

Hemispheric Ministerial Process

**In pursuit of a renewed institutional
framework for agriculture
and rural life in the Americas**

The public, private and social sectors working together



**Ministerial Meetings "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas"
Held within the context of the Summits of the Americas Process**

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Report of the Secretariat on the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process
“Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and the
Fourth Ministerial Meeting - Guatemala 2007

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Held within the context of the Summits of the Americas Process**

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“Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance”

The Heads of State and Government of the Americas advocated growth through job creation, proposed a renewed institutional framework and supported implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan

“**W**e are committed to building a more solid and inclusive institutional framework, based on the coordination of economic, labor, and social public policies to contribute to the generation of decent work, which must comprise:

A comprehensive framework for rural and agricultural development, to promote investment, job creation, and rural Prosperity.

Fourth Summit of the Americas, 2005
Paragraph 55 g), Declaration of Mar del Plata

To carry out the above, the Heads of the State and Government defined as a national commitment:

To support the implementation of the Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil in 2005, Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (AGRO 2003-2015 Plan).

Fourth Summit of the Americas, 2005
Paragraph 35, Plan of Action

Fourth Ministerial Meeting - 2007



At the Fourth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” within the context of the Summit of the Americas process, the Ministers updated the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan by adopting the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*.

The commitment to promote a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu gave rise to the two strategic orientations that inspired the formulation of that Agreement: (i) to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, (ii) the “working together” approach to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

Foreword

The culmination of the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” was the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, held on July 25-26, 2007, in Antigua, Guatemala, as part of the “Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas” the theme of which was “Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas.”

The Group for the Implementation and Coordination of the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life of the Summits Process (GRICA) met in advance of the Ministerial Meeting (July 23-24) to discuss and build consensus on the *Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*, which was submitted to the Ministers for consideration.

The Ministerial Process, launched in 2001 by the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture of the Americas and their Delegates, was enhanced with the presentation of the results of the fora held by the government of Guatemala for agribusiness operators and social actors during the “Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas,” which were also submitted to the Ministers for consideration.

In approving the *Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007*, the countries

renewed their commitment to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and the Ministerial Process was strengthened when a clear course was set for building a renewed institutional framework through the two strategic orientations that inspired that Agreement: “(...) to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, (...) the “working together” approach to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.”

Two of the strategic actions called for in the Agreement emphasize the need to reposition rural life and reassess the value of agriculture and the rural milieu, two high priority political decisions made by the Ministers to be taken into consideration by the leaders of the public, private and social sectors during the 2008-2009 Ministerial Process at the national and hemispheric levels, in the run up to the Fifth Summit of the Americas (Trinidad and Tobago 2009) and the Fifth Ministerial Meeting (Jamaica 2009).

In fulfillment of the mandate received from the Third Ministerial Meeting (Guayaquil 2005), I am pleased to share with the actors of agriculture and rural life in the Americas the report on the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and the Fourth Ministerial Meeting - Guatemala 2007.

Chelston W. D. Brathwaite
Director General

*Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Secretariat of the Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”*

Part I

Agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda:

from Quebec 2001 to Mar del Plata 2005

- **A political framework that reassesses the value of agriculture and rural life:** the mandates of the Summits of the Americas - Quebec 2001, Monterrey 2004 and Mar del Plata 2005
- **The Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and its meetings:** dialogue, consensus and commitment

A political framework that reassesses the value of agriculture and rural life: the mandates of the Summits of the Americas - Quebec 2001, Monterrey 2004 and Mar del Plata 2005

The Third Summit marked a historic milestone in efforts to build a renewed institutional framework for agriculture and rural life. On that occasion, the Heads of State and Government acknowledged the important contribution that agriculture and rural life make to combating poverty and promoting sustainable development in their countries, in recognition of agriculture's dual role as a way of life for millions of rural inhabitants and as a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system for generating prosperity.

With this in mind, they instructed to promote:

- **hemispheric joint action** among the stakeholders of the actors of the agriculture and rural life, with a view to bringing about sustainable improvements in agriculture and rural life, and
- **medium- and long-term national strategies** for the sustainable improvement of agriculture and rural life, based on a dialogue among government ministers, parliamentarians and representatives of different sectors of civil society.

At the Special Summit (Monterrey, 2004), they pledged to make a sustained effort to improve the living conditions of rural dwellers, by promoting investments and creating an environment that would be conducive to the improvement of agriculture and contribute to social development, rural prosperity and food security. To that end, they endorsed the efforts of the Ministers of Agriculture by defining as a mandate of that Summit the implementation of the ***“AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,”*** which was adopted by the Ministers at their Second Ministerial Meeting (Panama 2003) to implement the hemispheric joint action the Heads of State and Government pledged to promote at the Quebec Summit in 2001.

At the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata 2005), they pledged to build an institutional framework based on the coordination of public policies, which would include a comprehensive framework for rural and agricultural development that would promote investment, job creation and rural prosperity. To that end, they adopted as a national commitment *“To support the implementation of the Ministerial*

Agreement of Guayaquil 2005 on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (AGRO 2003-2015 Plan)."

The mandates and commitments of these three Summits constitute a policy

framework for attaching greater value to agriculture and rural life in the Americas, and give rise to a new ministerial process whose agreements contribute to implementing and updating the mandates of the hemispheric Summits.

The Ministerial Process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas" and its meetings: dialogue, consensus and commitment

In Quebec 2001, the Heads of State and Government recognized the importance of the Ministerial Meetings as a mechanism for advancing the Summit of the Americas process. The meetings are used address the strategic matters particular to the inter-American agenda and to coordinate the implementation of the mandates set forth by the Heads of State and Government in the Plans of Action of the Summits. They are the highest level hemispheric forum for dialogue, coordination and cooperation among the 34 member countries of the Inter-American System. As such, the Ministerial Meetings reach agreement by consensus on priorities and strategic actions to meet hemispheric challenges.

At the Third Summit, the Heads of State and Government assigned the Ministers of Agriculture a leading role in the

implementation of the Plans of Action of the Summits, and promoted the emergence of the Ministerial Process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas" and its meetings. Since 2001, the Ministerial Process has become a continuous cycle that includes, in general terms:

- the adoption of Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements (HMAs) on agriculture and rural life;
- the implementation of the HMAs;
- monitoring of progress in the implementation of the HMAs;
- the identification of challenges in implementing the HMAs; and
- dialogue and development of consensus for the formulation of new HMAs for the sustainable development

of agriculture and the rural milieu.
la agricultura y el medio rural.

As part of that process, in the Ministerial Meetings, progress to date is reviewed and new commitments for strategic actions in the following biennium are assumed.

This hemispheric process is possible thanks to the emergence and consolidation of a new institutional architecture that facilitates the implementation of the Ministerial Agreements and the mandates of the Heads of State and Government. This architecture is made up of components that are organizational (the first four) and directional (the last two) in nature.

Hacen posible este proceso hemisférico el surgimiento y la consolidación de una nueva “arquitectura institucional” que facilita la implementación de los acuerdos ministeriales y los mandatos presidenciales. Dicha institucionalidad está conformada por componentes de orden organizativo (los cuatro primeros) y de orden orientador (los dos últimos):

- *A national team comprising a Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Life, an Alternate Delegate and a technical support group made up of members of the policy or planning units of the ministries of agriculture.*
- *A hemispheric forum of Ministerial Delegates, the GRICA, chaired by the Ministerial Delegate of the host country of the following Ministerial Meeting, who is accompanied by the Ministerial Delegate of the host country of the last Ministerial Meeting. The Ministerial Delegates, through dialogue and negotiation, build consensus on proposals for new HMAs they submit to the consideration of the Ministers.*
- *A Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting in the context of the Summit process, which is the forum of Ministers of Agriculture. This forum gives direction to and conducts the hemispheric process and adopts the HMAs which make it possible to continue working toward the Shared Vision 2015.*
- *A Secretariat of the Ministerial Process and its Ministerial Meeting, provided by IICA, whose main task is to support the national, regional and hemispheric dialogue that: (i) underpins the HMAs; (ii) gives continuity to the Ministerial Process; (iii) facilitates regional integration within the context of the hemispheric process; (iv) facilitates articulation of the Ministerial Process with the Summit of the Americas process; and (v) contributes to further positioning agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda. As a contribution to the dialogue, the Secretariat supports the work of the Delegates, the GRICA and the Ministerial Meeting.*
- *A strategic framework for agriculture and rural life in the Americas, comprising the mandates on agriculture and rural life of the Summits and the HMAs, the common thread of which is the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. This HMA, which is a reference point for decision makers,*

comprises the Shared Vision 2015, the Strategic Objectives, the hemispheric ministerial agendas and the measures for implementing and monitoring same.

- *A renewed concept of agriculture and rural life*, the AGRO-Matrix, which the Ministerial Delegates and the Ministers developed over the span of three Ministerial Meetings (Bavaro 2001, Panama 2003, Guayaquil 2005) in an attempt to reach agreement on the scope of action of the AGRO Plan.

To date, there have been four meetings within the Ministerial Process. At them, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture, supported by the hemispheric forum of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA), have adopted important HMAs, including the *Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro, the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas, the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005 and the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007*.

- **AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.** (La Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2007)

This HMA focuses on how to build a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, with the participation of the public, private and social sectors. In this regard, the agreement attaches

priority to two complementary strategic orientations “... *the first one, to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad-based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, the second one, “working together” to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.*”

- **AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: Ministerial Agreement on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.** (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 2005)

Este AMH reafirma el compromiso de los Ministros con el Plan AGRO 2003-2015, el cual actualiza con acciones estratégicas complementarias para el bienio 2006-2007 y medidas para su implementación y seguimiento. En esencia, el Acuerdo está inspirado en tres asuntos estratégicos: a) la promoción de políticas de Estado para la agricultura y la vida rural, b) el fortalecimiento de la integración regional y la cooperación internacional y c) el desarrollo de un sistema de información para el seguimiento del Plan AGRO 2003-2015.

- **AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.** (Ciudad de Panamá, Panamá, 2003)

The Ministers’ decision to reach consensus on a shared hemispheric agenda, taken at the First Ministerial Meeting, prompted further dialogue and the development of the second HMA.

The Ministers' determination was reflected in the Plan, in the following four complementary components: the Shared Vision 2015; the Strategic Objectives, to focus the efforts; the strategic actions needed to achieve the objectives (the 2003-2005 Hemispheric Agenda); and, the measures for implementing and following up on the Plan.

The Ministers and their Delegates based the preparation of the Plan on a new and broader conception of agriculture and rural life, of great value in developing effective strategies for agriculture, which is summarized in the **AGRO-Matrix**.

■ **Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.** (Bávaro, República Dominicana, 2001)

In the Declaration, the Ministers of Agriculture pledged to promote joint action aimed at improving agriculture and rural life, as called for in the Plan of Action adopted at the Third Summit of the Americas. They stressed the importance of making progress with the efforts related to food security, rural poverty alleviation and the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, addressing together the issues of competitiveness, equity, environmental sustainability and democratic governance.

These HMAs offer the stakeholders of agriculture and rural life a renewed broad and comprehensive, way of viewing and addressing the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. They also provide a frame of reference for defining national, regional and hemispheric strategic actions needed to move toward the Shared Vision for 2015 of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action.

Part II

A strategic framework for agriculture and rural life in the Americas:

the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas

- **Consensus on and commitment to improving agriculture and rural life:** a common point of reference for decision makers
- **A renewed way of viewing agriculture and rural life:** the AGRO-Matrix, the conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan
- **Monitoring the AGRO Plan:** the AGRO-Matrix and the Information System

Consensus on and commitment to improving agriculture and rural life: a common point of reference for decision makers

What are the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life?

They are ministerial decisions on strategic aspects of agriculture and rural life in the Americas that the ministers take by consensus. As international instruments in support of the Summit of the Americas Process, the HMAs document the ministers' determination and commitment to promote strategic actions for the sustainable improvement of agriculture and the rural milieu, working with the actors responsible for the development of agriculture and rural life.

The HMAs carry considerable political weight because they are the result of a highly participatory ministerial process, are based on the realities identified in the national proposals and are strengthened with the hemispheric consensus built by the Ministerial Delegates of the 34 member countries of the Inter-American System by means of dialogue and negotiation. That political weight is derived from the governments' pledge to implement and follow up on the HMAs, with a view to updating them and ensuring the continuation of the process required

to move toward the Shared Vision 2015, defined by the Ministers of Agriculture in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

The political weight of the HMAs was reaffirmed when they were adopted as official documents of the Summit of the Americas process, and as inputs for the declarations and plans of action issued by the Heads of State and of Government.

What is the Ministerial Process and how are the HMAs developed?

Development of the HMAs begins in the countries, with a Ministerial Process that encompasses national consultations which yield the proposals that the countries share. Based on these national proposals, the countries enter into dialogue, negotiate and reach a hemispheric consensus on the text of each HMA.

