



Director General of IICA attends OAS General Assembly

Rising food prices will be the focus of attention of the delegations which will familiarize themselves with the document reflecting the Institute's position on this global crisis.

The Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston Brathwaite, will head the Institute's delegation to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), to take place in Medellin, Colombia, from June 1 through 3.

Brathwaite, accompanied by Deputy Director General Christopher Hansen and the IICA Representative in the United States, David Hatch, will have an opportunity to discuss with officials from OAS Member States the need to make food security a top priority on national development agendas.

For this organization of the Inter-American System, according to the document entitled "IICA's Response to Rising Food Prices", the time has come for the countries of the Americas to review their food security policies and take steps to design appropriate policies to make agriculture a priority on the national development agenda.

IICA's delegation to this OAS General Assembly plans to hold meetings with foreign ministers and ambassadors to discuss specific items. It will also hold working discussions with heads of other organizations of the Inter-American System.

IICA and the Summit of the Americas Process

The top officials from the Institute will take part in the meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), to be held in Colombia on Monday, June 2.

At that time, the status of the mandates emanating from the Summit of the Americas, the most recent of which was the meeting held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2006, will be reviewed. Decisions will be taken in connection with preparations for the next meeting of Heads of State and Government, scheduled to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009.

IICA has status as an institutional partner in the Summit process and as such focuses its efforts on consolidating the positioning of agriculture and rural life on the hemispheric agenda.

The Institute is the secretariat for the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life and is already organizing, in conjunction with the Government of Jamaica, the Fifth Ministerial Meeting to be held in Jamaica in 2009.

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Director General advocates for food security in the Caribbean

IICA's Director General, Chelston Brathwaite, made an appeal to take measures to bring food security to the Caribbean during his visit to Barbados

In a context of rising food prices, implementing a food security plan in the Caribbean States Single Market and Economy (CSME) is a necessity. This is what the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston Brathwaite, had to say during his visit to Barbados from May 12 through 17.

Aware that in the current situation, no country can reach an acceptable level of food security on its own, he recommended engaging in joint activities to draw on the advantages that the region has. He also urged the private sector and the governments to work together in aid of food security, the Barbadian press that covered his visit reported.

He also recommended action to promote agro-industries based on local production and the establishment of an agricultural insurance program to insure producers against natural disasters.

Brathwaite, a national of Barbados, went on to say that agrarian reform was needed to give lands to farmers who had none. "We need to see land in a different light: land for food, land for energy, land for water, land for recreation...but we have to define them".

He further recommended that the ministers of portfolio of agriculture in the Caribbean should become ministers of food, agriculture and rural development. In this way, they would be responsible for the importation and production of food and food security and food safety.

Rethinking the Barbadian agricultural model

In the opinion of IICA's Director General, Barbados should rethink its development model in the light of world efforts in the area of food security, so that its production was based on its own needs.

According to Brathwaite, if the country focused on national food security, employment opportunities would be created in the agro-industries and related services, which would help bring down unemployment and poverty.

According to the Barbadian press, the Director General of IICA said he was impressed with the vision of agriculture and food security that the Minister of that portfolio was promoting. The idea was to increase food production, the value added of production, inter-sectoral ties, energy manufacturing, the strengthening of rural communities and the development of a legal framework that allows for the repositioning of agriculture.

"I hope that the agricultural community of Barbados, the private sector and Barbadian consumers join efforts to cooperate with the Ministry in achieving the goal of greater food security in this country," he said during the Olive Trotman Memorial Lecture.

In his visit to the island, Brathwaite also met with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Haynsley Benn, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, Christopher Sinkler. He also participated in the conference of young leaders at the IICA Office in Barbados and in the national forum on food security.

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Institute was represented at the meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank

The Director General of IICA participated at the Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank, held in Canada.

The Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston Brathwaite, travelled to Canada from May 24 through 29 to participate as an Observer in the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank.

The Board held its thirty-eighth meeting from May 26 through 29 in Nova Scotia, Canada.

During the meeting, the governors of the Bank discussed topics such as the economic situation in the United States and its repercussions for the Caribbean and Canada's contribution to building an entrepreneurial culture in the Caribbean.

The Director General took advantage of his visit to Canada to attend the celebration of the Modern High School's 25th anniversary, which took place in Toronto on May 24.

Brathwaite, who graduated from that institution of learning in 1963, was invited to be the keynote speaker at that event. "I am pleased to be here among so many people who have kept the vision of the Modern High School alive and who have contributed –and continue to contribute- to the social welfare of Canada and Barbados, he said during his inaugural address.

