



## **President Bill Clinton Lends Support to IICA OAS Food Security Conference**

**Washington, DC – Sept 30, 2009** – “The time has come for the countries of the Americas to review their food security policies and take appropriate steps to make agricultural production a priority,” says President Bill Clinton, as organizers from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Organization of American States (OAS) make final preparations for the upcoming food security conference entitled, ‘Agriculture for Development and Food Security in the Americas.’ The conference will take place at the OAS Main Building in Washington D.C. located at 17th and Constitution Ave, N.W. on Thursday, Oct 1 beginning at 8:30am.

In his remarks to the participants and attendees of the conference, Clinton will stress the critical need for increased investment in agriculture in the Western Hemisphere.

“Support for agricultural development and investment in agricultural technology and innovation have been on the decline in many of the countries in the Americas since the eighties,” warns IICA Associate Deputy Director General, David C. Hatch, Director of Strategic Partnerships and IICA Representative in the United States. “While food security needs are acute in Africa and Asia, we also recognize that there are significant issues here in the Americas.” He continued, “This conference is intended to raise the awareness of the need for improving food security in this hemisphere,” he says.

Given the challenges of development, commitments to join forces and pursue common objectives with other international organizations have been on the rise. Earlier this year, the global community increased its commitment to ending food insecurity. At the G-8 Summit, leaders of the eight largest countries agreed that food security is an international problem and committed to increase international assistance for agricultural development to \$20 billion over the next three years.

Just last week, donors pledged more than \$4.75-billion during the opening day of the Clinton Global Initiative, an annual event led by President Bill Clinton to fight global problems. Approximately 1,300 political, corporate, and nonprofit leaders participated in this year’s gathering in New York, which focused on the issues of education, climate change, global health, and poverty.

In the past eight years, the Clinton Foundation has made a substantial impact on the global community and paved the way for successful philanthropic practices. From delivering life-saving medication to children living with HIV/AIDS to creating new economic opportunities in some of America’s most underserved communities, to impact over 200 million lives across the world.

According to IICA’s Director General Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, the priorities of the Institute have been focused on repositioning agriculture at the national, regional and hemispheric levels. “IICA and the OAS have created a platform to elevate the vital importance of increasing agriculture development in Latin America and the Caribbean.” He added, “To advance this issue, the Institute will continue discussions on this important priority at the upcoming Ministerial Meetings, “Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas,” in Montego Bay, Jamaica in October.

For this week’s conference in DC, senior officials from international organizations such as: the World Food Programme (WFP); the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); the World Bank; the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; (ECLAC); the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the OAS; the Food and Agriculture; Organization (FAO); the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture; the International Markets Bureau-Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Pan- American Health Organization (PAHO); the University of California-Davis; and the Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation are confirmed to participate in the event.

## **ABOUT IICA**

Established in 1942, 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. Today, 34 IICA offices the length and breadth of the hemisphere are working to meet the needs of the countries in areas such as: trade and agribusiness development; sustainable rural development; agricultural health and food safety; technology and innovation; education and training; and information and communication.

For additional information on IICA, please go to: [www.iica.int](http://www.iica.int)

## **ABOUT THE OAS**

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890. The OAS is an international organization established in 1948 to achieve an order of peace and justice, promote solidarity, strengthen collaboration, and to defend sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence among its Member States. Today, it comprises the 35 independent States of the Americas and constitutes the principal political, juridical, and social governmental forum in the Hemisphere.

For additional information on the OAS, please go to: [www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org)

### **More information**

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<http://www.iica.int/Eng/regiones/norte/USA/Pages/FoodSecurityConference.aspx>

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