



Thirty-fifth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee

**Report on the Meetings of Ministers of Agriculture  
and the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and  
Rural Life in the Americas**

Information Document No. 01 (15) Original: Spanish

San Jose, Costa Rica  
July 15-16, 2015



**Report on the Meetings of Ministers of Agriculture and the  
AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas**

**Javier Gatica Pardo  
16 April 2015**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### BACKGROUND

- From *Our Common Future* to *The future we want*: on the road to sustainable development
- Agriculture in the global development processes and agreements
- Agriculture in the Summits of the Americas
- Agriculture's dual role: its relationship with rural life and the rest of society
- IICA is an institutional partner in the Summit of the Americas Process
- Ministerial meetings and technical secretariats
- Integration of the systemic concept of agriculture and the sustainable development approach: the AGRO-Matrix
- The 2003-2015 AGRO Plan: a frame of reference for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu
- Resolutions adopted by the OAS and IICA's governing bodies

### THE MINISTERIAL MEETINGS: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

- Positioning of agriculture and rural life in the Summits of the Americas
- Holding of regular meetings of ministers of agriculture of the Americas
- Participatory construction of hemispheric ministerial agreements: a process within and between countries
- Use of a broad-based approach to viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu in the development of the ministerial agreements
- Strengthening of the dialogue and greater understanding of critical agricultural issues
- Creation and operation of the institutional framework of the ministerial process
- Adoption and updating of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan
- Greater public interest in and understanding of the importance of agriculture
- Development of a follow-up and information mechanism: experiences, indicators, and expectations

- Close connection between the meetings of ministers of agriculture and the Summits of the Americas
- Assessment of the meetings of ministers of agriculture of the Americas
- Progress made with the implementation of the AGRO Plan: an overview of the work carried out at the national and regional levels
- Consolidation and contribution of IICA as an institutional partner in the Summits

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- The ministerial agreements positioned agriculture and aligned it with the global and hemispheric dynamics
- Within the framework of the Summits of the Americas, the ministers of agriculture focused on strategic issues that go beyond their remit as members of IICA's highest governing body
- The ministerial meetings of agriculture and rural life have been a continuous, innovative and participatory process for the drafting of agreements
- The ministerial meetings influenced the mandates of the inter-American Summits
- The 2003-2015 AGRO Plan was a strategy constructed, updated and based on a broad concept of agriculture
- The ministerial process facilitated the emergence of new leaders and institutional capabilities
- The national reports partially reflect the strategies and actions implemented by the countries
- The national initiatives are a valuable resource for generating knowledge and horizontal cooperation
- The hemispheric ministerial process of agriculture and rural life has been productive
- IICA strengthened its presence in the hemispheric institutional framework
- The strategic objectives of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan continue to be valid
- Agriculture and rural life toward 2030: an opportunity to construct a post-2015 hemispheric agenda

## **ANNEX 1. SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS: MANDATES ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE FROM 2001 TO 2011**

**ANNEX 2. AGRO 2003-2015 PLAN. HEMISPHERIC MINISTERIAL AGREEMENTS (HMA):  
STRATEGIC ISSUES**

## BACKGROUND

The year 2015 was set as the deadline for achieving a number of global development commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals, and concluding the process set in motion at the Rio+20 Summit aimed at constructing a post-2015 development agenda. In particular, this year also marks the end of the period set for the implementation of the hemispheric ministerial agreement, *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*.

The ministerial process on agriculture and rural life in the Americas got under way in 2001. It has entailed biennial meetings, dialogue and the construction of agreements to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and rural milieu. The process grew out of a continuous and far-reaching global quest for sustainable development that began in 1972 with the adoption of the *Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment*, and has evolved constantly from then until now. One of the most recent contributions have been the dialogues and negotiations for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be attained by 2030, also under the aegis of the United Nations (UN).

Other contributions include the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*; the Earth Summit, Rio 92, with its Declaration and Agenda 21; the world agreements on climate change, desertification, and biodiversity; the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals; the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in 2012; the global process for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals; the Summits of the Americas, with their declarations and action plans, which include agriculture and rural life; and the declarations and plans of the regional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The following are some of the important issues addressed and milestones achieved at the global and hemispheric levels, as well as various initiatives that the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has carried out to provide follow-up and give substance and content to the ministerial process on agriculture and rural life in the Americas and its results.

### **1. From *Our Common Future* to *The future we want*: on the road to sustainable development**

In its report, *Our Common Future* (1987), the World Commission on Environment and Development highlighted the global economic, social, environmental, and institutional imbalances and challenges; outlined a future vision; coined the term “sustainable development” and underscored the importance of, and contribution made by, agriculture, food security, and rural development as part of that vision of development. The concept of sustainable development, which is intended to balance economic development with social development and environmental protection within a favorable institutional framework, became the guiding principle and global yardstick for long-term development agreements and actions.



### **The general concept of sustainable development**

Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development does imply limits - not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth. (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

Following on from the above, in 1992 the international community met to discuss ways of putting the concept of sustainable development into practice. At the Earth Summit, world leaders adopted Agenda 21, with 40 specific action plans for advancing toward sustainable development at the national, regional, and international levels. One of those plans was ***Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development***; a further nine plans were adopted directly related to agriculture and the rural milieu.

In 2012, twenty years on from the Earth Summit, world leaders met in Rio de Janeiro to renew the political commitment to sustainable development, evaluate the progress made in implementing the concept, and address the new and emerging challenges. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 focused on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. One of the main results of the conference, highlighted in the document produced—*The future we want*—was the decision of the Member States to develop a set of SDGs. Once again, the links between agriculture and the rural milieu and development were mentioned in the document.

In 2014, the intergovernmental Open Working Group of the United Nations General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals concluded its SDG proposal for presentation to the Assembly. The document, which establishes 17 goals and 169 targets, is expected to be adopted at the 70th session of the General Assembly, due to be held in September 2015. In particular, Goal 2 is “*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.*” Nevertheless, agriculture and rural life are related to most of the SDGs, a fact that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP) have all acknowledged.

The UN Secretary General reaffirmed the global determination and commitment to a sustainable future in the Report on the Post-2015 Agenda: “*The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming Lives and Protecting the Planet.*” The report points up six essential elements for delivering on the SDGs.



The environmental element, Planet, includes the following statement: *To respect our planetary boundaries we need to equitably address climate change, halt biodiversity loss, and address desertification and unsustainable land use. We must protect wildlife, safeguard forests and mountains, and reduce disaster risk and build resiliencies. We must protect our oceans, seas, rivers and atmosphere as our global heritage, and achieve climate justice. We must promote sustainable agriculture, fisheries and food systems; foster sustainable management of water resources, and of waste and chemicals; foster renewable and more efficient energy; decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, advance sustainable industrialisation and resilient infrastructure; ensure sustainable consumption and production; and achieve sustainable management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and land use.*

The six essential elements for sustainable development encompass a broad array of issues for a development agenda through 2030 that appraises and reaffirms the comprehensive contribution that agriculture and the rural milieu make to every aspect of sustainable development.

## **2. Agriculture in the global development processes and agreements**

The mandates of the Summits of the Americas and the ministerial agreements on agriculture and rural life were preceded by far-reaching global processes and agreements, both voluntary and legally binding in nature, on different aspects of sustainable development that have implications for agriculture. Food security, agriculture, and sustainable rural development were included explicitly among the challenges to be addressed from the end of the 20th century to the present.

Since 1987, the report *Our Common Future* has had a major influence on global agreements on development and environment. The report addressed the concerns that existed, and the tasks and joint efforts needed to ensure a safer, fairer and more prosperous future. These included a range of issues related to food security and food for the future on which progress has been made, such as the impact of subsidies, the indifference with which smallholders are treated, the downgrading of the resources on which agriculture depends, and rural development.

The most significant global instruments that have undergirded the drafting of the hemispheric ministerial agreements on agriculture and rural are: the Convention on Biological Diversity; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; the 'Forest Principles'; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR Convention); the Rome Declaration on World Food Security; the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the Uruguay Round; the Kyoto Protocol; the Millennium Development Goals; and, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21.

Agenda 21, adopted by consensus at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, was the agreement used to guide the deliberations and agreements through 2015, and the development of an agenda through 2030 with the SDG proposal. In addition to plans on economic, social, and institutional matters, the program included plans for the environmental area, specifically dealing with the following subjects: Protection of the atmosphere; Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources; Combating deforestation; Combating desertification and drought; Sustainable mountain development; Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development; Conservation of biological diversity; Environmentally sound management of biotechnology; and, Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources, all with implications for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural environment.

### **3. Agriculture in the Summits of the Americas**

At the Summits of the Americas, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) come together to discuss shared political issues, affirm common values, and commit to actions agreed upon at the national and regional levels for dealing with present and future challenges faced by the countries of the Americas.

At the First Summit (Miami, 1994), agriculture and rural life were not included among the issues considered of strategic importance for the integrated development of the countries. Until 2001, IICA was not a partner institution in the Summit Process, nor involved in its mechanisms. That despite being, according to its Convention, the specialized organization for agriculture of the Inter-American System, with the brief of promoting and supporting the efforts of the countries of the Americas to achieve their agricultural development and rural well-being. Since then, the ministers of agriculture, concerned at that omission, have promoted the inclusion of both strategic development issues on the agenda of the highest-level political forum of the Americas.

At the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, Bolivia 1996, the matters discussed included *Sustainable Agriculture and Forests*, basically from the environmental perspective of production, with decisions intended to lead to the “*adoption of policies aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources;*” and, “*the development of a portfolio of agricultural production systems that seeks a lasting balance between their economic, social, and environmental components, and enables farmers to enhance the value and productivity of their lands.*”

In order to ensure the application of an integrated approach to agriculture in development, in 2000 several governments, ministries of foreign affairs, and ministers of agriculture, with support from IICA, undertook actions with the chair of the Third Summit (Canada) designed to improve agriculture’s positioning, mindful of the fact that the sector helps to improve living conditions in the rural milieu, strengthen democracy, promote prosperity, eradicate poverty, and foster sustainable development, all core objectives of the Summit Process. The strategic interest manifested by the ministers proved to be well-timed and resonated with the leaders at the Third Summit (Quebec 2001). IICA’s proposal was included in the projects for the dialogue on the declaration and action plan, and the meeting adopted the mandates on agriculture and the role of the ministers of agriculture and IICA in promoting joint action for the improvement of agriculture and rural life in support of the implementation of the Summit action plans.

