



**THE MARRAKESH DECISION AND FOOD SECURITY: CONTRIBUTION OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**SUBMISSION BY IICA**

The following submission, dated 31 October 2014, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The purpose of this document is to inform member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) about the technical cooperation activities carried out by IICA in 2014 to provide support for Latin American and Caribbean countries in the area of food and nutrition security.

There has been a general tendency in recent years for countries to seek ways of consolidating and enhancing their food security and of implementing actions to that end. One of the objectives of IICA's 2010-2014 Medium-Term Plan is to raise agriculture's contribution to food security. The Institute accordingly supports its member States in developing policies, strategies and institutional frameworks to increase the contribution of agriculture, and especially small-scale farming, to their food security, in terms of both national strategy and access for small-scale producers to income that enables them to buy food and produce staple foods.

IICA recently launched four flag projects for the period 2014-2018, which are geared towards competitiveness and sustainability of agricultural chains for food security and economic development; inclusion in agriculture and rural areas; resilience and comprehensive risk management in agriculture; and productivity and sustainability of family farming for food security and the rural economy. These flag projects address food security as a cross-cutting issue.

## **1 IICA ACTIONS**

1.1. IICA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID) organized a blended course entitled "Communication and knowledge for food and nutrition security decision-making in Latin America". The key objective was to build up the capacities and communication skills of government officials in order to improve food and nutrition security (SAN) decision-making processes and knowledge management in Latin America. The following countries took part: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The course consisted of seven weeks of e-learning and one face-to-face session held in Antigua, Guatemala, in October. More than 30 professionals from Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Rural Development and the Economy, and Secretariats for Food and Nutrition Security or Social Development participated in the course. One of the most noteworthy outcomes was the participants' undertaking to establish a coordinated network of interested persons

1.2. The Food Security Observatory for the Americas was in operation throughout the year. This is a bilingual tool, available free of charge for monitoring and consulting the food security policies and instruments of the countries of the Americas. It provides news, indicators and information relevant to food security stakeholders in the Americas, and publishes a monthly newsletter. For further information please visit: <http://www.infoagro.net/programas/Seguridad/Default.aspx>.

1.3. IICA collaborated with the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in identifying the most critical current and emerging issues in the area of food security and nutrition for Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, the HLPE published a note on the subject, which is available at: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/critical-and-emerging-issues/en>.

1.4. IICA, the FAO and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) jointly produced a report entitled *The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean*, which focuses on family farming in Latin America and the Caribbean and its bearing on food security as the main provider of food for countries of the region. For further information please visit: <http://www.ica.int/Esp/Programas/AnalisisEstrategico/Publicaciones%20de%20Modernizacin%20Institucional/b3249e.pdf>.

1.5. Together with the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Production (PROMECAFÉ) and Latin American national institutions, IICA continued to implement the regional programme for the integrated management of coffee rust. Coffee rust has had a serious impact in Central America, jeopardizing food security for small coffee growers and pickers.

1.6. IICA, the Argentine Agrifood Promotion of Exports Project of Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (PROARGEX) and the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Buenos Aires (FAUBA) have been working on a regional agribusiness platform for the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay), which is designed to become a network bringing together public, private and academic institutions engaged in the promotion of agribusiness. Its objective is to contribute information and knowledge to the development of the agrifood sector in the Southern Cone countries by encouraging the growth of agribusiness and the expansion and diversification of trade with emerging markets.

1.7. There are four recognized dimensions of food security<sup>1</sup>, and one of them is access to food.<sup>2</sup> IICA has played a very active role in its capacity as Executive Secretariat of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA), providing support for the dissemination of relevant and transparent information on markets and agricultural products in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

1.8. IICA is currently running a 12-week online course on value-adding policies, followed by some 50 officials from Ministries of Agriculture, technical professionals from public and private organizations, civil society and international cooperation agencies, consultants, teachers, and so on. The overall objective of the course is to build up the capacities of public and private stakeholders in countries of the Americas, with a view to designing and implementing public policies in support of value-adding for agricultural products.

1.9. Another dimension of food security is the organic utilization of food.<sup>3</sup> IICA has strengthened its ties with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Codex Alimentarius, sponsoring IICA member countries this year to attend meetings, forums and committees to discuss and approve plant and animal health and food safety standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Food availability, accessibility, utilization and stability.

<sup>2</sup> Defined by the FAO as access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources).

<sup>3</sup> Defined by the FAO as the biological utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This brings out the importance of non-food inputs to food security.

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## 2 ACTIONS IN COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

2.1. Based on the four dimensions of food security, IICA carried out the specific actions described below in several member countries.

2.2. As regards *food availability*<sup>4</sup>, IICA implemented the following activities:

- a. El Salvador: Jointly with the country's Ministry of Agriculture, IICA helped to empower more than 16,000 agricultural producers in eight priority production chains, providing technical support for technological innovation and high quality agricultural extension services.
- b. Nicaragua: IICA helped 66 organizations of small-scale staple grain seed producers to strengthen their capacities and mutual ties.
- c. Guatemala: 1,815 maize and bean producers, including 904 women, were trained in technological innovation so as to improve production.
- d. Colombia: IICA contributed to consolidating the agricultural production plan for the Tolima Triangle irrigation area in Colombia.
- e. Belize: IICA provided support to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture (MNRA) in developing a strategy to disseminate improved technologies for maize and bean production, which will directly benefit 2,500 small farmers and 20 communities essentially made up of indigenous groups in the south of Belize. IICA also provided technical assistance to the MNRA in developing a national agriculture and food policy framework, with strategic objectives revolving around food security and nutrition, competitiveness of the agricultural sector, conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and rural prosperity.
- f. Dominican Republic: IICA consolidated efforts to promote the use of technologies for improving people's diet and increasing household agricultural incomes under an integrated farming strategy; this included training, which covered dairy goats, free-range chickens, guinea pigs, sheltered vegetable gardens, and ponds.
- g. Bolivia and Ecuador: with IICA's support Bolivia obtained OIE certification as a country free from foot-and-mouth (FMD) disease with vaccination. Likewise, IICA is helping Ecuador to implement its National FMD Eradication Programme.

