



MINISTERIAL PROCESS "AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN THE AMERICAS"

Leadership, working together and the reassessment of
agriculture and rural life: pillars for a renewed
institutional framework

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

**Follow-up to the Summit of the Americas Process
June 2009**

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Fifth Summit of the Americas
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
April 19, 2009

Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain

Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability

Excerpt

PromovePromoting Human Prosperity

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. (Paragraph 25)

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. (Paragraph 23)

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. (Paragraph 24)

The Ministerial Process 2001-2009: Context, results and the challenges from now to 2009

Throughout the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” begun in 2001 in response to the mandates of the Third Summit of the Americas, the Ministers have adopted a number of far-reaching decisions of importance for agriculture and rural life, which are set out in the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements (HMAs) approved in the Ministerial Meetings of 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 and form part of this document.

Prior to presenting the HMAs, however, this document provides information that will help to understand the context in which the ministerial process began and how it has evolved, its meetings and its results.

A number of topics are addressed in this document, including the hemispheric political framework that reassessed agriculture and rural life, the Ministerial Process derived from same, the reasons why the process is fundamental if the next step in consolidating the positioning of agriculture and rural life is to be taken, and how to move forward with the unfinished task of ensuring that the HMAs are reflected fully on the development agendas of the countries and the organizations that support them in implementing their strategies.

It concludes by indicating that, if that next step is to be taken, renewed leadership will be needed to develop mechanisms that will enable the different interest groups in agriculture and rural life to work together to build a renewed institutional framework in the countries of the Americas.

The HMAs in context

Over the last six years, efforts to build a more just, secure, prosperous and equitable world in the 21st century through dialogue and consensus building at the global and hemispheric levels have been strengthened. The Millennium Development Goals and their targets for 2015, as well as the mandates and commitments of the Summit of the Americas process, are two significant results of those efforts which have important implications for agriculture and rural communities.

Specifically, the mandates and commitments related to agriculture and rural life derived from the Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec 2001):

- ~ attached greater value to agriculture and rural life by recognizing their importance in the comprehensive development of countries;
- ~ bestowed on the Ministers of Agriculture a leading role in the implementation of the mandates of the Summits process;
- ~ gave rise to the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and its meetings, as instruments for energizing the Summits process; and
- ~ included IICA as an institutional partner in all stages of that process, along with the OAS, PAHO, IDB, ECLAC and the World Bank.

Working within the context of the Summits process, and engaging in an ongoing broad-based, participatory and transparent ministerial process, the Ministers of Agriculture and their Ministerial Delegates have discussed and built consensus on the HMAs adopted in the Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” held within the context of the Summit of the Americas process, in Bavaro in 2001, Panama in 2003, Guayaquil in 2005 and Guatemala in 2007.

What is the Summit of the Americas process?

This process, spearheaded by the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, with the support of the Ministers of Foreign Relations and the National Summit Coordinators, is aimed at moving forward in the formulation and implementation of an inter-American agenda for the development of the Americas. That agenda includes commitments, mandates and concrete actions in areas of strategic importance for the comprehensive and sustainable development of our countries. The Heads of State and Government made the decision to include agriculture and rural life among the strategic issues of the Third Summit of the Americas, given the key role they play in making such development possible.

Four regular Summits (Miami 1994, Santiago 1998, Quebec 2001, and Mar del Plata 2005) and two special summits (Santa Cruz de la Sierra 1996 and Monterrey 2004) have been held to date. Between Summits, two mechanisms ensure the continuation of the process: (i) the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), which is the hemispheric forum of the Ministers of Foreign Relations (held once a year) and of the National Summit Coordinators (held several times a year) to follow up on the mandates adopted and propose texts for new mandates; and (ii) the Ministerial Meetings, in which the ministers give direction to the implementation of those mandates through specific ministerial agreements, provide follow-up and propose new mandates.

These two mechanisms are complemented with the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), which is the hemispheric forum of the international organizations that are partner institutions in all stages of the Summits process.

What led to the reassessment of the value of agriculture and rural life?

Agriculture and rural life were not included among the issues considered strategic for the comprehensive development of our countries at the First Summit of the Americas (Miami 1994). Concern over the implications of this situation moved the Ministers of Agriculture to launch a campaign to ensure the inclusion of both on the agenda of subsequent Summits.

