

Jamaica's Ambassador to the U.S. to Support the Role of Women in Development at Annual 'IICA Day' Function



Washington D.C. November 2, 2010 – Ambassador of Jamaica to the United States of America and Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the Organization of American States (OAS), Audrey Marks is the latest addition to participate in 'IICA Day,' an annual event organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and hosted by the Organization of American States (OAS). Marks will serve as a guest speaker and will highlight the role of women in development.

A career entrepreneur, Ambassador Marks established and operated six previous businesses, ranging from a 100-acre banana exporting farm, a transportation company, to a real estate sales and development company. She has also operated a Venture Capital Company with diverse investments, including manufacturing, travel and entertainment companies. Ambassador Marks is the founder of Paymaster (Jamaica) Limited, a multi-transaction company which she conceptualized and started in 1997. Paymaster operates payment agencies from which all types of bill payments and remittances can be made.

Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), groups of rural women producers devoted to agriculture and other essential activities are now commonplace. Earlier this year, the OAS inaugurated the *Inter-American Year of Women*. In the spirit of cooperation and support, in early October 2010, IICA hosted an international forum at its headquarters in Costa Rica entitled, **'Women in Agriculture: The Contribution of Women to Agriculture and Food Security in the Americas'** in which the Institute recognized the contributions made by women in the Western Hemisphere to food security and rural well being; took steps to develop a cooperation agenda to support the productivity and competitiveness of women involved in the agricultural sector and, held discussions on how best to focus IICA's work under its Medium Term Plan 2010-2014 to support these efforts.

To further support this initiative, the IICA Office in the United States, with support from the OAS, is hosting a complementary event celebrating women in agriculture in the Americas on November 18, 2010. The program also includes women leaders in agriculture from Haiti and Guatemala who will address a Joint Session of the Permanent Council (PC) and Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) of the OAS on their experiences in agriculture.

ABOUT IICA

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture is the specialized agency for agriculture and the rural milieu of the Inter-American System, whose purpose is to provide innovative technical cooperation to the Member States, with a view to achieving their sustainable development in aid of the peoples of the Americas.

For additional information on IICA, please visit <http://www.iica.int/usa>

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