



AFRICA-AMERICAS MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS

*"BUILDING BRIDGES FOR COOPERATION ON AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS
TRANSFORMATION"*



SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS

SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA,
JULY 28, 2022

1. BACKGROUND

Within the framework of South-South cooperation, leaders from Africa and the Americas have been making joint efforts to align their priorities in accordance with the ecological, cultural, and historical similarities between the two continents and with the common challenges related to agri-food systems.

In different dialogues initiated in 2019 prior to the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNSCF), Africa and the Americas drafted and ratified a Common Position in each continent, under the leadership of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD, www.nepad.org) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, www.iica.int), respectively.

On January 18, 2022, the First High-Level Round Table meeting between Africa and the Americas, was held virtually and convened jointly by IICA and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA, www.agra.org), where the latter functioned in its capacity as the technical body that provides support to AUDA-NEPAD.

This first meeting made it possible to recognize that both continents share the common goal of feeding the world and promoting global environmental sustainability and highlighted the need to develop a joint agenda of cooperation.

During this round table event, the participants proposed to hold a Ministerial Summit in the second half of 2022, in which the ministers of agriculture and other actors in the sector, from both continents, will analyze the global agenda for the transformation of agri-food systems, with the participation of high-level specialists who also had wide international recognition.

In keeping with this commitment, and with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA, the first Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems was held on 27-29 July 2022 at IICA headquarters in Costa Rica, under the theme "Building Bridges for Cooperation in the Transformation of Agri-Food Systems".

The purpose of this Summit was to identify areas where the two continents can work together, especially those where opportunities for cooperation could be most profitable; as well as the operational and financial mechanisms necessary to mobilize the required resources. The dialogues focused on the following thematic areas: (i) science, technology and innovation; (ii) climate change and resilience; (iii) opportunities in digital agriculture; (iv) institutional and policy innovations; (v) international and regional food trade; and (vi) the transformation of post-CFSA agri-food systems; among other issues considered indispensable to increase productivity, inclusion and sustainability of agri-food systems.

This first Summit between the African and American continents had more than 181 participants, including Ministers, Vice Ministers, and high authorities of agriculture and environment from forty countries; as well as representatives of international organizations and institutions, the private sector and academia. (Annex 1)

Of note is the participation of international specialists whose presentations provided context for the summit's deliberations: Dr. Joachim von Braun, Director of the Center for Development Research and Distinguished Professor of Economic and Technological Change at the University of Bonn, Germany; Dr. Oseyemi Olurotimi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Dr. Rattan Lal, Director of the Center for Carbon Management and Sequestration at The Ohio State University, USA; Dr. Michael Kremer, Nobel Prize in Economics 2019; Dr. Ousmane Badiane, Executive Chairman of AKADEMIYA 2063; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO); Dr Gloria Abraham, Chair of the WTO Negotiating Group on Agriculture; H.E. Rafael Hipólito Mejía Domínguez, Former President of the Dominican Republic; and Dr. Eugenio Díaz-Bonilla, Senior Visiting Researcher of the IICA/IFPRI Program.

Also noteworthy is the presence of the First Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica, H. E. Stephan Brunner Neibig; the Administrator of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Mr. Daniel Whitley; the Director of CAADP AUDA-NEPAD, Dr. Martin Bwalya; the Senior Advisor in Agricultural Development of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Rubén Echeverría; and IICA's Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit, H.E. Keithlin Caroo; as well as Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Executive Director of AUDA-NEPAD; Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA, H.E. Josefa Leonel Sacko, Commissioner of AUC-ARDBE and Dr. Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA, co-hosts of the Summit.

To fully reflect the richness and importance of the deliberations that took place during the event, press releases were prepared that include the interventions of the participants, which are included in this report (Annex 2).

Undoubtedly, the expectations around the Summit were more than met, achieving the following objectives:

- **UNDERSTANDING** the role that Africa and the Americas can play in shaping global food and environmental security in the future.

- **ESTABLISHMENT** of opportunities for cooperation in science, technology, and innovation, for the achievement of resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.

- **MUTUAL LEARNING** on the institutional and policy innovations needed to drive the transformation of the agri-food sector.

- **IDENTIFICATION** of challenges related to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience; as well as the issues of convergence between both regions towards COP27:

- **COMMITMENT** to promote the digital transformation of agriculture through appropriate public policies and the construction of alliances with different national and international actors to that end.

- **ANALYSIS** of innovations in institutions and public policies necessary for the transformation of agri-food systems.

- **SHARED VISION** on the situation and prospects of global agri-food trade and on opportunities to strengthen participation in international agri-food markets and bi-regional trade.

- **CONSENSUS** on the need for joint work to position agriculture in post-CFSA processes and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes, in particular at COP27.

The ideas developed and shared by the participants in this first intercontinental Summit of Agriculture and Agri-Food Systems are contained in this communiqué.

