

IICA DAY 2007 and 65th Anniversary

MARKING ITS 65TH ANNIVERSARY, HEMISPHERIC AGRICULTURE INSTITUTE PROPOSES YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Young leaders from the nations of the Americas will be provided strategic training, under a new leadership program announced yesterday as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) marked its 65th anniversary.



"The development of young leaders in the agriculture sector must be an important part of the future agenda of the institute," declared IICA Director General Chelston Brathwaite, as he addressed the Organization of American States (OAS) Permanent Council convened in special session to mark the hemispheric agriculture institute's milestone. In arguing that investing in young people is fundamental to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Brathwaite explained that the youth leadership program proposes to help the young leaders "obtain a global vision of agriculture."

Argentina's Ambassador to the OAS, Rodolfo Gil, presiding over the special Permanent Council session under the theme "Realizing the Inter-American Dream of 1942," praised the Institute for its role in advancing economic development and for promoting rural development.



"At 65 years old, this Institute is not ready to retire," the Director General declared, asking the OAS Member State ambassadors to assist the Institute in producing the hemisphere's future leaders in agriculture. "The promotion of a modern agricultural sector and rural prosperity holds the key to development if our goal is the reduction of poverty." Brathwaite outlined the three principal phases of the Institute's development, accentuating current efforts to position the Institute to help member nations meet the challenges of the 21st century, with agriculture and agriculture-related activities playing a major role in economic development and in poverty reduction in the rural areas in particular.

OAS Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin praised the Institute's modernization process leading the way with technical cooperation in the rapidly transforming agricultural sector across the hemisphere. "By reviving rural life, particularly by engaging the youth, IICA, in partnership with the OAS, can help in a meaningful way not only to increase the productive capacity for domestic food security as well as for exports and foreign currency earning, but also to contribute to peace and stability in the region," Ramdin stressed.

During the meeting, Guatemala's Minister of Agriculture, Bernardo López Figueroa, in his overview of the results of the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture held in Guatemala last July, focused on the sustainability of natural resources and the need to pursue new practices distribution to improve living conditions for the peoples of the Americas. He stressed as well the need for stronger institutional cooperation, given the role of agriculture in this new international environment on governance. An overview of the Institute's regional initiatives was presented by Christopher Hansen, Associate Deputy Director General and IICA Representative in the United States.

The OAS Member State ambassadors joined in saluting the IICA anniversary and passed a resolution recognizing the sterling work undertaken by the hemispheric Institute over the past 65 years.

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