



Fourth Ministerial
“Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”
Within the context of the Summit of the Americas Process
La Antigua Guatemala, July 23-26, 2007



MM4/HMA8-2007
July 26, 2007

AGRO 2003-2015 PLAN

Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007 for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas

We, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture, gathered together as the Fourth Ministerial “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”, within the context of the Summit of the Americas process, as follow up to the Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005 and the commitment adopted with such agreement by the Heads of State and of Government during the Fourth Summit, Mar del Plata 2005, reaffirm our commitment with the implementation and updating of the *AGRO 2003- 2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*.

Therefore, considering the national reports on progress made and challenges identified in the implementation of the AGRO Plan during the 2006-2007 ministerial process and based on the consensus reached by the Ministerial Delegates during the GRICA 2007 (Implementation and Coordination Group for the Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life), we adopt the strategic actions of the Hemispheric Agenda for the 2008-2009 biennium and the measures for its implementation and follow up.

Two strategic orientations inspire the Guatemala 2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement: the first one, to promote with the agricultural stakeholders a broad based approach to thinking and acting in agriculture and the rural milieu and, the second one, “working together” to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda

Providing leadership for a holistic approach to agriculture and rural life

The updating of the Hemispheric Agenda for the 2008-2009 biennium is based on the current validity of the strategic actions adopted in 2003 and 2005, and on new challenges identified by the countries in the 2006-2007 ministerial process.

In defining the strategic actions of the present Hemispheric Agenda, and in accordance with the broad based approach towards agriculture and rural life adopted by the Ministers in the development of the AGRO Plan in 2003 and the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guayaquil 2005, the conceptual framework of the Plan AGRO was used, as reflected in the AGRO Matrix, which synthesizes the renewed approach to agriculture and rural life and the situation which will be desirable to advance the Shared Vision 2015.

Therefore, we express our will to jointly promote, with other agriculture and rural life stakeholders, the following **strategic actions**:

I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises

(Rural territories – production/trade dimension)

Entrepreneurial and business capability and capability for innovation

1. To strengthen and promote the development of entrepreneurial and business capabilities and capability for innovation in men and women in rural communities to support the creation of new business operators and enterprises and the sustained and competitive growth of emerging and existing enterprises.

II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness

(Agricultural production-trade chains – production/trade dimension)

Market information

2. To increase the availability of, and improve access for rural producers and other sectors linked to the productive chain to, reliable and timely market information through various public and private mechanisms or services.

Inclusive chains linkages

3. To promote the integration of rural producers and micro, small- and medium-scale agri enterprises into production and marketing/trade chains contributing to a sustainable income.

III. Promoting a harmonized environment conducive to competitive agriculture

(National and international context – production/trade dimension)

Strengthening of small- and medium scale rural enterprise

4. To implement policies that promote coordination between the public and private sectors, to improve the competitiveness of rural enterprises and producers to maximize trade.

Mobilizing resources

5. To mobilize public and private resources for the creation of infrastructure in an effort to promote investment in the rural sector and promote competitive agriculture.

IV. Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas

(Rural Territories – ecological/environmental dimension)

Environmental plan for businesses

6. To promote the creation of national capabilities to develop and implement agro environmental policies in the rural milieu with the participation of rural organizations, academia and the public and private sectors.

V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management

(Agricultural production-trade chains – ecological/environmental dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework

(National and international context - ecological/environmental dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity

(Rural Territories – sociocultural/human dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in the chain

(Agricultural production-trade chains – sociocultural/human dimension)

The challenges identified are covered by the previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities

(National and international context - sociocultural/human dimension)

Repositioning of rural issues in national strategies

7. To participate proactively in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in national strategies by promoting in society an increased understanding of the contributions made by the rural sector, a rural-urban balance in the national development agenda and efforts to overcome biases and exclusions that are detrimental to rural communities.

X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories

(Rural Territories – political/institutional dimension)

Establishment and follow-up of partnerships and agreements

8. To support rural stakeholders and their organizations with establishing coordinating, consensus building, and follow-up mechanisms on partnerships and agreements to facilitate joint efforts in implementing policies and strategies in rural territories.

XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors in the chain

(Agricultural production-trade chains – political/institutional dimension)

The challenges identified are covered in previous hemispheric agendas and, therefore, no complementary strategic actions are suggested.

XII. Promoting State policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life

(National and international context – political/institutional dimension)

Establishment of partnerships and agreements

9. To promote cooperation and the establishment of lasting alliances and agreements at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, which allow for greater participation of the private and social sectors in public policy development and implementation geared towards the improvement of agriculture and rural life.

Modernization and institutional strengthening of the rural public sector

10. To promote the modernization of public institutions in agriculture to enable them to integrate actions and services, that will improve linkages with other public, private and social stakeholders, as well as international partners, in the implementation of the 2003-2015 AGRO Plan.

Reassessment of the value of agriculture and the rural milieu

11. To promote efforts to reassess the value of agriculture and the rural milieu by helping to address strategic and emerging development issues, promoting urban-rural integration, taking into consideration social, political, economic, ecological and cultural factors, reporting on the multidimensional contributions made by the rural sector to national development.

Implementation and Follow-up

Working together for agriculture and rural life in the Americas

The AGRO 2003-2015 Plan reflects the will of the countries to work together towards the Shared Vision 2015, with the understanding that national governments are the main parties responsible for the implementation of the shared agenda and to coordinate the participation with the other agricultural stakeholders in view of their international commitments and agreements.

Dissemination of the AGRO Plan and its Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007

12. The implementation of the 2007 Guatemala Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement requires a joint action on the part of stakeholders in the public, private and social sectors. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the dissemination of the 2007 Agro Plan and its Guatemala 2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement, an activity that the ministerial delegates will undertake with the support of the respective IICA offices, taking into account the countries' National Policies.

Facilitating joint action

13. The renewed, broad-based and comprehensive way in which we conceive agriculture and rural life in the Plan (expressed in the AGRO-Matrix) represents the main contribution of our ministerial process to facilitate an understanding of the contribution of agriculture and the rural milieu to development in our countries. In this sense and taking into account paragraph 12, we strongly recommend that, in publicizing the AGRO Plan, we promote the broad-based and comprehensive view expressed in the AGRO-Matrix, and that it be implemented in cooperation with the public, private and social stakeholders in implementing this Ministerial Agreement.

Regional mechanisms and strategies

14. To strengthen regional meetings of ministers of agriculture, regional meetings of other agricultural stakeholders, as well as working together with the mechanisms for the regional integration of agriculture and for consultation and identification of priorities, coordination of actions and adoption of regional policies on matters of common interest, in support of the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

Information System

15. Having been informed of progress in the development of the Information System for Monitoring and Evaluating the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and its three components, we support efforts to promote the system in the countries through the integration of existing mechanisms, and we ask the Secretariat to report on progress to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting. We acknowledge the work accomplished under the leadership of IICA and ECLAC, with support from FAO and PAHO, and we urge them to encourage other international organizations to join this effort and, together, continue supporting efforts to improve this tool.

Support from and alignment of the international organizations

16. We reiterate our calls to the international organizations, made in 2001, 2003 and 2005, and request that they actively participate in the implementation of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement Guatemala 2007. In this regard, we shall promote and support the creation and operation of interagency groups at the national level.

Updating of the Hemispheric Agenda

17. The 2008-2009 Hemispheric Agenda is the third of six biennial agendas by means of which the AGRO Plan is to be implemented. National governments will deliver reports on progress in implementing each biennial agenda and identify challenges faced. These reports will serve as input for updating the Agenda for the following period. We therefore entrust:

- The Ministerial Delegates with preparing, with the support of the Secretariat of the Ministerial Process, the national report on progress and challenges in implementing this Ministerial Agreement.
- The Hemispheric Forum of Ministerial Delegates (GRICA) with updating this Ministerial Agreement for the 2010-2011 biennium.
- The Technical Secretariat with reporting, in the Fifth Ministerial, on progress with the Ministerial Process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas" and on any actions carried out to ensure coordination of this ministerial process with the Summit of the Americas process, with the purpose of consolidating the positioning of agriculture and rural life in the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Signed in the city of La Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala
on twenty-sixth day of July of two thousand and seven.