2. Communiqué

Ministers and high-level officials of agriculture of the countries of Africa and the Americas, as well as the continental organizations such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), were in attendance at the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agri-food Systems held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from July 27 to 29, 2022 to the issues highlighted in this joint communiqué:

A VISION ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

1. The international community is suffering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unstable situation in Eastern Europe. As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues to unfold, global food security is deteriorating.
2. The war has destabilized world commodity markets and global trade flows, leading to an increase in global food and input prices, which were already high in most countries of the two continents.
3. In addition, climate change continues to affect the productive capacity and resilience of the agricultural and livestock sectors, with negative impacts on the creation of employment; particularly for women and youth.
4. Within this complex situation, countries of Africa and the Americas can play a key role in ensuring global food security, environmental sustainability, and resilient livelihoods, given their wealth of natural resources, biodiversity and the opportunities afforded by their diverse agriculture.
5. Many of the challenges and opportunities for the agricultural systems of these two continents are common, so their agricultural systems and households face many similar issues. Hence, the resolution to build bridges for cooperation to transform agri-food systems in both continents, based on a shared vision and the development of a solid cooperation agenda, as well as an understanding about forms of land tenure in the countries and population size.
6. Cooperation between the two continents, under the leadership of AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA, will be fundamental to achieving the objectives on the following issues:

A. "SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION"

7. For most countries in Africa and the Americas, the agri-food sector is very relevant to their economies, as it provides strategic income through exports and job creation, which is essential to fight poverty and exclusion, considering that in rural areas these problems are more widespread.
8. The countries of Africa and the Americas agree that science is fundamental to the transformation of resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, and only through harnessing the potential of science, technology, and innovation (STI), will they be able to overcome the challenges of food insecurity and environmental sustainability.
9. Both continents share a wealth of biodiversity and natural resources, as well as situations of vulnerability and challenges, which open innumerable opportunities to share knowledge, experiences, and good practices, within the framework of a vision of transformation of agri-food systems.
10. It is necessary to integrate the objectives of productivity, efficiency, sustainability, resilience, nutrition, and inclusion, considering synergies and trade-offs, among these dimensions, in order to better exploit the potential for economic and social growth, that is in sync with environmental and climate change issues. All of this is part of a circular bioeconomy, where sustainability must include reduction of carbon emissions, water security and other activities, including bioeconomy and its importance to food security.
11. It is urgent to overcome the constraints faced by the low levels of investment affecting most national systems, both in Africa and the Americas, and to ensure greater commitment by both public and private sector investments to STI.
12. There are specific areas for cooperation, such as those linked to soil health, crop, and animal productivity, increasing availability and access to nutritious food and healthy diets, low-carbon agriculture, digital agriculture, and biotechnology, bio-inputs and gene editing, as cross-cutting platforms to address critical issues such as drought and heat tolerance, pests and diseases resistance, and improvements in the nutritional quality of food.
13. Multilateral, bilateral, and triangular cooperation between the countries of Africa and the Americas, as well as the strengthening of existing collaboration spaces, specifically the adaptation of Brazil's low carbon emissions model, are key to increasing their capacities and capabilities in innovation, science and technology. Initiatives such as the creation of a network of Bio-inputs or a Hub for Innovation, can contribute to unconventional thinking guided by science, technology, and innovation.

B. “CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE”

14. Climate change affects economic, social, and political conditions in many countries across the two continents, which, in turn, increases poverty, malnutrition, poor health, mortality, and forced migration and displacement of populations, particularly those that are most vulnerable, marginalized, and underrepresented.
15. The adaptation of agriculture to climate change in Africa and the Americas – two regions with a wealth of natural resources that comprise a wide range of climates, biomes, soils, and human capital – has the capacity to play a leading role in mitigating the global climate change impact.
16. The adoption of “no regrets” and nature-based solutions (NBS) by our farmers is crucial to improve the resilience and productivity of agri-food systems.
17. Actions should consider evidence-based practices and adoption of a soil-driven approach, in areas such as ecosystem-based adaptation, soil restoration, intensification of land use, reduction of land degradation, improvement of soil carbon sequestration and soil health through the adoption of best management practices (BMPs), training of farmers (especially youth and women) in the implementation of BMPs, mapping of agroeconomic practices, and the strengthening of new public policies and effective governance.
18. International partnerships and initiatives such as “Living Soils of the Americas” and the “Coalition of Action for Soil Health” are crucial to create conditions that are conducive to agri-food systems transformation, through people focused solutions.
19. The vulnerability of several countries in Africa and the Americas to more frequent extreme weather events, such as droughts or hurricanes, requires specific cooperation actions, particularly in risk management and in addressing the challenges of food insecurity related to increased imports of basic food commodities.

C. “OPPORTUNITIES IN DIGITAL AGRICULTURE”

20. Digital solutions for agriculture can contribute substantially to increasing production and resilience, improving food security, addressing climate change, minimizing impacts on the environment, and generating inclusion and development opportunities for people. Thus, digital solutions are indispensable to face the problems and challenges of the agri-food systems of Africa and the Americas. But they must be embraced in an inclusive and equitable manner.