#### **4. Agriculture’s dual role: its relationship with rural life and the rest of society**

Since the Third Summit, the Heads of State and Government have taken important decisions regarding the positioning of agriculture on the inter-American development agenda. Specifically, they acknowledged the importance of agriculture for the integrated development of their countries, given the “*role it plays in the creation of prosperity as a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system...*” and as a “*... a way of life for millions of rural families of Hemisphere...*”

In that political recognition, the leaders underscored two significant complementary aspects. Firstly, they called for “*joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector...*” involved, in any way, in the development of agriculture and the rural milieu. Secondly, they specified which stakeholders should be involved in such joint action, instructing the ministers of agriculture to promote “*dialogue involving government leaders, lawmakers, and civil society, in particular organizations linked to rural areas, as well as the scientific and academic communities...*”

The need for a new inclusive institutional framework for the agricultural sector was recognized and reiterated by the ministers of agriculture in their hemispheric ministerial agreements in 2001, 2003 and 2005. The framework was to be based on *joint action* by everyone actively involved in the agricultural sector, complemented with an interinstitutional, multisectoral and interagency coordination effort.

That institutional approach was present in the deliberations and influenced the mandates issued at the Fifth Summit (Trinidad and Tobago, 2009) when the leaders stated that:

*“We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the Agro Plan 2003-2015 ...we support the efforts in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organizations.”*

## **5. IICA is an institutional partner in the Summit of the Americas Process**

At the Third Summit, the leaders included IICA in the Summit Process and its mechanisms, the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) and the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), stating that, *“We welcome the engagement of the institutional partners (OAS, PAHO, IICA, IDB, ECLAC and the World Bank) in all stages of the Summit of the Americas process and endorse: regular dialogue between the SIRG and the partner institutions to ensure coordination in the planning, financing and implementation of Summit mandates; participation of the Heads of the partner institutions at future ministerial-level meetings of the SIRG;...”*

The SIRG is made up of the national coordinators of the ministries of foreign affairs and, at the ministerial level, by the ministers themselves. The JSWG, on the other hand, coordinates the support that the 12 inter-American and international institutional partners provide to the Summit Process. These institutions provide technical orientation to the countries to enable them to identify and negotiate matters addressed in the Summit Process. IICA has participated in both groups since 2001.

## **6. Ministerial meetings and technical secretariats**

In the Declaration of the Third Summit, the leaders recognized that the ministerial meetings were producing significant results in support of the Summit mandates. Therefore, in the action plan they agreed to promote the broad sectoral cooperation that takes place among the different government ministries, observing that the latter are the keystones of hemispheric cooperation. They also welcomed the involvement of the institutional partners—IICA, the World Bank, the OAS, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)—in all the stages of the Summit Process. Hence, they called on the ministers of agriculture to play an active role in the implementation of the Summit action plans.

Beginning in 2001, this decision facilitated the holding of the *ministerial meetings on agriculture and rural life* during the Summits of the Americas. These biennial meetings have reached consensus on and adopted agreements in which the ministers have set out priorities, actions, and strategic objectives for tackling the challenges related to the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Since then, with IICA’s support as the technical secretariat, the ministerial process has been **an unbroken and repeated cycle** that in general has included:

- the holding of meetings of ministers of agriculture of the Americas and hemispheric forums of ministerial delegates
- dialogue and consensus building for the drafting and adoption of ministerial agreements
- the implementation of those agreements by the countries by means of their national strategies
- follow-up to the progress made in implementing the agreements
- the identification of new challenges, and
- dialogue and consensus building for the drafting of new agreements for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

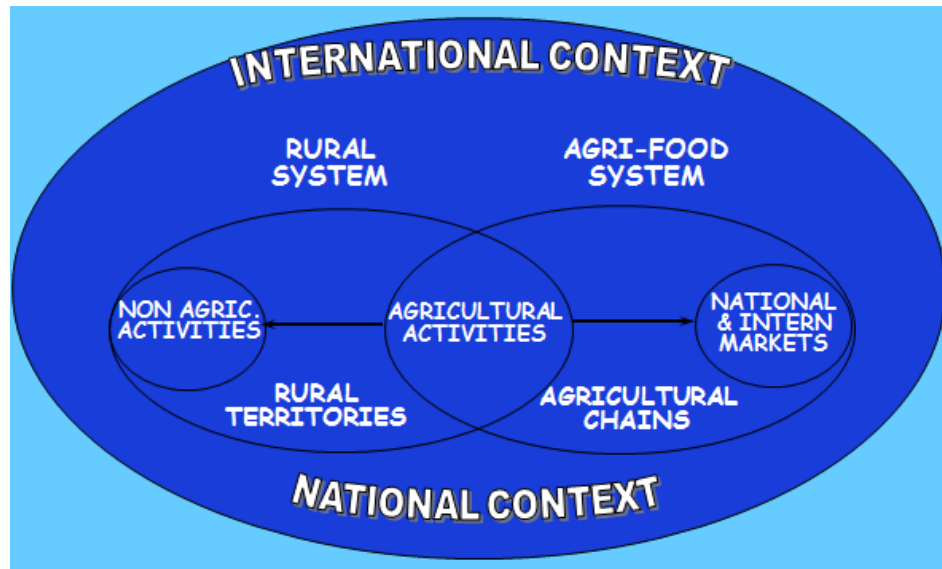
By 2013, seven meetings had been held. After studying the national proposals and engaging in dialogue, the leaders adopted the following themes:

- *Towards the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*. Dominican Republic, 2001.
- *Promoting trade, agribusiness, and rural prosperity in the Americas*. Panama, 2003.
- *Working to reduce poverty, create employment and promote rural prosperity*. Guayaquil, 2005.
- *“Working together” for agriculture and rural life in the Americas*. Guatemala, 2007.
- *Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas*. Jamaica, 2009.
- *Sowing innovation to harvest prosperity*. Costa Rica, 2011.
- *Water to feed the land*. Argentina, 2013.

At their meetings, the ministers of agriculture of the Americas have adopted, among other agreements, the *2001 Ministerial Declaration of Bávaro* and the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*.

Taking into account the mandates of the Third Summit, in the Declaration of Bávaro, the ministers agreed to advance toward the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, food security and rural poverty reduction. They also decided that sustainable development should be based on the objectives of greater competitiveness, equity, the sustainable management of natural resources and democratic governance. The AGRO Plan, therefore, reflects the commitment, set forth in the Declaration of Bávaro to “*reaching consensus on the strategic guidelines for a shared agenda to be used by our countries in developing future ... plans of action...*”

With regard to the technical secretariats, the leaders stated that “*In order to strengthen ministerial participation in and continuity with the Summit of the Americas Process, improve the implementation of our decisions at this Fifth Summit, and increase our accountability to the people of the Americas, we call on the technical secretariats of all inter-American ministerial meetings to inform their ministers and high-level authorities of the mandates arising from this Summit and to initiate strategic actions, by the end of 2009, to facilitate the implementation of our commitments.*”



## 7. Integration of the systemic concept of agriculture and the sustainable development approach: the AGRO-Matrix

The integration of two areas of knowledge provided the conceptual and methodological underpinnings for the drafting of the hemispheric ministerial agreements, a combination that gave rise to a broad vision of agriculture and the construction of the AGRO-Matrix. The first area was the concept of sustainable development, and measures that have been adopted across the globe since the 1970s. This concept includes the interrelationships that exist among the economic, environmental, social, and institutional dimensions of development. The need for an integrated approach to agriculture and its many interactions became increasingly evident and was set forth in the Ministerial Declaration of Bávaro.

The second area was the development of a systemic concept of agriculture, to move beyond the notions of “primary production” and “expanded agriculture” and serve as the basis for the design of more comprehensive public strategies and policies.

The systemic concept of agriculture and rural life was developed at IICA in the 1990s. It recognizes three groups of stakeholders. Two of them form part of the two systems that define the evolution of agriculture and rural life: the rural system, which includes the agricultural and non-agricultural actions of rural dwellers; and the agrifood system, which includes the flows of agricultural products that pass along the value chains as a result of the actions of the agents and interests in the various links “from the farm to the table.” The third type of key stakeholder forms part of the policy system, which includes the actions of policymakers.

The 2002-2003 ministerial process fleshed out the broad approach to viewing and acting in systemic agriculture focused on sustainable development, thereby providing the framework for drafting the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. It was recognized that policies are more effective when they include the systemic concept (territories, chains and environment) and the sustainable

development approach (production/trade, ecological/environmental, sociocultural/human, and political/institutional dimensions).

## **8. The 2003-2015 AGRO Plan: a frame of reference for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu**

The AGRO Plan is a political-technical agreement adopted by the ministers of agriculture of the Americas and recognized by the Heads of State and Government at the inter-American Summits.

In drafting it, the ministers and secretaries of agriculture:

- (i) Took into consideration for its preparation a new 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 in the areas of action of the national and international context, rural territories and agricultural production and trade chains.
- (iii) Reiterated the commitments they assumed in the Ministerial Declaration of Bávaro, 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.
- (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 AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.
- (v) They decided on a number of **measures for implementation of, and follow-up to**, the Plan. These included: (i) the preparation of national progress reports on the implementation of the plan; (ii) the updating of the hemispheric agenda for the next five biennia; (iii) a request that international institutions and cooperating governments coordinate their strategies around the implementation of the AGRO Plan; and, (iv) efforts to determine appropriate ways of gauging the progress of the Plan.

Since its adoption in 2003, and the subsequent updating of topics and actions, the AGRO Plan has reflected the readiness of the countries to work toward the Shared Vision 2015 and the strategic objectives and actions, considering that the governments are primarily responsible for implementing it and coordinating the participation of other public and private agricultural stakeholders.

## **9. Resolutions adopted by the OAS and IICA's governing bodies**

In compliance with the Summit mandates, the OAS and IICA adopted resolutions to continue to work with the countries of the Americas and support their efforts to implement the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, and provide follow-up to the ministerial process on agriculture and rural life.

