

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

February, 2008

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Institutional Affairs



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▪ IICA creates innovative Center for Leadership in Agriculture

The Institute recently created an innovative Center for Leadership in Agriculture which will train leaders with a global perspective. The center, which is a pioneer in its field, will be inaugurated on March 24th. It will work to provide tools to enable leaders in agriculture throughout the hemisphere to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Director General of the Institute has discussed the new program with delegates from Member States on a number of occasions. At the Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA held in May 2007, for example, the delegations of the United States, Brazil, Jamaica, Canada and Dominica agreed that the proposal represented a response to a felt need, as the challenges of agriculture have become increasingly complex. The official inauguration of the Center, on the aforementioned date, will also mark the beginning of the First Forum for Young Leaders, which will be attended by participants from 34 countries. In addition, a forum for ministers and high-level executives will be held, in the context of the Center's strategic activities. From February 19 to 24, Christopher Tufton, the new Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica, will visit IICA to discuss the new challenges to agriculture in his country in the light of developments on the regional and global scenes, and to discuss the Institute's plans for cooperation activities in Jamaica.

▪ The Director General sets priorities for 2008

At the beginning of the new year, Chelston Brathwaite, Director General of IICA, shared with his cabinet and staff his priorities for 2008. In his view, the 34 Member States have taken a positive approach, and that provides incentive to pursue further the changes that were put underway in 2002, with a view to ensuring the satisfactory performance of the organization. He pointed out that IICA was in a positive position financially, thanks to the countries' performance in paying their quotas, and to the fact that the Institute's budget had been increased, albeit moderately. In 2008, IICA will gear its efforts towards further strengthening its technical capacity and will begin implementing in the different countries the financial system (SAP) that is already in operation at Central Headquarters in Costa Rica. Sabbatical leaves and intensive training will be offered to encourage staff members to refresh and update their knowledge. The Director considers it essential to fine-tune the tools used for supervision and monitoring of the Institute's programs throughout the hemisphere. Another objective will be to carry out the Leadership Program, an initiative that has been discussed on several occasions with delegations from Member States. IICA will also seek to strengthen its relations with its partners, including the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE). Preparations are already underway for the Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture to be held in Jamaica in 2009 and for the Institute's contribution to the Fifth Summit of the Americas (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 2009).

▪ Christopher Hansen appointed Deputy Director General of the Institute

Christopher Hansen, of the United States, has assumed his duties as Deputy Director General of IICA. Mr. Hansen has been involved in the financial and entrepreneurial sector for over 25 years, mainly in

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Tel. (506) 216-0222 • Fax (506) 216-0233
Headquarters P.O.Box. 55-2200 Coronado, Costa Rica
www.iica.int

Latin America and Africa, and has been with IICA for over two years. He has extensive experience in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises through projects of the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, the Foundation for Sustainable Development in Latin America (FUNDES) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), among others. At IICA he served as Assistant Deputy Director General, as Director of Relations with Strategic Partners, in Washington D.C., and as Director of Regional Operations and Integration for the Northern Region. He also served as Acting Representative at the IICA Office in Mexico.

▪ **New representatives in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Mexico**

IICA has three new representatives in member countries: Gregg Rawlins of Barbados, an agronomist and agricultural economist, assumed his post in Trinidad and Tobago on January 7. Joseph Peltier of Dominica, an economist and development specialist, began in Barbados on February 1. The IICA Office in Mexico is headed by Gino Buzzetti, of Chile, an agronomist and sociologist. The three have ample experience in the agriculture sector.

Ministerial changes

The Director General of IICA conveyed his congratulations to several recently appointed Ministers of Agriculture. He congratulated Raúl Robles, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, who will also serve as Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture. He assured Walter Poveda, the new Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador, of the Institute's commitment to support that country's development plan. "We expect to strengthen the ties between our organization and your government," he said to Ed Shafer, the new Secretary of Agriculture of the United States. He assured Haynesley Benn, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Barbados, that the Institute would cooperate in addressing the challenges facing the agriculture sector and implementing actions to generate wellbeing within the rural community.

Regions and countries

▪ **IICA and the prestigious University of the West Indies sign agreement**

IICA and the prestigious University of the West Indies (UWI), which has campuses in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados, have signed a cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening the academic, professional and technical activities of the two institutions. The idea is to promote exchanges between their scientific and administrative staffs. The agreement was signed by Chelston Brathwaite, Director General of IICA, and Nigel Harris, Vice-Chancellor of UWI, in December 2007. With a duration of four years, which can be extended, the arrangement will contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture, specifically in the Caribbean.

▪ **WTO Counsellor leads workshop on plant and animal health in Costa Rica**

Gretchen Stanton, Counsellor at the World Trade Organization (WTO), was the chief facilitator at a workshop on the context, scope and implementation of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement (SPS), and the sanctions provided therein. The event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica (COMEX), with the support of the IICA Office in Costa Rica. More than 30 officials of Costa Rica's Ministries of Foreign Trade and of Agriculture and Livestock attended, as well as representatives of private-sector chambers and companies.

Coming events

- **24-29 March 2008.** First Forum for Young Leaders involved in the sustainable development of agriculture in the Americas, IICA Central Headquarters, San José, Costa Rica
- **22-23 April 2008.** Special Meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI), IICA Central Headquarters, San José, Costa Rica

More information

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- **Frontier women become microentrepreneurs**

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