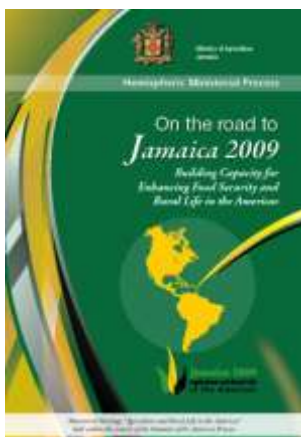


Jamaica to serve as venue for most important hemispheric meeting on agriculture and rural life

Thirty-four countries will be represented by their Ministers of Agriculture



The motto for the discussions will be "Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas"

The Week of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas, the most important agricultural event held in the hemisphere, will take place this year in Montego Bay, announced the Jamaica Information Service.

Delegations from 34 countries, headed by their Ministers of Agriculture, will attend two meetings during the Week (October 25-30): the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the context of the Summit of the Americas process, and the Fifteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA).

The Ministerial Meeting is the most important hemispheric forum for reaching agreement on priorities and strategic actions for the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere.

The IABA, the highest governing body of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), meets every two years to make decisions on administrative matters, the budget and priorities for technical cooperation.

At the meeting in Jamaica, the Board will elect the next Director General, who will begin a four-year term in January 2010, in replacement of Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, from Barbados, who has been in that position since 2002 (he was re-elected in 2005).

This year, the Caribbean will be the venue for two meetings of great importance for the hemisphere: the Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in April, and the aforementioned Week of Agriculture and Rural Life. "Both will be golden opportunities for key decision makers to observe the reality of the Caribbean first hand. At the same time, the hosts must create the climate of understanding and goodwill needed to seek joint solutions to the challenges of development and those posed by the world economic crisis," Brathwaite said.

Food Security

As suggested by the Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica and host of the Week, Christopher Tufton, the motto for the discussions will be "Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas," a subject that took on special importance in the wake of the crisis in the prices of staple grains that hit the world in 2008.

With an eye to moving forward with preparations for the meetings, government officials and IICA staff member met on February 1-4 in Jamaica.

IICA was represented by the Director of Regional Operations for the Caribbean Region, Trevor Murray; the Director and the Coordinator of the Office for Follow-up of the Summit of the Americas Process, Bernardo Badani; the Technical Secretary of the Executive Committee and the IABA, Fernando Del Risco; and the IICA Representative in Jamaica, Cynthia Currie.

During their visit, the group from IICA held a seminar-workshop in which they explained in detail the Ministerial Process, and how it ties in with the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

They also went into detail regarding the role of the Jamaican government in the ministerial process, inasmuch as Minister Tufton will chair both meetings, and Permanent Secretary for Agriculture Donovan Stanberry will head and coordinate the Group for the Implementation and Coordination of the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life of the Summits Process (GRICA).

They also went over the topics to be discussed by the IABA, and Minister Tufton's responsibilities as Chairman.

According to Brathwaite, these preparatory meetings "reaffirm the joint commitment of the Government of Jamaica and IICA to preparing for the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life."

More information

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IICA committed to food security

Participated in world meeting to reduce poverty and hunger worldwide.



The Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Jacques Diouf, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Miguel Angel Moratinos, participated in the meeting.

The Deputy Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Christopher Hansen, participated in the High-level Meeting on Food Security for All from 26-27 January, in Madrid, Spain.

The meeting, convened by the Spanish Government and the United Nations, brought together participants from the governments of 126 countries, civil society, labor unions, the private sector, universities, donor agencies and multilateral organizations.

The purpose was to accelerate progress in meeting the first Millennium Development Goal to eradicate poverty and hunger and address the effects of fluctuations in food prices on vulnerable populations, as spelled out in the [Final Statement of the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All](#) that was adopted.

"The aim of this meeting was to bring together the government and private sectors, civil society and international cooperation stakeholders as one single committed bloc to design strategies for solving global problems in the area of food security," Hansen said.

Since 2002, IICA has included food security as a focal point on its agenda, alongside rural prosperity and the sustainable development of agriculture. Since then, the Institute has endeavored to effect change in these three major areas through first-rate and innovative technical cooperation

For the Deputy Director General, "The emphasis on food security therefore responds to institutional objectives and to the needs and demands of the countries of the region".

This has been achieved through ongoing support to micro- and medium-scale businesses, the generation of information and knowledge and support in the design of public policy, etc.

More information

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Food Security brochure targets School Students

IICA is promoting several initiatives that will make up part of a larger project entitled “Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago.”

“Our farmers in Trinidad and Tobago are champions in the effort to achieve food and nutrition security for our nation.” This is one of the messages being promoted in a new brochure entitled: “Food Security, Agriculture and Nutrition: a discussion for teachers and young students”.

The brochure, produced by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), is the first of several initiatives that will make up part of a larger project entitled “Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad.”

The project, which is jointly funded by IICA and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), aims to raise the profile of domestic agriculture; educate and inform on food security and good nutrition, in an effort to better inform the public of Trinidad and Tobago and stimulate action towards changed buying habits and eating choices, while supporting domestic agriculture.



“Food Security, Agriculture and Nutrition: a discussion for teachers and young students” is the name of the brochure.

Additionally the project seeks to partner with the Media in mainstreaming issues on domestic agriculture and food security as they relate to national and human development.

The brochure, tailored for young minds, presents an informative discussion between a teacher and a student in three areas. The first defines Food Security, according to definitions provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The second looks at agriculture as the “major source of food all over the world” and describes the agriculture sector as important in improving food security within our homes, communities and the nation as a whole.

It promotes our farmers in Trinidad and Tobago as “champions of food security” and also suggests simple ideas for youngsters to encourage their families and schools to produce their own food at home by establishing home or backyard gardens.