Given the diversity of the countries' interests and views, the Ministerial Process has made it possible to reach a broad consensus on the HMAs. As a result, the HMAs reflect common concerns and issues on which the

countries agree, which are of great value for improving agriculture and rural life.

With a view to facilitating hemispheric dialogue and building consensus, since 2001 the Ministerial Process has included two groups of key players who have their respective hemispheric forums and agreements: (i) the Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life and their hemispheric forum, the GRICA; and (ii) the Ministers of Agriculture and their forum, the Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

The Delegates coordinate the formulation of national proposals for the HMAs and, meeting as the GRICA, build the hemispheric consensus required for the agreements signed by the ministers in their meetings. They also coordinate the preparation of the national progress reports on the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and identify the challenges faced in implementing it.

What is the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan?

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan is the shared long-term agenda for promoting the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, called for in paragraph 18 of the Declaration of Bavaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

The Plan was adopted at the Second Ministerial Meeting (Panama 2003),

following a broad-based process of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reaching consensus on national proposals, which were then submitted to the same process at the hemispheric level under the responsibility of the Ministers of Agriculture and their Ministerial Delegates.

The Plan provides a framework for bringing about the changes required to achieve the Shared Vision 2015, and is implemented and updated by the countries through the strategic actions contained in the biennial hemispheric agendas, and the measures for their implementation and follow-up negotiated by the GRICA and defined by the ministers in their Ministerial Meetings.

In the Plan, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture:

- (i) Took into consideration for its preparation a renewed way of viewing agriculture and rural life, which is the conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. The AGRO-Matrix synthesizes this new concept of agriculture and rural life.
- (ii) Adopted the *Shared Vision 2015* for agriculture and rural life. The vision is a characterization of the desired future vis-à-vis the national and international context, rural territories and agricultural production-trade chains.
- (iii) Reiterated the commitments they assumed in the Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro, with the Strategic Objectives

of Rural Prosperity, Food Security, the International and Regional Integration of Agriculture, Agricultural Health and Food Safety, and the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu. The **Strategic Objectives** make it possible to focus the efforts of the leaders of the Community of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

- (iv) Pledged to promote, with the stakeholders in agriculture and others involved in the development of agriculture and rural life, the strategic actions of the 2003-2005 Hemispheric Agenda, to make progress toward achievement of the Strategic Objectives. This **Hemispheric Agenda** is the first of six biennial agendas. It is divided into 12 sections containing a total of 40 strategic actions.
- (v) Stated that the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan reflects the member countries' intention of working to achieve the shared vision, acknowledging that the national governments have primary responsibility for implementing the Plan pursuant to their international commitments and agreements. They decided on a number of measures for **Implementation and Follow-up** of the Plan. These included: (i) the preparation of national progress reports on the implementation of the strategic actions of the current hemispheric agenda; (ii) the updating of the agenda for the next five biennia; (iii) a request that international institutions

and cooperating governments coordinate their strategies around the implementation of the Plan; and, (iv) efforts to determine appropriate ways of gauging the progress of the Plan.

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action has been updated as a result of the HMAs adopted at the Third and Fourth Ministerial Meetings (Guayaquil 2005 and Guatemala 2007). This Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting was endorsed by the Presidents and Prime Ministers in the Declaration and Plan of Action issued at the Special Summit of the Americas (Monterrey 2004) and Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata 2005)

A renewed way of viewing agriculture and rural life: the AGRO-Matrix, the conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan

The mandates from the Summits in Quebec 2001, Monterrey 2004 and Mar del Plata 2005 constitute a new political framework in which agriculture is no longer viewed simply as a primary production sector of the economy.

Faced with the task of developing a shared vision of agriculture and rural life for 2015, within the framework of the goals set at the Millennium Summit and taking into consideration the aforementioned mandates, the Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture adopted a renewed concept of agriculture and rural life. This concept, which was endorsed by the Ministers of Agriculture at the last three Ministerial Meetings (Panama 2003, Guayaquil 2005 and Guatemala 2007), is spelled out in the second paragraph of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

The renewed concept adopted by the Ministers of Agriculture incorporates rural territories, thus strengthening the linkage between agricultural and non-agricultural activities; recognizes agricultural production-trade chains as the most effective vehicle for concatenating primary production activities with those that add value, with a view to better positioning them on national and international

markets; and underscores the role of the national and international context in the creation of the policies and other measures and actions that affect the development of those territories and chains.

In this renewed concept, agriculture and rural life comprise a number of networks that involve multiple relationships that go beyond mere agricultural production and trade, and the other dimensions (ecological-environmental, sociocultural-human and political-institutional) of the sustainable development of those territories and chains and that context are taken into consideration.

In essence, those networks and relations, which help to understand agriculture and rural life and promote the improvement of both, involve:

A systemic concept of agriculture and rural life, combined with an approach focused on the sustainable development of both.

The interactions between those two elements are visualized in the conceptual-thematic document known as the AGRO-Matrix. This comprehensive framework

The AGRO-Matrix				
<i>Systemic Concept</i>	<i>Rural Territories</i>	<i>Agricultural Production-Trade Chains</i>	<i>National and International Context</i>	<i>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</i>
<i>Sustainable Development approach</i>				
<i>Production - Trade</i>	I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises	II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness	III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture	→ Competitiveness
<i>Ecological - environmental</i>	IV. Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas	V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management	VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework	→ Sustainability
<i>Sociocultural - human</i>	VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity	VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in the chain	IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities	→ Equity
<i>Political - institutional</i>	X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories	XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actions in the chain	XII. Promoting national policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life	→ Governance
<i>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</i>	Rural Prosperity - Food Security - International Positioning			OVERARCHING GOAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL MILIEU

for understanding agriculture and rural life and working to improve both calls for action on the part of a broad range of public, private and social actors responsible for their development.

The AGRO-Matrix synthesizes a new concept of agriculture and rural life that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of both. It recognizes that agriculture and rural life are complex phenomena and, as such, that a multiplicity of actors and a diversity of interests should be taken into account when designing effective strategies and policies aimed at transforming the sector.

The AGRO Plan is one of the main outcomes of the consensus-building process followed by the Ministerial

Delegates in their efforts to support the Ministers of Agriculture by drafting the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements adopted at the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas in 2003, 2005 and 2007. The AGRO-Matrix is the conceptual framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. The conceptual framework of the AGRO Plan is mentioned specifically in the second paragraph of the HMA Panama 2003).

Basically, there are two aspects that need to be differentiated in the AGRO-Matrix. They are: (i) the two pillars of its structure; and (ii) the three components of the desired situation of agriculture and rural life.

The two pillars of its structure are: a systemic concept of agriculture and rural life, broken down into three categories or operational areas (rural territories, agricultural value chains and the national and international context) and a sustainable development approach consisting of four dimensions or types of actions (production-trade, ecological-environmental, socio-cultural-human and political-institutional).

The three components of the desired situation needed to attain the Shared Vision 2015 are: the twelve purposes, the seven strategic objectives and the overarching objective which guides the strategies, policies and actions adopted.

The AGRO-Matrix facilitates: (i) an understanding of the fundamental aspects of the complex phenomenon of agriculture and rural life, by revealing the “true” contribution of both to national development; (ii) the promotion of strategies, policies and actions aimed at addressing specific issues; and (iii) the articulation of the different interest groups in the public, private and social sectors who, “working together,” are building a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu and shaping such development.

Monitoring the AGRO Plan the AGRO-Matrix and the Information System

The mandates and the HMAs on agriculture and rural life must be monitored to determine the extent to which they are being implemented and how the situations that gave rise to them have changed, and to identify the challenges that have been encountered in their implementation and what strategic decisions must be taken at the following Ministerial Meeting and the corresponding Summit of the Americas.

What is needed is a conceptual framework that provides uniform criteria for implementing and monitoring the Plan.

The AGRO-Matrix, the conceptual framework that underpins the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, provides a frame of reference for both tasks.

The AGRO-Matrix facilitates the development of a common base of information on agriculture and rural life and on the nature and scope of their processes. It also makes it easier to solicit and systematize the opinions and expectations of the many actors of agriculture and rural life, define and prioritize objectives and strategic actions, determine the impact

of policies and programs, and measure progress in achieving the purposes and strategic objectives and moving toward the Shared Vision for 2015.

What is the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan?

Since they approved the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action in 2003, the Ministers of Agriculture have felt it necessary to propose measures for the implementation and follow-up of same. They stated as much in the HMAs of Panama, Guayaquil and Guatemala.

More specifically, at the Ministerial in Guayaquil, the Ministers approved a HMA on an Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. In that agreement, the Ministers considered it was necessary to monitor and evaluate the efforts being made via an information system that would cover:

- compliance with agreements
- the impact of same on improvement of agriculture and rural life
- opinions and expectations of leaders.

At the Guatemala Ministerial, the Secretariat of the Ministerial Process reported to the Ministers on progress in implementing that Ministerial Agreement.

In sum, the information system (IS) is a ministerial initiative aimed at generating and using up-to-date information to facilitate

decision making in the formulation of policies and strategies for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

The IS is based on the integration of three components of information under the Agro-Matrix. These components are:

- national actions and the challenges the counties face in implementing the AGRO Plan
- performance indicators related to agriculture and rural life
- the expectations of leaders of agriculture and rural life

The development of the IS requires the joint effort of the countries and international organizations. The actions and challenges component is based on the national progress report prepared by the Ministerial Delegate of each country. The performance indicators component is based on work headed by ECLAC, in coordination with IICA, which receives support from other international organizations, primarily FAO and PAHO. The expectations of leaders component is based on the responses obtained in the National Consultation of Leaders of Agriculture and Rural Life conducted by IICA.

The IS provides the stakeholders of agriculture with up-to-date strategic information, organized around a conceptual framework which is based on a comprehensive conception of agriculture and rural life and is always available on the Web site of the Secretariat of the ministerial process.



“Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance”

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The Heads of State and Government asked international organizations to develop an information system for the follow-up of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan

To request Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and ECLAC to continue with their efforts to develop an information system for the follow-up and evaluation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, and the other members of the Joint Summit Working Group to join in those efforts as a contribution to defining goals and indicators for the mandates of the Summit of the Americas.

Fourth Summit of the Americas, 2005
Paragraph 43, Plan of Action

Part III

The 2006-2007 Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and its Fourth Ministerial Meeting – Guatemala 2007

- **From Guayaquil 2005 to Guatemala 2007**
- **The 2007 GRICA**
- **The Fourth Ministerial Meeting**

2006-2007 Ministerial Process

ON THE ROAD TO GUATEMALA 2007

“Working together” for the agriculture and rural life in the Americas

Positioning agriculture and rural life on the national agenda and devising and implementing the measures needed to achieve their sustainable development are permanent challenges, challenges that all the actors of the agricultural sector must help tackle. Hence, the call to “work together” with all of them in realizing the 2015 Shared Vision, taking into account the hemispheric political framework and our ministerial agreements.

In essence, the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process, “working together,” offers the key actors responsible for the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life a mechanism and an opportunity to construct a renewed institutional framework and to beef up the joint activities and cooperation that will help us advance, swiftly and successfully, toward the Shared Vision of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas for 2015.

Bernardo López Figueroa

Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala
Chairperson of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting
September, 2006

FOURTH MINISTERIAL MEETING “AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN THE AMERICAS”



Inaugural ceremony chaired by His Excellency Oscar Berger Perdomo, President of the Republic of Guatemala. With him are Dr. Eduardo Stein, Vice President of the Republic of Guatemala; Dr. Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, of Trinidad and Tobago, Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group and Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas; Dr. Gerth Rosenthal Koenigsberger, Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala; Dr. Chelston W. D. Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, and Mr. Bernardo Lopez Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala.

From Guayaquil 2005 to Guatemala 2007

The Fourth Ministerial Meeting in the context of the Summit of the Americas process, held in Antigua, Guatemala, in July 2007, was an opportunity for the participants in the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” to take stock of the process up to that point and to look ahead.

In preparation for the meeting, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture

agreed on the actions to be carried out in, and the stages of, the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process, which focused on the implementation and follow-up of the HMAs adopted in Guayaquil in 2005, at the Third Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.” Those agreements were endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata 2005), when they adopted as a “national

commitment” the implementation of the HMA Guayaquil 2005 of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

The strategic actions and measures for implementing and following up on that HMA and others that complement it gave pride of place to the following:

- The establishment of national policy in the countries;
- An adjustment of regional strategies;
- Development of an information system for following up on the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action; and
- The updating of the hemispheric agenda for the 2008-2009 biennium and measures for its implementation.