In his talk on the topic "Food Security, Entrepreneurship and National Development", he referred to topics such as the importance of revolutionizing agriculture, the need for the Caribbean to position food security as a national priority, the challenges and benefits of tourism and immigration in the Caribbean, etc.

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IICA reports on 2007 activities

IICA presents reports on activities accomplished in 2007 in all Member States

With a view to maintaining a style of technical cooperation where the relationship with Member States is essentially based on participation and transparency, the Offices of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), in the various Member States, have held a series of accountability seminars.

The purpose of these activities is to report on the status of the 2006-2010 technical cooperation agendas to the regional authorities, provincial and district mayors, farmers' associations, the academic sector, the agrarian and rural sector, cooperating organizations and society in general in the respective countries.

“The accountability meetings allow for feedback on the activities of the Institute and for the planning of its future agenda. These types of activities are a particularly relevant procedure for an organization like IICA which serves at the behest of Member States and works with public funds from the countries”, said IICA’s Director General, Chelston Brathwaite.

In fact, one of the most important of these presentations was the one made by IICA’s Deputy Director General, Christopher Hansen, at the meeting of the General Committee of the Organization of American States (OAS) on March 26, when he summarized the 2007 Annual Report.

Accountability in Peru

Ensuring food security, improving agricultural health and boosting rural development were three of the objectives targeted by the IICA Office in Peru in 2007. This was reported in the “Presentation of the results of technical cooperation in 2007 provided by IICA in Peru” on April 23.

The IICA Representative in Peru, Freddy Rojas, underscored the following, among other, activities undertaken in that country: the training of producers in the eradication of the fruit fly and the adoption of clean technologies in agricultural production and rural agro-industry.

In addition, IICA supported training programs for the establishment of agro-production chains for 200 producers. This led to the creation of cereal, handicraft and livestock producer associations.

In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, it also successfully imported 645,350 oil palm seeds, which made it possible to expand the cultivation area to 3,700 hectares, thereby benefiting 740 palm cultivators.

During the presentation on IICA’s achievements in 2007, the Minister of Agriculture, Ismael Benavides, underscored the usefulness of cooperation activities provided by the Institute and said he hoped that that support would make it possible to institute a new policy that would make Peru the leading country in agricultural production on the Pacific Coast of South America by 2015.

IICA Venezuela reports on activities

As was the case for Peru, the IICA Representative in Venezuela, Diego Montenegro, also presented the 2007 Annual Report on IICA’s cooperation activities and achievements in the country to public and private organizations on May 5.

Specifically, the 2007 Technical Cooperation Agenda in that country was related to three major objectives: more and better food production; improvement in the standard of living of rural families and institutional strengthening. All of the activities fell within the framework of the national public policies.

According to Montenegro, sustainable rural development based on a territorial approach was pivotal to the technical cooperation activities of the IICA Office in Venezuela.

Activities to provide training, education, information and documentation in the areas of agricultural health and food safety, agribusiness, and the modernization of agriculture and rural development were also organized.

Brazil reports on activities in 2007

The IICA Representative in Brazil, Carlos Basco, reported to officials, cooperating entities and Institute partners on activities on May 20.

The document he presented summarized IICA's contributions to the repositioning of agriculture and rural life, which materialized as part of the country's political and economic agenda or as part of a joint effort with other sectors of society and other cooperation agencies.

Some of the results of technical cooperation delivered by the Institute in 2007 were the promotion of trade and the competitiveness of agribusiness, the strengthening of rural communities based on a territorial approach and the promotion of agricultural health and food safety (AHFS).

The Annual Report also describes activities accomplished in the following areas: the promotion of the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment and the impetus given to the introduction of technology and innovation in the modernization of agriculture and rural development.

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[Informe Anual 2007 \(de Perú\)](#)
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PROCITROPICOS met in Venezuela

At the last meeting of PROCITROPICOS, the 2008 Annual Action Plan was presented, activities accomplished in 2007 were summarized and Venezuela assumed the Chairmanship of the Executive Committee (Comisión Directiva).

The Executive Committee of the Cooperative Program for Agricultural Research, Development and Innovation in the South American Tropics (PROCITROPICOS) held its annual meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, on May 9.

The purpose of the meeting, which was the 18th such meeting, was to summarize activities accomplished in 2007, discuss its 2008-2010 working agenda and appoint a new Chair for the year.