21. The process of digital transformation of agriculture offers opportunities for development and employment to young people and to make rural areas more attractive. In turn, young people have more ability to handle technologies and can, therefore, accelerate the digitalization process.
22. Most of the elements that are needed for digitization are not fully developed in either LAC or Africa. There are large gaps and limitations for the advancement of digital transformation. It highlights the need for training skills or capabilities, as well as overcoming challenges related to the development of software solutions and digital infrastructure.
23. There are opportunities for collaboration between countries to share information and experiences to drive the digitalization of agriculture, particularly in rural areas with small-scale producers, for improved products and services, providing solutions to support increased productivity to develop resilient, strong, and inclusive economies.
24. Utilization of smart phones serves as an important tool to detect, track, and overcome threats on agriculture, for information sharing and providing support to farmers, to implement best practices and monitor the status of planting, harvesting and markets, among others.
25. Digital solutions can create real conditions to provide equal opportunities, helping farmers to increase their productivity and their integration into value chains and markets. These potential benefits can become threats if access to technologies and the capabilities to use the technologies are limited and uneven. Access to digital technologies needs to be democratized.

D. "INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY INNOVATIONS"

26. The transformation of agri-food systems also requires innovation in policy and institutional design and implementation, as well as continental development frameworks such as the agenda 2063, agenda 2030 and the CAADP-Malabo Declaration. The harmonious development of the sector demands: (a) agricultural policies for primary producers, classifiable into subsistence, intermediate/family and commercial producers; (b) rural/territorial development policies, taking into account geographical space; (c) policies for value chains, covering production inputs and services, as well as processing, transport, distribution and marketing; (d) policies for the consumers and the food environments in which they operate; and (e) policies for the agri-food system as a whole.
27. There are areas in which to exchange experience and knowledge, such as: social protection measures based on cash transfers for poverty alleviation while linked to the financing of productive activities, the additional costs of implementing sustainable adaptation and

mitigation technologies and the payment of environmental services; interventions focused on women or youth; measures for climate-smart agriculture including irrigation and soil management; different approaches to reduce food insecurity, improve nutrition and health; management of food losses and waste; and other related areas.

- 28.** These policies must be implemented by different public and private actors within existing institutional frameworks, which, in turn, need development and innovations to facilitate the implementation of programs to transform agri-food systems.
- 29.** Institutional innovations that address the complex agenda of the agri-food sector in developing countries must include mechanisms for intersectoral operational coordination, with annual programs and objectives, linked to the preparation and execution of budgets.
- 30.** Investments and financing are required to create environmentally sustainable agri-food systems that generate decent income and jobs, and provide healthy diets, while being resilient to shocks.
- 31.** The support of international funds is key to development and must be used more strategically. Also, governments' budgets (expenditures and taxes) must be analyzed and reoriented for the transformation of innovative food systems. Constraints on banking systems and capital markets to finance such transformation must be eliminated.

E. "INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FOOD TRADE"

- 32.** Agri-food trade in the Americas and Africa plays a key role in regional and global food and nutrition security, in all its dimensions, availability, access, utilization and stability of food. Strengthening this role requires countries to take steps to facilitate trade, improve market access, and ensure transparent, fluid, undistorted, science-based trade.
- 33.** To enhance the benefits of international trade in agri-food products, it is important to continue to participate actively in trade negotiations both in the multilateral trading system and at the regional level, which promote rules-based, open, transparent, fairer, and non-discriminatory trade; and contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and food security in member states.
- 34.** Dialogue between the two regions and South-South cooperation should be promoted to strengthen the implementation of the commitments of the current trade agreements, to improve their use and to adopt actions that promote the equitable inclusion of the different actors, with special attention to MSMEs, small and medium producers, so that they can be better linked to regional and global value chains.

35. Efforts should be made to promote intraregional and interregional trade, addressing key issues such as trade facilitation, improvements in supply chains and logistics, transport, as well as strengthening regulatory cooperation.

F. “ADVANCING THE TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS POST UNFSS”

36. The operation of food systems is directly related to the achievement of a high percentage of the 17 SDGs that require, in addition to a variety of policies and institutional issues, to articulate different individual interventions in comprehensive national plans that lead to real improvements for people and the planet.
37. The SDGs define the overall framework, but a more detailed and quantitative specification is needed in relation to food systems. These definitions make it possible to analyze the complementarity, but also the contradictions that may exist between objectives. Comprehensive programs need to determine and structure institutional and operational capacities to implement required activities and monitor and evaluate progress.
38. It is necessary to define components of these comprehensive plans, including the policies and investments, the required technologies, and the macroeconomic and trade frameworks, along with laws, regulations, and other interventions necessary to achieve the transformation.
39. Each comprehensive program or plan requires an estimate of the costs of the activities and interventions needed and the identification and mobilization of the financial resources required to implement national programs, whether they come from international development funds, or from the financial resources available in public budgets and in banking systems and capital markets.
40. The countries of Africa and the Americas participate in two global processes: on the one hand, there are the “national pathways” agreed at the UNSFS; on the other, there are the formal climate change negotiations, within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which lead to the definition of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). These two processes require coordination mechanisms at the national level that integrate both types of programs, so that policies, investments, technologies, institutional aspects, and financing are adequately articulated.