In early 2006, Guatemala, as the host country for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, assumed its initial and proactive role as Chair of the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process, which it steered and spearheaded. In the publication, *Towards Guatemala 2007: Working together for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*, the Chair proposed the slogan for guiding the Process and the meeting. In that publication, the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food stated the following:

“Essentially, the 2006–2007 Ministerial Process, ‘working together’, offers stakeholders responsible for the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life a forum and an opportunity to build a renewed institutional framework and strengthen joint action and cooperation

as a means of contributing to rapid and successful progress towards a shared vision of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas through 2015.”

In mid-June of 2006, the Minister also informed his counterparts about the path decided on in the run-up to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, the implementation of the 2005 Guayaquil Agreement and the designation of the regular and alternate Ministerial Delegates. He also asked them to take necessary action to coordinate the work required for this meeting.

To assist the Ministerial Delegates with the assignments mandated by the ministers, the Chair prepared, with support from the Secretariat, a proposal entitled “Basis for a work program for the Ministerial Delegates”. This document, which served as a general reference for work at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, pinpoints the four objectives that highlight the “working together” approach, the basic activities, expected results and general programming towards Guatemala 2007.

The Delegates played a fundamental role in developing the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process and accomplished the following in their respective national spheres:

- Coordinated implementation of the HMAs, as mandated by the Ministers at their Third Ministerial Meeting;
- Reported on and coordinated, with their respective foreign ministries, the dissemination and follow-up of the

¹ *Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación. Hacia Guatemala 2007 “Trabajando juntos por el agro de las Américas. MAGA, Ciudad de Guatemala, septiembre 2006.*

mandates on agriculture and rural life of the Summits;

- Provided support for the “National consultation 2007 with leaders of agriculture and rural life of the Americas”, aimed at ascertaining the expectations and opinions of leaders, which is one of the three components of the Information System for the Follow-up of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. That consultation was coordinated by IICA in the 34 countries of the Americas, pursuant to the mandate of the Fourth Summit of the Americas and HMA Guayaquil 2005, in reference to an information system for the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan;
- Prepared the national report on progress made and challenges faced with the implementation of HMA Guayaquil 2005; and
- Participated in the preparation of HMA Guatemala 2007.

Based on the “2007 National Report on the progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005” provided by 26 countries, IICA, in its capacity as Secretariat for the Ministerial Process, prepared the “Base Document for the 2007 Hemispheric Dialogue”. This document was the main input used at the GRICA 2007 meeting, held on July 23 and 24, to prepare and build consensus on HMA Guatemala 2007.

The hemispheric dialogue, led by the Ministers of Agriculture, with support from the Ministerial Delegates, was a distinctive and vital element in the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” aimed at establishing the HMAs, in that it promoted participation by the private, social and public sectors in the countries and ensured the relevance and legitimacy of the strategic decisions adopted by the Ministers at their Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”.

A view from the countries: progress and challenges in the implementation of the HMA Guayaquil 2005

This “look” at the second stage (2006-2007) of the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan is based on the information provided by 24 countries in national reports on progress in the implementation of the HMA Guayaquil 2005 and on the challenges faced in its implementation.

The processes involved in implementing the HMA Guayaquil 2005

Taking into account the message behind and the formidable challenge embodied in the theme of the Fourth Ministerial

Meeting, one of the main objectives of the Secretariat when preparing the format of the 2007 National Report was to obtain information needed to come up with an overall appreciation from the countries of how the 2006-2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Agenda was being implemented. This included, for example, how the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan had been disseminated among the different key actors of agriculture and rural life, and how it was being used to identify the key actors involved in the implementation of the Hemispheric Agenda and reach agreement on actions in those areas of the Agenda that had received less attention.

The most important aspects identified in several reports were:

- the commitment of the government to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan,
- the consistency of the objectives of the national strategies with the those of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan,
- the use of the AGRO-Matrix, the conceptual framework of the AGRO Plan, in the formulation of policies,
- the different approaches to implementation, via a single agency, several agencies of the public agricultural and rural sector, or intersectoral work involving the private sector,
- the different levels of interest in disseminating the HMAs, and

- the facilitation of public-private participation and the use of the consultation, using new or existing institutional mechanisms.

The assessments of the countries were taken into account by the Secretariat when preparing the proposal for the **Implementation and Follow-up** section of the HMA Guatemala 2007.

The most important national experiences: a valuable source of knowledge

The information contributed by the countries in their reports on the most important initiatives they were implementing, arranged according to the 12 purposes of the AGRO-Matrix, constitutes a valuable resource for the countries which could enhance horizontal cooperation and contribute to the generation of knowledge on innovative experiences in the implementation of strategic actions.

The large number of interesting initiatives reported are related to the 12 purposes of the AGRO-Matrix. In order to share information on those initiatives with the countries, IICA has developed an on-line mechanism for the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO Plan.

It will take more than two biennia foreseen

by the Ministers to bring about the desired changes in agriculture and the living conditions in the rural communities of the Americas.

Four years after the adoption of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, the situation in agriculture and rural life has changed little, as have the challenges that led to the identification, in 2003 and 2005, of the strategic actions set out in the HMA Guayaquil 2005. Consequently, the continued implementation of national actions, many of which are innovative initiatives, confirms the appropriateness of the strategic actions identified by the Ministers in 2003 and 2005.

The regional strategies and the AGRO Plan: encouraging progress

Agriculture is involved in different ways in regional integration processes thanks to the existence of a wide variety range of regional policies. For different historical and institutional reasons, the focus in most cases is on the production-trade dimension of the AGRO 2015 Plan. Nonetheless, it should be noted that some intersectoral efforts have emerged in the regional institutional framework for agriculture and rural life.

Efforts under way in Central America and the Caribbean report significant progress in adjusting regional strategies within the framework of the AGRO Plan and its AGRO-Matrix, which has given rise to

different institutional arrangements that make it possible to address the ecological-environmental and sociocultural-human dimensions of the AGRO Plan.

Those efforts are aimed at moving toward the integration of regional sectoral mechanisms and at aligning sectoral strategies with the political decisions emanating from the regional fora of Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2015 Plan: its promotion and development

In the HMA Guayaquil 2005, the Ministers wisely called for the development of an information system for monitoring the AGRO Plan, comprising three components: national actions and challenges, performance indicators and the expectations of leaders. This ministerial decision was endorsed at the Fourth Summit of the Americas when the Heads of State and Government entrusted IICA and ECLAC with continuing to develop the system.

The national reports submitted by several countries confirm the existence of different information mechanisms, but they are not integrated, as called for in one of the Ministerial Agreements of Guayaquil 2005. Nonetheless, the reports reveal that the countries possess a wealth of information which, if integrated into the information system, would be invaluable for decision making by the Ministers of Agriculture.

In fulfillment of the presidential mandates, IICA and ECLAC continued to develop the information system. Specifically, ECLAC took the lead in developing the “performance indicators” component, and IICA the “national actions and challenges” and “expectations of leaders” components.

ECLAC’s work in the identification and development of indicators has served as the foundation for a regional initiative in the Caribbean, which is coordinated from the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago by the regional project “Building a Monitoring and Evaluation Information System for the Agro Plan 2003-2015 and Jagdeo Initiative in the Caribbean.”

The countries contributed greatly to the development of the last two components. As regards national actions and challenges, 24 countries prepared their 2007 National Report on Progress and Challenges, and 34 countries filled out 1238 questionnaires which were used as inputs for the 2007 National Consultation on the Expectations of Leaders of Agriculture and Rural Life.

Prevailing challenges and others not addressed in the AGRO Plan

A challenge exists when the decision has been made to do something about a given situation. Therefore, inherent to challenges are the actions to be taken to address that situation.

In the case of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, the challenges identified from observing the situation in agriculture and rural life at the beginning of the millennium and a vision for 2015 led to the definition of the objectives, purposes and strategic actions of the AGRO Plan and its 2006-2007 Hemispheric Agenda. The strategic actions contained in the hemispheric agendas reflect the decisions that have been agreed upon by more than one country and approved by the Ministers of Agriculture to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu in their countries.

The challenges encountered by the countries in the implementation of the HMA Guayaquil 2005 denote the persistence of economic, production-related, social and environmental and, above all, institutional problems that hinder the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Once again, concerns related to competitiveness, sustainability, equity, governance, rural prosperity, food security and the national and international positioning of agriculture and rural life come to the fore.

The challenges identified by the countries confirm the continued relevance of the strategic actions adopted in 2003 and 2005. However, other challenges identified by several countries are not reflected in the strategic actions set out in the 2006-2007 Hemispheric Agenda, which suggests

that additional strategic actions might be necessary.

Based on that analysis, the Secretariat prepared the “Base Document for the 2007 Hemispheric Dialogue,” which served as the foundation of the work of the 2007 GRICA aimed at drafting and building consensus on the HMA Guatemala 2007, which included new strategic topics for the 2006-2007 Hemispheric Agenda, submitted to the consideration of the 2007 GRICA, such as:

- Entrepreneurial and business capability and capability for innovation
- Market information,
- Inclusive chains linkages,
- Strengthening of small- and medium-scale rural enterprises,
- Environmental plan for business
- Repositioning of rural issues in national strategies,
- Establishment and follow-up of partnerships and agreements,
- Institutional modernization and strengthening of the rural public sector, and
- Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu.

In addition, the challenges identified by the countries, together with their assessment of how they had been implementing the 2006-2007 Hemispheric Agenda, provide grounds for reaffirming the topics defined in 2005 and adopting other new ones, and their measures, to facilitate implementation and follow-up of the HMA Guatemala 2007. The new topics refer to:

- disseminating the AGRO Plan and its HMA Guatemala 2007, and
- facilitating joint actions involving the public, private and social sectors.

The contributions of the countries support the continued implementation of actions related to:

- regional mechanisms and strategies,
- the information system,
- support of international organizations, and
- updating the Hemispheric Agenda.

In sum, the Ministerial Process that took place from Guayaquil 2005 to Guatemala 2007 constitutes a hemispheric ministerial experience that reflects the continuing improvements that have been made in policy formulation. Indeed, the Ministers approved a 2005 HMA with strategic actions and measures; are making efforts to implement it at the national level, which have given rise to valuable innovative experiences; and, in preparing the national

reports on progress and challenges, are identifying and monitoring those national efforts and, based on them, updating the new HMA.

IICA' contribution to the Ministerial Process

At the last three Summits of the Americas, the Heads of State and Government have expressed strong support for the process of improving agriculture and rural life spearheaded by the Ministers of Agriculture. Additionally, the HMAs adopted by the Ministers in Bavaro 2001, Panama 2003 and Guayaquil 2005 have become new mandates for IICA.

In response to the new hemispheric challenges and the mandates derived from the Summits and Ministerial Agreements, which constitute a new hemispheric dynamic, IICA promptly undertook a process of institutional modernization in which it assumed a dual role in helping the countries to implement the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan:

- a new role, as Secretariat of the Ministerial Process and its Ministerial

Meeting within the context of the Summit process, and

- its conventional, but renewed, role as an international cooperation organization aligned with the new institutional dynamic of the Americas.

As Secretariat, IICA's role in supporting implementation of the presidential mandates and the HMAs is to facilitate:

- the continuation of the Ministerial Process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,"
- regional integration within the framework of that process, and
- the articulation of the Ministerial Process with the Summit of the Americas process.

This articulation involves participating in the Summit review and follow-up mechanisms, through the OAS. The goal is to ensure that the positioning of agriculture and rural life achieved at the Third Summit will be consolidated in subsequent meetings of Heads of State and Government, as was the case at the Special Summit and the Fourth Summit of the Americas.

2007 GRICA

The Fourth Ministerial Meeting, as in previous meetings, was preceded by a meeting of the Group for the Implementation and Coordination of the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life (2007 GRICA), held in Antigua, Guatemala, on July 23-24, 2007, under the Chairmanship of Anabella Osorio Escobar, Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Life of Guatemala, and co-chaired by Fausto Jordan, Ministerial Delegate of Ecuador, and Lizardo de las Casas, for the Technical Secretariat.

The GRICA is the Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life appointed by the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture of the 34 countries of the Americas.

The hemispheric dialogue, headed by the Ministers of Agriculture with the support of the Ministerial Delegates and aimed at formulating the HMAs, is a unique and essential element of the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.” The hemispheric dialogue and efforts to build hemispheric consensus encourage the participation of the countries and ensure the relevance and legitimacy of the strategic decisions taken at the Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

As part of their duties within the Ministerial Process, the Delegates coordinate in their

respective countries the national proposal for the formulation of the HMAs and interact, in the GRICA, with the other Delegates in building hemispheric consensus, on this occasion, for the HMA Guatemala 2007.

“Through our hemispheric forum, GRICA, the Ministerial Delegates –both those who are currently serving and our predecessors, have supported the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture by contributing to strengthening a forum for dialogue, analysis and exchange of experiences, which has made it easier to proceed with the ongoing preparation of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements aimed at the sustainable improvement of agriculture and rural life in the Americas.”