Among the strategic projects that will be the focal point for the National Agricultural Research Institutes over the next two years are those dealing with family, indigenous, small-scale, urban and peri-urban agriculture; agricultural technology for sustainable production in rural territories; the national seed plan; and innovation for the production of animal protein.

Yvan Gil, who is chair of INIA, Venezuela, reported on these activities and gave a presentation entitled "INIA –Research and innovation for food sovereignty", in which he noted that the Institute seeks to be an executing organ of the Ministry of the People's Power for Agriculture and Land in scientific research, technological development, advisory services and the delivery of specialized services that contribute to the sustainable development of the Venezuelan agricultural sector and the rural milieu.

Joint activities

The members of the Executive Committee underscored the need to combine further the work of the PROCI for the preparation of joint proposals and thereby avoid duplication of effort.

In this regard, they underscored the joint work in which the PROCIANDINO, PROCISUR and PROCITROPICOS are engaged and recognized their contribution to the exchange of information, project proposals and training in the region.

In addition, the representative from Ecuador, Saúl Mestanza, felt that researchers should be in touch with the existing realities in other countries as part of their training.

With regard to work between PROCITROPICOS and the IICA Office in Venezuela, there was a discussion of alternatives for contributing to the initiative proposed by Venezuela to create an International Tropical Research Center, which would include the possibility of incorporating research, development and innovation networks of PROCITROPICOS as activities of the Center.

In addition, options were proposed for joint effort between PROCITROPICOS and IICA in Venezuela to carry out the activities of the EMBRAPA Office (Brazilian Agricultural Research Enterprise) recently inaugurated at INIA Headquarters in Caracas.

New Chairmanship

At the close of the meeting, the new Chair of the Executive Committee of PROCITROPICOS was appointed. The Chair of INIA of Venezuela assumed that position and the Director General of INIAP in Ecuador, Julio Delgado, was appointed Vice Chair.

In the previous period, these positions were held by the Director of CELOS, in Suriname, Rudolf Van Kantén, and the representative from Venezuela, Prudencio Chacón.

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Chile shares experience in family agriculture

In an effort to facilitate an exchange of knowledge, IICA sponsored a talk on the "Development of family agriculture: the Chilean experience".

Credit, technical assistance and investment incentives were the components of the platform of services offered by the Agricultural Development Institute (INDAP) in Chile to farmers who want to be competitive in a globalized world, explained INDAP's Director, Hernán Rojas, during a talk in Costa Rica on the "Development of family agriculture: the Chilean experience".

The activity was sponsored by the Office of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Costa Rica, in cooperation with the Consejo Nacional de Producción (CNP) (National Production Council), the Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario (IDA) (Agrarian Development Institute) and the Programa de Desarrollo Rural (PDR) (Rural Development Program) as part of the horizontal technical cooperation that IICA promotes among the countries of the Americas.

“One of the most important experiences to learn about and discuss when addressing the concerns of small-scale agriculture is the Chilean experience. We promote this type of opportunity because we believe that this is an invaluable resource for reviewing our own action programs and thereby improving our actions and making them more effective and efficient,” explained the IICA Representative in Costa Rica, Byron Miranda, who said that Central America is committed to the development of entrepreneurial agriculture.

Factual information

Chile, where small-scale family agriculture accounts for 85% of production units, aspires to becoming an export power in the area of high-quality foods for specialized niche markets. To get there, part of its development strategy has been to increase the productivity of subsistence farmers, make them competitive and enable them to function as small, successful entrepreneurs.

Accordingly, INDAP intervenes at three levels. "We reinforce the achievements of family farmers who have moved ahead and we don't let them fall, because they are an example that yes, we can; we support those who are trying to take advantage of the opportunities in the new economic context; and we minimize the negative effects that specific circumstances can have on strategic sectors ", Rojas explained during his address.

Among the 44 programs offered by the Institute is one that offers technical advisory services for 20,000 farmers for a three-year period, “thereby providing support for the medium to long term”. H also referred to the Local Development Program which works with the municipalities in addressing the needs of some 50,000 people.

The Investment Development Program, a regular fund for subsidizing investments, provides financing to close to 15,000 farmers. It is another mechanism whereby the Institute supports entrepreneurship and innovation in small-scale agriculture. In addition, they offer loans and facilitate financial coordination between the farmers and commercial banks.

They also offer vocational training programs to improve the skills of farmers and establish strategic partnerships with agroindustry, major exporters and supermarkets and thereby develop production chains, from the producers to the consumers.