With support from IICA, the Ministers of Agriculture undertook actions aimed at positioning agriculture, convinced of its contribution to improving living conditions in the rural milieu, and its role in strengthening democracy, promoting prosperity, eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development, all of which are key objectives of the Summit process. Their efforts finally bore fruit at the Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec 2001).

What is the political framework for reassessing the value of agriculture and rural life?

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

life for millions of rural inhabitants and as a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system for generating prosperity.

With this in mind, they instructed to promote:

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

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

At the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata 2005), they pledged to build an institutional framework based on the coordination of public policies, which would include a comprehensive framework for rural and agricultural development that would promote investment, job creation and rural prosperity. To that end, they adopted as a national commitment *“To support the implementation of the Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil 2005 on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (AGRO 2003-2015 Plan)”*.

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

What is the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan?

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

The Plan was adopted at the Second Ministerial Meeting (Panama 2003), following a broad-based process of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reaching consensus on national proposals, which were then submitted to the same process at the hemispheric level under the responsibility of the Ministers of Agriculture and their Ministerial Delegates.

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

In the Plan, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture:

- ~ Took into consideration for its preparation a *broad based approach 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.
- ~ Adopted the *Shared Vision 2015* for agriculture and rural life. The vision is a characterization of the desired future vis-à-vis the national and international context, rural territories and agricultural production-trade chains.
- ~ Reiterated the commitments they assumed in the Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro, with the *Strategic Objectives* of Rural Prosperity, Food Security, the International and Regional Integration of Agriculture, Agricultural Health and Food Safety, and the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu. The Strategic Objectives make it possible to focus the efforts of the leaders of the Community of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.
- ~ Pledged to promote, with the stakeholders in agriculture and others involved in the development of agriculture and rural life, the strategic actions of the 2003-2005 *Hemispheric Agenda*, to make progress toward achievement of the Strategic Objectives. This Hemispheric Agenda is the first of six biennial agendas. It is divided into 12 sections containing a total of 40 strategic actions.
- ~ Stated that the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan reflects the member countries' intention of working to achieve the shared vision, acknowledging that the national governments have primary responsibility for implementing the Plan pursuant to their international commitments and agreements. They decided on a number of measures for *Implementation and Follow-up* of the Plan. These included: (i) the preparation of national progress reports on the implementation of the strategic actions of the current hemispheric agenda; (ii) the updating of the agenda for the next five biennia; (iii) a request that international institutions and cooperating governments coordinate their strategies around the implementation of the Plan; and, (iv) efforts to determine appropriate ways of gauging the progress of the Plan.

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action has been updated as a result of the HMAs adopted at the Third and Fourth Ministerial Meetings (Guayaquil 2005 and Guatemala 2007).

What are the Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”?

The decision taken by the Heads of State and Government at the Quebec Summit to recognize and promote hemispheric ministerial meetings as mechanisms for the implementation of their mandates, in particular those on agriculture and rural life, led to the establishment of the *Ministerial Meetings “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” held in the context of the Summits Process*. They are aimed at addressing the strategic issues and the specific mandates related to agriculture and rural life identified by the Heads of State and Government in their declarations and hemispheric actions plans, and constitute a hemispheric forum for multilateral political dialogue, coordination and cooperation among the 34 member countries of the Inter-American System.

“Ministerial meetings for many issues are the most important operational mechanism for the collective design of sectorial action plans on public policy in the region. This is the most

important added value that the Summits of the Americas Process has brought to the OAS and to our countries.”¹

The Ministerial Meetings, which are part of the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” provide an opportunity to learn of progress in implementing the mandates of the Summits and the HMAs. As such, these hemispheric meetings are part of two complementary and articulated processes: the Summit of the Americas process and the “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” process. The HMAs adopted at these meetings give continuity to the process of building the Shared Vision 2015 and, at the same time, contribute to the preparation of the new decisions that the Heads of State and Government are required to take.

Thus, the Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas,” the highest-level hemispheric ministerial forum, is the political space in which the Ministers of Agriculture reach agreement by consensus on *priorities and strategic actions* for improving agriculture and rural life.

The identity of the Ministerial Meeting, underpinned by a continuous ministerial process, is expressed and consolidated with the HMAs. Thanks to this identity as a hemispheric body, the Ministerial Meeting has positioned itself as a key political player that is having a real impact on the Summit of the Americas process.