Anabella Osorio Escobar,
Ministerial Delegate of Guatemala
Chair of GRICA 2007

At previous GRICA meetings, the Ministerial Delegates have played a leading role in building hemispheric consensus for the formulation of the following HMAs:

- Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (Bavaro 2001)

- AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (Panama 2003)
- AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (Guayaquil 2005)

The mandate

At the Second Ministerial Meeting (Panama 2003), the Ministers decided that the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action would be implemented under six biennial agendas. To this end, in Guayaquil, in the *Ministerial Agreement on Implementation and Follow-up of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan in Preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting*, the Ministers agreed:

- To charge the Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA) with updating the Hemispheric Agenda, for application in 2008-2009, to be presented at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting.”
- “To charge the Ministerial Delegates, with support from the Secretariat of the Ministerial Meeting, and in advance of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, with preparing the national reports on compliance with the 2006-2007 Hemispheric Agenda of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, and on the challenges encountered in implementing the Plan.”

Inauguration of the 2007 GRICA Meeting

Participating in the opening session were Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of IICA; Carlos Vallejo Lopez, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador and Co-chair of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting; and Bernardo Lopez Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala and Chair of that meeting.

Dr. Brathwaite, for the benefit of those Delegates attending a GRICA meeting for the first time, explained how agriculture and rural life had come to be included as strategic issues on the Inter-American agenda, and the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” noting that “...*from the very beginning, this process has been characterized by one important feature: the countries have been in charge of every aspect of its implementation.*”

He called particular attention to the contribution of the Ministerial Delegates, indicating that, in their respective countries and in the Hemispheric Forum, they had played a pioneering and fundamental role in the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.” Their duties, he added, had ranged from coordinating the formulation of the national proposals for the Ministerial Agreements, the dissemination of same, the coordination of their implementation, the preparation of progress reports and the identification of

challenges, to participating in this Forum of Delegates, the objective of which was to build hemispheric consensus on the Agreements for consideration by the Ministers.

In his address, Mr. Carlos Vallejo Lopez focused on several questions related to the persistence of poverty and social inequality in Latin America despite decades of efforts intended to reduce them, and to the need to view the rural milieu from a political perspective. In this regard, he urged the participants in the 2007 GRICA to propose actions aimed at addressing both problems, and expressed hope that, in doing so, they would focus on substance rather than form in putting forth a model for emerging from underdevelopment.

Mr. Bernardo López agreed with Minister Vallejo's idea of taking a political approach to technical issues, saying "... *there is no need to apologize for addressing such an important and structural topic from a political perspective; someone must, and it is timely to bring it to the attention of the technical forum.*" I share, he added, the interest we all have in improving the living standards of the rural populations of the continent. And he argued:

"...if we understand the economy as the establishment of those relationships of production that tend to satisfy the basic needs of human beings and ensure the sustainability of their environment, in our continent, agriculture and rural life are fundamental pillars of our economies. Therefore, we should feel encouraged to include political considerations when addressing a

topic that cannot only be viewed from a technical standpoint."

Minister López stated that since the Third Ministerial Meeting, held Guayaquil in 2005, fundamental changes had taken place in the international context of agriculture, noting that strategic topics such as energy and biofuels, climate change, and biotechnology and their impact on multilateral agricultural trade negotiations had been growing in importance on the agenda and in public opinion. As a result, he added, "...*we need to redefine the boundaries within which we wish to operate if we hope to see these good intentions translated into actions.*"

In inaugurating the meeting, Minister López told the Delegates:

"...you are the heart of this "Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas." This meeting and the results you as Ministerial Delegates obtain and pass on to the Ministerial Meeting will determine, from the beginning, success or failure in the treatment of the strategic topics of this Fourth Ministerial Meeting."

The 2007 GRICA meeting

Ms. Anabella Osorio Escobar, Chair of the 2007 GRICA, opened the meeting with an overview of the Ministerial Process, underscoring the active role played by the countries in preparing the national proposals and building consensus within the GRICA for the formulation of the

GRICA in the 2001-2007 Ministerial Process

	2001	2003	2005	2007
NATIONAL INPUTS	III Summit of Americas (Québec) 31 Proposals Declaration and Guidelines	Special Summit of Americas (Monterrey) HMA Bavaro 2001 30 Proposals on Strategic Actions	IV Summit of Americas (Mar del Plata) HMA Panama 2003 29 Progress Reports 25 Challenges Reports	HMA Guayaquil 2005 24 Progress and Challenges Reports
SECRETARIAT	Guidelines for Dialogue Synthesis of National Proposals	Strategic Guidelines Synthesis of Strategic Actions Proposals	Background Information for Hemispheric Dialogue Base Document for Hemispheric Dialogue	Background Information for Hemispheric Dialogue Base Document for Hemispheric Dialogue
RESULTS	HMA Bavaro 2001 (First Ministerial)	HMA Panama 2003 (Second Ministerial) AGRO Plan (First Hemispheric Agenda)	HMA Guayaquil 2005 (Third Ministerial) AGRO Plan (Second Hemispheric Agenda)	HMA Guatemala 2007 (Fourth Ministerial) AGRO Plan (Third Hemispheric Agenda)

2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 HMAs. In this regard, she acknowledged the Regular and Alternate Delegates for the role they played in leading the national dialogue, conducting the 2007 National Consultation of Leaders of Agriculture and Rural Life, and preparing the national reports on compliance with the HMA Guayaquil 2005.

Continuing, she set forth what the principal result of the meeting should be:

“...Our responsibility is to send to the Ministers a proposed Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007. The Agreement must contain the inputs we already addressed in the process of preparing and defining those new strategic actions we believe

will support the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. As of today, our AGRO Plan comprises 51 strategic actions. The experience of the Delegates in their countries shows that the AGRO Plan continues to be relevant; however, as the Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala said earlier, the context has changed, making it necessary to add new strategic actions which we must arrive at by consensus.”

She concluded by saying that the Agreement should “...state clearly the belief that “working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas” can become a reality, and that, together, we can move towards the Shared Vision 2015 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

Dr. las Casas indicated that the working methodology would be the same one followed in the GRICA meetings in 2001, 2003 and 2005, explaining that the Delegates would use the proposal prepared by the Secretariat “Base document for the 2007 Hemispheric Dialogue” as the basis for their work. This proposal presents and summarizes, as of the date of the meeting, the proposals of the countries, indicated in the National Reports on Progress and Challenges in the Implementation of the HMA Guayaquil 2005, and the comments made on the first version of the document via virtual dialogue.

He added that the Forum of Delegates would work on each one of the paragraphs of the base document, which would be projected on two screens placed side by side (English and Spanish). The goal would be to improve upon the proposed texts and approve by consensus each of the strategic actions of the 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda and the measures for their implementation, which make up the HMA.

For two days, the Delegates engaged in deliberations and reached consensus on the HMA Guatemala 2007, which is described below. The full text of the agreement appears in Annex 1.

The Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007

Four years after it was signed, the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan has been expanded and

improved as a result of the strategic guidelines and actions in the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 and the measures for its implementation and follow-up.

Three significant aspects for a renewed institutional framework characterize the decisions of the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture and are of enormous conceptual, practical and political value to stakeholders in agriculture and rural life in the Americas who are interested in or responsible for the comprehensive and sustainable development of agriculture and rural life.

First are the two underlying strategic guidelines, which reflect the conceptual approach that informed the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and the actual HMA: promoting with stakeholders in agriculture and rural life a broad-based concept of agriculture and rural life and a different approach to these areas, and promoting with them the “working together” approach to agriculture and rural life in the Americas. Both guidelines are complementary and, together, offer significant potential for establishing and implementing more effective national, regional and hemispheric strategies and policies.

The first feature is reinforced by the second distinctive aspect of HMA Guatemala 2007: the express desire to promote the strategic actions jointly and in coordination with other stakeholders in agriculture and

rural life in the public, private and social sectors. This is specifically emphasized in the participation and establishment of partners and commitments to move forward with building a more conducive renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, the overarching objective of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

The third distinctive feature of HMA Guatemala 2007, which is rather of a political nature, concerns the need to view agriculture and rural life in the context of society and its priorities and to consider the repercussions that this has on national strategies and policies. This HMA, which has extraordinary value for the Ministerial Process leading up to 2009, embodies the ministerial commitment to participate proactively in the repositioning of agriculture and rural life and the related priorities in national strategies, and to promote an increased appreciation of agriculture and the rural milieu, thereby contributing to meet strategic and emerging challenges to development.

These strategic actions aim at promoting in society an increased understanding of the contribution of agriculture and the rural milieu to development, rural–urban balance in national strategies and an end to the biases and exclusions that exist to the detriment of agriculture and rural communities. What is more, the spirit and political vision that ensue from HMA Guatemala 2007 provide the mainstay for the proposals and priorities that emerge

from the process as we move towards the Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009.

2007 GRICA Meeting



Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas discussing and building consensus on the HMA Guatemala 2007 during the 2007 GRICA Meeting, held in Antigua, Guatemala, on July 23-24, 2007. From left to right, Bernardo Lopez Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala; Carlos Vallejo Lopez, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador; and Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

The Fourth Ministerial Meeting

The meeting provided the participants in the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” begun in 2006 after the Third Ministerial (Guayaquil 2005) and the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata 2005), with an opportunity to take stock of process up to that point and look ahead. At this Fourth Meeting, the dialogue among and

the decisions adopted by the Ministers and their Delegates were based on the theme “*Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas*” and their impact will be felt throughout the next biennium, in particular, in the run up to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting (Jamaica 2009) and the Fifth Summit of the Americas (Trinidad and Tobago 2009).

The Ministerial Meeting was the main event of the “*Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas*” and was enhanced with the presentation of the results of: (i) the fora for stakeholders in civil society (private, public and academic sectors of agriculture); and (ii) the forum of Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life, based on the work in the countries, dialogue and the building of hemispheric consensus. The results of both fora contributed to the dialogue on the HMA Guatemala 2007.

The theme “Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas”

This theme reflects recognition on the part of government leaders and the Ministers of Agriculture of the need for joint action involving all the actors of agriculture and rural life. The goal in selecting this theme is to promote the creation of an institutional framework conducive to the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, through the development of institutional mechanisms that will facilitate joint efforts among public, private and social actors, and through the design and execution of strategic actions.

A wide variety of stakeholders in agriculture share the strategic objective of ensuring the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, and use resources of different kinds and in many ways to pursue it. Nonetheless, an approach that calls for individuals and groups in agriculture to

think and act separately is hindering a more synergistic relationship among those different stakeholders, which would make it easier to move toward the Shared Vision for 2015 of the AGRO Plan.

There is an urgent need to adopt a comprehensive concept of agriculture and rural life, one that includes and reflects an understanding of all stakeholders. That new way of viewing agriculture and rural life was developed and improved upon in the three preceding Ministerial Meetings and is summarized in the AGRO-Matrix, the conceptual framework of the AGRO Plan.

The Results

The following principal objectives were set and achieved:

- The adoption of the HMA Guatemala 2007, with strategic actions to facilitate implementation of the AGRO Plan in the 2008-2009 biennium.
- A broader understanding of strategic issues and the identification of challenges that will serve as the basis for defining new strategic actions.
- A renewed commitment on the part of the countries to the development of an Information System for Monitoring the AGRO Plan.
- The strengthening of cooperation under the AGRO Plan.

The Inaugural Session

The Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” was inaugurated on July 24, 2007, in Antigua, Guatemala, by His Excellency Oscar Berger Perdomo, President of the Republic of Guatemala. He was accompanied at the head table by Eduardo Stein, Vice President of the Republic of Guatemala; Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of the American State; Luis Albert Rodriguez, of Trinidad and Tobago, Chairman of the Summit Implementation Review Group and Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas; Gerth Rosenthal, Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala; Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture; and Bernardo Lopez Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala.

The ceremony was also attended by other government ministers from Guatemala; delegations from the member countries of the Summit of the Americas process; Heads of diplomatic missions and international organizations; members of the diplomatic corps; Jose Graciano Da Silva, Assistant-Director General and Regional Representative of FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean; Directors Emeritus of IICA; officials of international organizations; and invited speakers and guests.

The following people spoke during the ceremony:

The Director General of IICA

“Let us work together to make the Americas a region of peace and social equity for all.”

Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite extended the delegations of the Member States a cordial welcome to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” indicating that the large number of people in attendance was proof of their commitment and their determination to find solutions to the problems facing agriculture and rural life in the 21st century.

