

M. PINHEIRO

IICA-CIDIA

IMPROVING OFFICE EFFICIENCY

ADMINISTRATIVE RETREAT

LIBRE 1505  
IICA - CIDIA

CIRCULATION SHEET

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation  
on Agriculture

Date: .....

Initials

Date

Attention

1. J.H. MacDonald
2. T. Mulleady
3. A.V. Chin
4. J. Isaza
5. S. Glasgow
6. A.C. MacDonald
7. D. Donaldson
8. H. O'Brien
9. S. Oechsle
10. S. Harwood
11. R. Reiter
12. T.C. Neiman
13. T. Jones
14. L. Clarke
15. H. Campbell
16. Z. Martin
17. C. Reid
18. J. Dehaney
19. L. McBean
20. L. Christian
21. M. Brown
22. O. Tingling
23. E. Shelley
24. M. Machado

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IMPROVING OFFICE EFFICIENCY  
ADMINISTRATIVE RETREAT  
IICA OFFICE IN JAMAICA



Report of the Retreat  
"Ivor", Jack's Hill, Kingston  
December 12, 1986

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IMPROVING OFFICE EFFICIENCY

ADMINISTRATIVE RETREAT  
IICA OFFICE IN JAMAICA

Report of the Administrative Retreat  
held at "Ivor", Jack' Hill, Kingston  
December 12, 1986

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ANNEX A: PARTICIPANTS

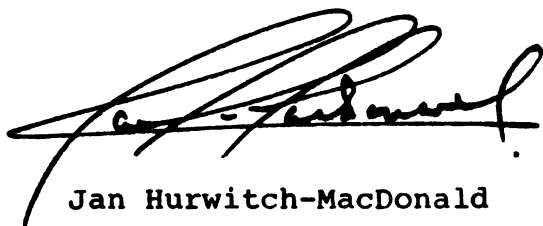
ANNEX B: SCHEDULE



## INTRODUCTION

On December 12, 1986 the IICA Office in Jamaica held an Administrative Retreat at "IVOR" in Jack's Hill, overlooking the City of Kingston.

Administrative staff, secretarial staff and the Director a.i. spent a day analyzing work load organization, work schedules and interpersonal relations. Each topic was discussed, related problems analyzed and recommendations made. This document synthesizes the deliberations. Recommendations will be put into effect during 1987 as part of an ongoing process to improve administrative efficiency in the IICA Office in Jamaica.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Hurwitch-MacDonald", written over a horizontal line.

Jan Hurwitch-MacDonald  
Director a.i.