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

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

The HMAs carry considerable political weight because they are the result of a highly participatory ministerial process, are based on the realities identified in the national proposals and are strengthened with the hemispheric consensus built by the Ministerial Delegates of the 34 member countries of the Inter-American System by means of dialogue and negotiation. That political weight is derived from the governments’ pledge to implement and follow up on the HMAs, with a view to updating them and ensuring the continuation of the process required to move toward the Shared Vision 2015, defined by the Ministers of Agriculture in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

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

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

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

¹ Official Documents from the Summits of the Americas Process from Miami to Quebec City, Volume III. OAS. Quote taken from the Preface presented by Jaime Aparicio Otero, Director of the OAS Summits Office.

Given the diversity of the countries' interests and views, the Ministerial Process has made it possible to reach a broad consensus on the HMAs. As a result, the HMAs reflect common concerns and issues on which the countries agree, which are of great value for improving agriculture and rural life.

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

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

What is the "institutional architecture" that underpins the ministerial process?

For the Ministerial Meetings to be effective in further positioning agriculture and rural life in the Summit process, the Ministers and their Delegates, with support from IICA, conduct the Ministerial Process, which is underpinned by an "institutional architecture" whose key components are of two types: the first four being organizational in nature, and the last two political-conceptual.

- ~ A *national team* comprising a Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Life, an Alternate Delegate and a technical support group made up of members of the policy or planning units of the ministries of agriculture. The key duties of this team are: (i) to coordinate implementation of the mandates of the Summits and the HMAs in the respective country; (ii) to prepare the reports on progress and challenges, which are shared with the other Ministerial Delegates; and (iii) to conduct national consultations in order to gather the inputs needed to begin building consensus on new HMAs.
- ~ A *hemispheric forum* of Ministerial Delegates, the GRICA, chaired by the Ministerial Delegate of the host country of the following Ministerial Meeting, who is accompanied by the Ministerial Delegate of the host country of the last Ministerial Meeting. The Ministerial Delegates, through dialogue and negotiation, build consensus on proposals for new HMAs they submit to the consideration of the Ministers.
- ~ A *Secretariat of the Ministerial Process and its Ministerial Meeting*, provided by IICA, whose main task is to support the national, regional and hemispheric dialogue that: (i) underpins the HMAs; (ii) gives continuity to the Ministerial Process; (iii) facilitates regional integration within the context of the hemispheric process; (iv) facilitates articulation of the Ministerial Process with the Summit of the Americas process; and (v) contributes to further positioning agriculture and rural life on the inter-American agenda. As a contribution to the dialogue, the Secretariat supports the work of the Delegates, the GRICA and the Ministerial Meeting. The Secretariat also serves as the institutional memory of the process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas," constantly updating its Web site: www.iica.int/eng/cumbres.
- ~ A *Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting in the context of the Summit process*, which is the forum of Ministers of Agriculture. This forum gives direction to and conducts the hemispheric process and adopts the HMAs which make it possible to continue working toward the Shared Vision 2015.

Through the Secretariat, the Chair of the Ministerial Meeting sends some of those HMAs to the Chair of the SIRG and to the Secretariat of the Summit Process of the OAS for consideration by the Heads of State and Government, so that they can make the decisions required to move forward toward the Shared Vision 2015.

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

What are the HMAs and what do they define?

In the 2001-2007 Ministerial Process, the four Ministerial Meetings held to date have yielded the following HMAs:

Guatemala 2007 (Fourth Ministerial Meeting)

- ~ *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: HMA Guatemala 2007*

The agreement comprises two parts: (i) the 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda *“Providing leadership for a holistic approach to agriculture and rural life,”* with 11 strategic actions that complement those adopted in the Ministerial Meetings held in 2003 (Panama) and 2005 (Guayaquil); and (ii) the section Implementation and Follow-up *“Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas,”* which includes 6 measures with direct implications for the work in the countries and regions, as well as for the role of the international organizations and the Secretariat of the Ministerial Process.

The Agreement of Guatemala 2007 focuses on how to build a renewed institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, with the participation of the public, private and social sectors. In this regard, the agreement attaches priority to two complementary strategic orientations *“(…) the first one, to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad-based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, the second one, “working together” to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.”*

Guayaquil 2005 (Third Ministerial Meeting)

- ~ *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan: Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*

The decision to implement the Plan by means of biennial ministerial agendas created the need to keep abreast of progress in the implementation of their strategic actions and, based on the information garnered, to update the Plan. The Agreement reaffirms the ministers’ commitment to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and updates it with complementary strategic actions for the 2006-2007 biennium, as well as implementation and follow-up measures. The Agreement places emphasis on the promotion of national policies for agriculture and rural life, and the strengthening of regional integration and international cooperation.

