnitude of these problems, and a clear understanding that IICA's activities should be restructured on the basis of specific and concrete work to assist the countries with their agriculture, prompted the Inter-American Board of Agriculture to recommend that a Medium Term Plan be prepared in order to delineate a new program of action.

The 1987-1991 Medium Term Plan, which is being presented to you for consideration during this meeting, is intended to be a program that will respond to the problems and prospects that we have examined together over the last few months.

Consequently, the Plan stresses the objective of encouraging and supporting the efforts of the Member States to:

- Stimulate the development of the agricultural sector as the major source of economic growth, both as a supplier of foodstuffs for domestic consumption and as the major source of foreign exchange.
- Intensify modernization and increase production efficiency in the agricultural sector. This will be done by incorporating appropriate technology so as to maintain the traditional and comparative advantages and competitiveness of agricultural production in this region.

- Pursue regional integration. This will be done through joint actions that will facilitate better use of limited human and financial resources. Another approach will be to develop production and commercial complementation.

The Plan also sets forth a new style of international cooperation which, through common agreement among the Member States, will allow for:

- Concentration of efforts and resources in a small number of programs and activities of high priority to the countries, in which IICA will develop strong technical leadership.
- The development of a flexible, dynamic operating structure that will facilitate and streamline the task of coordination with national authorities, and will make it possible to implement actions effectively and efficiently in the region and in each particular country.
- The formation of mechanisms to provide more and better services to the countries, so that they can obtain and use external resources to implement programs and projects in the agricultural and rural sectors.

When I assumed the position of Director General in January of this year, I outlined an action strategy for 1986 which, to the extent of our ability and in continuous consultation with the countries, would enable us to move ahead with the institutional renovation with which I have been entrusted.

Accordingly, major efforts were made during the first months to prepare the new Medium Term Plan, which is being submitted to you for consideration.

At the same time, in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive Committee at its Sixth Regular Meeting, we are focusing our attention on the Institute's structure and internal organization. We are making significant cuts in positions at the administrative level in order to strengthen technical capacity, and we are designing new internal procedures for analysis, discussion and decision-making.

As a result of this effort, we have put into operation a programming and evaluation system that will enable us to develop and select techni-

cal cooperation projects of high priority and effectiveness. Similarly, and in this same context, we have carefully examined projects that are underway in order to gradually adjust the Institute's technical cooperation activities without losing continuity.

We have also made efforts to develop new projects that are of importance to the countries and demonstrate our concern for multinational action as a tool for regional cooperation and interaction.

Finally, I must mention the careful, explicit and deliberate efforts we have made to improve relations with other international organizations in order to upgrade our operational efficiency through activities that are complementary and that will prevent duplication of efforts.

I would particularly like to note that we have had the pleasure of receiving Ambassador Baena Soares, the Secretary General of the OAS, at our headquarters, and we have initiated talks for signing an agreement that will provide for new forms of cooperation.

We have had meetings with Dr. Edouard Saouma, Director General of the FAO, and with Dr. Carlyle Guerra de Macedo, Director General of the Pan American Health Organization, with whom we have discussed the advisability of studying different avenues for greater cooperation. We have also approached ECLAC, an organization which will soon be holding an important meeting here at the initiative of the President of Mexico.

Distinguished members of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, I have tried to provide you with a general idea of action taken during my first few months as Director General of the Institute and of the concerns and objectives that will guide our actions in the future. These have been months of intense activity and I am sure you will agree that they have also been fruitful. This would not have been possible without the decisive and generous support that I have received from the member countries and from my colleagues at the Institute.

During these three days that we will be together here in Mexico City, you will discuss an agenda that includes items of utmost importance to IICA. In particular, the new Medium Term Plan will be the central instrument through which we will define an institutional framework that is more suitable for bringing about technical cooperation to deal with the pressing problems of this decade.

Thank you very much.