## 1. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKLOAD

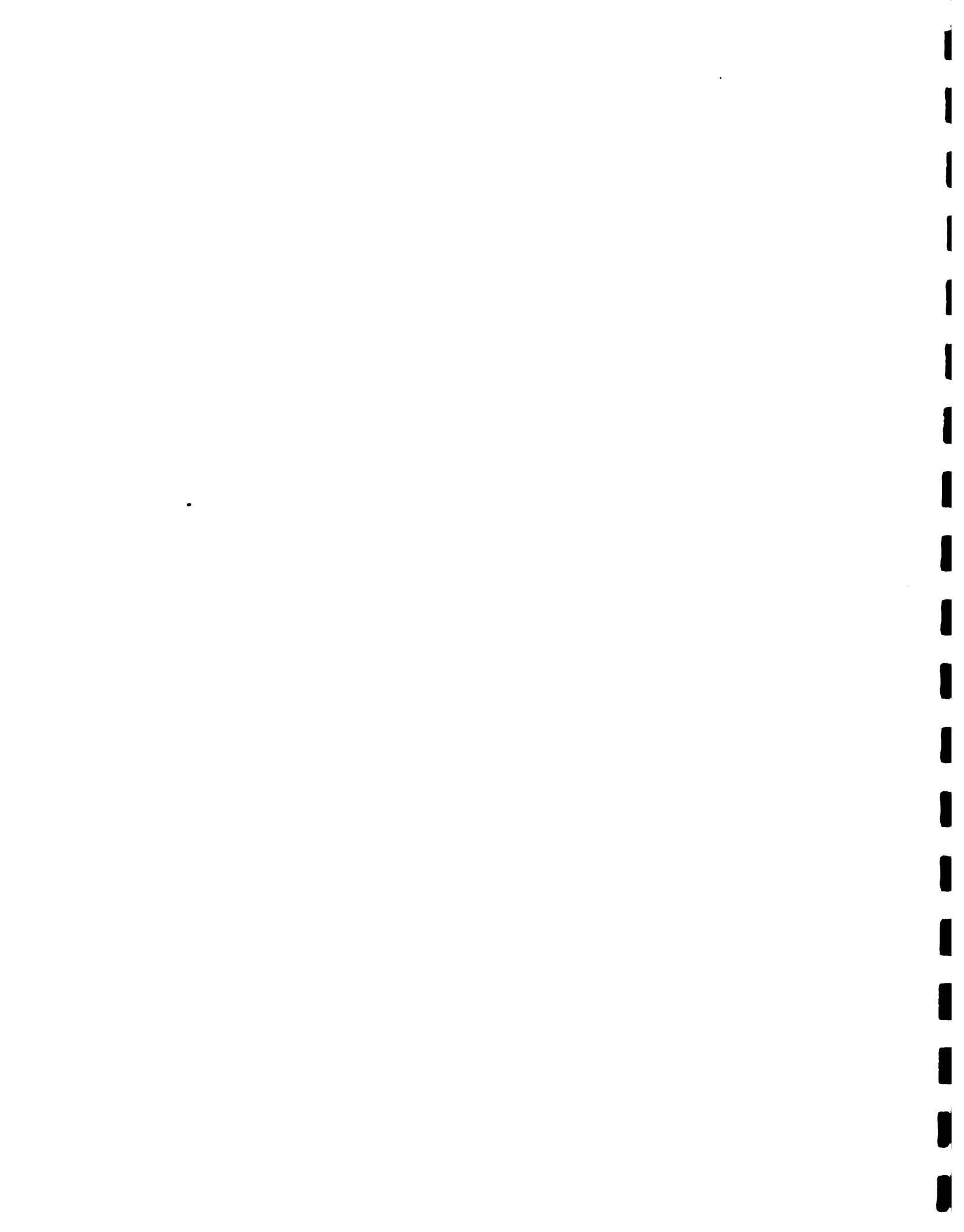
The group discussed the organization of the workload by listing and analyzing all tasks of each member. Suggestions were made for increasing productivity and improving efficiency. Sometimes the most appropriate suggestion was to teach the task to another employee who is less occupied. Other times, two or more persons were handling similar tasks, primarily because it is not clear to technical staff who is responsible. The following recommendations were made:

### 1.1 Changes in individual responsibilities as well as office procedures were approved by the Director as follows:

#### 1.1.1 Lilieth Christian (Office Administrator)

There was general agreement that there is a need to tighten the administrative functions, particularly by organizing systems for requesting administrative support, limiting interruptions and reallocation of some duties.

- a. All technical staff, including the Director, should use the Staff Meeting as the medium to discuss their weekly administrative needs with Lilieth. This should include car, equipment and supply requirements; printing, collating and shipping requirements; as well as any special errands.
- b. At the weekly Staff Meeting, Lilieth will also discuss with the technicians the secretarial work load for the week.
- c. All staff are encouraged to make more use of the intercom system for purposes of communication. The Director, who believes in the concept of MBWA (Management By Walking Around) and who also needs to lose weight, may from time to time be excused from this.