In the case of the OAS, the resolutions adopted included AG/RES 1728 (June 2000), CP/RES. 826 (September 2002) and CP/RES. 909 (October 2006). For their part, IICA, the Inter-American



Board of Agriculture (IABA), and the Executive Committee adopted resolutions IICA/JIA/Res. 360, IICA/JIA/Res. 379, IICA/CE/Res. 262 (October 2002), IICA/CE/Res. 403 (July 2003), IICA/JIA/Res. 387 (November 2003)-Implementation of and Follow-up to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, IICA/CE/Res. 413 (July 2004) and IICA/JIA/Res. 448 (October 2009).

## **THE MINISTERIAL MEETINGS: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESULTS**

### **1. Positioning of agriculture and rural life in the Summits of the Americas**

From the Third Summit (Quebec, 2001) to the Sixth Summit (Colombia, 2012), agriculture and rural life continued to figure prominently in the declarations and action plans as strategic issues for integrated and sustainable development. This was possible thanks to the existence of a ministerial process that led to the adoption of a set of agreements and proposals for the different summits, and to the facilitation of the process by the technical secretariat operated by IICA. The main decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government are outlined below.

In their declaration at the **Third Summit of the Americas**, the leaders pledged to promote programs to improve agriculture and rural life, and to foster agribusiness as a key means to help reduce poverty and promote integrated development. In the action plan, they acknowledged the important contribution that agriculture and rural life make to combating poverty and promoting sustainable development in the countries, based on agriculture's dual role as a way of life for millions of rural dwellers and as a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system for generating prosperity. With this in mind, the leaders issued instructions for the promotion of:

- Hemispheric joint action aimed at bringing about sustainable improvements in agriculture and rural life; and,
- Medium- and long-term national strategies for the sustainable improvement of both, based on dialogue involving government ministers, lawmakers and representatives of different sectors of civil society.

The mandates and commitments on agriculture and rural life of that summit:

- Attached greater value to agriculture by recognizing its importance for the comprehensive development of countries;
- Assigned the ministers of agriculture a leading role in the implementation of the mandates of the Summits process;
- Led to the ministerial meetings on agriculture and rural life; and,
- Included IICA as an institutional partner in all stages of the Summits.

At the **Special Summit of the Americas** (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 implementation of the ***“AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,”*** adopted at the Second

Ministerial Meeting (Panama 2003), taking into consideration the mandate of the Third Summit related to hemispheric joint action.

At the **Fourth Summit of the Americas** (Mar del Plata, 2005), the leaders pledged to build an institutional framework based on the coordination of public policies, which would include a comprehensive framework for rural and agricultural development designed to 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*” of the AGRO Plan.

At the **Fifth Summit of the Americas** (Trinidad and Tobago, 2009), the leaders adopted the *Declaration of Commitment of Port-of-Spain*, which includes mandates related to agriculture and its importance in promoting human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability. In particular, they stated that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life was of key importance in achieving sustainable development and food security. In this context, and within the framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, they endorsed the efforts to reposition agricultural and rural issues and priorities in national strategies, and pledged to strengthen national, subregional, regional, and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions carried out with the support of IICA and other pertinent organizations.

At the **Sixth Summit of the Americas**, the leaders agreed to promote greater investment in, and access to, research, technological innovation, and capacity-building in order to strengthen and ensure a sustainable, integrated, inclusive, and competitive agrifood sector that would contribute to the attainment of food security and the reduction of poverty and inequity, particularly in marginalized rural and urban areas.

Finally, at the **Seventh Summit of the Americas**, held in Panama in April 2015, the senior officials of the ministries of foreign affairs, meeting in their capacity as members of the SIRG, established as mandates for action the promotion of sustainable productive agriculture and efforts to institute public policies for the integrated management of water resources. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the Declaration of Ministers of Agriculture 2013 “Water to feed the land,” and instructed the inter-American institutions to do everything possible to cooperate and coordinate their work on the mandates issued.

The mandates of these seven summits provided a political framework based on a reassessment of the importance of agriculture and rural life in the Americas. They generated a ministerial process whose meetings and agreements have helped to implement and update the Summit mandates. The texts of the mandates are presented in **Annex 1**.

## **2. Holding of regular meetings of ministers of agriculture of the Americas**

Seven meetings on agriculture and rural life have taken place since the Summits of the Americas endorsed the holding of sectoral meetings: Dominican Republic 2001; Panama 2003; Guayaquil 2005; Guatemala 2007; Jamaica 2009; Costa Rica 2011; and Argentina 2013. At each one, the host country took the chair and IICA operated the technical secretariat, supporting and facilitating

the organization and implementation of the meetings of ministers and the hemispheric forum of their ministerial delegates.

The meetings have provided a hemispheric ministerial forum and a political mechanism that have enabled the ministers of agriculture to reach consensus on the priorities, objectives and strategic actions for the improvement of agriculture and rural life. They have afforded opportunities to learn about the progress made with the implementation of the Summit mandates on agriculture; and formed part of two interlinked, complementary processes: the Summits, on the one hand, and agriculture and rural life in the Americas, on the other. The agreements adopted by the ministers have given continuity to the process of advancing toward the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu and, at the same time, contributed to and influenced the drafting of mandates that are required from the Heads of State and Government in the Summits.

### **3. Participatory construction of hemispheric ministerial agreements: a process within and between the countries**

In the course of the ministerial process on agriculture and rural life in the Americas, which got under way in 2001, and in response to the mandates issued at the Third and subsequent Summits of the Americas, the ministers of agriculture have adopted twelve hemispheric ministerial agreements. These have been drafted by teams working in each country, through a process that has included national consultations and proposals followed by the participation of other countries. Based on those proposals, and with the support of the technical secretariat, the countries engaged in dialogue and negotiations before reaching hemispheric consensus on each agreement.

The agreements are joint decisions on issues of strategic importance for the development of agriculture and rural life in the Americas. As international instruments in support of the Summit process, the agreements have documented the ministers' determination and commitment to promoting strategic actions for the sustainable improvement of agriculture and the rural milieu, working with the people responsible for the development of agriculture and rural life. The following is a list of the ministerial agreements adopted. The Ministerial Declaration of Bávaro and the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas and its amendments are highlighted:

1. **Ministerial Declaration of Bávaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas** (Dominican Republic, 2001).
2. Strategic guidelines for a shared agenda for the community of agriculture and rural life of the Americas (Dominican Republic, 2001).
3. **AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the America.** (Panama, 2003).
4. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement. Implementation of and Follow-up to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan (Panama, 2003).
5. AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (Ecuador, 2005).
6. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement on the Implementation of and Follow-up to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan in preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting (Ecuador, 2005).

7. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement on the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan (Ecuador, 2005).
8. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement on the Proposal on Agriculture and Rural Life for the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Ecuador, 2005).
9. AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. Ministerial Agreement for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas Guatemala 2007 (Guatemala, 2007).
10. AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. Ministerial Agreement for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas Jamaica 2009 (Jamaica, 2009).
11. Declaration of Ministers of Agriculture San Jose 2011. Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2011, “Sowing innovation to harvest prosperity.”
12. Declaration of Ministers of Agriculture Argentina 2013. Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2013, Water to feed the land.

#### **4. Use of a broad-based approach to viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu in drafting the ministerial agreements**

For the process of dialogue and consensus-building involved in drafting the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan in 2003 and in updating it over the years, the ministerial delegates and the technical secretariat adopted a broad approach to viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu, which is reflected in the objectives, purposes, issues addressed, and strategic actions set forth in the ministerial agreements adopted.

Based on this approach, the so-called **AGRO-Matrix** integrates a systemic concept of agriculture and rural life, broken down into three operational areas (rural territories, agricultural value chains, and the national and international context) and a sustainable development approach with four dimensions (production-trade, ecological-environmental, sociocultural-human, and political-institutional). As explained earlier, the former was consolidated within IICA in the 1990s and the latter, following the adoption of the concept of sustainable development used in the international dialogue and efforts to build consensus on development and environment undertaken since 1987 with the publication of the global report *Our Common Future* and the follow-up activities carried out.

Use of the AGRO-Matrix allowed the countries to make progress with the comprehensive understanding of agriculture and the rural milieu, which is reflected in the breadth of the agreements adopted and the recognition of agriculture and rural life as complex phenomena, involving many different types of people and a diversity of interests that must be taken into account when devising effective strategies and policies aimed at transforming the sector. That gave rise to the spirit and conviction manifested in the “working together” agreements by all the stakeholders responsible for the improvement of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Two of the main results of the ministerial meetings have been the technical secretariat’s development of the AGRO-Matrix, and the ministerial delegates’ comprehension and use of it in drafting proposals and agreements, and for subsequent follow-up and information on the progress being made.

## 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 actors 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			<b>OVERARCHING GOAL</b> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL MILIEU

*“We based the preparation of the Plan on a systemic concept of agriculture and rural life which encompasses rural territories, agricultural production and trade chains and the national and international context, and an approach to sustainable development that takes into account the differences among countries and regions in the hemisphere in the production-trade, ecological-environmental, sociocultural and human development, and political-institutional dimensions.”*  
 Paragraph 2 of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, Panama 2003.

The following is a brief description, prepared by IICA, of the spheres of activity of the systemic concept and the dimensions of sustainable development that make up the AGRO-Matrix.

**Rural territories** are geographic areas that have their own history and natural resource base, where agricultural activities are carried out and the people involved interact with one another and with the natural environment, other non-agricultural activities and urban centers in the sociocultural, technical-economic and political-institutional areas.

**Production-trade chains** are the array of production and distribution processes and interrelationships that link rural and urban areas, and which involve all the economic and social agents engaged in agriculture in a given territory, from the planning of production through to the delivery of products to the national and international end consumers.

The **national and international context** affects the operation of the production-trade chains and the development of territories. It comprises the legal, political and institutional elements, at the international, national and local levels, that make up the framework for the formulation and implementation of public policies, and for effective investment.