G. WAY FORWARD

41. Africa and Americas have had positive exchanges, which should serve as the foundation for mutual learning and cooperation in the future, especially with a view to improving agri-food systems; translating science into action; implementing public policies that benefit farmers, nature, and agriculture; and involving the private sector. Furthermore, increasing access to technology and improving investment in agricultural research and development are key to guiding the transformation of agri-food systems.
42. Work together to position agriculture in post-UNFSS processes and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes; particularly, at COP27.
43. Request the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA to explore and put in place a mechanism of mutual interest which also involves the national Ministers on how to foster and get action on agreed issues including continental collaborations.
44. Take forward the recommendations from this Summit for further deliberations at the AGRF 2022 Summit in September in Rwanda and the African Union (AU)- Specialized Technical Committees (STCs).

San José, Costa Rica, July 28, 2022

3. Acknowledgements

The organizing institutions and participants express their gratitude to the institutions, organizations, and companies whose sponsorship supported the celebration of this Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems. These sponsors include Bayer, CAF, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the World Bank Group, as well as Turvisa. They recognize all of them as strategic partners for the consolidation of an alliance for global food security and sustainable development.

They also thank Clarín Rural, El Tiempo, Jamaica Observer, El Observador, Guyana Chronicle, as well as all the media that have covered this momentous Summit. Their work and partnership facilitated the promotion and the sharing of the Summit results with the global community.

Annex 1

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INSTITUTIONS

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27	West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF)	Abdou Tenkouano	Executive Director	



AFRICA-AMERICAS MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS

 27 AL 29 DE JULIO DE 2022 EN SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



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Press releases on the
Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit
on Agri-food Systems

July 19-29, 2022

Ministers of Africa and the Americas hold first summit to enhance cooperation on agrifood issues

The meeting, to be held on 27, 28 and 29 July in Costa Rica, will outline the role of Africa and the Americas in global food and environmental security. It will provide opportunities for bi-regional cooperation in science, technology and innovation, with a view to building resilient and sustainable food systems.



San Jose / Nairobi, 19 July 2022 (IICA/AGRA/AUDA-NEPAD) - Ministers of Agriculture, national senior officials in the fields of environment, science and technology, heads of international organizations and private sector representatives will meet this month during the first Summit of Africa and the Americas, which will seek to enhance cooperation between the two continents on Agrifood Systems amid global threats to food security.

The high-level meeting “Building Bridges for Cooperation in Agrifood System Transformation” will take place at the headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 27 to 29 July.

The Summit is being organized by IICA, the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and AGRA, who agree that both continents face common challenges in advancing agrifood system transformation and will benefit from sharing of experiences to foster collaboration within the framework of South-South Cooperation.

Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA; Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA; and Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Executive Director of AUDA-NEPAD, will open the ministerial meeting on July 27.

The Summit will take place at a time when a partnership between Africa and the Americas is more important than ever: the Russia Ukraine Conflict has destabilized world commodity markets and global trade flows, leading to an increase in global food and input prices.

The Conflict has also negatively impacted recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in many countries in Africa and the Americas, where food security has worsened and is expected to continue deteriorating.

The hybrid Summit is the most important event within the framework of joint efforts between leaders of Africa and the Americas to align their priorities based on productive, environmental, cultural and historical similarities and common challenges with respect to agrifood systems.

At the Summit, ministers and officials will identify areas of joint work and cooperation between the two regions, as well as the operational and financial mechanisms required to mobilize the necessary resources to increase the productivity, inclusion, and sustainability of agrifood systems. They will focus on five key areas: Science, technology and innovation, including biotechnology

- Climate change and resilience
- Digital agriculture
- Institutional innovations and policies for social inclusion, safety nets, health and nutrition, and the recovery of degraded natural resources
- Fostering a fairer and more transparent international food trade system

About IICA

IICA is the specialized agency for agriculture in the Inter-American system, with a mission to encourage, promote and support its 34 Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through international technical cooperation of excellence.

About AGRA

Founded in 2006, AGRA, is an African-led African-based organization that seeks to catalyze Agriculture Transformation in Africa. AGRA is focused on putting smallholder farmers at the center of the continent's growing economy by transforming agriculture from a solitary struggle to survive into farming as a business that thrives. As the sector that employs the majority of Africa's people, nearly half of them small-scale farmers, AGRA recognizes that developing smallholder agriculture into a productive, efficient, and sustainable

system is essential to ensuring food security, lifting millions out of poverty, and driving equitable growth across the continent. www.agra.org.