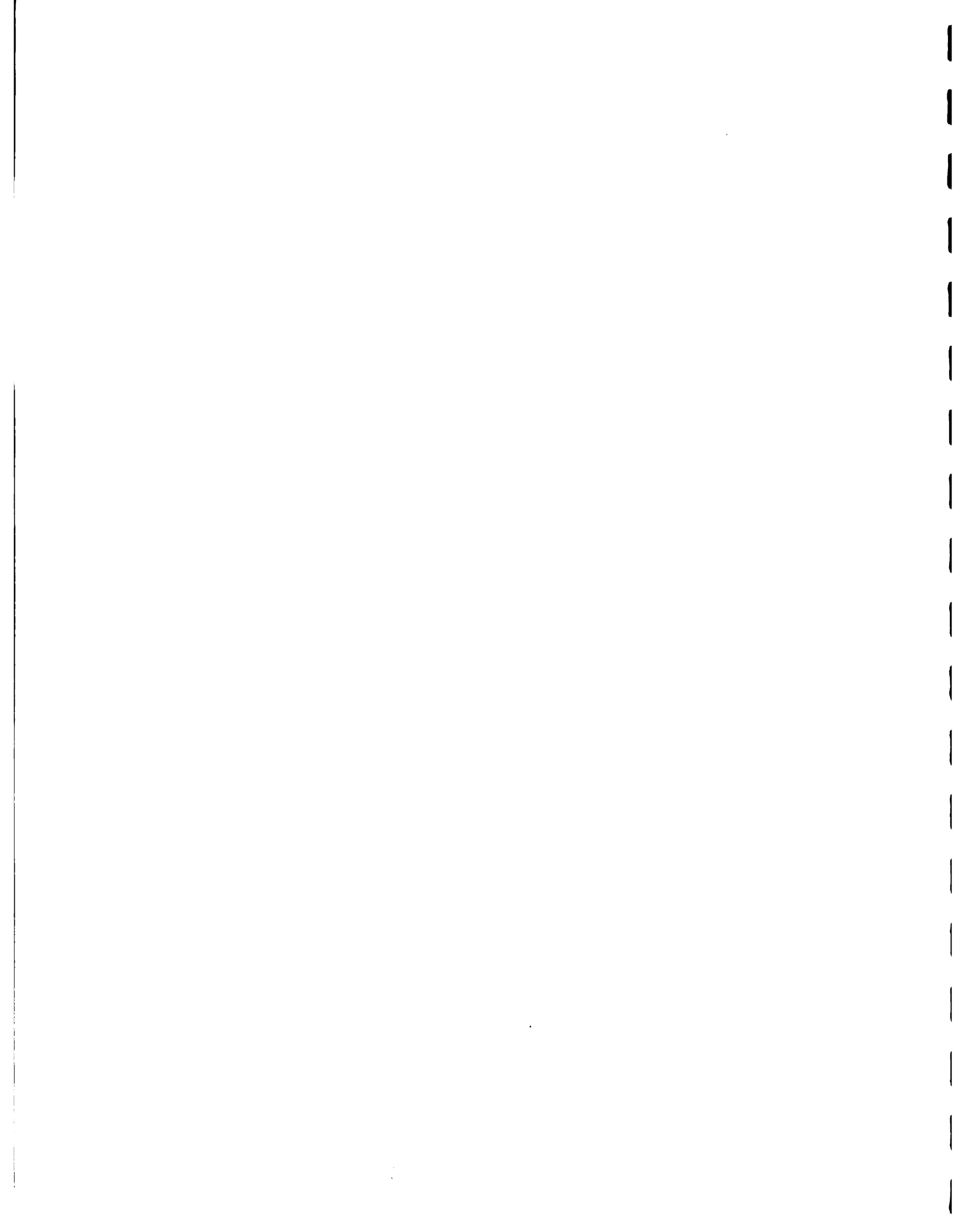


- d. Outsiders will be discouraged from entering the administrative office without an appointment. The group will study different methods for appropriate control without damaging IICA's friendly image. One solution could be to switch offices with the consultants.
- e. An inventory of supplies needs to be done urgently; supplies will be handled by Leonie, under Lilieth's guidance. Leonie will keep a book which will record movement of supplies. Lilieth will coordinate the stock, see the book monthly, deducting what has been taken.
- f. The sorting of the mail will now be done by Frankie, who will sort into three categories: personal (to be given directly to the individuals), regular (to be given to Elma or whomever is entering the mail that day) and confidential (to be given to Lilieth or to the Director, in Lilieth's absence).
- g. Lilieth is responsible for supervising Bob, the printer. See. 1.1.1. a regarding the staff meeting as the appropriate vehicle.