The **production-trade** dimension refers to the technical-economic processes that are the foundation of the material progress for facilitating competitiveness; the **ecological-environmental** dimension refers to the (living and non-living) natural base of production

processes which, when combined with human activity, determine its sustainability; **the socio-cultural-human** dimension refers to the backgrounds, customs, capabilities, rights, needs and expectations of individual and social groups in terms of equality of opportunities; and the **political-institutional** dimension refers to the international, national and local institutions, organizations and networks that affect the governability of society in territories and in political affairs.

The methodological and thematic aspects of the AGRO-Matrix have also been drawn upon in drafting national, regional and international strategies for agriculture and rural development.

*“The broad-based and comprehensive way in which we conceive agriculture and rural life in the AGRO 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.”* Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement, Jamaica 2009.

## **5. Strengthening of the dialogue and greater understanding of critical agricultural issues**

The ministerial agreements were drafted by the countries through a process of proposals, dialogue, and consensus. Given the various interests and viewpoints of the countries with regard to the critical issues that need to be resolved, the ministerial process of dialogue and consensus building paved the way for the eventual adoption of hemispheric agreements. The agreements thus reflect points of mutual agreement and understanding with regard to issues and strategic actions that are of great value for the improvement of agriculture and rural life. The agreements adopted between 2003 and 2013 focused on 72 issues and called for 114 strategic actions.

With a view to facilitating the hemispheric dialogue and the building of consensus, since 2001 the process has been spearheaded by two groups and their respective hemispheric forums. These groups are the ministerial delegates and the ministers of agriculture of the Americas. The delegates coordinated the drafting of national proposals for the agreements in their respective countries and then, at the meetings of their hemispheric forum, reached consensus on the agreements for the ministers to study, approve, and sign at each of the biennial ministerial meetings through 2013.

The issues and strategic actions adopted in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, based on the analysis of the critical issues, are linked to 12 objectives that take into account the spheres of activity covered by the systemic concept and the dimensions of sustainable development included in the AGRO-Matrix. Those objectives are: I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises. II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness. III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture. IV. Being environmentally responsible in rural areas. V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management. VI. Participating in building an environmental institutional framework. VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunities. VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in chains. IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for rural communities. X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in territories. XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among stakeholders in chains. XII. Promoting State policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life.

The strategic issues established between 2003 and 2009 are shown in Annex 2, to which must be added *Sowing innovation to harvest prosperity* and *Water to feed the land*, the themes of the meetings of ministers held in 2011 and 2013.

## **6. Creation and operation of the institutional framework of the ministerial process**

To ensure the effectiveness of the ministerial meetings in consolidating the positioning achieved by agriculture and rural life at the Summits, and to respond to the mandates issued and the ministerial agreements, since 2001 the ministers of agriculture and the delegates, with support from IICA, have engaged in a continuous ministerial process based on an institutional framework comprised of several components designed to guide and organize the work involved. These are:

1. A *national team* comprising a ministerial delegate and a technical support group made up of members of the policy or planning units of the respective ministry of agriculture. The key duties of this team are: (i) to coordinate implementation of the Summit mandates and the ministerial agreements in the respective country; (ii) to prepare the reports on progress made and challenges faced; and (iii) to conduct national consultations in order to gather the inputs needed to begin building consensus on agreements.
2. A *hemispheric forum of ministerial delegates*, chaired by the ministerial delegate of the host country of the ministerial meeting. Through dialogue and negotiation, the delegates built consensus on proposed agreements that they submitted for consideration by their respective ministers of agriculture and the biennial hemispheric ministerial forum between 2001 and 2013.
3. A *hemispheric meeting* that, in its capacity as the forum of ministers of agriculture within the Summit framework, under the chairmanship of the host country, has guided and led the hemispheric process, adopted the agreements that have shaped the content of, and given continuity to, the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, and drafted the proposed mandates for the inter-American summits.
4. The *technical secretariat of the ministerial process and its meetings*, which IICA has operated continuously since 2001 and whose principal tasks have been: (i) to support the hemispheric dialogue, contributing a broad approach to viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu that oriented the national proposals for the agreements; (ii) to facilitate the continuity of the ministerial process; (iii) to ensure the close coordination of the ministerial process with the Summits of the Americas; and, (iv) to contribute reports and proposals designed to bring about the consolidation of agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda of the heads of state and government.
5. A *strategic framework for agriculture and rural life in the Americas*, made up of the Summit mandates and the ministerial agreements, whose linchpin has been the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.
6. A *broad concept of agriculture and rural life* summed up in the AGRO-Matrix.

## **7. Adoption and updating of the 2003-2015 AGRO Plan**

The adoption of the AGRO Plan and the subsequent updating of the issues addressed and strategic actions required were significant results, achieved thanks to the ministerial meetings and

the use of the AGRO-Matrix by the ministries' technical teams and delegates, and the ministers of agriculture. The AGRO Plan and its updates were drafted through a broad process of hemispheric dialogue, negotiation and consensus building spearheaded by the ministers of agriculture with the support of the delegates and the technical secretariat operated by IICA.

The AGRO Plan has been a frame of reference for the formulation of strategies and policies for advancing toward the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. Specifically, it has been used to devise public policies in several countries, for the work of the integration mechanisms, and to identify indicators. Follow-up has also been provided and it has been updated with the adoption of new strategic actions.

Within the framework of the Inter-American System and the Summits of the Americas, the AGRO Plan was recognized at the events held in 2004, 2005, and 2009. In particular, at the last of those meetings the leaders adopted the plan's broad approaches, which make it unique. In this regard, they stated the following in the action plan:

*“We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the AGRO Plan 2003-2015 of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas, held in Guatemala in 2007, we support the efforts to reposition agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organizations.”*

At the 2012 Summit, the leaders stressed the importance of innovation, the theme of the 2011 hemispheric meeting of ministers of agriculture, stating their determination:

*“To promote greater investment in, and access to, research, technological innovation, and capacity-building in order to strengthen and ensure a sustainable, comprehensive, inclusive, and competitive agro-food sector that would contribute to food security and the reduction of poverty and inequity, particularly in marginalized rural and urban areas.”*

## **8. Greater public interest in, and understanding of, the importance of agriculture**

Recognition of the importance of agriculture and rural life in the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, and the implementation of the ministerial meetings of agriculture and their agreements, led to increased public interest in, and understanding of, the contribution made by agriculture and the rural milieu to development. This has been reflected in:

- The national dialogues and proposals for the identification of priorities and the construction of hemispheric agreements, consensus on the issues to be addressed and strategic actions required in the hemispheric forums of delegates and ministers, and the adoption of agreements such as the AGRO 2013-2015 Plan endorsed by the heads of state and government at the Special Summit of the Americas, in 2004.



- The presence of agriculture and rural development on the regional agendas of the heads of state and government of the Andean Community (CAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), as well as at the meetings of the regional mechanisms of ministers of agriculture, such as the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Wider Caribbean, the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) and the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS).
- The holding of forums of agro-entrepreneurs and civil society within the framework of the “*Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas*” (2007 and 2009) and the presentation of the conclusions reached during those activities to the hemispheric forum of ministers of agriculture on their respective roles as part of an institutional framework for the development of agriculture consistent with the “working together” approach.
- The up-to-date, innovative information on the importance of agriculture and the rural milieu disseminated in global and hemispheric reports of the international agencies that participate in the Summit of the Americas process. **IICA** prepared the studies *More than food on the table: Agriculture’s true contribution to the economy* (2004); *Agriculture: a strategic issue. Status of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas 2005*; and, *Agriculture and the new challenges of development* (2007). In 2005, the **World Bank** presented the report, *Beyond the city: The rural contribution to development*, which provides updated information on the contribution that rural areas make to development, the scale of rural activity, and the continued anti-rural bias of policies. **ECLAC**, in its *Social Panorama of Latin America 2004* noted “... poverty and indigence rates continue to be higher in rural areas of Latin America than in urban areas.” In addition, the **International Labor Organization (ILO)**, in its *World Employment Report 2004-2005*, stated, “*Agriculture should not be ignored if the focus is on poverty reduction.*”
- The forums, presentations, and dialogues that took place at the hemispheric meetings of ministers of agriculture on strategic issues and the sharing of national and regional experiences in relation to the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.
- The news disseminated in the national and international communications media of the Dominican Republic, Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Argentina, and the extensive, hemisphere-wide news coverage of the implementation and results of the hemispheric meetings of ministers of agriculture held in those countries.

## **9. Development of a follow-up and information mechanism: experiences, indicators, and expectations**

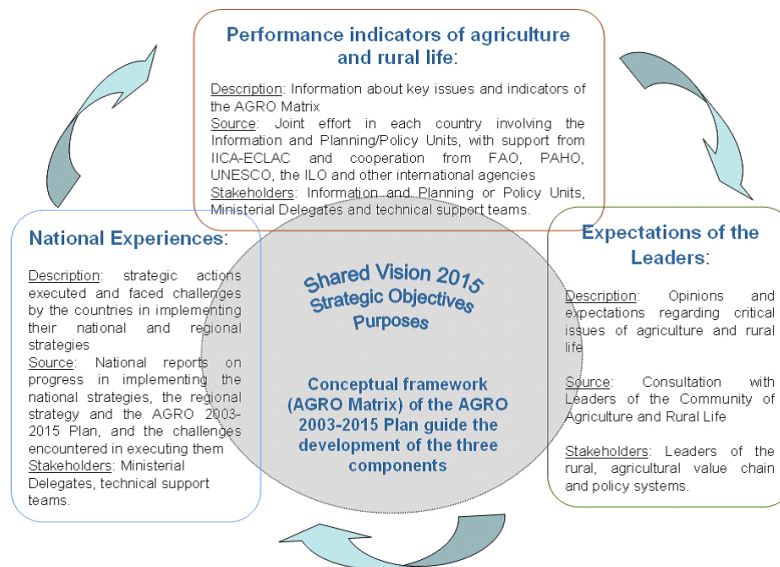
Following the approval of the AGRO Plan in 2003, the ministers of agriculture included a set of implementation and follow-up measures in the ministerial agreements aimed at:

- (i) Disseminating the agreements and the AGRO-Matrix (ministerial delegates, with IICA’s assistance)
- (ii) Strengthening the regional integration mechanisms on matters of mutual interest within the framework of the AGRO Plan
- (iii) Requesting support and the alignment of international organizations for the plan’s implementation
- (iv) Promoting forums for dialogue for other agricultural stakeholders

- (v) Bolstering the monitoring of implementation and the sharing of experiences, and,
- (vi) Updating the agreements.

