

# Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

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## Institutional Affairs

### ▪ Chelston Brathwaite appreciative of support

Speaking at the final meeting of his Cabinet, held on December 9, the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, stated that the Institute was now more ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century and expressed his appreciation for the support he received from the countries and the personnel of the Institute over the years. "IICA has been renewed and realigned and is now prepared for the future," he said.

During the meeting, he also noted "We can feel proud of the results we have obtained. It was worth the effort." At the end of the meeting, the Director of the Inter-American Agribusiness Program, Miguel Garcia, stated that he was proud to have worked in an administration characterized by honesty and transparency. Brathwaite attributed the success of his administration to putting the Institute's financial house in order.

When he took office in 2002, IICA's budget was frozen and only 22 of its 33 Member made their quota payments. Quota arrearages have dropped from US\$13.5 million in that year to US\$200,000 today. The timely payment of the annual quota of a country can only be interpreted as support for our efforts.

IICA is undergoing a process of transition today. On October 30, Victor M. Villalobos, from Mexico, was elected as the next Director General during the Fifteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), held in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The Director General-elect, together with a delegation of Mexican officials visited IICA Headquarters in early December to lead the process of transition. They along with IICA staff are ironing out the final details for the inauguration ceremony, which will take place on January 15.

### Accomplishments 2002-2010

Brathwaite, from Barbados, has been at the helm of the Institute since January 2002. He was elected for a second term that will conclude on January 15. During his administration, the Institute was successful in convincing the Member States of the need to pay their quota arrearages, resulting in the best financial situation since 1986.

At the beginning of his administration, the external auditors stated that the Institute "lacked economic viability due to the increase in the amount of quotas owed by the Member States." The report indicated that the deterioration of the finances of the Institute would hinder the achievement of its objectives. Today, the Institute is financially stable.

Brathwaite, who made transparency and accountability hallmarks of his administration, will deliver a full report on the work of the last eight years to the incoming Director General. The 800 plus page document, written by some 70 IICA staff members, including Directors, Representatives in the countries and technical and administrative personnel, was also delivered to each minister of agriculture on a compact disc during the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas – Jamaica 2009.

The Director General added that changes have been effected in the culture of teamwork, the exchange of information, excellence, equity, learning and leadership.

In summarizing the most important accomplishments, he listed the following:

1. The Institute is now more financially stable.
2. We have consolidated the Institute as an important partner in the implementation of the mandates derived from the Summits of the Americas.
3. We have strengthened relations with the countries by implementing a new model for technical cooperation, which has generated greater trust in the capacity of the Institute and its leadership in agriculture throughout the hemisphere.
4. We have expanded that technical services provided by the Institute, adding Agrotourism, Organic Agriculture, Agroenergy, Agricultural Insurance, Biotechnology and Biosafety and Horizontal Cooperation.
5. We established an office in Miami to promote Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety.
6. We established a Centre for Leadership in Agriculture to promote the development of young leaders with a global vision who can help the sector to face the challenges of agriculture and rural life in the future.
7. We have developed new differentiated information instruments aimed at different stakeholder groups in the community of agriculture, which has enabled us to improve the perception of the work of the Institute and promote the strategic importance of agriculture.
8. We have promoted a culture of financial prudence and performance evaluation at the institutional and individual levels, which has led to the adoption of a culture of transparency, responsibility and accountability.
9. We have kept the Institute as a single institution by promoting a single technical message and an appropriate level of institutional articulation.
10. We have strengthened our Offices in the countries as instruments for the delivery of technical cooperation, with methodologies for institutional reengineering when necessary to improve efficiency.
11. We have increased awareness of the true contribution of agriculture to development, underscoring the importance of expanded agriculture, production chains and the importance of intersectoral linkages and the multidimensional concept.
12. We have promoted a new model for development in which agriculture and rural life are essential elements of integrated and sustainable development.

### Coming events

- **January 15, 2010** Inauguration of the Director General of IICA, Victor M. Villalobos. Headquarters. San Jose, Costa Rica.

### More information

- **In Kenya, IICA Director General calls for new development model**
- **IICA Office in Uruguay again certified by ISO**

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