

Guatemalan and Haitian Women Entrepreneurs in Agriculture Development to Participate in Annual 'IICA Day' Function at the OAS

Washington D.C. November 16, 2010 – Guatemalan entrepreneur, Petronila Morales Clagua and Haitian entrepreneur, Monique Pierre Finnigan, are the latest presenters 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). Both will serve as guest speakers and will highlight the role of women in development.



Mrs. Finnigan, a career entrepreneur and director general of the Organization for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (ORE) in Haiti, has devoted her life to promoting sustainable practices in agriculture. After witnessing the effects of rapid degradation on the environment in her community, she was motivated to help preserve the community's natural resources and as a result, proposed viable and economical solutions for farmers. Thus, the creation of ORE was dedicated to the promotion of agricultural practices that offer an economical alternative to lift the pressure of destructive practices on the environment. Among other passions, she has been heavily involved in providing sanitation assistance for drinking water management and served as technical and financial advisor to grassroots farmer organizations in specialized areas such as irrigation, marketing, proposals writing and issues related to human rights. Finnigan has served as consultant to both the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). With the World Bank, she assessed perspectives for a project to reinforce the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture's extension services in the Central Plateau, in the South-East and the South departments. With the IDB, she carried out an analysis by conducting interviews in Creole with producers and key supply chain stakeholders to determine agriculture needs. Most recently, Finnigan has been involved in coordinating a small scale relief program for earthquake survivors.



Currently, Ms. Morales serves as the Vice President of the Rural Business Trade Association (AGER) which receives support from IICA. Her professional highlights include the development of communication strategies as well as the implementation of training schools aimed at women from various municipalities in the department of El Quiché and Botanical Gardens in the communities of Chichicastenango. She has helped improve the apple, corn and plum production systems; supported the search for trading opportunities for agricultural products such as plum and apple; participated in the process of agro industrial transition - in particular the processing of vegetables for juices, jams and dehydrated products and has directly participated in the marketing of plum for companies such as La Fragua in Guatemala.

She has also implemented several training workshops on topics such as: human rights, women's rights, indigenous people, decentralization, environment, leadership and is a local and international lecturer on women's rights, women in agriculture, youth and decentralization. Since 2009, she has participated in the process of analysis on Food Security and Food Sovereignty in 12 departments of Guatemala, in coordination with the Council of Development Institutions (COINDE).

ABOUT 'IICA DAY'

Earlier this year, the OAS inaugurated the Inter-American Year of Women. In the spirit of cooperation and support, in October 2010, IICA hosted an international forum at its headquarters in Costa Rica entitled, **'Women in Agriculture: Women's contribution to agriculture and food security in the Americas'** in which the Institute

1. Recognized the contributions made by women in the Western Hemisphere to food security and rural well being
2. Took steps to develop a cooperation agenda to support the productivity and competitiveness of women involved in the agricultural sector and
3. 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.

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

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