With regard to the last two measures, the ministers instructed:

- The delegates to prepare their respective national reports on progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the plan.
- The hemispheric forum of delegates to draft the agreements for the following biennia, and,
- The technical secretariat to prepare reports on the progress of the ministerial process and the actions undertaken to ensure that the ministerial process is coordinated with the Summits of the Americas process, with a view to consolidating agriculture and rural life at the Summits.



In relation to the last point, the technical secretariat, in addition to the reports submitted to the meetings of ministers of agriculture, the Secretariat of Summits of the Americas, and the Permanent Council and General Assembly of the OAS, produced the following documents:

- *From Bávaro to Panama. Mandates, progress, and achievements* (2003).
- *Two years after Bávaro to Fulfil the Ministerial Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life* (2003).
- *Agriculture, Rural Life, and IICA in the Summit of the Americas Process* (2003).
- *The Reassessment of Agriculture and Rural Life. From Quebec 2001 to Mar del Plata 2005.*
- *Building Today the Agriculture and Rural Life of 2015* (2005).
- *In pursuit of a renewed institutional framework for agriculture and rural life in the Americas. The public, private, and social sectors working together* (2007).
- *Building capacity for enhancing food security and rural life in the Americas* (2009).
- *Report of the Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture 2011.*
- *Report on progress made in implementing the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action 2010-2011: Most important national experiences* (2013).

At the Guayaquil 2005 meeting, the ministers decided to provide follow-up to and evaluate the efforts carried out by means of an information system designed to focus on three aspects: the progress made in implementing the agreements, their impact on the improvement of agriculture and rural life, and the opinions and expectations of the leaders. In this regard, in 2007 the technical secretariat presented a proposal to the ministers for a system based on the integration of the following three information components within a common conceptual framework (the AGRO-Matrix):

- The national experiences and the challenges the countries face in implementing the AGRO Plan.
- Performance indicators related to agriculture and rural life.
- The expectations of leaders of agriculture and rural life.

The experiences component refers to the actions that countries undertook to implement their national strategies under the AGRO Plan, as well as the challenges to be tackled. The secretariat prepared a form based on the AGRO-Matrix for the purpose. Up to 2013, the delegates prepared 96 such reports, broken down as follows: 25 countries in 2005, 26 countries in 2007, 29 countries in 2009, and 16 countries in 2013. The information is summarized and available on line at <http://www.iica.int/Eng/cumbres/Pages/default.aspx>.

The indicator component tracks the trend in the performance of agriculture and rural life. A basic set of topics and indicators organized in accordance with the AGRO-Matrix is used to do this. This effort was a joint one involving ECLAC, IICA, and FAO with the support of PAHO, the ILO and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The following documents were prepared:

- *Indicators identified for following up on the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.*
- *Development of indicators for following up on the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: a first attempt.*
- *Performance indicators for agriculture and rural life. A look at agriculture and rural life in the Americas toward the Shared Vision 2015 of the AGRO Plan.* Contributions 3, ECLAC, PAHO, IICA, FAO. 2007.
- *Indicators for following up on the AGRO Plan 2015. Update,* ECLAC, 2007.

The expectations component garnered the opinions and expectations of the leaders of the rural, agrifood and policy systems in the *National Consultation 2001*, targeted at the main agents in agriculture, and the *National Consultation for Leaders of Agriculture and Life Rural 2007*, both carried out by IICA.

## **10. Close connection between the meetings of ministers of agriculture and the Summits of the Americas**

The leaders' decision to involve the hemispheric ministerial meetings in the identification of priority issues and in the drafting and implementation of the Summit mandates has been a continuous, productive experience in the case of the meetings of ministers of agriculture. This is

reflected in the mandates adopted at the Summits of 2001, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2015, based on the proposals and strategic guidelines approved at the ministerial meetings. This dynamic interaction has included the following actions:

1. Reports to the ministers and their delegates on the mandates of agriculture and rural life.
2. Reports to the SIRG, comprised of the ministers of foreign affairs of the Americas, on the progress made in implementing the mandates and with the ministerial process and its agreements; and on IICA's contribution.
3. Participation as an institutional partner in the last six summits, including the latest, held in 2015.
4. Participation in the JSWG coordinated by the OAS, contributing reports and proposals to the Summits of the Americas process.

The close coordination between these two inter-American processes has helped to consolidate the positioning of agriculture and rural life on the agenda of the Summits, raise the profile of IICA's contribution to the Summits process, and strengthen joint actions with other institutional partners. As the technical secretariat, IICA has successfully facilitated the coordination of the two processes.

## **11. Assessment of the meetings of the ministers of agriculture of the Americas**

Broadening the scope of the meetings of ministers of agriculture of the Americas beyond their role as IICA's highest governing body—making them the highest-level inter-American forum for addressing strategic issues related to agriculture and rural life in the continent—fostered increased participation of senior government officials in the meetings, such as the presidents, prime ministers, vice presidents, ministers of foreign affairs and other ministers of the host countries; senior staff of international organizations like the OAS, ECLAC, FAO, the IDB, the World Bank, WFP, IFAD, CARICOM, and the World Economic Forum; international experts on strategic agricultural issues and representatives of agro-entrepreneurs, civil society, and local governments. The involvement of all these key players and their contributions to the dialogue added value and helped raise the profile of the meetings of ministers of agriculture and of IICA as a technical cooperation agency.

## **12. Progress made with the implementation of the AGRO Plan: an overview of the work carried out at the national and regional levels**

In the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, the ministers established a set of objectives and strategic actions aimed at promoting the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu in their respective countries.

*“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 public and private agricultural stakeholders in view of their international commitments and agreements.”*

They also decided on a series of implementation and follow-up measures. Specifically, in the section on implementation and follow-up they established that:

*“National governments will deliver reports on progress in implementing each biennial agenda and identify challenges faced.”*

Based on the national reports sent to the technical secretariat, the 34 countries of the Americas, by means of their ministries of agriculture and other institutions linked to agriculture and rural development, implemented a number of initiatives in the period 2001-2013 designed to improve competitiveness, sustainability, equity, and governance in the sector and thereby advance toward the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, reduce food insecurity and promote rural well-being.

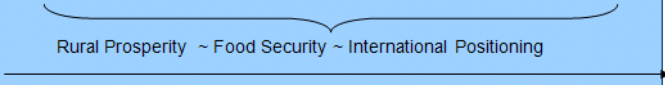
In fact, the countries have implemented, and continue to execute, a range of initiatives for the improvement of agriculture within the framework of the strategic actions called for in the Declaration of Bávaro 2001, and the AGRO Plan 2003 and its biennial updates. The national efforts have included studies, policies, and sectoral plans, programs and projects, State policies and different services in support of production and marketing and rural development offered by the ministries of agriculture and other institutions in the public agriculture and rural sector.

This overview of the countries and regions is based on the information supplied in the national reports on the status of the implementation of the AGRO Plan. Numerous important innovative experiences have been reported, covering the priority issues set out in the plan. This valuable resource has enriched the knowledge available for tackling similar situations and promoted the sharing of experiences and cooperation among countries.

Following the conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, the countries reported on national efforts related to the 12 sections of the AGRO-Matrix aimed at improving rural territories, strengthening agricultural production and trade chains, and creating a favorable national and international environment for agriculture. The set of national efforts was also comprehensive, with the initiatives reported focusing on a wide range of issues (production and trade-related; social, cultural, and human; ecological and environmental; and political and institutional matters).

The national reports on the progress being made with the implementation of the AGRO Plan reflect a broad range of strategic actions undertaken by the countries under the following **priority lines of action**, which are presented as they are organized in the AGRO-Matrix.

## 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 actors 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

### ➤ Promoting competitive rural enterprises

- Support services for production and commercialization
- Research, development, and technology transfer
- Productivity and production
- Infrastructure and investment in the rural milieu
- More and better food

### ➤ Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness

- Strengthening trade chains
- Development of products using national raw materials
- Storage and food processing

### ➤ Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture

- International negotiations on agricultural trade
- Sanitary and phytosanitary standards
- Agribusiness development
- Micro, small, and medium-sized rural enterprises and cooperatives
- Agricultural research priorities and capabilities
- Plant and animal health and food safety
- Soil and water management
- Land and land tenure
- Risk management and agricultural emergencies

- **Being environmentally responsible in rural areas**
  - Sustainable agriculture
  - Adoption of environmentally friendly practices
  - Economic activities based on the sustainable use of natural resources
  - Disaster preparedness and mitigation
  - Agriculture and biodiversity
  
- **From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management**
  - Agricultural environmental management
  - Environmental impact assessments
  
- **Participation in building an institutional environmental framework**
  - Agricultural environmental standards
  - Organic agriculture
  - Public-private coordination for environmental management
  - Early warning and agro-meteorological monitoring
  - Climate change
  - Multisectoral agro-environmental management
  
- **Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunities**
  - Rural poverty and employment
  - Social protection for vulnerable groups
  - Agricultural education system and rural education
  - Access to resources and services
  - Management and leadership
  
- **Advancing learning and expertise in the chain**
  - Entrepreneurial capacity
  - Producers' organizations
  
- **Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for rural communities**
  - Food security
  - Women producers and gender approach
  - Young people and other age groups
  - Rural agricultural training and evaluation and accreditation of higher agricultural education
  - Production and income

➤ **Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories**

- Mechanisms for dialogue, consensus-building, and strategic action
- Focusing on rural territories

➤ **Strengthening dialogue and commitment among agents in the chain**

- Institutional frameworks to facilitate dialogue and negotiation
- Coordination mechanisms and chain approach

➤ **Promoting State policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life**

- State policies for agriculture and rural life
- Regional integration and cooperation
- Institutional capacity
- Investment in agriculture and rural development

The following is a list of some of the **important** national and regional **initiatives** (programs, projects, policies, etc.) reported by the countries, identified by their name in the original language and organized into groups corresponding to the 12 purposes of the AGRO-Matrix:

I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises

- Argentina: Programa de Servicios Agrícolas Provinciales (PROSAP).
- Mexico: Programa de Fortalecimiento de Empresas y Organización Rural. Proyecto Estratégico de Seguridad Alimentaria.
- Honduras: Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (PRONADERS).
- Colombia: Institucionalidad para el Financiamiento Rural. Fortalecimiento de la Corporación Colombiana de Investigación Agropecuaria.
- Panama: Centros de Información y Gestión Rural. Fideicomiso para la Competitividad Agropecuaria. Ley de la Transformación Agropecuaria. Programa de Producción Artesanal de Semilla Mejorada y Programa de Promoción al Uso de Semilla Certificada.
- Ecuador: Diálogo entre universidades y el sector empresarial.
- Guatemala: Socialización del Subsistema Nacional de Investigación y Transferencia de Tecnología Agrícola. Estrategia Nacional Agricultura Orgánica. Homologación del Reglamento Regional de Producción Orgánica de Centroamérica, Panamá y República Dominicana.
- Paraguay: Programa de Fomento de la Producción de Alimentos por la Agricultura Familiar. Estrategia Nacional de Recuperación de Semillas Nativas y Criollas.
- Brazil: Produção Integrada Agropecuária. Programa de Qualidade de Insumos e Serviços Agropecuários.
- Peru: Fondo para el Desarrollo de Servicios Estratégicos. Programa de Compensaciones para la Competitividad.