About AUDA-NEPAD

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD is the technical body of the African Union. The core mandate of the AUDA-NEPAD is to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of regional and continental priority programmes and projects and to push for partnerships, resource mobilisation, research and knowledge management. Through AUDA-NEPAD African countries are provided unique opportunities to take full control of their development agenda, to work more closely together, and to cooperate more effectively with international partners. www.nepad.org

The President of AGRA informed IICA's Executive Committee that the Americas and Africa are working together to produce more and better-quality food

Next week, Agnes Kalibata, former Minister of Agriculture of Rwanda and President of AGRA, will be taking part in the first Summit of Africa and the Americas on Agrifood Systems, the objective of which is to strengthen cooperation between the two continents in the face of the global threats to food security.



San Jose, 21 July 2022 (IICA) – The President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Agnes Kalibata, told senior officials from more than 20 countries in the Americas that the two continents are working together to “produce more and better-quality food” at a time when the global situation poses a threat to food security.

Kalibata, former Minister of Agriculture of Rwanda and the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, addressed the ministers, secretaries, and other representatives of more than 20 countries in the Americas taking part in this year’s meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), in Costa Rica.

Next week, the head of AGRA will also participate in the first Summit of Africa and the Americas on Agrifood Systems, the aim of which is to strengthen cooperation between the two continents in the face of the global threats to food security.

The forum is being organized by IICA, the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Alliance

for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The partners are convinced that the two continents face similar challenges in achieving agrifood system transformation and will benefit from the deepening of discussions and the sharing of experiences designed to foster mutual collaboration within the framework of South-South Cooperation.

The ministerial meeting will be inaugurated on 27 July by the President of AGRA, the Director General of IICA, Manuel Otero, and the Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD, Nardos Bekele-Thomas.

“In January of this year, the agriculture ministers of Africa and the Americas agreed to work together. We agreed to share ideas about nutrition, people’s health needs, and the need to produce more and better-quality food. After that meeting, it was proposed that a Ministerial Summit be held to make further headway with food assistance. The summit will take place 27-29 July in Costa Rica. IICA, AGRA, and the African Union Development Agency are working together to support our member states, to get the most out of this Summit,” the former minister remarked.

“I know that in recent times the countries of the Americas have faced similar challenges to the African countries. Amidst the challenges, African scientists have made great strides in developing high-yielding, highly nutritious, drought-tolerant crop varieties. We have also seen scientists from the Americas make great strides in productivity,” she added. “Given the progress made and the challenges posed by climate change, we will only achieve sustainability and success more quickly by identifying and building on our different strengths. I therefore ask you to join me in developing stronger food systems for people, the planet and prosperity,” Kalibata urged.

The Africa-Americas Summit will be taking place at a time when the war in Eastern Europe has destabilized world commodity markets and global trade flows, triggering surges in the prices of food and raw materials around the world. The situation in Eastern Europe is also negatively impacting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and the Americas, where food security has worsened in many countries and is expected to continue deteriorating.

The face-to-face meeting, which will also include contributions from online participants, will be the most important event to be held so far as part of the joint efforts that leaders in Africa and the Americas have been making to align their priorities based on productive, environmental, cultural, and historical similarities and shared challenges related to agrifood systems.

The Summit is expected to provide a clear understanding of the role that Africa and the Americas can play in shaping future global food and environmental security; and open up opportunities for cooperation in the areas of science, technology, and innovation, with a view to building sustainable and resilient agricultural systems. The Summit will be used to identify areas of joint work between the two regions and specific topics for cooperation, as well as the operational and financial mechanisms required to mobilize the necessary resources.

The ministers and officials taking part will focus on five cross-cutting issues that are regarded as key to increasing the productivity, inclusiveness, and sustainability of agrifood systems:

- Science, technology, and innovation, including biotechnology
- Climate change and resilience
- Digital agriculture
- Institutional innovations and policies for social inclusion, safety nets, health and nutrition, and the recovery of degraded natural resources
- Fostering of a fairer and more transparent international food trade system



Director General of IICA highlights opportunities for cooperation between Africa and the Americas in facing global food security challenges

The first Summit of Africa and the Americas on Agrifood Systems will seek to enhance bi-regional cooperation amid global threats to food security. The forum is being organized by IICA, the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).



Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA.

San Jose, 26 July 2022 (IICA) - Ahead of the first Summit on Agrifood Systems, to be attended by ministers of Africa and the Americas next week in Costa Rica, the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Manuel Otero, underscored the joint responsibility of the two continents in addressing global food security challenges, and highlighted opportunities for collaboration.

The first Summit of Africa and the Americas on Agrifood Systems will seek to enhance bi-regional cooperation amid global threats to food security. The forum is being organized by IICA, the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

The three organizations agree that both continents face common challenges in advancing towards agrifood system transformation and will therefore benefit from more intensive discussions and sharing of experiences to foster collaboration within the framework of South-South Cooperation.