In order to place the Fourth Ministerial Meeting in the context of the Summit of the Americas process, Dr. Brathwaite provided an overview of the mandates on agriculture and rural life adopted by the Heads of State and Government. He also referred to the Ministerial Meetings held in the Dominican Republic in 2001, in Panama in 2003 and in Ecuador in 2005, underscoring the importance of the agreements reached at each, especially the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*, a shared hemispheric agenda adopted in Panama in 2003, and updated via the HMA Guayaquil 2005.

Referring to the scale of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, Dr. Brathwaite indicated that most of the poor lived in rural areas and depended on agriculture, saying:

“We are here today to renew our commitment to develop a modern agricultural sector that contributes to rural prosperity, so that more of our citizens can escape the clutches of poverty.”

In this regard, he noted that we were standing on the threshold of a new agriculture characterized by its contribution to the production of food and energy, to the mitigation of the impact of climate change and to the reduction of poverty. He indicated, however, that if this agriculture was to be successful in providing lasting solutions, it would be necessary to have a new institutional framework with strategic and operative partnerships involving governments, international agencies, the private sector and other sectors of civil society.

“...we can transform the rural sector from a state of poverty to a state of prosperity, if we promote and implement policies of inclusion that provide for investments in infrastructure, education, health care, provision of decent employment and good governance.”

In closing, the Director General shared the following ideas with the audience:

- (i) if the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty in our Hemisphere is to be achieved, it is essential to increase rural incomes;
- (ii) rural prosperity is essential if there is to be social stability and democratic governance in our countries; and

- (iii) the rural poor cannot wait, their problems require urgent solutions.

The Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala and Chairman of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting

Minister Lopez called attention to four important events for agriculture in the hemisphere being held during the *Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas*: the Hemispheric Meeting of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA 2007), the fora for the business sector and civil society, the Fourth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and the Fourteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA).

In addition to the fact that the events were taking place at the same time and in the same place, he underscored two important aspects of same. The first was the **strategic topics** to be addressed, including biofuels, biotechnology, climate change and its impact on agriculture, and the international agricultural trade negotiations under the WTO. In this regard, he stated that there was a common thread to those topics, pointing out that since the meeting in Guayaquil there had been a dramatic in the role of agriculture worldwide: as an economic activity, it now produced not only food, but also energy. He said that this fact gave rise a new scenario in which action must be taken, noting:

“...We are lucky to have fora and institutions with people who are intelligent and flexible enough to rethink their policies and their plans. And the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, to which we committed ourselves in Panama, enables us to delve further into and understand the new phenomenon, the new context, the new framework and, most importantly, to make technical and political decisions on what must be done in the face of this new context.”

He then referred to the actors involved, indicating that the Forum of Ministers would be supported, strengthened and enriched with the contributions and conclusions of the forum for representatives of the private sector and the forum for representatives of civil society. As a result, he added, the Ministerial Forum would be able to contribute more effectively to the upcoming Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009.

The Chairman of the Summit Implementation Review Group and Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas

“It is an honor and privilege for me to be part of the inaugural proceedings of this important Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life. This Ministerial Meeting is a significant part of the hemispheric political and operational mechanism that drives and sustains the Summits process.”

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, of Trinidad and Tobago, which will host the Fifth Summit of the Americas, stated that the last four Summits had created a solid political framework for action, and that what was needed now was solidarity and unity in the region to mobilize the forces for collective action. We must, he said, bring the different cultures, ethnic groups, races and interests together and have the determination and political will to work toward the hemispheric goal of doing away with poverty, marginalization and inequality.

He also suggested that the most effective way to face those problems was to invest in human capital. The basic needs (health, nutrition, housing and security) of each person and family in this hemisphere, he noted, must be met, and they must have the opportunity to develop the abilities, knowledge and competences they need to enjoy a better standard of living and greater levels of personal satisfaction.

In that context, agriculture and rural life, he said, were intrinsic parts of the complexity of life in the Americas. He concluded that, viewed from a perspective that entails more than production, agriculture was essential in promoting rural development, eliminating poverty, creating jobs, increasing incomes, preserving social stability and involving citizens more directly in the development of their local communities.

He added that in the preceding five years poverty levels had remained very high. That, he continued, was proof that efforts

to achieve sustainable development would fail unless a balance can be struck between urban development and similar rural initiatives and unless a sense of belonging could be created at all levels and in all segments of society.

Further, he said that unless progress was monitored and measured, it would not be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the national policies adopted to respond to the mandates of the Summits. Next, he stated that the Plan of Action of Mar del Plata endorsed that position by supporting further action on the part of IICA and ECLAC aimed at developing an information system for monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

In closing, he invited the Member States and institutions such as IICA to work with the Secretariat of the Fifth Summit of the Americas in defining strategic priorities on which consensus could be developed for joint action.

The Secretary General of the OAS

Jose Miguel Insulza stated that the Fourth Ministerial Meeting was important because it was taking place at a time in which agriculture was undergoing great change and in which the outlook was very positive for the sector, which was inextricably linked to the history, economy and culture of the countries of the Americas.

After referring to the contribution of agriculture and rural life to the development

of countries, he noted that the current global context demanded that we: (i) increase productivity substantially in rural areas; (ii) improve the working and living conditions of the rural population; and (iii) increase the quantity and quality of agricultural products. In our countries, he added, those actions would have a direct impact on reducing poverty, bringing about social cohesion and achieving comprehensive development.

He indicated that while it was true that some progress had been made, there was still much to be done in strengthening public institutions, designing public policies, establishing regulatory frameworks and making sound investments to strengthen agriculture. He added that it was also necessary: (i) to do more to stimulate the private sector, enterprises and small- and medium-scale farmers, by improving access to raw materials, new technologies and financial services and (ii) to increase significantly investment in roads, small-scale irrigation systems and processing plants that can comply with the quality standards required for exportation.

Of course, he added, social policies aimed at attacking the poverty that still affects many small farm families were also needed. He went on to say that the political stability achieved so far and the economic opportunities facilitated by access to markets could lead to the generation of jobs and reduce poverty in the agricultural sector.

He referred specifically to how the

development of agriculture could be boosted by the generation of energy from alternative and renewable sources. These include agroenergy and biofuels, whose environmental impacts are minimal, as set forth in the Declaration of Panama, approved at the 37th Annual General Assembly of the OAS, Panama 2007.

As regards the international context, he indicated that attention should be focused on liberalizing international trade and insisting on the elimination of distortions in our export markets, particularly those attributable to subsidies and protectionist tariffs. He also noted that the tariffs developing countries charge one another continued to be very high, stating that it was necessary to continue promoting integration in our region, in the understanding that intraregional trade is one of our strengths.

“Mr. Chairman, Ministers, we have many needs, but we also have many strengths that we must learn to use to our advantage. It is up to you to ensure that agriculture and rural life, those areas of our society that have contributed so much to our history, our identity and our culture, contribute to our economic strength and to the promotion of equity and social justice in our region.”

The President of the Republic of Guatemala

“The theme of this meeting ‘Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas’ assures me that

it will be a positive step forward in the formulation of policies derived from the interaction of the different social actors, and that these Ministerial Meetings will become the political framework that will benefit agriculture in the Americas.”

The President inaugurated the Fourth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” by extending a cordial welcome to the Ministers of Agriculture and their Delegates from the 34 member countries of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

He indicated that the meeting would focus on analyzing the new challenges being faced by agriculture as a result of emerging problems that would have an impact on its future development; the adoption of environmentally friendly practices that would contribute to mitigating the causes of climate change; the role of agriculture in the generation of energy from alternative sources; and the role of biotechnology in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

According to the President, the inclusion of these new topics on the agenda would encourage reflection on how to reassess the value of agriculture and the impact of its development on the lives of millions of rural inhabitants, and was done with one purpose in mind; to achieve comprehensive development through joint strategic actions to reduce the levels of rural and urban poverty in Latin America and strengthen the institutional framework of agriculture.

The Ministerial Meeting

the context

Bernardo López Figueroa, Chairman of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, accompanied by Carlos Vallejo López, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador and Co-Chair of the meeting, opened the meeting by explaining its purpose, significance and agenda. The presentation of the report from the Secretariat on progress in the Ministerial Process from the Quebec Summit of 2001 to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting Guatemala 2007 placed the meeting in the context of the Summit of the Americas process and its Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of IICA, noted that the presence of delegations from 30 countries reflected a renewed commitment to developing a new agriculture in the Americas, as called for by the ministers and political leaders of the Hemisphere in Quebec in 2001. The Fourth Ministerial Meeting, he added, was a new opportunity for reflection and to continue on the course they had set. Since 1994, he continued, the Summit of the Americas process had increased our willingness to work together toward a hemisphere that is more fair, secure and prosperous. He then stated that the inclusion of agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda in 2001 had been a great step forward.

“The political will expressed by the Heads of State and Government

at the Summit held in Quebec is today the path we will follow to consolidate their decisions and find solutions that will help us to face the challenges of poverty and development. The Ministerial Meetings are in that regard the most advanced/preeminent and important forum for dialogue and participation.”

Next, Lizardo de las Casas referred to the hemispheric dynamic for agriculture and rural life derived from the mandates of the Third Summit of the Americas, Quebec 2001, plus those issued in Monterrey in 2004 and Mar del Plata in 2005.

He explained that in the Declaration of the Third Summit the Heads of State and Government had recognized that the improvement of agriculture and rural life was essential for the reduction of poverty and for comprehensive development, and underscored in its Plan of Action the importance of agriculture in its dual role as a way of life for millions of rural families and as a strategic economic sector for the generation of prosperity.

He added that, with a view to promoting the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu and supporting the implementation of the plans of actions of the Summits, at the Third Summit the Ministers of Agriculture were given two

mandates: one at the national level referring to the promotion of dialogue involving government ministers, parliamentarians and civil society, with the objective of building long-term national strategies, and another at the hemispheric level referring to the promotion of joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector.

Dr. de las Casas explained that the Ministerial Process had been interacting with the Summit of the Americas process since 2001, supporting the implementation of and updating the mandates on agriculture and rural life. The Ministerial Meetings provided participants in the Ministerial Process an opportunity to take stock and look ahead, were based on an institutional framework that operated in the periods between the meetings, supported the implementation of the HMAs, followed up on their implementation, prepared the new agreements and ensured that the Ministerial Process contributed to the following Summit.

He then mentioned that the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas* was the main HMA and consisted of a Shared Vision for 2015, Strategic Objectives, Biennial Hemispheric Agendas and Measures for their Implementation and Follow-up. In developing the Plan, the Delegates and Ministers of Agriculture used a renewed concept of agriculture and rural life which recognized both as complex phenomena involving many actors and interests.

That concept, he indicated, is summed up in the **AGRO-Matrix**. The Matrix, when used by interested stakeholders, promotes a broad understanding of agriculture and rural life which can serve as a foundation in the formulation of effective strategies and policies for the transformation of both, in keeping with the Shared Vision for 2015.

Referring to the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process, he focused on six aspects identified in the national reports prepared by the Ministerial Delegates on progress and challenges in the implementation of the HMA Guayaquil HMA. Those six aspects, he noted, characterized the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process and constituted the key elements of the hemispheric dialogue conducted by Ministerial Delegates in preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting. They are:

- The AGRO Plan has not been widely disseminated.
- The AGRO-Matrix is the most important contribution of the Ministerial Process.
- National experiences in the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan are valuable and can be shared via horizontal cooperation actions.
- Few institutional mechanisms exist for the implementation of the AGRO Plan.
- It is necessary to develop and implement an Information System for Monitoring the AGRO Plan.

- Progress and challenges in implementing the AGRO Plan drive the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

As regards the 2008-2009 Ministerial Process, he referred to the three challenges that IICA, as Technical Secretariat of the Ministerial Process, shared with the members of the Joint Summit Working Group and with the National Summit Coordinators of the 34 Ministries of Foreign Affairs in preparation for the

Fifth Summit of the Americas (Trinidad and Tobago 2009).

The first, he said, was the urgent need to link the hemispheric and national levels by building a renewed institutional framework in the countries; the second, the urgent need to recognize rural life as a national treasure and an essential resource for comprehensive development, which will help eliminate the urban bias from national policies; and the third, the full integration of agriculture into the society of knowledge.

Challenges for agriculture and rural life in the Americas in the 21st century

In light of the major global and hemispheric challenges and via presentations by guest speakers and the dialogue with the ministers, this segment of the Ministerial Meeting focused on addressing strategic themes of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, selected for their currency and complementary nature, for the purpose of identifying relevant challenges for the leaders of agriculture and rural life.

Agricultural development and its role in reducing rural and urban poverty in the Americas

*Guest speaker: Daniel Lederman,
World Bank economist*

Dr. Lederman attempted to put into context the challenges the leaders of agriculture should address in the different strategic topics of the Ministerial Panel. His presentation centered on three main ideas: i) the contribution of the primary agricultural sector and agroindustrial sector to national development is greater than the size of the sector; ii) certain public goods contribute to the international competitiveness of the sector; and iii) the way in which public funds are spent in rural areas affects the efficiency of that spending.