- Jamaica: National Food Safety Modernization Initiative.
- Guyana: Spice Program to Enhance Livelihood in Hinterland Communities.

## II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness

- Mexico: Comités Nacionales de Sistemas Producto o Cadenas Agroalimentarias.
- Brazil: Producción de biocombustibles. Incentivo a Armazenagem.
- Argentina: Programa Nacional de Biocombustibles.
- USA: Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program. Food Hubs and Other Aggregation Models.
- Costa Rica: Centros de Procesamiento y Mercadeo de Alimentos.
- Dominican Republic: Construcción del Merca-Santo Domingo.
- Uruguay: Creación de un mercado mayorista.
- Jamaica: Renovation of Packaging Facilities and Farmers Markets.

## III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture

- Brazil: Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar. Programa de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento de Novas Empresas de Base Tecnológica Agropecuária e à Transferência de Tecnologia. Sistema Unificado de Atenção à Sanidade Agropecuária. Programa Minimização de Riscos no Agronegócio. Programa Desenvolvimento do Agronegócio no Comércio Internacional.
- El Salvador: Sistema Nacional de Alianzas para la Innovación Tecnológica.
- Colombia: Centro de Excelencia Fitosanitaria. Sistema Nacional de Identificación e Información del Ganado Bovino. Programa de Restitución de Tierras. Programa de Formalización de la Propiedad Rural. Programa del Seguro Agropecuario.
- USA: Support for an hemispheric understanding of the Cartagena Protocol. Harmonization of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures According to Science-based International Standards. USDA's Crop Insurance Program.
- Panama: Planta Productora de Moscas Estériles de Gusano Barrenador. Política Nacional de Gestión Integral de Riesgos de Desastres.
- Argentina: Armonización normativa de las medidas sanitarias. Ley de Protección al Dominio Nacional sobre la Propiedad de las Tierras Rurales. Sistema de Información para la Evaluación de Riesgos Climáticos del MAGyP.
- Costa Rica: Programa Nacional de Rastreabilidad.
- Paraguay: Construcción del Laboratorio de Bioseguridad.
- Perú: Reglamento Sanitario de Carnes. Programa de Mantenimiento de Infraestructura de Riego. Fondo de Garantía para el Campo y Seguro Agropecuario. Centro Nacional de Biotecnología Agropecuaria y Forestal.
- Suriname: Marine Stewart Council Certification.
- St. Kitts and Nevis: National Veterinary Laboratory.
- Jamaica: Food Safety Policy. National Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Programme. Project to Strengthen Community Preparedness and Resilience to Natural Disasters. The Agro-Parks Development Project.

- Guyana: Disaster Risk Management Plan. Agricultural Diversification and Export Project.
- Mexico: Programa de Prevención y Manejo de Riesgos.
- Dominican Republic: Creación del Departamento de Inocuidad Agroalimentaria. Sistemas de información de alerta temprana.
- Plan Regional de Reducción de Desastres Naturales (PRRD) en Centroamérica, Belice y República Dominicana
- Disaster Mitigation Facility for the Caribbean.

#### IV. Being environmentally responsible in rural areas

- Guatemala: Programa de Desarrollo Sostenible del Petén.
- Canada: Environmental Farm Plans.
- Ecuador: Consolidando la Política Ambiental Agropecuaria.
- El Salvador: Programa Ambiental. Componente de Inversión en la Cuenca Alta del Río Lempa.
- Honduras: Proyecto de Desarrollo Institucional para la Producción Agrícola Sostenible en las Laderas de América Central IICA-Holanda.
- Guatemala: Programa de Desarrollo Sostenible del Petén.

#### V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management

- Canada: Value-Chain Round Tables

#### VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework

- Ecuador: Política Ambiental para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Sector Agropecuario y Gestión Ambiental.
- Argentina: Proyecto de Adaptación y Resiliencia de la Agricultura Familiar del Noreste de Argentina ante el Impacto del Cambio Climático.
- Colombia: Programa Nacional de Agricultura Limpia.
- Dominican Republic: Políticas Ambientales y de Seguridad Alimentaria.
- Paraguay: Programa Nacional de Manejo, Conservación y Recuperación de Suelos.
- Panama: Programa Conjunto de Adaptación y Mitigación al Cambio Climático. Programa de Zonificación Agroecológica. Programa Producción Más Limpia.
- Costa Rica: Programa Pago por Servicios Ambientales. Política Nacional de Carbono Neutralidad (banano, café, pastos y producción de leche).
- Mexico: Programa de Sustentabilidad de Recursos Naturales, con un componente de conservación y uso sustentable del suelo y el agua. Programa Especial de Cambio Climático.
- USA: USDA's Climate Change Program Office. USDA's Climate Change Science Plan.
- Guatemala: Programa de Incentivos Forestales.
- Nicaragua: Regulación legislativa para la promoción de la gestión ambiental.
- Brazil: Programa de Incentivo à Produção Sustentável do Agronegócio. Programa de Agricultura de Baixa Emissão de Carbono. Desenvolvimento Sustentável das Regiões Produtoras de Cacau.

- St. Kitts and Nevis: Agricultural Resource Management Project. Climate Change Adaptation and Risk Mitigation.
- Guyana: Promotion of Climate Smart Practices.
- Caribbean Regional Environment Programme
- Jamaica: Adaptation Fund Programme for Agriculture
- Uruguay: Fondo de Adaptación al Cambio Climático
- Central America: Estrategia Regional Agro-Ambiental y de Salud 2009-2024

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

- Mexico: Proyecto Regional de Asistencia Técnica al Microfinanciamiento Rural.
- Bolivia: Diálogo Nacional Bolivia Productiva.
- Canada: The consideration of the rural voice in the development strategy.
- Costa Rica: Constitución del Foro Nacional Mixto Organizaciones-Sector Público Agropecuario.
- Panama: Proyecto de Desarrollo Participativo y Modernización Rural.
- Guatemala: Fondo Nacional para la Reactivación y Modernización Agropecuaria.
- Colombia: Proyecto Desarrollo de Oportunidades de Inversión y Capitalización de los Activos de las Microempresas Rurales. Programa Mujer Rural.
- Peru: Desarrollo del Fondo AGROEMPRENDE.

#### VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in chains

- Costa Rica: Programa de Fomento de la Producción Agropecuaria Sostenible – Componente II Capacitación e Información.
- Colombia: Proyecto de Apoyo al Desarrollo de la Microempresa Rural.

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

- Nicaragua: Escuelas de Campo.
- Guatemala: Programa para la Dinamización de Economías Campesinas.
- Paraguay: Programa de Apoyo a la Agricultura Familiar.
- Brazil: Programa Nacional de Apóio ao Médio Produtor Rural.
- Peru: Programa AGROIDEAS.
- Argentina: PRODEAR. Programa Regional de Fortalecimiento Institucional de Políticas de Igualdad de Género en la Agricultura Familiar del MERCOSUR.
- Jamaica: Rural Youth Employment Project.

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

- Bolivia: Diálogo Nacional Bolivia Productiva.
- Canada: Rural Dialogue. The Canadian Rural Partnership.
- Panama: Proyecto de Desarrollo Participativo y Modernización Rural.

- USA: StrikeForce Initiative (137 counties in Arkansas, Georgia and Mississippi).
- Costa Rica: Programa de Desarrollo Territorial de la Zona Sur. Programa de Desarrollo Territorial de La Cruz.
- Paraguay: Sistema Integrado de Gestión para el Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural.
- Central America: Central American Strategy for Rural Area-based Development (ECADERT).

#### XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among agents in the chain

- Mexico: Consejo Mexicano para el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible.
- Colombia: Conformación de organizaciones de cadenas productivas.
- Guatemala: Fondo Competitivo de Encadenamientos Empresariales.
- Peru: Mesa Técnica Nacional de la Cadena Agroproductiva de Cacao y Chocolate. Consejo Nacional de la Cadena Productiva Algodón Textil Confecciones.
- Argentina: Plan de Mejora Competitiva en Clusters Agroindustriales.

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

- Chile: Política de Estado para la Agricultura Chilena para el Período 2000-2010
- Honduras: Política de Estado para el Sector Agroalimentario y el Medio Rural 2004-2021
- Guatemala: Actualización de la política agropecuaria 2011-2015
- Trinidad and Tobago: National Consultation – Sector Policy for Food Production and Marine Resources 2001-2005
- Peru: Ley Marco para el Desarrollo Económico del Sector Rural
- Honduras: Mesa Agrícola Hondureña
- Costa Rica: Estrategia AGRO 21. Política de Estado para el Sector Agroalimentario y el Desarrollo Rural Costarricense 2010-2021
- Central America: Información de antecedente de la AGRO-Matriz del Plan AGRO 2003-2015, como fundamento estratégico de la Política Agrícola Centroamericana 2008-2017 (PACA)
- Argentina: Plan Estratégico Agroalimentario y Agroindustrial Participativo y Federal 2010-2016
- Central America: Regional Agro-environmental and Health Strategy (ERAS).

