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INTERVENTION BY THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)

(Beverly Best, Director of External & Institutional Relations)

With an acknowledgement of the protocols already established, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) extends its warm compliments to the OAS for hosting today's meeting, and acknowledges the leadership role and interventions of all other delegates who are participating in this meeting.

At the outset IICA takes this opportunity to underscore its unwavering commitment to join forces with other delegates and partners to strengthen cooperation to address the plethora of challenges which we face today; particularly those related to 5 priority thematic areas.

In light of IICA's work on the implementation of the IX Summit mandates, I will now provide a brief summary of the progress and achievements made to date. It is important to highlight that these achievements have been realized in collaboration with more than 150 international, regional and national partners.

Sustainable and Green Future

Firstly, under our sustainable and green future, IICA implemented approximately 40 initiatives related to achieving a more sustainable, climate-resilient and low-carbon agricultural sector.

In this regard, in association with the *Sustainable and Green Future Declaration of the Ninth Summit of the Americas*, IICA played a key role in providing a space for the member countries to position the positive role of their agriculture sector in the fight against climate change at COP27. IICA's international agenda also focused on *strengthening the resilience of agrifood systems and the strategic role of the agricultural activities of the Americas in the post-COVID 19 socio-economic recovery*.

Some other important initiatives that IICA undertook with counterparts include:

- a) Supporting the advancement in the Americas of the United States and United Arab Emirates *AIM Climate Initiative*.
- b) The Institute also collaborated with the World Food Prize Foundation through the Borlaug Dialogue to develop a series of technical and policy events to share knowledge for regenerative agriculture, agritech and digital solutions and carbon markets for farmers.
- c) Advanced the *Living Soils of the Americas* initiative, led by the *Ohio State University Carbon Sequestration Center and IICA*, provides the tools to assess and enhance the environmental services that agriculture provides through improved soil management.

- d) Recently, together with the IDB, ECLAC, the World Bank and CAF, IICA launched the *Water and Agriculture Initiative*, which also received strong support at the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2023.
- e) The first multi-country AgReady project of the *Green Climate Fund and CARICOM* enabled 700 technicians, scientists and farmers to be trained to raise the profile of the agricultural sector in climate finance processes. In 2023, the project "*Comprehensive Action for Climate Change Initiative*" was launched with USAID to facilitate processes towards carbon neutrality in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Health and Resilience

Under health and resilience, IICA has implemented more than 74 initiatives related to SDG 3/Sustainable Development Goal 3.

In keeping with the SIRG mandate to position the positive role of agriculture in Member States in the face of global challenges, IICA recently held the *Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas* in May 2023, which included a Forum on Agricultural Health of Agrifood Systems, where experiences were exchanged and the concept of "*One Health*" was agreed upon to optimize and balance animal, plant, human and environmental health. *The Continental Alliance for Food Security and Sustainable Development* received strong support from the Ministers of Agriculture as a platform for collective action to demonstrate the capabilities of the Americas to feed the world.

The Institute was instrumental in *strengthening surveillance systems and preserving the health status* of countries concerned about safer trade, working on norms for dairy products, health and safety standards, CODEX and antimicrobial resistance. Similarly, IICA addressed emerging agricultural threats in a timely manner, such as African swine fever, Fusarium in bananas, avian influenza and varroa destructor in beekeeping, tomato moth, fruit flies etc. among others.

Digital Transformation

Under digital transformation we have undertaken more than a dozen initiatives related to promoting the digitization of agrifood systems and reducing the digital divide in rural territories at the regional and national level. Some of the main achievements are as follows:

- a) The hosting of the two Digital Agriculture Week in 2022 and 2023 respectively which contributed to knowledge sharing among participants and through our social networks. It is important to highlight that these events had strong participation from the private sector and Multilateral Banking entities.
- b) Based on the Digital Agriculture Weeks, we have the consolidation of a network of Agtechs, with 30 leading entrepreneurs from 12 countries of the Americas. This network facilitates the development of policy proposals and the development of digital solutions for agriculture in the region. <https://iica.int/en/press/news/fostering-growth-agtechs-and-facilitating-public-private-linkages-will-enable>
- c) Improved capacities of young people from rural communities in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic in resilient agriculture, entrepreneurship and digital agriculture through the scaling up of the Rural Leaders School Initiative. Implementing a pilot plan with 100 producers to promote the adoption of a precision production model in Panama which led to increased profitability and reduced greenhouse gas emissions of mechanized rice producers.
- d) Undertook a survey and analysis of public policies for promoting the development and adoption of digital technologies in six countries of the Americas. In this regard, IICA now has

a dialogue room (within the framework of OPSAa) - Observatory of Public Policies for Agrifood Systems - for the presentation of the policies surveyed and the exchange of experiences among the relevant stakeholders: There is free access to member states and partners of this facility. <https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/21300>

- e) Also IICA collaborated with the World Bank, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), and the companies Bayer, Microsoft and Syngenta in a study that produced a report entitled "[Rural connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: status, challenges and actions for digitization and sustainable development](#)".

There are several other results at the country level which have been detailed in the written report. More details on IICA's projects and achievements are available in real time at: <https://iica.int/en>

Finally, we at IICA wish to express our gratitude and our continued support, through our operations to enhance transformation of agrifood systems of the Americas so that we successfully achieve human ends for all the people of the Americas as outlined in the priority areas of focus.