Ministerial dialogue. Delegations from Guatemala, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Ecuador,

Argentina, Colombia, Haiti and Chile participated.

The Ministerial Panel on the environment, agroenergy and biotechnology: the challenges for leaders

Its purpose was to contribute to a broader understanding of emerging topics that will impact on the future, for which the Ministers defined strategic actions in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and in the Hemispheric Ministerial Agendas adopted in the Ministerial Meetings held in Panama (2003) and in Guayaquil (2005).

Climate change and agriculture: adaptation and mitigation

*Guest speaker: Holm Tiessen,
Director of the Inter-American Institute for
Global Climate Research,
headquartered in Sao Paulo, Brazil.*

“To encourage the development of various approaches and mechanisms that recognize the value of the environmental services offered by the rural milieu and environmentally sound practices. Market opportunities for goods and services produced in an environmentally sustainable manner.”

*AGRO 2003-2015 Plan
Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005
Strategic action # 6*

Ways to help generate energy and meet the demand for food: the case of agro-energy and bio-fuels

*Guest speaker: Roberto Rodrigues,
Chairman of the Senior Agribusiness Council,
Federation of Industries of the State
of Sao Paulo, Brazil*

“To promote policies that will encourage the generation of energy from alternative sources based on agricultural and agroindustrial activities, sustainable use of renewable natural resources and modern biotechnology.”

*AGRO 2003-2015 Plan
Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005
Strategic action # 4*

Biotechnology in agriculture and rural life

*Speaker: Victor Manual Villalobos,
Coordinator of International Affairs,
Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock,
Rural Development, Fisheries and Food
of Mexico, Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture
and Head of Mexican delegation to
the Fourth Ministerial Meeting*

“To develop new products based on the application of biotechnologies, within the framework of national policies on innovation considering

biosafety mechanisms, with the coordinated participation of public and private sectors in compliance with existing regional and international agreements”.

*AGRO 2003-2015 Plan
Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005
Strategic action # 3*

Ministerial Dialogue: Delegations from Honduras, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Canada, Guatemala, the United States of America, Chile, Argentina and El Salvador participated.

Fora for key stakeholders in agriculture and rural life in the Americas: presentation of results

As part of the “Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas,” the government of Guatemala, in keeping with the approach “working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas,” held two fora for key stakeholders in agriculture and rural life:

- Forum “The Role of Agribusiness in a Renewed Institutional Framework for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Life,” with the participation of agribusiness operators from the Americas. It was chaired by the President of the Chamber of Agriculture of Guatemala, Carlos Zuñiga, and the Deputy Minister of Livestock and Water Resources of Guatemala, Gustavo Mendizabal.
- Forum “The Role of Social Actors in a Renewed Institutional Framework for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Life,” attended by representatives of civil society, including the academic sector. The forum was chaired by the Executive Director of the Guatemalan Confederation of Federations of Cooperatives (CONFECOOP), Rodolfo Orozco, and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources of Guatemala, Claudio Cabrera.

In both events, participants identified the challenges they would face and roles they would be expected to play in constructing

a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu which is characterized by the strengthening of relations and interaction among the public, private and social sectors. During this segment of the Ministerial Meeting, representatives of both fora presented the results obtained in each.

First, Rodolfo Orozco, representing the Forum of Social Actors, presented the results of their dialogue, set forth in the declaration “*Construction of a renewed institutional framework: a view from the rural territories,*” and identified the following **challenges**:

- Creation of opportunities for dialogue and consensus building among actors in the public and private sectors and civil society, focusing on the implementation of public policies, and their instruments, for the sustainable development of the rural milieu.
- Creation of new and/or application of existing legal frameworks required for effective political and economic decentralization, to make the transfer of competences and responsibilities to local actors possible.
- Development of human and social capital in the territories, applying, inter alia, strategies that will promote education, training, formation of associations, dialogue, consensus building, shared responsibility and solidarity.
- Creation of institutional mechanisms that will promote and implement

development initiatives based on the potential of the territories, taking into consideration the economic, ecological-environmental, and social and cultural dimensions.

- Development of a culture that is inclusive of local actors in the process of making decisions related to sustainable development.

Orozco then read out **the commitment** adopted at the forum to meet these challenges:

“...the civil society organizations linked to agriculture and rural life hereby state our willingness to promote the execution of joint actions with the ministries of agriculture and the agribusiness sector, leading to the progressive construction of a renewed institutional framework in the territories that will be conducive to rural prosperity.”

Carlos Zuñiga, representing the Forum of Agribusiness Operators, presented the results of their dialogue, contained in the declaration “*Construction of a renewed institutional framework: a view from the agricultural production-trade chains.*” He pointed out that, from the perspective of the chains and Purpose XI¹ of the AGRO-Matrix, the most pressing **challenges** were:

- To provide legal protections in order to promote agribusiness development and investment in rural areas.

¹ *Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors of the chain*

- To create innovative financial instruments, in support of agribusiness and the articulation of the chains.
- To involve the public and private sectors in the formulation of long-term national policies.
- To make public-private dialogue more effective and strengthen the new institutional framework by involving more actors from the chains.

To meet those challenges, he added, the private sector committed itself:

- To create a forum for dialogue with the public sector of our countries with a view to formulating long-term national policies that are agreed upon by consensus and aligned with one another.
- To do all we can to promote innovation in the financial, legal, political and educational sectors, as a means of contributing to the competitive development of agriculture in our countries and to the improvement of living conditions in the rural sector.
- To modernize business organizations so they can meet the demands of society and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the markets.

The representatives of both Fora asked the Ministers to make the Fora a permanent part of the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.”

Next, the Ministers were presented with the results of the Forum on Technology, held

in Antigua, Guatemala, on July 24. Mario Moscoso, President of the Central American Agricultural Technology Integration System (SICTA), called attention to the importance of science, technology and innovation for agricultural development, underscoring the fact that the “new agriculture” required that greater priority be attached to technology, in order to help take advantage of opportunities and anticipate new needs. He added that the Forum on Technology was asking the governments of the countries of the Americas, through the Ministers of Agriculture, to:

- Provide support in the formulation of research and innovation policies that will lead to the development of national systems for the improvement of agricultural production processes.
- Reverse the alarming decline in public investment in agricultural research in the Americas, and promote joint public-private efforts.
- Encourage greater participation of international technical and financial cooperation agencies in the development of the research and technology innovation agenda.
- Promote the strengthening of the human capital dedicated to research and technology innovation.

Finally, Carlos Cobos, President of the Inter-American Network of Water Resources, provided a glimpse of the Forum on Water, to be held in Guatemala after the Ministerial Meeting.

The Continuation of the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” from Guayaquil 2005 to Guatemala 2007

The following topics were addressed in this segment of the Ministerial Meeting: progress on the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO Plan, the report of the Chair of the 2007 GRICA, the ministerial dialogue on the institutional framework, and the signing of the HMA Guatemala 2007.

Progress in developing the Information System for Monitoring and Evaluating the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan

Lizardo de las Casas, from the Secretariat of the Meeting, reported on progress in developing the information system that the Ministers, in the 2005 Guayaquil HMA, and the Heads of State and Government, in Mandate 43 of the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas, Mar del Plata 2005, had requested from IICA and ECLAC and other international institutions.

The Ministers, he underscored, indicated that three complementary aspects should be considered in developing the system: (i) progress in the implementation of the strategic actions of the Plan, (ii) their impact on the sustainable development of

agriculture and the rural milieu, and (iii) the expectations of their leaders. These aspects became the three components of the system: the **national experiences**, the **performance indicators** and the **expectations of leaders**.

He then said that, if the information of those components was to be comparable and complementary and make it possible to visualize relations among them, it would be necessary to use a common conceptual base for the three components. That conceptual framework, he said, was constructed by the Ministers and Ministerial Delegates from 2001 to 2005. The first step of the process was to define the overarching objective of the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” which is the **sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu**, to be measured in terms of achieving the objectives associated with competitiveness, sustainability, equity and governance.

A second step was taken at the Second Ministerial Meeting, when the Ministers stated in the second paragraph of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan that in developing

The AGRO-Matrix				
Systemic Concept	Rural Territories	Agricultural Production-Trade Chains	National and International Context	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Sustainable Development approach				
Production - Trade	I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises	II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness	III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture	→ Competitiveness
Ecological - environmental	IV. Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas	V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management	VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework	→ Sustainability
Sociocultural - human	VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity	VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in the chain	IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities	→ Equity
Political - institutional	X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories	XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actions in the chain	XII. Promoting national policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life	→ Governance
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Rural Prosperity - Food Security - International Positioning			OVERARCHING GOAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL MILIEU

it they had adopted a systemic concept of agriculture and rural life which takes into consideration rural territories, *agricultural production-trade chains and the national and international context*; as well as an approach to sustainable development which comprises objectives associated with competitiveness, sustainability, equity and governance, and defines *production-trade, ecological-environmental, sociocultural-human, and 0*. A third step, he added, was the definition of 12 Purposes in the HMA Guayaquil 2005. The culmination of this process was the AGRO-Matrix, which serves as the common conceptual basis for the three components of the Information System.

The Information System, he said, consists of three components, which organize

information on the basis of the Purposes and Objectives identified in the AGRO-Matrix. Using information obtained from the 2007 National Reports on progress and challenges in implementing the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, coordinated by the Ministerial Delegates, from the documents on indicators prepared by ECLAC, and from the 2007 National Consultation with Leaders of Agriculture and Rural Life, he demonstrated the use of the Information System, available at: <http://www.iica.int/cumbres/>. He concluded by explaining that the system could be implemented in the countries and regions in stages, given the different level of progress of each country.

Dr. Brathwaite emphasized the fact that the work we were engaged in, on which Dr. las Casas had just reported, was essential for defining the new agriculture. The AGRO-Matrix, he added, was an analytical tool, but also a powerful policy instrument each country could use to analyze and define the agriculture of the 21st century, a multisectoral agriculture with four fundamental dimensions: sustainability, competitiveness, equity and governance.

As for the Information System, he defined it as a powerful instrument for facilitating the exchange of knowledge in the hemisphere; in particular, he pointed to the expectations of leaders component as a valuable instrument for bringing about change, in pursuit of the Shared Vision for 2015 of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

He then acknowledged the contributions of ECLAC, FAO and PAHO in the development of the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

Building consensus for actions in 2009: the 2007 GRICA meeting

Anabella Osorio Escobar, Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture of Guatemala, in her capacity as Chair of the Group for the Implementation and Coordination of the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life of the Summits Process (GRICA), shared with the Ministers the results of the 2007 GRICA meeting, held in Antigua, Guatemala, on July 23-24 as part of the “Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas.”

She called attention to the fact that the 2006-2007 Ministerial Process and this meeting were characterized by broad participation and productive dialogue, which made it possible to build consensus on the HMA Guatemala 2007. She added that the 2007 national reports on progress and challenges in the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, coordinated by the Ministerial Delegates in their respective countries, provided valuable input for the dialogue, as did the results of the 2007 National Consultation with Leaders of Agriculture and Rural Life, conducted by IICA to determine the expectations of leaders regarding the development of agriculture and rural life.

Both, she indicated, made it possible to validate the strategic actions adopted by the Ministers in 2003 and 2005, and facilitated the identification of the principal challenges faced in implementing the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, in pursuit of the Shared Vision

for 2015 defined at the Second Ministerial Meeting.

As a result of the Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates, the Chair of the 2007 GRICA meeting presented to the Ministers the proposed HMA Guatemala 2007, noting that the two strategic orientations that inspired its formulation were: to promote among the stakeholders of agriculture and rural life a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu, and the “*working together*” approach in the public, private and social sectors to bring about improvements in both sectors.

She then explained that the proposed HMA included the 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda “*Providing leadership for a holistic approach to agriculture and rural life,*” which comprised eleven strategic actions, as well as the Implementation and Follow-up section “*Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas,*” with six hemispheric, regional and national measures. In particular, she added, the HMA recognized progress in the development of the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO Plan and the work carried out by IICA, ECLAC, FAO and PAHO, and renewed interest in continuing its development with the support of international organizations.

In concluding, she said that the GRICA had fulfilled the commitment it assumed in Guayaquil in 2005, and thanked the Ministerial Delegates for their work and the Technical Secretariat for its continued and unconditional support.

“Every effort has its reward. To contribute to helping move the Ministerial Process forward, to the benefit of millions of people in our hemisphere who live in rural areas and depend on agriculture, and to be able to help agriculture and rural life occupy their rightful position in the Summit of the Americas process, is part of that reward.”