These and other initiatives provide a great deal of information about the progress made in achieving the objectives of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, and in constructing sustainable agriculture and rural communities. Detailed information about the initiatives reported is available on line at <http://www.iica.int/Eng/cumbres/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **13. Consolidation and contribution of IICA as an institutional partner in the Summits**

At the Third Summit, IICA was designated an institutional partner for all the stages of the Summit Process. Given the importance attributed to the inter-American sectoral meetings and to

the role of the technical secretariats at those events, in its capacity as an international technical cooperation agency IICA has served as the secretariat of the hemispheric meetings of ministers of agriculture.

As an *international technical cooperation agency*, IICA has used its technical cooperation strategy in each country to align its activities with the work at the inter-American level, the guidelines of the ministerial process and the Summit mandates in those areas in which it has expertise related to the strategic tropics and actions established in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan. In this regard, in 2001 IICA began strengthening its technical capabilities for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu with regard to strategic subjects such as agroenergy, organic agriculture, agrotourism, agribusiness and family farming, innovation and biotechnology, rural territories, food security, natural resources, resilience, risk management and climate change.

As the *technical secretariat of the ministerial process*, IICA has facilitated continuity and coordination with the Summits of the Americas. In doing so, the Institute supported the national authorities with the holding of the ministerial meetings in the Dominican Republic (2001), Panama (2003), Ecuador (2005), Guatemala (2007), Jamaica (2009), Costa Rica (2011), and Argentina (2013), as well as the meetings of the hemispheric forum of ministerial delegates. Specifically, IICA assisted the ministers and delegates of agriculture with the drafting of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, facilitated the hemispheric dialogue, and contributed a broad approach for viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu. It also prepared and disseminated the reports and the agreements of the ministerial meetings, and is the custodian of the institutional memory of the ministerial process on agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

Furthermore, IICA has participated regularly in the JSWG, the SIRG and the Summits of Quebec (2001), Monterrey (2004), Mar del Plata (2005), Trinidad and Tobago (2009), Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (2012) and Panama (2015). In the mechanisms mentioned, IICA has continued to coordinate the meetings of the ministers of agriculture with the Summits.

IICA's contribution as an institutional partner in the Summits, both as a cooperation agency and the technical secretariat of the ministerial meetings, has been detailed in the documents of the Secretariat of the OAS Summits of the Americas Process (the *Summit Report 2001-2003 – Advancing in the Americas: Progress and Challenges*), and the annual reports of the JSWG submitted to the SIRG and the Summits from 2004 onwards. The reports are available on line at [http://www.summit-americas.org/default\\_en.htm](http://www.summit-americas.org/default_en.htm). IICA has also kept the OAS Permanent Council abreast of its contribution in its annual reports.

## CONCLUSIONS

**1. The ministerial agreements positioned agriculture and aligned it with the global and hemispheric dynamics.** The ministerial meetings on agriculture and rural life and their hemispheric agreements enhanced the positioning of agriculture in the mandates of the inter-American summits, and facilitated the alignment of agriculture with the global and hemispheric dynamics related to the sector's contribution to integrated sustainable development.

**2. Within the framework of the Summits of the Americas, the ministers of agriculture focused on strategic issues that go beyond their remit as members of IICA's highest governing body.** The establishment of the ministerial meetings of agriculture and rural life in response, and as a contribution, to the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, broadened the scope of action of the meeting of ministers of agriculture as an inter-American body. In addition to meeting as the IABA and IICA's highest governing body, in 2001 the ministers and their delegates began holding forums for reflection, dialogue, and the adoption of agreements on strategic aspects of agriculture and rural development. Those agreements were then passed on to all the national and international public- and private-sector agents involved in the development of agriculture. This facilitated closer links among international organizations for joint activities under the AGRO Plan, and the alignment of the ministerial agreements with certain IABA resolutions on specific areas of the plan designed to expand IICA's technical cooperation.

**3. The ministerial meetings of agriculture and rural life have been a continuous, innovative, and participatory process for the drafting of agreements.** Within the framework of the inter-American summits and following a broad, participatory process, the meetings have been successful in constructing ministerial agreements and proposals for the plans of action of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Americas. The work has involved a ministerial process that includes the drafting of national proposals, the construction of draft hemispheric agreements by the technical secretariat, and dialogue, consensus building and the establishment of agreements among the countries in the forums of ministerial delegates and ministers of agriculture of the Americas.

**4. The ministerial meetings influenced the mandates of the inter-American summits.** The decisions of the ministers of agriculture set out in their ministerial agreements and in the proposals to the different summits dating back to 2001 have influenced the hemispheric mechanisms, such as the JSWG and the SIRG, with the drafting of the agreements adopted at the Summits of the Americas.

**5. The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan was a strategy constructed, updated, and based on a broad concept of agriculture.** The intrinsic conceptual value of the AGRO Plan, which each country helped draft working with its own stakeholders, was the dual, systemic, and sustainable approach, with its many interrelationships, that the ministerial delegates adopted. The positive experience of each biennial process and its agreements demonstrated that the broad approach to viewing and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu was necessary, understandable, viable, and applicable in the development of public policies for their improvement.

**6. The ministerial process facilitated the emergence of new leaders and institutional capabilities.** The dynamic, participatory hemispheric process of developing and providing follow-up to agreements was based on a number of elements. These included the designation and participation of around 300 ministerial delegates of agriculture from 34 countries in seven biennial processes (between 2001 and 2013), who concluded the drafting of the agreements by consensus in the corresponding hemispheric forums. Several countries named two delegates (a regular and an alternate representative) and a national technical support team. In sum, in support of the 34 ministers of agriculture, a group of leaders was set up at each biennial meeting who assumed responsibility for formulating national proposals, building hemispheric consensus,

providing information about the progress made in implementing the AGRO Plan, and representing their respective ministers in the hemispheric forum of delegates. On each occasion, the chair of the forum of delegates presented the results of the exercise to the meeting of ministers.

**7. The national reports partially reflect the strategies and actions that the countries carry out.** The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan established a mechanism for implementation and follow-up that the countries were to use to prepare status reports on the implementation of the agreement. Although the countries submitted a large number of reports detailing their most important initiatives (96 reports between 2005 and 2013), they also undertook major efforts related to the strategic objectives of the AGRO Plan that were not reported. Furthermore, not all the countries submitted a report every two years. This situation is similar to the one experienced with the follow-up processes of the UN Earth Summit and the OAS Summits of the Americas. In the latter case, 14 countries submitted reports during the period 2012-2014 ([http://www.summit-americas.org/default\\_en.htm](http://www.summit-americas.org/default_en.htm)).

**8. The national initiatives are a valuable resource for generating knowledge and horizontal cooperation.** The national reports on the implementation of the AGRO Plan contain an assortment of important experiences related to each of the 12 purposes and strategic topics of the AGRO-Matrix. These are a valuable resource for the countries, and their dissemination in printed and digital form and in the dialogues carried out by the leaders in the forums of delegates and ministers of agriculture, have enhanced the generation of knowledge for the improvement of agriculture. Innovative experiences have also led to horizontal cooperation between countries.

**9. The hemispheric ministerial process of agriculture and rural life has been productive.** The ministerial process's response to the tasks entrusted to it in the mandates of the Summits of the Americas was more than adequate. The long list of work carried out successfully includes the identification of priorities and strategic issues; the national and hemispheric dialogue on those matters; consensus building; the use of a broad approach to viewing and acting in agriculture; the adoption of eleven ministerial agreements for the improvement of agriculture and the rural milieu; the holding of ministerial meetings and discussion forums; dialogue on and the sharing of experiences; the broad participation of leaders of agriculture; a political impact; and follow-up and information about the progress made with the implementation of the ministerial agreements.

**10. IICA strengthened its presence in the hemispheric institutional framework.** The mandates on agriculture and rural life of the inter-American Summits, the Institute's inclusion as an institutional partner in the Summit Process, its contribution to compliance with the mandates as an international technical cooperation agency specializing in agriculture in support of the countries, and its role as the technical secretariat of the meetings of ministers of agriculture enabled IICA to participate and play a bigger role in the training, follow-up and information mechanisms of the Summit Process and the OAS, and to interact more with other international organizations such as ECLAC, FAO, and PAHO, among others.

**11. The strategic objectives of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan continue to be valid.** In 2013, in the form sent to the countries for the preparation of the national progress report for 2010-2011, the technical secretariat included the question, *Do you think the objectives of competitiveness,*

*sustainability, equity, governability, rural prosperity, and food security that underpin the vision and actions adopted by the ministers of agriculture and included in the AGRO Plan are still valid?* The countries that answered the question responded positively, stating that the strategic objectives of the AGRO Plan continued to be valid. In the international context, the different forums on future development continue to include the objectives adopted by the ministers of agriculture in the AGRO Plan among their goals.

**12. Agriculture and rural life toward 2030: an opportunity to construct a post-2015 hemispheric agenda.** The term established for the implementation of the AGRO Plan, the principal agreement of the hemispheric ministerial meetings on agriculture and rural life, concludes in 2015. The same is true, at the global level, of the process of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the progress achieved, the present challenges and the future outlook suggest that in both cases the goals that inspired their adoption remain valid and others need to be added to them looking to 2030, the time horizon being set for the SDGs of the post-2015 agenda. Most of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets are linked to the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, and will serve as a frame of reference for the development of national and regional strategies, cooperation, and international public and private financing for development. In particular, several international organizations linked to agriculture are adjusting their cooperation to bring it into line with the SDGs and a post-2015 development agenda.



## ANNEX 1

### SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS MANDATES ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE 2001-2015

#### THIRD SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS – QUEBEC 2001 DECLARATION OF QUEBEC CITY

We commit ourselves to promote programs for the improvement of agriculture and rural life and agro business as an essential contribution to poverty reduction and integral development.

Ministerial meetings are producing significant results in support of Summit mandates. We will continue to develop this cooperation.

