



FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
April 19, 2009

Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain
*Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity,
Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability*

Promoting Human Prosperity

25. We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the Agro Plan 2003–2015 of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas held in Guatemala in 2007, we support the efforts in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organizations.

23. Providing our people with adequate and timely access to safe and nutritious food is among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and the world. We recognize the negative impact on our people of food crises when they occur, and commit to taking urgent and coordinated action, working in partnership with the relevant

international and regional organizations, as appropriate, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes in order to confront the challenges of food security. We reaffirm our commitment to the objective of the Millennium Declaration to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; and we recognize the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/235, which calls for addressing these challenges.

24. We call on our Agriculture Ministers to develop activities aimed at addressing issues affecting access to and availability of food in order to combat chronic malnutrition and to promote adequate nutritional policies for our populations. We support the promotion of investment in agriculture, as well as the strengthening of our States' institutional capacity, with a view to increasing and intensifying productive activities, particularly in the countries most affected by hunger.

Foreword

One of the challenges the agricultural sector is facing in the 21st century is to position agriculture as an issue of the highest priority on international development agendas. There are many compelling reasons for ensuring that agriculture continue to occupy a place of prominence in discussions at the highest political level on the future of the hemisphere. Suffice it to say that this sector has enormous potential for contributing to economic growth and to the well-being of our peoples.

Equally formidable are the challenges that agriculture must address if it is to become a viable alternative for solving problems such as food insecurity, poverty and unsustainable development.

For this reason, it is crucial to secure political backing that will translate into a clear strategy that will enable the agricultural sector to overcome the obstacles and contribute to the achievement of shared goals.

Fortunately, in the Summits of the Americas, the Heads of State and Government of the continent have responded, issuing important mandates aimed at addressing the challenges of the agricultural sector. The Third Summit, held in Quebec in 2001, recognized the fundamental importance of agriculture as a way of life for millions of rural families, together with the crucial role it plays in the creation of prosperity as a strategic sector in our socio-economic system. Since then, agriculture has been fully incorporated into the inter-American development agenda, as has been evident in subsequent Summits.

At the most recent Summit, held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, the Heads of State and Government went a step further, expressing their conviction that “a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security.” They also acknowledged that IICA’s support is essential for the success of actions undertaken to achieve that goal.

Devising a development strategy consistent with this vision is a task that has been entrusted to those responsible for the sector at the national level: the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture. Accordingly, the ministerial process “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas” was established to provide a forum for discussion of these issues, in compliance with the Summit mandates.

It should be recalled that in the *Declaration of Bavaro for the Improvement of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*, issued in 2001 at the First Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, the Ministers echoed the political will expressed by their respective Heads of State and Government. Subsequently, at their Ministerial Meeting in Panama, in 2003, they adopted the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*, which was updated in 2005 and 2007, via the Ministerial Agreements of Guayaquil and Guatemala, respectively.

More recently, at their Fifth Meeting, held in October of last year, the Ministers issued the *Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Jamaica 2009*, reaffirming their commitment to the implementation and updating of the *AGRO 2003-2015 Plan* for the 2010-2011 biennium. This Agreement constitutes a major step forward in defining the priority issues and strategic actions for the development of agriculture and the improvement of rural life in the Americas.

I have been a privileged witness to this process, having represented my country, Mexico, on three occasions as a Ministerial Delegate of Agriculture to the Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA), in which we discussed and reached consensus regarding the above-mentioned Agreements. Today, as Director General of IICA, I firmly intend to support this process, given its intrinsic value for the fulfillment of the Institute’s objectives which, in the end, are those of its member countries.

The Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Jamaica 2009 reflects the political will of the leaders of the agricultural sector to move forward in achieving the Shared Vision 2015, described in the AGRO Plan, and defines the strategic actions and the follow-up measures that must be undertaken jointly. In this effort, IICA's role is fundamental, as I have acknowledged in my proposed medium-term work plans, which the Institute will implement during my administration.

I am convinced that IICA can make a great contribution to the fulfillment of the objectives of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, and to the development of competitive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture in the Americas, which will serve to improve the lives of rural communities and of the population in general.

I have assumed the commitment to strengthen the Institute's technical capacity in order to offer our member countries technical cooperation services of the highest quality, and to continue supporting and strengthening the current Ministerial Process, ensuring that agriculture and rural life remain on the agenda of the next Summit of the Americas, goals that undoubtedly we all share.

In the interest of preserving the historical record of this process, it is my great pleasure to present this publication, which contains a brief account of the Ministerial Process 2001-2009, together with the texts of all the agreements adopted by the Ministers, from the First to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting. These texts, which are a clear testimony of the political will that has inspired this initiative, have enormous value in defining the common objectives pursued by the countries of the hemisphere in the areas of agriculture and rural life.



Victor M. Villalobos

Director General

*Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Secretariat of the Ministerial Meeting Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*