



## **MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE AMERICAS 2011**

*“Sowing innovation to harvest prosperity”*

### **SAN JOSE DECLARATION OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE 2011**

1. We, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture of the Americas, gathered together in San Jose, Costa Rica, October 19-21, 2011, with the objective of engaging in dialogue and undertaking commitments in order to advance towards achieving food security, rural well-being and the development of a competitive, sustainable and inclusive agrifood sector, and in harmony with the challenges and thematic areas indicated for the Sixth Summit of the Americas, *“Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity”*, Colombia 2012.
2. Agreeing that agricultural innovation is a catalyst for growth and positive change, and further, to foster innovation it is vital to increase and intensify production and productivity, improve incomes, reduce poverty and inequality, decrease the environmental impacts of the agrifood sector, respond to natural disasters, increase access to new technologies, adapt to climate change and, consequently, achieve food security and a better quality of life for all our citizens.
3. Recognizing that innovation in the agrifood sector should include: better practices and new technologies, wholesome and safe products, better infrastructure to support production and marketing, technology transfer, sharing knowledge and building relationships through value chains, training and extension services, access to credit, and a science-based legal and policy framework.

4. Being aware that to meet today's challenges and preparing for the future, requires the promotion of innovation in the agrifood sector throughout our hemisphere, in order to achieve food security and sustainability of natural resources, taking into account the rising demand, climate change, high input costs, and resource constraint.

Do hereby declare that:

5. The agrifood sector and rural development play a fundamental role in the overall development of all the countries of this hemisphere to achieve the economic and social growth of the inhabitants of the Americas.
6. Effective access to innovation and technology transfer is a key element to achieve a sustainable, competitive and inclusive agrifood sector.
7. Innovation will assist the agrifood sector to address economic and environmental challenges and offer tools for converting the sector into an axis for economic and social development.
8. Adoption of public policies and transparent regulatory systems to promote and support innovation in the agrifood sector is fundamental to achieving the development and use of innovative agricultural technologies and practices and the objectives of competitiveness and economic growth, with social integration, in each of our countries.
9. The use of science-based technical regulations and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, while not unduly restricting national and international trade, is key to enabling countries to benefit from innovative agricultural technologies.
10. The regional, hemispheric and global initiatives with respect to innovation are an excellent complement to the efforts that each of our countries is deploying and will therefore be the priority areas for joint action.

11. The support of regional and international bodies for technical cooperation and agrifood development funding is essential to achieve the common objectives that the countries have established for strengthening national innovation systems, built on different types of cooperation.
12. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) serves a leadership role in supporting innovation for the competitive and sustainable development of the agrifood sector in the Americas and for improving rural life through the provision of technical cooperation, the dissemination and leveraging of its specialized knowledge and its networks of experts, implementing projects, and working with its Member States.

For these reasons, we urge:

13. The Member States, the international funding and cooperation agencies, and public and private sector organizations, to strengthen the institutional frameworks and increase investment and financing of agrifood innovation systems in a sustainable and predictable manner, with measurable results.
14. The international organizations which operate within the hemisphere, the national agencies for international cooperation, the national governments, the research centres and regional agrifood research and innovation mechanisms, to cooperate mutually on behalf of the countries and to develop a regional strategy to promote innovation, transfer and access to these technologies.

We commit to:

15. Promoting, with the assistance of the public and private sector, a greater role for research and the development and transfer of knowledge for the agrifood sector in national innovation systems, as well as the access to technology and capacity building for small scale producers.

16. Adopting public innovation policies in the agrifood sector, strengthening the creation and improvement of public and private organizations with responsibility in this area and encouraging their effective and committed participation.
17. Developing national strategies for the development, dissemination and use of innovation, including agrobiotechnology, nanotechnology and information and communication technologies, in accordance with the policies of each country, that support and guide all efforts geared at improving competitiveness of the agrifood sector value chain, preserving natural resources and promoting social integration, value added at country of origin and the full development of its productive capacity.
18. Promoting innovations by strengthening science-based risk assessments, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical regulations as key elements for allowing countries to benefit from better access to markets of agri-food products.
19. Establishing favorable conditions and mechanisms for promoting a culture of innovation based on strategic alliances for collaborative work among public and private organizations, at both national and international levels, in order to develop, transfer and implement innovative practices and technologies, oriented towards agricultural productivity and sustainability of the agrifood sector.
20. Strengthening the monitoring and early-warning systems on food security and improve the availability of timely and reliable market information to foster market transparency and identify commercial opportunities for agrifood products.
21. Supporting the work of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA) to promote greater collaboration between the Member States on innovative means to collect, process, analyse and disseminate information relative to markets and agrifood commodities fostering greater market transparency and efficiencies.

22. Promoting sustainable direct investment in the generation of new knowledge and the strengthening of extension systems to ensure its transmission through innovative methodologies.
23. Supporting technological and institutional innovations that: (i) facilitate greater integration of the agrifood sector – including small scale producers–in the value chains, (ii) strengthen the links between the traditional agrifood sectors with the “intensive knowledge” sectors, (iii) strengthen the technological base to undertake competitive activities, and (iv) facilitate rural social integration.
24. Fostering innovation, including land and water management technologies, biotechnology and all other factors that contribute to the resilience of agrifood production systems in the face of adverse climate events.
25. Stimulating innovation in different types of agroenergy that contribute to the diversification of the energy matrix and the reduction of negative environmental impacts.
26. Promoting innovation in climate risk management and fostering national, regional and hemispheric initiatives as well as facilitating the identification and dissemination of best practices that reduce the vulnerability of the agrifood sector and of the rural milieu.
27. Investing in the improvement of appropriate capacities and skills of our human resources to foster research and innovation as well as promote agrifood entrepreneurship.
28. Continuing support of IICA in its capacity of working jointly with member countries, to help foster innovation in the agrifood sector consistent with this Declaration.

Signed in the City of San Jose, Costa Rica, on the twenty-first day of October, two thousand and eleven.