

David C. Hatch Remarks

Good Afternoon

This has been a very informative day. Thank you for your attendance and your participation. Special appreciation goes to each of the presenters who have shared their knowledge and wisdom with us. We know their busy schedules and heavy demands and in many cases the significant travel that was necessary to be with us today. Thank you very much indeed.

We encourage you to stay for the reception so you can meet personally with any of the participants and any of your colleagues here. Of course the food and drink is not to be missed! We also have two brief videos especially prepared for this event that will be shown at the beginning of the reception. Ambassador Ramdin will speak more of the reception in a moment.

This conference was conceived and organized with one thought in mind. That is to use the important political platform offered by the OAS to call attention to the significant agriculture investment and food security needs in the Americas and in so doing create a catalyst for further dialogue and substantive action. The dialogue has begun. Soon, very soon, we will need to take substantive action.

We hope this action is collaborative and coordinated between multiple organizations. Most certainly this action will need to continue until the issue of food security is resolved. We are all in this together. Few times, if ever, in our history are we facing such legacy creating issues as a world society. Issues that if not addressed will create further misery... One of them is food security. If addressed correctly we create a legacy of food security for future generations. Our choices today will affect their lives tomorrow.

So where do we begin? Yes increased investment in agriculture is necessary but it needs to be very carefully thought out. We cannot afford to get this one wrong. We call upon each nation in this hemisphere to create a national food security plan that is strategically tailored to the needs, resources and competitive advantages of the country. For example, if a country has been blessed with fertile soil, sufficient water, and significant uncultivated land then that country should accept this reality as a competitive advantage; an advantage that should be nurtured and

developed for the good of all. Rural assets are strategic assets, however they are largely under developed in many areas of this hemisphere.

The G-8 countries, and many others who will follow their lead, believe that country led food security plans are essential in order to secure a portion of the \$20 billion commitment the 8 countries have made. The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP) is one framework that is recognized by the G-8 countries as useful and worthy of adaptation. The document can be found in the food security portion of the IICA US website (www.iica.int/usa) or by visiting www.nepad.org.

Last week in announcing the US commitment to food security *Secretary Clinton said, "First, we will work with partner countries to create and implement their plans. Few know better the complex obstacles that hinder a country's food supply than the people who live and work there. That may sound like a very simplistic statement, but it has not guided policy often enough in the past. We will work closely with countries to map out the particular investments they need to bolster their agricultural sector. Now, in one country, roads may be a top priority; in another, irrigation and water or greater access to credit and markets or drought-resistant feed. Once the plans are in place, we will help countries put them into action."*

During the panel discussion, so ably moderated by Dr. Murano, the experts outlined some essential components or issues to consider when developing a plan. While each national plan will likely follow a similar framework of issues to address, there will be by necessity many variations on the theme. In fact, in some cases, a regional plan (for the Central American region for example) may be useful.

IICA encourages each of its member countries to formalize its own national food security plan. IICA can help. When it comes to agriculture, no organization in the world has the history, experience, perspective and knowledge of IICA at the country level in Latin America and the Caribbean. We know of many initiatives that have worked and why. As importantly, we know about many initiatives that have failed and why. This insight is invaluable when developing national food security plans. More specifically, IICA, with appropriate financial assistance, can

1. Organize workshops at the country or regional level to continue the development and execution of food security plans
2. Provide technical assistance on many of the agricultural components of each plan.
3. Promote where possible national food security plans in appropriate venues.
4. Work closely with other institutions, organizations and/or agencies to help execute selected portions of a national food security plan.

Before I conclude let me once again thank each of you for your attendance and participation. Additionally, we thank all those in the OAS for their support, particularly the translation team and Ambassador Ramdin, without whose support we could not have held this conference. He is a friend of IICA and much appreciated. Last but certainly not least, I would like to recognize the team in the IICA , most particularly the staff in the Washington office, for their invaluable assistance.

One matter of housekeeping: Please leave your business cards in the crystal bowl located near the entrance of this room so we can make sure we send the CD with all the presentations and other items of interest to each of you.