2.3. As regards the food security dimension relating to the *biological utilization of food*, IICA implemented the following activities:

- a. Ecuador: IICA contributed to strengthening Ecuador's national agricultural health and food safety (AHFS) system through various measures, including a proposal to establish a national contaminants control programme (mycotoxins and pesticides); various technical and regulatory proposals for the issuing of sanitary registration and post-registration control; updating of the existing regulatory framework (regulations, standards and procedures); and strengthening of the Codex Committees and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures.
- b. Peru: IICA helped the country's Standing Multisectoral Commission on Food Safety (COMPIAL) to draw up a draft food safety policy and related instruments.
- c. Venezuela: IICA provided support in strengthening the national agricultural health and food safety (AHFS) system, using tools aimed at facilitating the Food Hygiene Directorate's strategic planning process and capacity building for the officials concerned. Networks, associations, cooperatives, communities, producers' associations and public institutions have a work plan for implementing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP),

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<sup>4</sup> Defined by the FAO as sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid).

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Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and ensuring food hygiene in production chains with a lower environmental impact, thus contributing to public health and food security.

- d. Antigua and Barbuda: thanks to IICA's cooperation, government agencies, producers and exporters have accurate and up-to-date information on food safety processes and procedures, with particular reference to food processing and handling. This information will serve to establish SPS protocols which are essential to expanding Antigua and Barbuda's access to markets for food products.
- e. Suriname: National food safety capabilities were enhanced through training in GPMs, GAPs, crop control and how to enhance participation in Codex Alimentarius and WTO forums. Training was also provided to farmers, food handlers, agribusinesses and extension personnel in the districts of Marowijne, Para and Wanica to improve their knowledge and build capacity in food hygiene, value-adding (pineapple and cassava) and good manufacturing practices.
- f. St. Kitts and Nevis: Farmers adopted good management principles for the production of safe and wholesome foods for human consumption. In addition, agro-processors were able to identify critical safety points in the handling, preparation and serving of food and concentrate their resources on activities that are critical to ensuring food safety. IICA also helped to increase youth engagement in agriculture.
- g. Saint Lucia: IICA implemented four phases of the Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools (HOOPSS) Project, in partnership with the Saint Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY) and Consolidated Foods Limited (CLF), in response to the dwindling involvement of youth in agriculture and the need to address the nutritional concerns of school feeding programmes by promoting the production and consumption of fresh, wholesome foods.

2.4. As regards the food security dimension relating to *market access*, IICA implemented the following activities:

- a. Costa Rica: IICA contributed to the development of an integration methodology and strategy under the National Production Council's Integrated Agricultural and Livestock Marketing Programme, with a view to linking small and medium-sized producers to local markets.
- b. Peru and Ecuador: IICA helped to ensure that officials from government agencies in both countries had reliable tools for the formulation and/or implementation of policies aimed at improving market links for small and medium-sized agricultural producers.
- c. Ecuador: IICA helped to ensure that the country's autonomous governments had harmonized and validated documents providing methods and tools for decentralized management of production, agricultural and irrigation capabilities. They also have an employment- and income-generating strategy for young people in rural areas in line with the business projects being implemented. El Oro province has a food security promotion and management strategy at provincial level.
- d. Bahamas: IICA collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture to support the Bahamas Agribusiness Cooperative (BABCO) backyard gardening project. This included negotiating for local farmers to supply large hotel developments with local fresh produce. Two hundred farmers, processors and their organizations benefited from a comprehensive training programme covering, *inter alia*, agribusiness and trade, project management, entrepreneurship, food safety, food processing, livestock, animal nutrition and sourcing planting material.
- e. Barbados: The Ministry of Agriculture has given priority to the development of an Agricultural Market Intelligence Service. IICA was a key partner in the process, providing support for the design of the system and a direct link to the Market Information Organization of the Americas.

- f. Paraguay: IICA held a capacity-building workshop for technicians and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture's Planning and Marketing Directorate. One of the most noteworthy outcomes was the establishment of five project profiles for strengthening small producers' organizations and validation of the IICA tool on strategic elements of association management. This tool was shared with other countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

2.5. Lastly, IICA implemented the following activities in support of *food stability*: IICA and the Central American Integration System of Agricultural Technology (SICTA) have jointly presented the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic with a project entitled "*Estrategia regional para la investigación y adaptación de frijol y maíz dentro de escenarios de cambio climático (2013-2020)*" (Regional strategy for research and adaptation of maize and beans under climate change scenarios (2013-2020)), which promotes research and innovation with a view to adapting small- and medium-scale production systems to climate variation. For additional information please visit: [http://www.iica.int/Esp/Programas/Innovacion/Publicaciones\\_Tel/b3338e.pdf](http://www.iica.int/Esp/Programas/Innovacion/Publicaciones_Tel/b3338e.pdf).

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2.7. For more information, please visit the IICA website at: <http://www.iica.int>.

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