**ADDRESS BY MR. EDUARDO PESQUEIRA
AT THE THIRD SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
OCTOBER 27, 1986**

Mr. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, President of the United Mexican States; Mr. Pedro Bonino, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of the Republic of Uruguay and Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture; Distinguished Members of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture; Dr. Martín E. Piñeiro, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture; Ladies and Gentlemen:

Mexico, the original home of maize and a friend of all, extends a fraternal greeting to those who work for the progress of rural dwellers in the Americas. We are greatly honored to be the hosts of this important event. You are welcome.

Last year we received tokens of the solidarity and support of the peoples of the Americas after the earthquakes that struck our country. We now extend that same solidarity and support to our neighbors in El Salvador. May these manifestations of the wrath of nature be a sign that this noble people will soon find the path of harmony and progress.

Cooperation for development is one of the principles of Mexico's foreign policy. Grounded in respect for self-determination and the sovereignty of peoples, we are participating with determination in combining efforts to surmount the crisis.

Dialogue and collective action form the essential basis of this objective.

We are gathered here today in this forum of ministers and secretaries of agriculture from around the continents for the purpose of strengthening cooperative ties among the agricultural sectors of our countries. Today's world has seen the limitations of isolated action, which quickly results in frustration and hopelessness.

The Inter-American Board of Agriculture provides us with the opportunity to share experiences and reach agreements. We are fortunate to have the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which implements decisions of the Board in cooperative projects.

During the past two decades, economic relationships among the countries have undergone profound changes. Today we live in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. Finances, energy, trade, migration, national security, foodstuffs, public health, technology, transportation, and ecology form a web in which ongoing changes in any area modify everyday life and, in turn, alter the concert of nations: sovereignty, freedom and democracy.

International trade of agricultural commodities has ceased to be the exclusive domain of developing countries. To the contrary, today's market is flooded by grain surpluses from powerful nations, as a result of their rapid assimilation of modern technology. Unlike in the past, productive capacity is no longer determined by a country's endowment of natural resources; instead, it depends on the capitalization and technological innovation in a given society.

In Latin America, the enormous burden of the external debt and subsequent policies of adjustment have exacerbated problems for rural dwellers. Public resources are on the wane even as social needs increase; productive activities have lost momentum and their potential for expansion is conditioned by costly foreign technologies. Similarly, possibilities of expanding the frontier of production are rapidly disappearing since technical and financial resources are, for the most part, beyond our reach.

Agricultural activity plays a role of vital importance in the circumstances imposed on us by the crisis. It is perhaps the only real hope for the survival of millions of people. Since it is capable of responding in

the short term, it provides a basis for sustaining a strong and equitable economic recovery. We should not forget that the powerful nations of today built their wealth on the foundation of an increasingly prosperous rural society. Time and again, we have pointed out that there is no case in history in which an industrial power has been built on the ruins of a rural society.

The President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid, in faithful adherence to the principles of the Mexican revolution, has enshrined in the Constitution the promotion of integrated rural development, as an advance stage in the agrarian reform process. Consequently, greater priority is now given to working the land, transforming it and modernizing it, in order to upgrade the well-being of *campesinos* and their communities. Integrated development of rural areas cannot be delayed if national development objectives are to be achieved. This is the manner in which the government of Mexico understands its commitment to the rural population.

Conditions at the present time in history call for a new integrated framework for agricultural policy-making in all the countries of the hemisphere. We must make structural changes that provide a more dynamic framework for programs and vitalize the institutional and production machinery responsible for promoting and implementing these changes.

Modernizing the agricultural sector to keep abreast of present circumstances inevitably requires greater public and private financial, technical and human resources for:

- Productive investment
- Generation and transfer of state-of-the-art technology
- Input production
- Credit and insurance
- Industrial processing of primary commodities
- Promotion of producer organization, in addition to training of farmers and technical assistance

- Preventing the protectionist practices of the powerful from hindering market access for agricultural and forestry products from the countries that are struggling for survival.

These resources could not be put to better use.