#### 1.1.2 Oriel Tingling (Accounting Assistant)

Essentially, Oriel's duties will remain the same with the addition that she will handle all international travel liquidations. She will ensure that these will be done as promptly as possible, with the cooperation of the technical staff.

In addition, deadlines will be set up for the preparation of cheques, with specific days of the week (2) designated for cheque collection. All staff will be asked to cooperate



with this new system. The Director will no longer be interrupted in meetings to sign cheques, unless it is a matter of life or death. (This will extend to the preservation of the FSR project chickens).

#### 1.1.3 Elma Shelley (Director's Secretary)

Essentially, Elma's duties will remain the same; however, she will be responsible for advising people what type of meeting the Director is engaged in. This way, individuals may judge more carefully whether to interrupt the Director or not.

Elma also now will handle the mail as per above.

Elma will coordinate the staff's personal requests for cheque cashing and payment of utility bills. This is discussed further below.

#### 1.1.4 Maxine Brown (Secretary to Technicians)

Maxine's duties will remain the same.

Maxine will continue to train Leonie in the sorting of items to be filed. This way, Maxine will have time for the library, which should become operational in 1987. Leonie may also assist Maxine in the library.

#### 1.1.5 Maureen Machado (Secretary to Technicians)

Maureen's duties will remain the same.

Maureen has the additional duty of handling the electronic mailing. This was discussed at length and recommendations are in the next section.



1.2. General, overall recommendations include the following:

- a. The work of the administration is such that, if at all possible, peak technical activities such as seminars should not be scheduled in the fourth quarter. In addition, such activities should be staggered throughout the year, rather than bunched into the fourth quarter as in 1986.
- b. The office needs another secretary and this cannot be done through regular IICA channels. Therefore, technical staff are requested to include a secretarial position in all projects prepared for external funding.
- c. The office will explore the possibility of obtaining a HEART trainee to act as receptionist/photocopier/telephone operator, who could also assist with clerical work.
- d. The administrative staff recognize the needs of technicians vis a vis personal matters (i.e. banking and utility payments), however, the Director stressed that these are personal favours and should be done in line with IICA banking and utility payments. This will be coordinated by Elma.





## 2. WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME RELATED MATTERS

A number of efficiency problems related to time were discussed by the group, these being:

- \* Control of visitors to IICA who take up too much time
- \* When to send and receive WANG messages
- \* Distribution of supplies
- \* Weekend work
- \* Time problems relating to peak period of technical activity

The possibility of a staggered work schedule to allow more time on the machines was discussed and discarded. The option of keeping the office open six days a week (each person working five days) was discussed and discarded. It was decided to handle peak work periods in the same way as done during 1986, i.e. regular staff rotating on Saturdays, if the 1987 budget permits. (The Director stressed that this may always be arranged by giving compensatory time, which is preferred by IICA).

The following other recommendations were made and supported by the Director:

- 1.2.1 Machine efficiency: it was decided that all documents entered on the WANG and IBM word processor must be logged in a book kept by the operator (Maxine for IBM and Maureen for WANG). Each entry will contain the code, title, date received and date returned to writer.
- 1.2.2 WANG messages: These will be sent in the afternoon from 3:30 onwards on a daily basis. Maureen must receive the draft by 2:00 that day, otherwise they will be sent the next day, unless there is an urgent message for the DG, DDG, DDGER, DDGOp, or Finance.



Incoming messages will be collected in the morning. The exact time will depend on when San Jose sends them, which the Director was asked to ascertain while in San Jose.

- 1.2.3 Week-end work: The secretarial and administrative staff stressed to the Director that they prefer to complete documents which they have started. The idea of bringing in outside temporary help for this purpose was discarded and the Saturday solution with rotation as done in 1986 was adopted. Most staff are willing to work one or two Saturdays a month, taking compensatory time or payment (when possible), rather than take the time to train new people.