- ~ *Ministerial Agreement on the Implementation and Follow-up of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan in preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting*

Basically, this covers the preparation of the national reports on the progress being made in implementing the Plan and the challenges facing the countries. Based on the reports, the Plan will be updated for the 2008-2009 biennium.

~ *Ministerial Agreement on the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan*

It recognizes the effort initiated by IICA and ECLAC, and supported by FAO, PAHO, UNESCO and the ILO. It calls for further efforts to develop the system.

~ *Ministerial Agreement on the Proposal for the Fourth Summit of the Americas*

The Ministers instructed the Chairperson and the Secretariat of the Ministerial Meeting, based on the ministerial proposal, to help consolidate the positioning of agriculture and rural life within the Summits process.

Panamá 2003 (Second Ministerial Meeting)

~ *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*

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

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

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

~ *Ministerial Agreement on Implementation of and Follow-up to the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan*

Bavaro 2001 (First Ministerial Meeting)

~ *Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*

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

What is the AGRO-Matrix and what is it used for?

The AGRO-Matrix synthesizes a new concept of agriculture and rural life and facilitates a comprehensive understanding of both. It recognizes that agriculture and rural life are complex

phenomena, with a multiplicity of actors and a diversity of interests that should be taken into account when designing effective strategies and policies aimed at transforming the sector.

It is one of the main outcomes of the consensus-building process followed by the Ministerial Delegates in their efforts to support the Ministers of Agriculture in developing the HMAs adopted at the Ministerial Meetings held in 2003, 2005 and 2007.

The AGRO-Matrix, used as the basis for preparing the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, is the conceptual framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, as stated in the second paragraph of the Plan.

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

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

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

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

The AGRO-Matrix helps to explain the basic aspects of the complex phenomenon of agriculture and rural life, promotes national, regional and hemispheric strategies, policies and actions to address specific issues and facilitates coordination between different interest groups, in order to develop a new institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

The AGRO-Matrix is the ideal tool for understanding and defining the “real” contribution of agriculture and rural life to the development of countries. Its use facilitates the development of a common base of information on agriculture and rural life and on the nature and magnitude of the processes they involve. It also helps to organize the compilation of the opinions and expectations of the multiple actors of agriculture and rural life, and to define and rank objectives and strategic actions, to identify the impact

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

What is the information system?

At the time they approved the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action in 2003, the Ministers of Agriculture felt the need to propose measures for implementing and following up on same. They stated as much in the HMAs of Panama, Guayaquil and Guatemala.

At the Ministerial Meeting in Guayaquil (2005), the Ministers considered it was necessary to monitor and evaluate the efforts being made via an information system that would cover the following aspects of its implementation:

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

To this end, the Ministers approved the HMA on the Information System for Monitoring the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan (IS). At the Guatemala Ministerial Meeting, the Secretariat of the Ministerial Process reported to the Ministers on progress in implementing that HMA.

The information system (IS) is a ministerial initiative aimed at generating and using up-to-date information to facilitate decision making in the formulation of policies and strategies for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. It is based on the integration of three components of information under the AGRO-Matrix. These components are:

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

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

The opportunity and the challenge: how to move forward with the unfinished task of linking the hemispheric and national levels

The mandates of the Summits and the HMAs are necessary, but not sufficient to make the Shared Vision 2015 a reality in the countries. They serve as a policy and technical framework for formulating national strategies and policies, ensuring institutional alignment and focusing national efforts and international cooperation. However, to begin working toward the change the HMAs are promoting with

the Shared Vision 2015, it is necessary to emphasize the development of a renewed institutional framework at the national level in their implementation.

The additional step that is required to develop that institutional framework is a renewed leadership that will promote the adoption of an intersectoral strategy calling on the public, private and social sectors to work together, with the coordinated support of international organizations. The goal of this strategy will also consolidate the Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” and also to link, in that process, the hemispheric and regional levels with the national level.

The great challenge to be faced in taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the mandates of the Summits and the HMAs can be summed up as follows: it is urgent to pick up the pace toward 2015 with a renewed leadership that will promote, from the countries, the “*working together*” strategy.



“Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance”

Excerpt

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

We are committed to building a more solid and inclusive e 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 ruralProsperity

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

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

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

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

Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement

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

Panama 2003 – Guayaquil 2005 – Guatemala 2007

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan reflects the countries' determination to work toward the Shared Vision 2015. In setting about their work, in 2003 the ministers decided to implement the Plan by means of six biennial agendas.

The **2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda**, the first part of the *Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007*, is the third of those agendas. Realizing that the earlier agreements were still relevant, the ministers decided that the new agenda should include both the strategic actions adopted in 2003 and 2005 and the complementary strategic actions designed to meet the new challenges identified by the countries in the course of the 2006-2007 ministerial process. Accordingly, and to facilitate a comprehensive reading of the AGRO Plan, we present below the elements of the Shared Vision 2015 and the ongoing strategic actions pertaining to the 12 Purposes of the AGRO-Matrix.

Además, se presenta la segunda parte del *Acuerdo Ministerial Hemisférico Guatemala 2007* con las medidas referidas a la **Implementación y Seguimiento** del Plan AGRO.

Furthermore, we present the second part of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 along with the measures required to implement and provide follow-up to the AGRO Plan

The Shared Vision 2015 and the Strategic actions of the 2003 – 2005, 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 Hemispheric Ministerial Agendas of the AGRO Plan pertaining to the 12 purposes of the AGRO-Matrix

I. *Promoting competitive rural enterprises*

Shared Vision 2015: The rural economy comprises both agricultural and nonagricultural activities. There are organizations, institutions and enterprises with capacity for innovation. There are efficient support services and improved access to technology for production and trade. It also generates goods and services with levels of production and productivity in line with national and world markets.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote conditions that will stimulate, in the rural milieu, the development of needed infrastructure, competitive enterprises, and greater investment to improve rural life.
- ~ Promote innovative types of financial and non-financial services, and risk management for the rural milieu.
- ~ Promote food security through increased productivity, greater market access through improved distribution and the production of safe, nutritious foods, as well as the production and consumption of products that offer greater competitive advantages, taking into consideration social and economic issues.
- ~ Improve rural connectivity and access to information through the creation of information network systems within communities.

- ~ Promote increased coordination among farmers, research centers and agricultural public and private services to establish priorities and implement actions in the areas of research and technology transfer.

HMA2006-2007

Areas of local economic development

- ~ To further promote local economic development with support from public and private investment based on an integrated approach aimed at improving the productivity, competitiveness and managerial capabilities of rural enterprises, with a view to generating employment and improving living conditions in rural territories.

HMA 2008-2009

Entrepreneurial and business capability and capability for innovation

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

II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness

Shared Vision 2015: Paragraph 8 (First Part): Agriculture encompasses production-trade chains whose links add value. Agriculture supplies safe, healthy, and high-quality products; it has support services and is efficient and competitive.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote the strengthening of linkages in agricultural production-trade chains, and the expansion of infrastructure for development.
- ~ Promote research, development and marketing programs for products that recognize added value use of national raw materials.

HMA 2006-2007

Quality management and certification

- ~ To promote quality integrated management in the agricultural production chains by, inter alia, developing agricultural health and food safety systems, including certification mechanisms. Information related to existing quality management tools shall be disseminated to facilitate the expansion of production and trade.

Development of products based on the biotechnologies

- ~ To develop new products based on the application of biotechnologies, within the framework of national policies on innovation considering biosafety mechanisms, with the coordinated participation of public and private sectors in compliance with existing regional and international agreements.

HMA 2008-2009

Market information

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

Inclusive chains linkages

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

III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture

Shared Vision 2015: Macroeconomic policies facilitate effective management of agricultural development that foster and promote the improvement of rural life and allow greater access to efficient services, new and appropriate technologies, improved infrastructure, user-friendly information systems, and transparent markets.