Ministerial dialogue on the institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, based on the theme “working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas”

The Chair moderated a productive Ministerial Dialogue involving delegations from St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guatemala, Venezuela, Jamaica, Belize, Nicaragua, St. Kitts and Nevis, Honduras, Dominica and Ecuador.

The delegations addressed current issues related to the institutional framework, such as the limitations small economies face in participating in open economies, the strengthening of the mechanisms for horizontal cooperation in the implementation of the AGRO Plan, multilateral agricultural trade negotiations, the strengthening of producer organizations, the improvement of rural education, the strengthening of ties between the public and private sectors, the implementation of measures to “work

together” in solving the problems of rural communities, the role of international organizations and preferential treatment for the economies of Small Island States.

They also referred to issues related to production and trade, such as the international demand for agricultural products and its effects on the small-farm economy; biofuel production, from the perspective of environmental, economic and social sustainability; the improvement of competitiveness; access to technology and collaboration in research; and the strengthening of ties among, agriculture, tourism and rural development.

According to the Technical Secretariat of the meeting, the topics addressed were some of the 62 complementary strategic actions of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan which had been adopted in 2003 and 2005 and were called for in the proposal from the 2007 GRICA. Also, the AGRO Plan was a hemispheric frame of reference that took the particular needs of each country into consideration in the formation and implementation of the national, regional and hemispheric agendas.

**The signing of the HMA
Guatemala 2007**

The signing ceremony was attended by Ministers, Secretaries and Delegates of Agriculture of the Americas, representatives of the diplomatic corps and international organizations, special guests and IICA directors and staff.

Chaired by Mr. Bernardo Lopez Figueroa, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, and with co-chair Carlos Vallejo Lopez, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador, the delegations proceeded to approve and sign the ***Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas***² agreed upon at the 2007 GRICA Meeting.

In signing the HMA, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to implement and update the ***AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*** and to continue

the Ministerial Process leading up to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting (Jamaica) and efforts to link it to Fifth Summit of the Americas process (Trinidad and Tobago 2009).

To conclude the ceremony, the honorary witnesses also signed the HMA: Dr. Gerth Rosenthal, Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala; Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, of Trinidad and Tobago, Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group and Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas; and Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of IICA.

The Closing Ceremony: from Guatemala 2007 to the Fifth Summit of the Americas process (Trinidad and Tobago 2009).

At the head table were the Ministers of Agriculture of Guatemala and Ecuador; Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas; Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General of IICA; Dr. Lizardo de las Casas, of the Technical Secretariat of the Meeting; Anabella Osorio, Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture of Guatemala and Chair of the 2007 GRICA meeting; and Dr. Gerth Rosenthal, Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala, who adjourned the meeting.

Director General of IICA

Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite stated that the recently approved HMA was a beacon that would light the way to rural prosperity in the Americas. He went on to say that the development of a modern agricultural sector and the promotion of rural prosperity were key to the development of countries:

“...because we can no longer accept the migration of the rural poor, nationals and foreigners, to the

³ Full text of HMA in Annex 1

cities as a solution to rural poverty. The associated social and economic difficulties continue to threaten social stability and progress toward democratic governance.”

In keeping with the theme of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting *“working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas,”* Dr. Brathwaite stated that the problems hindering agricultural and rural development constituted a challenge that was both formidable and complex and required that governments, international agencies, civil society and the private sector partner with one another to find lasting solutions, stating, *“We need a hemispheric partnership for rural development.”*

Those partnerships, he added, should be based on the identification of the core competences of each institution; the strengthening of intersectoral ties; greater interinstitutional cooperation; the identification of synergetic and complementary relationships; the creation of national fora for dialogue and joint action; cooperation among the institutions of the Inter-American System; and cooperation among the private sector, the social sector, the academic sector and financial institutions. The result, he concluded, should be a national agenda for rural development.

As regards the mandates of the Summit of the Americas process, he said that they had: (i) assigned greater value to agriculture and rural life by recognizing

the importance of both for the comprehensive development of countries; (ii) given the Ministers of Agriculture a leading role in the implementation of the plans of the Summits; (iii) led to the emergence of the Ministerial Process *“Agriculture and Rural Life;”* (iv) made IICA an institutional partner in all stages of the Summit Process, along with the OAS, PAHO, the IDB, ECLAC and the World Bank; and (v) entrusted those institutions with supporting, through their respective activities and programs, the implementation of the declarations and plans of action.

Regarding the process leading up to the Fifth Summit, the Director General identified three challenges that the leaders of the Americas must consider:

- the strengthening of the institutional framework for the implementation of the commitments acquired;
- the reassessment of rural life as a national treasure and an essential resource for comprehensive development; and
- the development of a base of knowledge for comprehensive sustainable development.

“We believe that attention to these issues at the Fifth Summit will contribute to strengthening the Summits Process and to the development of our countries.”

Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala

Bernardo López Figueroa, Chairman of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, said that the Ministerial Agreement was the result of the work of the Ministerial Delegates during the two years between Guayaquil 2005 and Guatemala 2007.

He said he was pleased to have participated in a Ministerial Meeting in which topics that were opening the door for a new civilization, including biofuels, biotechnology and climate change and how they relate to agriculture and the rural milieu, were debated openly and frankly. He added that the meeting had successfully identified the problems associated with these topics, which range from the vulnerability of the island states and difficulties in obtaining loans for rural development, to production units with a limited vision that failed to go beyond purely business considerations.

The above, he said, had brought a new level of maturity to the forum which made it a more resourceful and effective mechanism:

“The capacity to change course in times like these, when it is necessary to have a very clear vision of how the scenario has changed and how our institutions must adapt to those changes to be able to help combat poverty and contribute to comprehensive rural development.”

Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group and Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas

“The dialogue, the exchange of ideas and decisions taking during this Ministerial Meeting have been true to the spirit of Bavaro and to our common goal of bringing prosperity into the lives of each and every person of our Hemisphere.”

Without a doubt, he affirmed, hemispheric meetings on important topics such as agriculture and rural life play a key role in focusing attention on and sustaining the momentum of the Summit process. In this regard, he added that for the last six years the Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” had served not only as the highest level political forum for the Ministers of Agriculture to discuss priorities and strategic actions, but also as the principal means of positioning agriculture and rural life on the hemispheric agenda.

The mandates of the Summits of Quebec, Monterrey and Mar del Plata, he said, established a new institutional and political framework which went beyond the traditional concept of agriculture as a production sector, and adopted a comprehensive approach to the sustainable development of agriculture and rural communities. Indeed, he added, thanks to the Summit process, today there is broader recognition and appreciation of

the intrinsic value of agriculture and rural life for the economic and social fabric in the Americas.

He recognized, however, that while the mandates of the Summits and the HMAs were necessary in providing strategic direction to and a frame of reference for action, they were not enough by themselves to make the Shared Vision for 2015 a reality. To be able to bring about the change envisioned in those mandates and agreements, he said, special emphasis should be placed on:

- (i) the translation of political commitments at the hemispheric level into the allocation of sufficient financial resources to support concrete actions at the national level to follow up on and implement the mandates of the Summits related to agriculture and rural life;
- (ii) greater coordination at the regional level among multilateral organizations and at the national level between the ministries of agriculture and foreign affairs, as well as between the social and business sectors; and
- (iii) the continual improvement and revitalization of the institutional framework, to monitor developments in agriculture and rural life and provide relevant and timely responses to the challenges faced by the countries of the hemisphere.

In order to ensure greater coordination of activities and broad participation in the Fifth Summit of the Americas, he invited IICA and other international institutions to work closely with the Secretariat of that Summit, with a view to ensuring that the challenges identified at this meeting and in other fora are addressed in detail at that Summit.

Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala

“...meetings such as this, in addition to having intrinsic value reflected in the 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda, under the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, must be viewed as events that give real meaning to the concept of hemispheric cooperation at its different levels.”

Dr. Gerth Rosenthal echoed the positive comments of President Oscar Berger regarding the decision to hold the Fourth Ministerial Meeting in Guatemala, and was particularly pleased by the fact that the HMA, which provided for the continued implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, would bear the name of Guatemala 2007. He then commented on the following ideas and convictions regarding the Ministerial Meetings in the international context:

He called attention to the usefulness of events such as this in the broader context of our commitment to multilateralism. Each of the multilateral fora to which we belong, he said, offered the opportunity

to disseminate ideas, interchange experiences, contrast points of view and propose, when appropriate, joint actions that will contribute to achieving the core objective of multilateralism, which is to raise the standard of living of our peoples through the efforts of the countries and international cooperation agencies.

He differed with those who complain about the excess number of international meetings and suggest that it would be best to leave the conduct of international relations to the foreign ministries so that the other government bodies can focus on fulfilling their mandates. The last 70 years, he pointed out, have shown the importance of providing opportunities for those in charge of national affairs to come together, for the specific purpose of promoting cooperation and sharing knowledge. This meeting, he indicated, attested to the above by providing an opportunity to share best practices, exchange experiences, understand the positions of others and adopt strategic decisions that will benefit all our countries.

He noted that this meeting was part of a much broader and more comprehensive effort stemming from the periodic meetings of the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the hemisphere. We do not work in isolated compartments, he added, in which the Ministers of Agriculture worry only about agriculture, and the Ministers of Labor, Education and Health only about their respective ministries. Rather, we are building by

consensus an agenda for development, with the participation of those actors who are directly involved.

He applauded the participation of civil society in the program of the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas and in the Fourth Ministerial Meeting. The topics on our agenda, he said, were too important to be limited to intergovernmental fora.

Dr. Rosenthal concluding by pointing out that, from the perspective of those responsible for foreign relations of one of the member countries, he valued highly the forum and, above all, its direct and indirect products, which, he concluded, were an essential step on the road to the Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009.

Part IV

The 2008-2009 Ministerial Process:

on the road to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting,
Jamaica 2009

- **From Guatemala 2007 to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting, Jamaica 2009:** the frame of reference
- **Two articulated and complementary hemispheric processes**

From Guatemala 2007 to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting, Jamaica 2009: the frame of reference

The 2008-2009 Ministerial Process must address two principal issues: the first is the **implementation and follow-up** of the HMA Guatemala 2007; the second, the participation of the Ministers and Ministerial Delegates in the preparation of the **proposal on agriculture and rural life** to be delivered to the SIRG as an input in formulating the mandates of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

As regards the first, it is important to recall the commitment to promote a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, based on the two strategic orientations agreed upon by the Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life at the 2007 GRICA, and by the Ministers, which inspired the formulation of the HMA Guatemala 2007:

“...the first, to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and the second “working together” to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.”

The second focuses on consolidating the positioning of agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda by: (i) submitting

a proposal to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting, and (ii) supporting the implementation of any mandates on agriculture and rural life issued at same. To do this, it is necessary to take into account the interest of the Ministers in reassessing the value of rural life, as expressed in Guatemala 2007.

Of particular importance for the two principal issues mentioned above are strategic actions 7, 9 and 11 of the 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda, which are quoted below:

Repositioning of rural issues in national strategies

To participate proactively in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in national strategies by promoting in society an increased understanding of the contributions made by the rural sector, a rural-urban balance in the national development agenda and efforts to overcome biases and exclusions that are detrimental to rural communities.

Establishment of partnerships and agreements

To promote cooperation and the establishment of lasting alliances and

agreements at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, which allow for greater participation of the private and social sectors in public policy development and implementation geared towards the improvement of agriculture and rural life.

Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu

To promote efforts to reassess the value of agriculture and the rural milieu by

helping to address strategic and emerging development issues, promoting urban-rural integration, taking into consideration social, political, economic, ecological and cultural factors, reporting on the multidimensional contributions made by the rural sector to national development.

In essence, those are the principal political elements that make up the frame of reference for the work of the countries and the Secretariat on the road to Jamaica 2009.

Two articulated and complementary hemispheric processes

In 2009, two hemispheric events will bring together the political leader and leaders of agriculture and rural life of the 34 countries of the Americas.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago is organizing and will host the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April. The Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture will hold their Fifth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” in the context of the Summit of the Americas process, possibly in October. The Government of Jamaica will host this meeting and, consequently, will assume the Chair of the 2008-2009 Ministerial Process and its two meetings: the 2009 GRICA and the Ministerial Meeting.

Therefore, the principal tasks in the 2008-2009 Ministerial Process are to implement the HMA Guatemala 2007 and update the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, for application in the 2010-2011 biennium.

Additionally, in order to consolidate the positioning of agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda, it will be necessary to prepare and submit a proposal to the Fifth Summit and support the implementation of any mandates on agriculture and rural life issued at same. In this effort, the Ministers and Delegates will receive support from IICA, which will serve as Secretariat and seek contributions from the other institutional partners in the Summit process.