#### PLAN OF ACTION

To strengthen democracy, create prosperity, and realize human potential, our Governments will:

Recognizing the fundamental importance of agriculture as a way of life for millions of rural families of the Hemisphere as well as the role it plays in the creation of prosperity as a strategic sector in our socioeconomic system and taking note of the importance of developing its potential in a manner compatible with sustainable development that would ensure adequate treatment and attention to the rural sector:

- Promote dialogue involving government ministers, parliamentarians and civil society, in particular organizations linked to rural areas as well as the scientific and academic communities, with the objective of promoting medium and long-term national strategies toward sustainable improvement in agriculture and rural life;
- Support national efforts to strengthen rural enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and promote, where appropriate, a favorable environment for agribusiness; encourage, in a complementary manner, the training of small- and medium-sized rural entrepreneurs as well as the modernization of training institutions in this field;
- Encourage the development of markets in the Hemisphere for goods obtained through the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Strive to facilitate access to markets for those goods derived from alternative development programs implemented in countries engaged in the substitution of illicit crops;
- Instruct **the Ministers of Agriculture** to promote, in cooperation with **the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**, joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector to work towards the improvement of agricultural and rural life that enables the implementation of the Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas;

We welcome and encourage the extensive **sectoral cooperation** that exists at the ministerial level in various sectors, which form the building blocks of hemispheric cooperation. We direct our **respective Ministers** to continue to support the implementation of the mandates contained within this Plan of Action and to report on progress.

We welcome the engagement of the institutional partners (OAS, PAHO, IICA, IDB, ECLAC, and the World Bank) in all stages of the Summit of the Americas process and endorse:

- regular dialogue between the SIRG and the partner institutions to ensure coordination in the planning, financing and implementation of Summit mandates;
- participation of the Heads of the partner institutions at future ministerial-level meetings of the SIRG.

#### **SPECIAL SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS – MONTERREY 2004 DECLARATION OF NUEVO LEÓN**

We commit to maintain a sustained effort to improve living conditions for inhabitants of rural areas, by promoting investment and creating a favorable environment to achieve sustainable improvements in agriculture that will contribute to social development, rural prosperity, and food security. In this context, we support the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas, adopted at the Second Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life, held in Panama in November 2003, and we trust that the Global Forum on Biotechnology, which will take place in Chile in March 2004, will contribute to fighting hunger in the region.

We call upon the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Bank, **the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture**, the Andean Development Corporation, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the Caribbean Development Bank to strengthen their coordination, and to continue deepening their support, through their respective activities and programs, and committing appropriate resources to implement and conduct follow-up on the Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas, and this Declaration, and to assist in preparations for the Fourth Summit of the Americas in 2005.

#### **FOURTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS – MAR DEL PLATA 2005 DECLARATION OF MAR DEL PLATA**

We 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;

We instruct the members of the Joint Summit Working Group, comprised of the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pan-American Health Organization, the **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**, the Central American Bank for Economic

Integration, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA), the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Andean Development Corporation, under the coordination of the OAS, **to continue, through their respective activities and programs, to support the follow-up and implementation of the Declarations and Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas**, and of the Declaration and Plan of Action of Mar del Plata, as well as to assist in the preparations for future summits.

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

To support the implementation of the **Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005, Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (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.

### **FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS - PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO - 2009 DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT OF PORT OF SPAIN**

Providing our people with adequate and timely access to safe and nutritious food is among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and the world. We recognize the negative impact on our people of food crises when they occur, and commit to taking urgent and coordinated action, working in partnership with the relevant international and regional organizations, as appropriate, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes in order to confront the challenges of food security. We reaffirm our commitment to the objective of the Millennium Declaration to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; and we recognize the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/235, which calls for addressing these challenges.

We call on our Agriculture Ministers to develop activities aimed at addressing issues affecting access to and availability of food in order to combat chronic malnutrition and to promote adequate nutritional policies for our populations. We support the promotion of investment in agriculture, as well as the strengthening of our States' institutional capacity, with a view to increasing and intensifying productive activities, particularly in the countries most affected by hunger.

We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the AGRO Plan 2003–2015 of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas held in Guatemala in 2007, we support the efforts in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to

strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organizations.

## **SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, CARTAGENA DE INDIAS - 2011**

### **POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND INEQUITY**

To promote greater investment in, and access to, research, technological innovation, and capacity building in order to strengthen and ensure a sustainable, comprehensive, inclusive, and competitive agro-food sector that would contribute to food security and the reduction of poverty and inequity, particularly in marginalized rural and urban areas.

## **SEVENTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS – PANAMA, 2015**

### **ENVIRONMENT**

To encourage sustainable and productive agriculture, optimizing and improving the use of natural resources, particularly water and soil, in order to achieve prosperity with equity in rural areas.

To promote the implementation of public policies, practices, and technologies to strengthen national capacities for proper integrated management of water resources. Thus, we reaffirm our commitment to the declaration “Water to Feed the Land,” adopted by the Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas in 2013.

### **HEMISPHERIC PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT**

We entrust the inter-American organizations and institutions to cooperate and coordinate as extensively as they can in implementing the mandates contained in this document. We call on the institutions of the Joint Summits Working Group, other international agencies, as well as civil society organizations and other social actors, including the private sector, to support the implementation of the aforementioned actions.

We pledge our commitment to periodically follow up on and seek cooperative action on these mandates, through the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) and the Summit of the Americas Follow-up System (SISCA).

**ANNEX 2. AGRO PLAN 2003-2015. HEMISPHERIC MINISTERIAL AGREEMENTS (HMA): STRATEGIC SUBJECTS**

<b>Systemic Concept</b>	<b>Rural Territories</b>	<b>Agricultural Production – Trade Chains</b>	<b>National and International Context</b>	<b>Strategic Objectives</b>
<b>Sustainable Development Approach</b>				
<b>Production – Trade</b>	<b>Promoting competitive rural enterprises</b>	<b>Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness</b>	<b>Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture</b>	<b>Competitiveness</b>
	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Productivity and production</li> <li>- Infrastructure, competitive enterprises and investment</li> <li>- Support services for production and marketing</li> <li>- Financial and non-financial services</li> <li>- Coordination among producers, research centers and public and private agricultural services</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Areas of local economic development</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entrepreneurial, innovation and business capabilities</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More and better food</li> <li>- Diversification of the food basket</li> </ul>	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening trade chains</li> <li>- Infrastructure for development</li> <li>- Development of products using national raw materials</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality management and certification</li> <li>- Development of products based on biotechnologies</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market information</li> <li>- Inclusive chain linkages</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storage and food processing</li> </ul>	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policies for an enabling environment</li> <li>- Favorable international framework for agricultural trade</li> <li>- Regional integration and increase in national capabilities</li> <li>- Micro, small and medium scale rural enterprises</li> <li>- Cooperatives and associative enterprises</li> <li>- Investment in the rural milieu</li> <li>- Research capacity - access to new technologies</li> <li>- Agricultural health and food safety</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generation of energy from alternative sources</li> <li>- Policies for agroindustry</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening of small- and medium-scale rural enterprises.</li> <li>- Mobilizing resources</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plant and animal health and food safety</li> <li>- Soils and water management</li> <li>- Land tenure and titling</li> <li>- Risk management and agricultural emergencies</li> </ul>	
<b>Ecological – Environmental</b>	<b>Being environmentally responsible in rural areas</b>	<b>From farm to table: environmental management of agricultural production-trade chains</b>	<b>Participating in building an institutional environmental framework</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental impact of agriculture</li> <li>- Biodiversity and agriculture</li> <li>- Sustainable agriculture</li> <li>- Access and use of sustainable technologies</li> <li>- Linking agriculture with other non-agricultural activities based on the sustainable use of natural resources</li> <li>- Mitigation of natural disasters</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental plans for businesses</li> </ul>	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental management of trade chains</li> </ul>	<p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation in updating environmental standards</li> <li>- Organic agriculture</li> <li>- Public and private coordination for environmental management</li> <li>- Early warning and agrometeorological monitoring</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental services and environmentally sound practices</li> <li>- Market opportunities for goods and services produced in a environmentally sustainable manner</li> </ul> <p><b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate change</li> <li>- Multisectoral agro-environmental management</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Sociocultural – Human</b></p>	<p><b>Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunities</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Poverty, quality of life and employment  - Capacities for dialogue, negotiation and strategic action  - Agricultural education system and rural education  - Social protection for rural families  - Broad-based participation in the design and implementation of rural development strategies  - Access to resources and services  <b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b>  - Management and leadership</p>	<p><b>Advancing learning and expertise in chains</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Entrepreneurial capacity</p>	<p><b>Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for rural communities</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Rural development that includes gender, age and multicultural equity  - Agricultural and rural training  - Evaluation and accreditation of agricultural education  <b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b>  - Social responsibility in rural enterprises  <b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b>  - Repositioning of rural issues in national strategies  <b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b>  - Production and income</p>	<p><b>Equity</b></p>
<p><b>Political – Institutional</b></p>	<p><b>Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in territories</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Participation of rural communities  <b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b>  - Integrated development of rural territories  <b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b>  - Establishment and follow-up of partnerships and agreements  <b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b>  - Focusing on rural territories</p>	<p><b>Strengthening dialogue and commitments among stakeholders in chains</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Institutional frameworks to facilitate dialogue and negotiation  <b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b>  - Coordination mechanisms and chain approach</p>	<p><b>Promoting State policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life</b></p> <p><b>HMA – Panama 2003</b>  - Mechanism for cooperation between countries  - Cooperation and coordination between stakeholders  - Institutional capacity  - Regional and hemispheric cooperation  <b>HMA – Guayaquil 2005</b>  - National policies  - Interinstitutional and multisectoral work  <b>HMA – Guatemala 2007</b>  - Establishment of partnerships and agreements  - Modernization and institutional strengthening of the rural public sector  - Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu  <b>HMA – Jamaica 2009</b>  - Institutional capacity  - Investment in agriculture and rural development</p>	<p><b>Governance</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Objectives</b></p>	<p><b>RURAL PROSPERITY – FOOD SECURITY – INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING</b></p>			<p><b>Overarching Goal: Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu</b></p>