“The two continents have several things in common: tropical agriculture, an incredible wealth of biological resources, good practices to share, and, above all, tremendous responsibilities in overcoming the challenge of global food insecurity”, said Otero in his welcome message to the delegations that will soon arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica, to participate in the Summit.

“In this challenging context, the Americas and Africa are two key continents for guaranteeing global food security and environmental sustainability given their abundant natural resources, biodiversity and opportunities based on tropical agriculture.

The ability to adequately respond to this challenge will depend on rapprochement and dialogue, which must involve governments”, added Otero, who also noted that “the meeting of ministers expresses IICA’s conviction to serve as an institution that builds bridges and looks outward to the world from the Americas”.

Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA; Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA; and Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Executive Director of AUDA-NEPAD, will open the ministerial meeting on July 27.

The Africa-Americas Summit will take place at a time when the war in Eastern Europe has destabilized world commodity markets and global trade flows, leading to an increase in global food and input prices.

The war in Eastern Europe has also negatively impacted recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in many countries of Africa and the Americas, where food security has worsened and is expected to continue deteriorating.

The face-to-face meeting, which will be attended virtually by some participants, will be the most important event within the framework of joint efforts between leaders of Africa and the Americas to align their priorities based on productive, environmental, cultural and historical similarities and common challenges with respect to agrifood systems.

The Summit is expected to shed light on the role that Africa and the Americas can play in shaping global food and environmental security in the future, as well as open up opportunities for cooperation in the areas of science, technology and innovation with a view to building resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.

At the Summit, ministers and officials will identify areas of joint work and cooperation between the two regions, as well as the operational and financial mechanisms required to mobilize the necessary resources. In this regard, they will focus on five key areas, which are crucial to increase the productivity, inclusivity and sustainability of agrifood systems:

- Science, technology and innovation, including biotechnology
- Climate change and resilience
- Digital agriculture
- Institutional innovations and policies for social inclusion, safety nets, health and nutrition, and the recovery of degraded natural resources
- Fostering a fairer and more transparent international food trade system



Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit will strengthen cooperation amid threats to food security

The institutions and the entities involved in the organization of the Summit agree that both continents face common challenges and that the promotion of mutual collaboration and the exchange of experiences will accelerate positive transformations in their agri-food systems, making them more productive, sustainable and resilient.



San José, 26 July 2022 (IICA) - Ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment, and Science and Technology from some 40 countries will meet as of this Wednesday in Costa Rica for the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems”, in which multilateral credit, cooperation and private sector organizations will also participate, in an attempt to lay the foundations for greater collaboration between the two continents in the face of threats to global food security.

The Summit is organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and has the support of Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, World Bank Group, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The institutions and the entities involved in the organization of the Summit agree that both continents face common challenges and that the promotion

of mutual collaboration and the exchange of experiences will accelerate positive transformations in their agri-food systems, making them more productive, sustainable and resilient.

The ministerial meeting will feature opening remarks by Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA; Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA; and Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD, in a session that will also be attended by the Vice-President of Costa Rica, Stephan Brunner Neibig.

“Both continents have many things in common, including tropical agriculture, an immense wealth of biological resources, good practices and, above all, the enormous responsibility of facing the challenges of food insecurity in the world; they play a crucial role in this context. Responding properly to this challenge requires joint efforts, dialogue, and this must include the governments”, the Director General of IICA said of the Summit.

“We will explore practical options to generate South-South and international cooperation between the countries of Africa and the Americas in terms of rural transformation and agri-food systems,” added Otero.

Kalibata, former Minister of Agriculture of Rwanda and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, said of the meeting that “in January of this year, the ministers of agriculture from Africa and the Americas agreed to work together. We agreed to share ideas about nutrition, people’s health needs, and the need to produce more and better food. The proposal for a Ministerial Summit was one of the outcomes of this meeting”.

She then added “I know that, until recently, the countries of the Americas had similar challenges to the ones faced by the countries of Africa. Amid these challenges, African scientists have made great strides in developing high-yielding, nutritious, drought-tolerant crop varieties. We have also seen great scientific progress in the Americas in terms of productivity. Given these developments and the challenges of climate change, we will only achieve sustainability and success faster by identifying and amplifying our different strengths.”

A robust agenda to promote cooperation

The opening ceremony will be followed by exhibitions and discussions on the transformation of agri-food systems, with the participation of ministers and senior officials from some 40 countries, as well as:

The Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala;

The 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics, Michael Kremer;

Ohio State University Professor Rattan Lal, 2020 World Food Prize Laureate

and the world's top authority on soil sciences;

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development of the African Union, Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko;

The Head of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Martin Bwalya;

The Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Yemi Akinbamij;

The Senior Advisor in Agricultural Development of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rubén Echeverría;

Ambassador of Costa Rica to the WTO, former Minister of Agriculture and President of the Agricultural Negotiations Committee, Gloria Abraham Peralta;

The Director of the Center for Development Research (ZEF), Professor of Economics and Technological Change at the University of Bonn and President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Joachim Von Braun.