Agricultural trade is taking place in an international framework significantly less distorted by subsidies and market access barriers.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Support a real and meaningful reform in agriculture by strengthening the multilateral rules governing agricultural trade, as agreed in Doha, including substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to elimination of, all forms of export subsidies, and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support. Support the establishment of free trade areas in the hemisphere and in other regional or sub-regional forums. Support and participate in capacity building and technical assistance that contributes to these objectives.
- ~ Assign high priority to regional policies on animal and plant health and on food safety, strengthening national and regional systems, and reaffirming their commitment to the competent organizations recognized by the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the relevant international organizations (Codex Alimentarius, the World Animal Health Organization (OIE), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)) and regional organizations.
- ~ Foster economic and social conditions conducive to the development of agribusinesses, the generation of employment, the integration of production-trade chains and their participation in the international context.
- ~ Promote micro, small and medium scale rural enterprises, cooperatives and community groups engaged in agricultural production, agroindustry and rural services.
- ~ Promote cooperatives as a way to improve production and marketing organization and to improve rural income.
- ~ Support programs that encourage internal and external private investment in the rural milieu, promoting the adoption of legal measures that provide investors with security.
- ~ Foster the establishment of priorities and the revitalization of research capabilities by coordinating among farmers, research centers and agricultural services, and facilitate access to innovative technologies that are adaptive and practical with direct links to production, processing and marketing systems.
- ~ Facilitate access to new technologies to improve productivity; and establish a hemispheric mechanism to advance better understanding of the science and safety of biotechnology products, including the development of a data base. Consider the development of biotechnology and its use in agriculture with a sustainable strategic vision.
- ~ Support actions to comply with international agricultural health standards.

HMA 2006-2007

Generation of energy from alternative sources

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

Policies for agroindustry

- ~ To promote the adoption of policies for the development of market oriented agro-industries, agribusiness and nonagricultural rural activities.

HMA 2008-2009

Strengthening of small- and medium scale rural enterprise

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

Mobilizing resources

- ~ To mobilize public and private resources for the creation of infrastructure in an effort to promote investment in the rural sector and promote competitive agriculture.

IV. *Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas*

Shared Vision 2015: Agriculture uses environmentally friendly practices and technologies that address sustainable management of natural resources.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Increase understanding of the environmental impact of conventional agricultural systems, and of production systems suited to agroecological systems.
- ~ Promote access to, and adoption of, agricultural, forestry and fisheries practices that are environmentally sound, including agroecological and organic alternatives.
- ~ Foster better understanding, facilitate dialogue and work towards hemispheric consensus with regard to the links between agriculture and biodiversity within the framework of national and international agreements.
- ~ Strengthen national and local capabilities to mitigate natural disasters.
- ~ Foster sustainable agriculture with an expanded agroecological and innovative vision based on land use planning, diversification and non-food uses of agricultural products.
- ~ Foster dialogue and collaborate with other sectors related to rural life for the development of activities that link agriculture with other non-agricultural activities such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism and environmental services.

HMA 2008-2009

Environmental plan for businesses

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

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

Shared Vision 2015: Production-trade chains use systems and technologies that mitigate the effects of natural disasters and sanitary and phytosanitary emergencies.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote environmental management in the links of the production-trade chains.

VI. *Participating in building an institutional environmental framework*

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote organic agriculture, as well as regulations for the production, oversight, quality certification and trade of organic products.
- ~ Collaborate with the appropriate domestic authorities on the updating of environmental regulations for agriculture and strengthen public-private coordination for environmental management.

- ~ Encourage active participation of agricultural and rural community leaders in national discussions related to international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development.
- ~ Encourage the establishment of a hemispheric network specialized in early warning and agrometeorological monitoring for the mitigation of natural disasters through the joint efforts of public and private institutions in the hemisphere.

HMA 2006-2007

Environmental services and environmentally sound practices

- ~ To encourage the development of various approaches and mechanisms that recognize the value of the environmental services offered by the rural milieu and environmentally sound practices.

Market opportunities for goods and services produced in an environmentally sustainable manner

- ~ To improve institutional frameworks and consolidate the progress reached in the production and marketing of sustainable agricultural products.

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

Shared Vision 2015: There has been a substantial reduction in rural poverty as defined in Millennium Development Goals. The quality of life of the inhabitants in rural communities has improved as well as the levels of employment and employment opportunities.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Support public-private interaction and coordination in order to improve national capabilities for strategic action, dialogue and negotiation.
- ~ Improve the agricultural education system and promote the improvement of education of the rural population.
- ~ Promote appropriate social protection measures for economically vulnerable rural families.
- ~ Promote the participation of the rural population and consider its cultural diversity in the design and application of rural development strategies.
- ~ Promote policies that support access to resources such as land, credit, market information and other services.
- ~ Apoyar la interacción y coordinación público-privada que mejore las capacidades nacionales para la acción estratégica, el diálogo y la negociación.
- ~ Mejorar el sistema agroeducativo y promover el mejoramiento de la educación en la población rural.
- ~ Promover medidas apropiadas de protección social para familias rurales económicamente vulnerables.
- ~ Promover la participación de la población rural y considerar su diversidad cultural en el diseño y aplicación de estrategias para el desarrollo rural.
- ~ Propiciar políticas que apoyen el acceso a recursos como tierra, crédito, información de mercado y otros servicios.