### 3 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

In discussing interpersonal relations, the group focused briefly on those between:

- \* members of the group
- \* the group and the technical staff
- \* the group and the Director

The group decided that too little time was allotted to discuss this topic fully, and it should be considered in the future. The following recommendations were made:

#### 3.1 Among members of the group:

- a. It was observed that interpersonal relationships among the secretarial and administrative staff had cemented over the last few months as the group worked together under varying degrees of pressure.

#### 3.2 Between the group and technicians:

- a. The question of personal assistance was discussed and a solution found for payment of utility bills and cheque-cashing. The Director indicated that all other personal assistance should be considered a personal favour between the two individuals.
- b. The question of clearing imported goods from the wharf was discussed with regard to the time used up by administrators, secretaries and drivers of the office. The Director indicated a similar concern and added the concern of Head Office regarding improved controls. The Director is



developing a new system which will be put into place in early 1987. In the meantime, all staff with importation privileges will be asked not to make any more orders.

3.3 Between the group and the Director:

- a. As much as the Director would like to be easily accessible to all staff, it was recommended that Elma be the person to advise on nature of Director's meetings, so that the Director can improve the flow of her work.
- b. Matters of concern to the Director with respect to any individual, will from now on be discussed fully with the individual in private. Efforts will be made by all individuals to refrain from confrontational situations during pressure periods.





## CONCLUSIONS

The participants agreed that the day of reflection and discussion was time well spent. However, it was noted that one day was insufficient time for the items on the agenda.

Some recommendations could and would be put into effect immediately. Others would require the development of a particular plan. The responsible individual would work on the plan.

A meeting would be held with the participants and the technical staff on January 16, 1987 to discuss the recommendations and their implementation.



ANNEX A: PARTICIPANTS

Jan Hurwitch-MacDonald, Director ad interim  
Lilieth Christian, Office Administrator  
Oriel Tingling, Accounting Assistant  
Elma Shelley, Director's Secretary  
Maxine Brown, Secretary to Technicians  
Maureen Machado, Secretary to Technicians  
Marie Anne Cholmondeley, Seminar organizer (temporary)



ANNEX B: SCHEDULE

IMPROVING OFFICE EFFICIENCY  
ADMINISTRATIVE RETREAT  
IICA OFFICE IN JAMAICA  
December 12, 1986

RETREAT AT IVOR, JACK'S HILL

Friday December 12, 1986

8:30 a.m

Depart office

9:30-12:30 p.m

General Session A: Discussion of office functioning, particular problems, analysis pertaining to:

1. Organization of work load
  - Chart indicating present situation
  - Possible bottlenecks
  - Recommendations
2. Work schedule and time related matters
  - Present situation
  - Possible bottlenecks
  - Recommendations
3. Inter-personal relations
  - Relations between members of the group
    - Areas for improvement
  - Relations between members of the group and International Professional staff
  - Relations between members of the group and the Acting Director

12:30 - 1:30 p.m

L U N C H



1:30-2:30 p.m.

Sessions in small groups:

1. Organization of work load: E. Shelley/  
M.A. Cholmondeley
2. Work schedule and time related matters:  
M. Brown/M. Machado
3. Inter-personal relations: L. Christian/  
O. Tingling

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

General Session B:

Reports of Small Groups

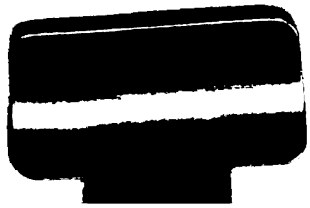
Discussion

Amendments

Final Recommendations







IMPROVING OFFICE EFFICIENCY

ADMINISTRATIVE RETREAT



CIRCULATION SHEET

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation  
on Agriculture

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| 5. S. Glasgow     | _____    | _____ |
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| 8. H. O'Brien     | _____    | _____ |
| 9. S. Oechsle     | _____    | _____ |
| 10. S. Harwood    | _____    | _____ |
| 11. R. Reiter     | _____    | _____ |
| 12. T.C. Neiman   | _____    | _____ |
| 13. T. Jones      | _____    | _____ |
| 14. L. Clarke     | _____    | _____ |
| 15. H. Campbell   | _____    | _____ |
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