In addition to bringing together high-level officials and experienced scientists, the Summit will feature the active participation of representatives from the private sector and international organizations, who will discuss topics such as Science, Technology and Innovation; Climate Change and Resilience; Opportunities in Digital Agriculture; Innovative Public Policies; and International and Regional Food Trade.

Executives and representatives of organizations such as Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, Microsoft, Rabobank and Syngenta, all entities that supported the organization of the meeting together with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), will also participate in the discussions.

Clarín Rural from Argentina, El Tiempo from Colombia, The Jamaica Observer, El Observador from Uruguay and the Guyana Chronicle will be the Summit's media partners.

After the deliberations that will conclude on Thursday, the participants will participate in field visits in Costa Rica organized by the IICA Delegation in this Central American country. During these visits, they will learn about successful experiences in sustainable agriculture carried out by small-sized farmers that use good practices and technological advances to increase productivity and quality, both in the agricultural and livestock sectors.

The visits include tours of ICAFE, the governing body for Costa Rican coffee; the National University in Heredia; the company that produces and exports Tomatisimo, a hydroponic tomato; and dairy companies. The goal of these visits is for participants to learn about the implementation and benefits of agrosilvopastoral systems.

Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit shines the spotlight on cooperation and sustainable agricultural productivity to tackle hunger and malnutrition and foster agrifood systems transformation

The Summit, which seeks to foster the sharing of experiences to accelerate positive transformations in agrifood systems, was convened and organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the African Union Development Agency -New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU-DA-NEPAD) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) at a particularly momentous point in time, when global food security is being threatened by a war and overlapping health and environmental crises.



The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Environmental Sustainability of the African Union Commission, Josefa Leonel Sacko; the Vice President of Costa Rica, Stephan Brunner Neibig; the Director General of IICA, Manuel Otero; and the IICA Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit and IICA Goodwill Ambassador on Sustainable Development Issues, Keithlin Caroo.

San Jose, 27 July 2022 (IICA) - Ministers, deputy ministers and high-ranking officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from some 40 countries officially opened the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agrifood Systems” in Costa Rica, with a view to strengthening bi-regional cooperation to face global food security challenges and strengthen the role of both continents in terms of productivity.

The Summit, which seeks to foster the sharing of experiences to accelerate positive transformations in agrifood systems, was convened and organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Afri-

ca's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) at a particularly momentous point in time, when global food security is being threatened by a war and overlapping health and environmental crises.

"The global agrifood system will face very specific challenges in the coming decades. The first one will be to feed nearly 9.5 billion people in 2050; the second one is to maintain and protect the natural resources on which agricultural and fishing production is based, including biodiversity; the third, to face climate change with mitigation and adaptation measures in addition to the changes that are already inevitably emerging", said Stephan Brunner, Vice President of Costa Rica, one of the speakers who gave opening remarks at the meeting.

The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Environmental Sustainability of the African Union Commission, Josefa Leonel Sacko; the President of AGRA, Agnes Kalibata; the Executive Director of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Nardos Bekele-Thomas; the IICA Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit and IICA Goodwill Ambassador on Sustainable Development Issues, Keithlin Caroo; and the Director General of IICA, Manuel Otero, were also speakers at the opening ceremony of the Summit.

"This Summit is happening at an opportune time, when the world is facing increases in food prices that particularly affect poor and developing countries. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were already disruptions in supply chains", said Josefa Leonel Sacko.

"If we want to put an end to hunger –she added–, and comply with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda, we are moving in the wrong direction. It is urgent to deal with malnutrition and hunger in Africa; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, the situation is not very different. We have young populations, and a partnership between the two continents is more important now than ever before, because we face the common challenge of building more sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems".



The Ambassador to the Summit, Keithlin Caroo, said that “we are sending out a powerful message of union and integration of two continents that are fundamentally young”.

She went on to say that “transformation is impossible without inclusion, and this Summit is about building bridges. We must develop and consolidate South-South Cooperation on a number of issues, such as climate change and disruptions to international trade. The challenges are common but so are the solutions, and it is about time we share them”.

For her part, Bekele-Thomas focused on the shared commitments that the two continents have as a global community and pointed out that the current crisis scenario has amplified the seriousness of the lack of action.

“We must dedicate our energy to high-impact issues in the different communities. Both in Africa and in Latin America, deficiencies in infrastructure are major challenges and we need to strengthen the institutional framework. We know what the challenges and the opportunities are”, she explained.

Agnes Kalibata stated that Africa and the Americas have taken steps forward to transform their agrifood systems, and considered it very encouraging that both continents have reached a common position.

“We face great challenges, such as the pandemic, the financial crisis, and climate change. Food insecurity is growing everywhere. The question is how we face these challenges to obtain positive results. We have found a key partner in IICA. There’s a lot we can learn”, she remarked.

The Director General of IICA pointed out that Africa and the Americas are two continents that need each other.