Within this process, we must be continuously alert to changes, sometimes imperceptible, in international trends. We cannot continue to fall behind. On the contrary, we must learn to anticipate events, so that our actions and institutions can dynamically adapt to new situations. Harmony between our programs and our instruments is essential.

The challenge is to redefine the position of our agricultural sectors within our own economies and within the world economy. We must take full advantage of international cooperation, without sacrificing our sovereignty.

Current trends of regional integration are important in this context. Making production processes complementary, expanding markets, conducting joint research, mobilizing technical and economic resources, and making joint investments are only a few of the mechanisms available for effective integration. To date, it would seem that in this hemisphere, or at least in most of Latin America, we have given preference to political rhetoric. And, although such statements have laid the groundwork, it is time to move on to action, with the firm will to progress rapidly in order to make up for lost time.

Trade relations among our countries offer the broadest possibilities for regional integration in the immediate future. What is more, in view of the course of events observed in GATT since the round of negotiations was initiated in Punta del Este, reaching agreements that enable us to persevere in the efforts being made by all of us to increase our share in the world market is not only advisable, but urgently needed.

Throughout our history of independence, America has dreamed of, and sometimes attained, political and economic integration. Simón Bolívar is a case in point.

Since World War II, efforts have been manifold, but so have failures. The agricultural and forestry sector now represents a new hope and a new challenge. It is up to us to respond to the demands of our times.

We are not only willing, but determined to modernize trade. But we will not allow such modernization to jeopardize the well-being of millions of farmers who work and live on the land and off the land.

As long as all parties are not willing to negotiate openly about agricultural issues, Mexico refuses to serve as a guinea pig for experiments that might be detrimental to the interests of farmers.

Modernization and progress have a dual course to follow in agriculture. On the one hand, we have our bonds with other markets, other regions; on the other hand, there is the commitment of our governments to the *campesinos*, who are the source, not only of production, but also of the legitimacy of our institutions.

Fully forty percent of our population still depends on primary activities, living by working the land. Our *campesinos* are already hard-put to weather the storm. That is why we categorically reject opening the way to the indiscriminate interplay of free-market forces in agriculture.

Letting free-market forces dominate the agricultural sector results in the law of the jungle; the big fish devour the little fish. But it is also true that a policy based exclusively on protectionism and subsidies is not only untenable but also causes distortions in the trade system and the world economy.

Negotiations and dialogue are the only options.

Therein lies the importance of these meetings, and from this derives the commitment of our governments to see that these instruments of cooperation operate effectively.

Agriculture is inseparable from the most important political decision that the peoples of the Americas have made —the never-ending search for peace in a climate of freedom. And it is to that end that we are perfecting our systems of justice and democracy.

Thus the strengthening of our Inter-American Board of Agriculture becomes an imperative of the first rank. It is with this conviction that we are resolved to give it greater momentum through the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. It is our intention to bring its structure and operational effectiveness into line with the exigencies imposed by our times.

No one can have the slightest doubt that the areas in which IICA operates faithfully respond to the needs for the promotion of integrated rural development. Therein lies the importance of agreeing on the Institute's Medium Term Plan and the implementation of its basic programs:

- Agrarian Policy Analysis and Planning
- Technology Generation and Transfer
- Organization and Management for Rural Development
- Marketing and Agroindustry
- Animal Health and Plant Protection.

In this regard, we hereby reiterate our intention to devise mechanisms that will establish:

- International programs of financing and reinsurance, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank
- A shared system of transportation and storage
- An international exchange of foodstuffs, mainly of basic grains and oilseeds
- A program of technology exchange and training in the handling and proper preservation of foodstuffs.

In all these things IICA has much to offer, and we are certain that these plans will be carried out.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished colleagues and friends; the problems that are now besetting the countries of Latin America are similar and they lend themselves to a common solution. Based on respect for the self-determination of peoples, I am certain that our joint actions will target our objectives and pave the way to our goals. Self-sufficiency in food does not represent merely a longing for justice and security; it is, above all else, an essential requisite for the peace and progress of our peoples.

