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PRESENTATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA) ON REGIONAL THEMATIC PRIORITIES

(Alfredo Valerio, Information Systems Specialist)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our Director General, Mr. Manuel Otero, sends his sincere apologies for being unable to personally participate in this important SIRG meeting, since he is currently on an official mission in Honduras.

In the Americas, agriculture and food systems play a fundamental role in addressing pressing challenges like food insecurity, poverty, the effects of climate change, and social instability. As the region combats these multifaceted issues, it is becoming increasingly clear that an approach that integrates agriculture, food systems, and action against climate change is essential.

With the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the collaboration of other international agencies, the ministries and departments of agriculture in the Americas have been setting up a process to reach consensus on positions and define joint actions that will foster the transition of the agrifood systems in the Americas.

Namely, the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development in the Americas seeks to increase productivity through science and care for the environment, and focuses on fostering collective action among the countries of the region to promote and implement a new generation of policies and to strengthen capacities so as to facilitate the development of more resilient, inclusive, sustainable, profitable and competitive agriculture sectors and agrifood systems.

Notably, the collective action strategy will require countries to work together to craft solutions to shared problems, by building on their national capacities; improving regional positioning; coordinating efforts with public sector, private sector, and civil society stakeholders; and scaling up the available resources.

The approach adopted for this collective action is based on three fundamental strategic principles:

1. The first is that agriculture, due to its weight in the national economies and its significant contribution to trade and global food security, must necessarily be part of the solution;

2. Second, farmers are central stakeholders in the changes to be made, since no one can contribute to more sustainable and resilient resource management like they can;
3. And lastly, science and technology, which are the major transformative tools of our time and form the basis for solutions and evidence-based decision-making.

Accordingly, we ask the member countries to make AGRICULTURE an important component of the topics to be addressed at the next Summit of the Americas. While there are many issues to be covered, we consider the following three to be of great significance: food security, climate change, and the bioeconomy.

Digital agriculture, innovation, international and regional trade, climate finance, One Health as a strategy for agricultural health in agrifood systems, rural family farming and rural development; and gender and youth are also extremely relevant subjects involved in making the agrifood systems in the Americas more sustainable, resilient, and productive.

Thank you very much.