Towards the Fifth Summit of the Americas Trinidad y Tobago 2009

“Without a doubt, hemispheric meetings on key issues such as agriculture and rural life play a critical role in refining the focus and sustaining the momentum of the Summits of the Americas process. The National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas recognizes the importance of Ministerial Meetings as an institutional mechanism for addressing strategic topics on the Inter-American agenda and coordinating the implementation of mandates agreed to by the Heads of State and Government. Over the past six years, the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life have served not only as the highest political forum for Ministers of Agriculture to discuss priorities and strategic actions but also as the main avenue for placing agriculture and rural life squarely on the Hemispheric agenda.”

Closing ceremony of Fourth Ministerial Meeting “Agricultura and Rural Life in the Americas”

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, Trinidad and Tobago
Chairperson of the Summit Implementation Review Group and
Fifth Summit of the Americas National Secretariat Coordinator

Annex I

AGRO 2003-2005 Plan. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas

- **2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda.**
Providing leadership for a holistic approach to agriculture and Rural Life.
- **Implementation and Follow-up.**
Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas.



**Fourth Ministerial
“Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”
Within the context of the Summit of the Americas Process
La Antigua Guatemala, July 23-26, 2007**

AGRO 2003-2015 PLAN

Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas

We, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture, gathered together as the Fourth Ministerial “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”, within the context of the Summit of the Americas process, as follow up to the Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005 and the commitment adopted with such agreement by the Heads of State and of Government during the Fourth Summit, Mar del Plata 2005, reaffirm our commitment with the implementation and updating of the AGRO 2003- 2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.

Therefore, considering the national reports on progress made and challenges identified in the implementation of the AGRO Plan during the 2006-2007 ministerial process and based on the consensus reached by the Ministerial Delegates during the GRICA 2007 (Implementation and Coordination Group for the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life), we adopt the strategic actions of the Hemispheric Agenda for the 2008-2009 biennium and the measures for its implementation and follow up.

Two strategic orientations inspire the Guatemala 2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement: the first one, to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, the second one, “working together” to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda

Providing leadership for a holistic approach to agriculture and rural life

The updating of the Hemispheric Agenda for the 2008-2009 biennium is based on the current validity of the strategic actions adopted in 2003 and 2005, and on new challenges identified by the countries in the 2006-2007 ministerial process.

In defining the strategic actions of the present Hemispheric Agenda, and in accordance with the broad based approach towards agriculture and rural life adopted by the Ministers in the development of the

AGRO Plan in 2003 and the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005, the conceptual framework of the Plan AGRO was used, as reflected in the AGRO Matrix, which synthesizes the renewed approach to agriculture and rural life and the situation which will be desirable to advance the Shared Vision 2015.

Therefore, we express our will to jointly promote, with other agriculture and rural life stakeholders, the following strategic actions:

I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises

(Rural territories – production/trade dimension)

Entrepreneurial and business capability and capability for innovation

1. To strengthen and promote the development of entrepreneurial and business capabilities and capability for innovation in men and women in rural communities to support the creation of new business operators and enterprises and the sustained and competitive growth of emerging and existing enterprises.

II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness

(Agricultural production-trade chains – production/trade dimension)

Market information

2. To increase the availability of, and improve access for rural producers and other sectors linked to the productive chain to, reliable and timely market information through various public and private mechanisms or services.

Inclusive chains linkages

3. To promote the integration of rural producers and micro, small- and medium-scale agri enterprises into production and marketing/trade chains contributing to a sustainable income.

III. Promoting a harmonized environment conducive to competitive agriculture

(National and international context – production/trade dimension)

Strengthening of small- and medium scale rural enterprise

4. To implement policies that promote coordination between the public and private sectors, to improve the competitiveness of rural enterprises and producers to maximize trade.

Mobilizing resources

5. To mobilize public and private resources for the creation of infrastructure in an effort to

promote investment in the rural sector and promote competitive agriculture.

IV. Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas

(Rural Territories – ecological/ environmental dimension)

Environmental plan for businesses

- To promote the creation of national capabilities to develop and implement agro environmental policies in the rural milieu with the participation of rural organizations, academia and the public and private sectors.

V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management

(Agricultural production-trade chains – ecological/environmental dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework

(National and international context - ecological/environmental dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity

(Rural Territories – sociocultural/ human dimension)

Los desafíos identificados están cubiertos por las anteriores Agendas Hemisféricas, por lo que no sugieren acciones estratégicas complementarias.

VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in the chain

(Agricultural production-trade chains – sociocultural/human dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities

(National and international context - sociocultural/human dimension)

**Repositioning of rural issues
in national strategies**

7. To participate proactively in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in national strategies by promoting in society an increased understanding of the contributions made by the rural sector, a rural-urban balance in the national development agenda and efforts to overcome biases and exclusions that are detrimental to rural communities.

X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories

(Rural Territories – political/institutional dimension)

**Establishment and follow-up
of partnerships and agreements**

8. To support rural stakeholders and their organizations with establishing coordinating, consensus building, and follow-up mechanisms on partnerships and agreements to facilitate joint efforts in implementing policies and strategies in rural territories.

XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors in the chain

(Agricultural production-trade chains – political/institutional dimension)

The challenges identified are covered in previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

XII. Promoting State policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life

(National and international context – political/institutional dimension)

**Establishment of
partnerships and agreements**

9. To promote cooperation and the establishment of lasting alliances and agreements at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, which allow for greater participation of the private and social sectors in public policy development and implementation geared towards the improvement of agriculture and rural life.

Modernization and institutional strengthening of the rural public sector

10. To promote the modernization of public institutions in agriculture to enable them to integrate actions and services, that will improve linkages with other public, private and social stakeholders, as well as international partners, in the implementation of the 2003-2015 AGRO Plan.

Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu

11. To promote efforts to reassess the value of agriculture and the rural milieu by helping to address strategic and emerging development issues, promoting urban-rural integration, taking into consideration social, political, economic, ecological and cultural factors, reporting on the multidimensional contributions made by the rural sector to national development.

Implementation and Follow-up

Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan reflects the will of the countries to work together towards the Shared Vision 2015, with the understanding that national governments are the main parties responsible for the implementation of the shared agenda and to coordinate the participation with the other agricultural stakeholders in view of their international commitments and agreements.

Dissemination of the AGRO Plan and its Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007

12. The implementation of the 2007 Guatemala Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement requires a joint action on

the part of stakeholders in the public, private and social sectors. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the dissemination of the 2007 Agro Plan and its Guatemala 2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement, an activity that the ministerial delegates will undertake with the support of the respective IICA offices, taking into account the countries' National Policies.

Facilitating joint action

13. The renewed, broad-based and comprehensive way in which we conceive agriculture and rural life in the Plan (expressed in the AGRO-Matrix) represents the main contribution of our ministerial process to facilitate an understanding of the contribution of agriculture and the rural milieu to development in our countries. In this sense and taking into account paragraph 12, we strongly recommend that, in publicizing the AGRO Plan, we promote the broad-based and comprehensive view expressed in the AGRO-Matrix, and that it be implemented in cooperation with the public, private and social stakeholders in implementing this Ministerial Agreement.

Regional mechanisms and strategies

14. To strengthen regional meetings of ministers of agriculture, regional meetings of other agricultural stakeholders, as well as working

together with the mechanisms for the regional integration of agriculture and for consultation and identification of priorities, coordination of actions and adoption of regional policies on matters of common interest, in support of the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

Information System

15. Having been informed of progress in the development of the Information System for Monitoring and Evaluating the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and its three components, we support efforts to promote the system in the countries through the integration of existing mechanisms, and we ask the Secretariat to report on progress to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting. We acknowledge the work accomplished under the leadership of IICA and ECLAC, with support from FAO and PAHO, and we urge them to encourage other international organizations to join this effort and, together, continue supporting efforts to improve this tool.

Support from and alignment of the international organizations

16. We reiterate our calls to the international organizations, made in 2001, 2003 and 2005, and request that they actively participate in the implementation of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007. In this regard, we

shall promote and support the creation and operation of interagency groups at the national level.

Updating of the Hemispheric Agenda

17. The 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda is the third of six biennial agendas by means of which the AGRO Plan is to be implemented. National governments will deliver reports on progress in implementing each biennial agenda and identify challenges faced. These reports will serve as input for updating the Agenda for the following period. We therefore entrust:

- The Ministerial Delegates with preparing, with the support of the Secretariat of the Ministerial Process, the national report on progress and challenges in implementing this Ministerial Agreement.
- The Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA) with updating this Ministerial Agreement for the 2010-2011 biennium.
- The Technical Secretariat with reporting, in the Fifth Ministerial, on progress with the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and on any actions carried out to ensure coordination of this ministerial process with the Summit of the Americas process, with the purpose of consolidating the positioning of agriculture and rural life in the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Signed in the city of La Antigua Guatemala,
Guatemala
on twenty-sixth day of July of two thousand and seven.

Antigua and Barbuda
Joanne Massiah



Argentina
Luis Gerardo Petri



Bahamas
Lawrence S. Cartwright



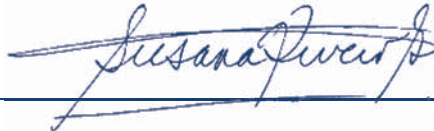
Barbados
Erskine Griffith




Belize
Juan Vildo Marín



Bolivia
Susana Rivero Guzmán



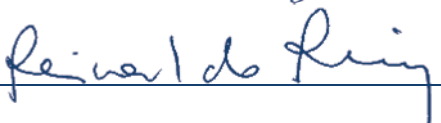
Brazil
Célio Brovino Porto



Canada
Christian Paradis



Chile
Reinaldo Ruiz



Colombia
Lorena Garnica de la Espriella



Costa Rica
Marco Vargas



Dominica
Claudia Bellot



Ecuador
Carlos Danilo Vallejo



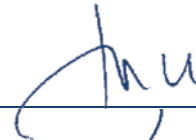
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Mario Ernesto Salaverría



Grenada
Roland Bolha



Guyana
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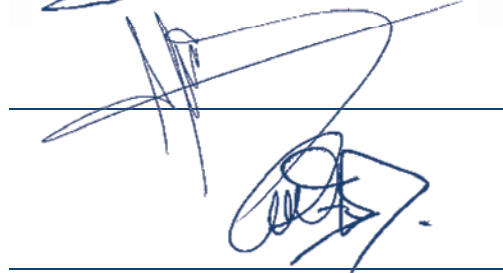


Honduras
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Jamaica
Donovan Stanberry



Mexico
V́ctor Manuel Villalobos



Nicaragua
Ariel Bucardo



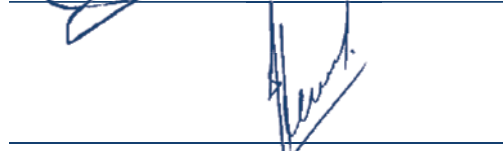
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Guillermo Salazar



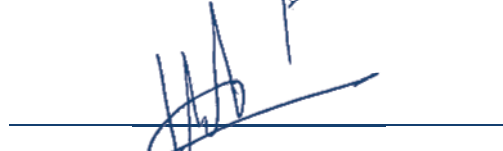
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Miguel Angel Pangrazio



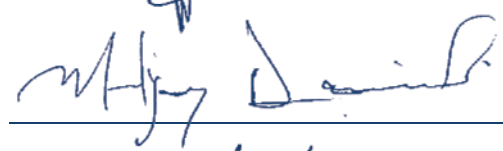
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Ismael Benavides



Dominican Republic
Salvador Jiméneez



Saint Kitts and Nevis
Cedric Roy Liburd

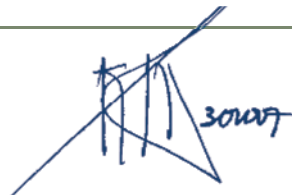


Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Montgomery Daniel



Saint Lucia
Ezechiel Joseph

Suriname
Kermechend Stanley Raghoebarsing



Trinidad and Tobago
Jarrette Narine



United States of America
Ellen Terpstra



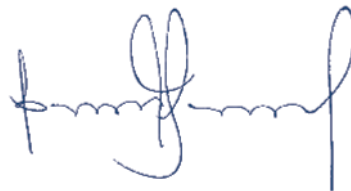
Uruguay
José Mujica



Venezuela
Tatiana Pugh



Bernardo López Figueroa
*Ministro de Agricultura,
Ganadería y Alimentación de Guatemala
Presidente de la Cuarta Ministerial*



Testigos de Honor

Oscar Berger Perdomo
Presidente de la República de Guatemala



Gert Rosenthal Koenigsberger
*Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
de Guatemala*



Luis Alberto Rodríguez
*Coordinador de la Quinta
Cumbre de las Américas*



Chelston W. D. Brathwaite
*Director General
Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación
para la Agricultura*





Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”
held within the context of the Summits of the Americas Process



Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Secretariat of Ministerial Meetings
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