**ADDRESS BY DR. MARTIN E. PIÑEIRO,
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IICA,
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE THIRD SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
OCTOBER 29, 1986**

Mr. Chairman; Distinguished Members of the Board; Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Third Special Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture has concluded its deliberations. To begin with, I wish to join the delegations present in expressing our gratitude to the government and people of Mexico for their hospitality and their invaluable contributions to organizing this meeting, and to all the other who shared in the tasks at hand.

The Board has studied items of great importance for the future of the Institute. This meeting will surely stand as a milestone in the history of IICA and in its ability to respond to the needs of the member countries. I therefore wish to express my appreciation to all of you for your approval and support of the documents and resolutions submitted.

The approval by the Board of amendments to the Institute's regulations governing positions of trust and other categories of international professional personnel represents an important step toward modernising the Institute's personnel policy. It is my desire and my responsibility to work closely with the Board, the Executive Committee and the

officers of the Institute to establish a personnel policy that will meet the needs of IICA and the Member States. The important decisions made by the Board during this meeting take us a step closer to achieving those objectives.

The support for the proposal to modify the Charter of the Tropical Agriculture Research and Training Center (CATIE) reaffirms the decision of the Member States to reinforce the standing of this center as a keystone in the system of research and training in the agricultural sciences at the service of the Central American and Caribbean region. I wish expressly to acknowledge the generosity and vision of all of you in your consideration of this topic, and to reaffirm our willingness to work with the administration of CATIE and the member countries so as to ensure that it will grow stronger.

The new 1987-1991 Medium Term Plan that you have approved will have a major impact on the Institute. The approval of the Plan brings to a close a special stage of this administration—the drawing up of a working agenda. Now the real challenge begins. That is why I wish to share with you some ideas about the contents and implications of the Plan.

In preparing the Medium Term Plan that you have approved, our principal objective has been to lay the groundwork that will enable IICA to become an institution useful to the member countries — an institution capable of responding effectively to the problems confronting the member countries in achieving agricultural development and rural well-being.

This has led us to define the program as a basic instrument for the activities of the Institute and, more important still, to become conscious as an institution of the need to set priorities and to structure our activities accordingly. This may well represent the greatest challenge for the future and the task on which we must concentrate during the coming months when we begin implementing the Plan.

We must continue the internal review of our activities in such a way that the 1988-1989 Program Budget may fully reflect the system of priorities approved at this meeting. The changes in the 1987 Program Budget mark a first step in this direction.

Nevertheless, an arduous task lies ahead: analyzing the problems and priorities of each country within the framework of the 1987-1991

Medium Term Plan. This process will produce adjustments and new technical cooperation projects in which the objectives of regional integration will receive a high priority, as you have requested in this meeting. This orientation reaffirms the will to point the Institute in new directions.

These changes will not be made, however, without acknowledging the achievements of the past and the experience acquired. That is why I value and appreciate the presence of the Directors Emeriti, Dr. José Emilio Araujo and Mr. Carlos Madrid, and the telegrams of congratulations and best wishes for success received from Dr. Armando Samper and Dr. Francisco Morillo, who were unable to attend, owing to other commitments.

The next meeting of the IABA will coincide with the Inter-American Conference on Agriculture. I believe the timing of the meeting is propitious, and the statements that all of you have made during these days clearly indicate your central concerns and the will to analyze them together in seeking shared solutions.

I believe it is important for us to think together about the most appropriate mechanisms for making the meetings of IABA a permanent forum and meeting place for the ministers of agriculture of the region.

I wish to thank the Delegation of Canada and especially Minister John Wise for offering to host our next meeting. This is an indication of their interest in and support for IICA.

In conclusion, I can only reiterate our appreciation to the host country. I would like to award special certificates of merit to two persons as a token of our gratitude to the Mexican people—Mr. Pesqueira Olea and Mr. Carlos Vidali.

It only remains for me to thank you for participating in this meeting and to wish you a safe journey to your countries, in the hope that we shall meet again next year in Canada.

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