School gardening is also a way to generate income for the school as well as encourage students to learn about the value of agriculture and good food and develop a sense of business.

The third area looks briefly at good nutrition – as an integral aspect of food security. It promotes food groups that are essential for maintaining healthy lifestyles, using information obtained from the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), viz. cereals; starchy fruits, roots, tubers/ground provisions; legumes; vegetables; fruits; food from animals; fats and oils.

The discussion between the teacher and the students ends with the student affirming that he/she has learned that:

“...my household is food secure when all members of my family can have the right amount and variety of safe foods that we need to lead active lives. We can buy food that is produced by our farmers in Trinidad and Tobago and we can also produce some of our food at home in our backyard gardens. The food that we produce, buy and eat must be nutritious enough to meet the nutrition needs of everyone in the family. I have also learned that agriculture is very, very important for our country and that our farmers are champions in our nation’s efforts at achieving Food Security.”

IICA is collaborating with other agricultural agencies, including the local office of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), CARDI, the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and the CFNI in this project.

The brochure will be distributed to several primary schools in Trinidad and in Tobago and is also available for download by the general public – from the IICA website: www.iica.int/trinidadandtobago

More information

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Ministerial Delegation from Honduras participates in IICA's Forum for Leaders in Agriculture

The Institute considers leadership as crucial for the development of agriculture.

A delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture of Honduras visited IICA Headquarters this last February 20 to take part in the Forum for Leaders, a program intended for new ministers and senior executives in agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

The Executive Director of the Directorate of Agricultural Science and Technology (Dirección de Ciencia y Tecnología Agropecuaria - DICTA), Arturo Galo, and the Director General of the National Agricultural Health Service (Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria - SENASA), Edmundo Omar Toro Vallecillo, discussed topics of interest for the Honduran government and IICA.



The ministerial delegation from Honduras was met by the Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite.

“Whenever we have succeeded as a society, we have had leaders capable of encouraging change. Without leadership, we cannot get very far”, the Director General of the Institute, Chelston Brathwaite, said. Director General Brathwaite welcomed and conversed with the delegation from Honduras during the first session of the Forum.

How to link the agendas of IICA's Directorate of Operations for the Central Region and the Central American Agricultural Council was one of the items on the agenda.

“At IICA we are supporting and reinforcing the Councils of Ministers through technical cooperation within the framework of integration processes”, the Director for the Central Region and Executive Secretary of the CAC, Roger Guillen, said.

During the forum, IICA's involvement in the Caribbean and the issue of its technical expertise were outlined and particulars relating to the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas, to be held in Jamaica in October this year, were discussed.

The Forum for Leaders provides information on the role of agriculture in economic and social development, the challenges and opportunities for agriculture in the 21st century and IICA's role in agricultural development in the hemisphere.

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IICA explores partnerships in Europe to promote projects portfolio in Haiti

IICA Office in Spain serves as bridge between the old and new world.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is in search of strategic partners in Europe so that it can expand cooperation services and assistance to the poorest country in the Americas and promote the projects portfolio in Haiti “Investing in the Future of Food Security”.

“We have had a portfolio of 23 projects which we have been preparing since 2008, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture of Haiti. In some cases, these projects are being executed; others are being prepared and

there are those that will come in the future”, said François Dagenais, Director of External Financing and Investment Projects of IICA.

“We need more support from cooperating agencies and friends so that we can get going with these projects that are intended solely to improve the situation in Haiti in the area of food security”, he added.

Last November, a delegation headed by Dagenais and the Projects Coordinator for the IICA Office in Europe, Cristina Belda, visited several cooperation agencies in Spain and other European countries to present and promote the projects.

More information

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Sustainable Rural Development Network created in Paraguay

Two objectives here are to create a virtual knowledge bank on sustainable rural development and a directory of professionals in the field in Paraguay.

The IICA Office in Paraguay is developing a mechanism for integration, exchange, debate and reflection, known as the "Sustainable Rural Development Network in Paraguay".

This network is intended for specialists from the public, private and academic sectors and from international organizations who wish to contribute their knowledge and experience in the subject as members of that network or as a cooperating entity.

The purpose of the Network, membership in which is free of charge and voluntary, is to contribute to knowledge management related to sustainable rural development and technical resource training.

Accordingly, the proposal is to publicize national and international information related to training in sustainable rural development and concepts and innovative methodologies on this topic.

It will also identify, systematize and publicize current experiences in rural development in the country and promote national and international technical exchanges through seminars, workshops, on-site and virtual forums and discussion groups.

The purpose of all these activities is to generate a virtual knowledge bank on sustainable rural development, consisting of research, case studies, working reports, articles, books, etc. In addition, a directory of professionals in the field of sustainable rural development in Paraguay will be created.

Getting started with the network

An initial step in setting up this Network was the launch of its first news bulletin in February.

“This bulletin, which is in electronic format, will be published on a monthly basis. It will publicize national and international information related to skills training, experiences encountered and lessons learnt”, explained Fatima Almada, the specialist in sustainable rural development carrying out this project.

It also seeks to support the promotion of fora for discussion and the critical analysis of present-day topics related to sustainable rural development and the social, economic, environmental, political-institutional and cultural facets related thereto.

The contents of the bulletin will be based on the demands and needs of its users.

This first issue shows the events that will be held in Latin America in the first half of this year and contacts to facilitate access to information on programming, areas of interest, time frames, presentation of papers, etc.

It also invites those interested to write articles on experiences in rural development and food security.

The bulletin is available in Spanish from this Office's Web site (<http://www.iica.org.py/>) and through the following link: http://www.iica.org.py/Boletin_DRS_PY_1.pdf.

More information

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Registration form: <http://www.iica.org.py/FormularioDRS.doc>