According to Rojas, in all of this, the partnership between the public and private sectors has been fundamental. Work has focused on critical areas and support has not been forthcoming for all, only “for those who truly want to move ahead and be competitive”.

In this way, he said, the Institute's approach has been geared towards quality and not coverage. “There is no point in having many users of a service. Our goal, our ethical imperative is excellence ", he emphasized.

In the opinion of the IICA specialist in rural development for Central America, Mario Samper, the Chilean institutional model “suggests that we can learn a lot, especially now that we are involved in the dynamics of institutional change”. He further underscored the importance of INDAP adopting a long-term vision as regards country projects, having substantial resources and the necessary political will for it to prosper.

The head of the Costa Rican Agrarian Development Institute (Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario - IDA), Carlos Bolaños, noted that “the Chilean experience demonstrates that state participation has been extremely important as a facilitator of development” and expressed the need for Costa Rica to improve institutional coordination.

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IICA attends the 15th meeting of the Inter-American Meeting at Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA)

The Deputy Director General of IICA, Christopher Hansen, the Director of the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Area of IICA, Ricardo Molins, and other specialists from the Unit will attend this meeting, to be held from June 11-12 in Brazil.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) organized, within the framework of the strategic partnership established between the two organizations, the Inter-American Meeting at Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture. It is the 15th such meeting and will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 11 and 12.

RIMSA brings together each year the Ministers of Health and Agriculture of the Member States of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Through that meeting, PAHO receives the necessary political support for taking part in and coordinating technical cooperation activities in topics related to veterinary public health. This year, the theme of the Meeting is "Agriculture and Health: Alliance for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas".

Deputy Director General of IICA, Christopher Hansen, will head the Institute's delegation at that Meeting. He will be accompanied by the Director of the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Area of IICA, Ricardo Molins, and other specialists from that Unit.

Hansen will give a talk on "Five years of economic growth in the Americas: Contribution of the agricultural sector to the Millennium Development Goals". There, he will address topics such as the economic growth of the agricultural sector and its projections for the next five-year period, the agricultural sector's contribution as a generator of employment, foreign exchange and food for human consumption, the participation of women and equity, social development and health in the rural population.

The Deputy Director General of IICA will also present the report on the mandates and status of the ministerial process for the ministerial meetings "Agriculture and Rural Life".

In addition to the inaugural conference on developments with regard to agrifood chains, at RIMSA, there will be three discussion panels: "Facing New Challenges: Climate Change, Food Security and Economic Growth", "Nutrition, Food Safety and Health: How to face the new challenges" and "Rural Development and Health: directing efforts towards social inclusion".

Also to be presented at the meeting are the report of the meeting of COHEFA 11, the report of the meeting of COPAIA 5 and the report of PAHO/WHO on the Program for Technical Cooperation in Veterinary Public Health.

The meeting will conclude with the signing of the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro by the group of Ministers.

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http://www.panaftosa.org.br/Comp/Eventos/rimsa_15_novo/espanol/default_e.html



IICA executives are trained in leadership

Professionals, specialists and project coordinators, technical and administrative areas of IICA participated in a workshop seminar on leadership for institutional modernization.

A workshop seminar on “Leadership for Institutional Modernization II” was held at IICA Headquarters as part of an effort to build on the leadership and management skills of professionals, specialists and project coordinators, and the technical and administrative areas of IICA.

Experts and members of the teaching staff from the INCAE Business School led the activities from May 21 through 23.

At the three-day workshop, the 26 participants heard talks and took part in dynamic activities aimed at improving their competencies in coaching, empowerment, conducting processes of change, emotional intelligence, assertive communication, accountability and teamwork.

The academic director of the seminar, German Retana, said that the idea behind the topics addressed was to improve institutional efficiency through the impact of each person’s individual efforts at the Institute.

“To develop talent in the team, its leader must be a coach and unleash that talent. Second, if these talents are to flourish, the institutional conditions must exist to make this happen. This has to take place within a framework of empowerment and this implies change”, he said when addressing the agenda for the workshop.

The Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite, who was present at the inauguration of the workshop seminar, recognized the importance of each IICA staff member’s individual contribution. “You are the most important of this process because your ideas, your contribution, are fundamental in achieving the success of this organization which we must continue to improve”, he told participants.

In the opinion of Roxana Cornejo, one of the other professors at the workshop, assertiveness—which is clear, honest, direct and appropriate communication – and emotional intelligence are “critical competencies in developing effective leadership and promoting more productive, flexible and creative work teams”. Both of these issues were also addressed during the workshop seminar.

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