VIII. *Advancing learning and expertise in the chain*

Shared Vision 2015: Production-trade chains have information systems that enhance knowledge and learning processes to facilitate the management of risk involved in agriculture and contribute to the operation of efficient food security systems.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote the development of entrepreneurial capabilities among different social and cultural groups in the rural communities.

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

Shared Vision 2015: Agriculture is recognized as a key component of the health and food security systems.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote rural development programs that include gender equity, including multicultural considerations, where applicable, and special attention to different age groups to improve the living conditions of the rural population.
- ~ Promote agricultural and rural training and recommend to the competent authorities the evaluation and accreditation of agricultural education.

HMA 2006-2007

Social responsibility in rural enterprises

- ~ To promote the concept of social responsibility in rural enterprises; fostering the creation of jobs and the principle of decent work as reflected in international conventions.

HMA 2008-2009

Repositioning of rural issues in national strategies

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

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

Shared Vision 2015: The rural economy comprises based on the coordinated action of the public and private sectors.

The different social and productive groups of the rural sector have democratic mechanisms for reflection and dialogue and have mechanisms for their full participation in the definition and execution of actions aimed at improving rural life.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Support the participation of rural communities in decisions that affect their lives and the environment in which they live, specifically to develop their capabilities, leadership skills and their ability to participate in government programs.

AHM 2006-2007

Integral development of rural territories

- ~ To foster integrated rural development based on a multisectorial and participatory approach, and strengthened public-private coordination.

HMA 2008-2009

Establishment and follow-up of partnerships and agreements

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

XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors in the chain

Shared Vision: Agriculture encompasses production-trade chains It has mechanisms among the different stakeholders to discuss various aspects of the distribution of global benefits.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Promote institutional frameworks to facilitate dialogue and negotiation among all participants in the production-trade chains.

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

Shared Vision 2015: Agriculture is recognized of strategic importance to development.

HMA 2003-2005

- ~ Strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation among countries in the areas of technical assistance, knowledge, information and experience which contribute to the modernization of agriculture and rural life.
- ~ Develop additional opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with agricultural and non-agricultural stakeholders and with civil society and to ensure that agricultural institutions have sufficient capacity to pursue these objectives.
- ~ Strengthen regional and hemispheric interaction among and between agricultural ministries and international organizations.

HMA 2006-2007

National policies

- ~ To promote long-term national policies for the development of the agri-food sector and the rural milieu, taking into consideration existing international frameworks.
- ~ Interinstitutional and multisectorial work
- ~ To strengthen sectoral and multisectorial coordination to facilitate the implementation of long-term national policies, for improving agriculture and the quality of life in rural communities.

HMA 2008-2009

Establishment of partnerships and agreements

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

Modernization and institutional strengthening of the rural public sector

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

Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu

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

Agro 2003-2015 Plan. Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007. The implementation and follow-up measures for 2008 – 2009

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

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

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

Facilitating joint action

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

Regional mechanisms and strategies

To strengthen regional meetings of ministers of agriculture, regional meetings of other agricultural stakeholders, as well as working together with the mechanisms for the regional integration of agriculture and for consultation and identification of priorities, coordination of actions and adoption of regional policies on matters of common interest, in support of the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

Information System

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

Support from and alignment of the international organizations

We reiterate our calls to the international organizations, made in 2001, 2003 and 2005, and request that they actively participate in the implementation of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007. In this regard, we shall promote and support the creation and operation of interagency groups at the national level.

Updating of the Hemispheric Agenda

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

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



III SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

Quebec City, Canada 2001

Plan of Action

Excerpt

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

10. Agriculture Management and Rural Development

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 socio-economic 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.

Instruct the Ministers of Agriculture, during the next meeting of the Inter-American Board 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.



**Ministerial Process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”
held within the context of the Summit of the Americas Process**



**Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Secretariat of the Ministerial Meeting
“Agriculture y Rural Life in the Americas”
www.iica.int/eng/cumbres**