“The crisis is very serious, and we cannot afford to leave anyone behind. The Americas produce one out of every three tons of food traded in the world. Africa is very powerful. We must remain united based on the many things we have in common. It is our duty to play a decisive role in the areas of food, environmental and energy security. We cannot shy away from that leading role”, said Otero.

“This is a historic meeting in which we must continue to reinforce cultural ties to strengthen agrifood systems. The time is now, because time is running out. This Summit must be a turning point”, he concluded.

Multilateral credit, cooperation and private sector organizations are also participating in the meeting.

The Summit also has the support of Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, World Bank Group, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Africa and the Americas must promote a joint agenda that recognizes their importance for global food security, stated scientist Joachim von Braun

Von Braun stressed that it is essential that the countries of the two regions increase their investment in research, considering that science and technology are key to achieving a more productive and resilient agriculture sector while protecting natural resources.



This was stated by scientist Joachim von Braun, Director of the Center for Development Research and Professor of Economics and Technological Change at the University of Bonn, and one of the featured speakers at the Africa-America Ministerial Summit on Agrifood Systems, which is taking place in San Jose, Costa Rica.

San Jose, 28 July 2022 (IICA) - Africa and the Americas must have a clear understanding of the role that the two continents can play in sustaining food and environmental security in the world. This is why they must unite and develop a joint vision on the transformation of agrifood systems as the only way to ensure that developed countries consider the south of the planet in accordance with its potential, its challenges and the size of its population.

This was stated by scientist Joachim von Braun, Director of the Center for Development Research and Professor of Economics and Technological Change at the University of Bonn, and one of the featured speakers at the Africa-America Ministerial Summit on Agrifood Systems, which is taking place in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Von Braun pointed out that the main lines of action of the two continents should include efforts to set an agenda that reflects their interests, the exchange of

knowledge and experiences in science and innovation, unity in fostering reliable international food trade and the responsible use of natural resources, with an emphasis on the protection of the forests of the Amazon and the Congo.

“We need to change the way we see the world. Africa and the Americas can complement each other and have much to learn from one another. We are dealing with a multidimensional crisis, and transforming agrifood systems in the midst of a crisis is a difficult undertaking”, said von Braun, who, in 2021, spearheaded the scientific group that brought together nearly 50 experts for the UN Food Systems Summit.



Ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from some 40 countries are participating in the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agrifood Systems, with the aim of strengthening bi-regional cooperation to face the challenges of global food security

and strengthen the role of both continents in terms of productivity.

Von Braun stressed that it is essential that the countries of the two regions increase their investment in research, considering that science and technology are the key to achieving a more productive and resilient agriculture sector while protecting natural resources.

In this sense, he explained that in Africa 0.3% of GDP is allocated to science whereas this percentage is 0.7% in Latin America. “At least 1% must be reached on both continents”, he considered.

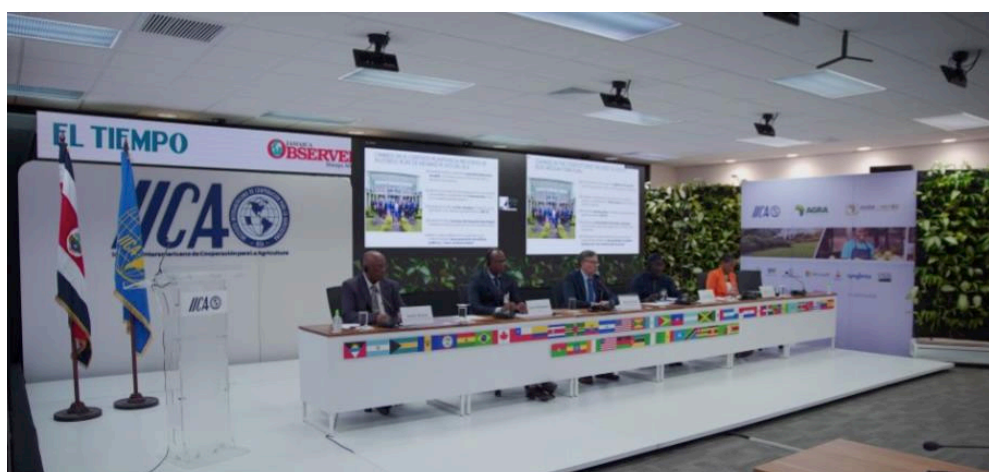
For von Braun, some of the specific fields to target are: minimizing risks in agriculture and strengthening resilience, in particular regarding extreme weather events; promoting innovations to achieve more productive soils; caring for the land, the water, the agricultural genetic base and biodiversity; and promoting the bioeconomy as a way to facilitate the health of production systems and ecological well-being.

“We need to ask ourselves”, he stated, “in what direction we should go to produce in a sustainable and resilient manner while protecting the environment. This requires a larger transformation than the one we have engaged in so far, in order to build capacities, develop a financing agenda, promote fair trade in food exchange and serve the planet and the people in a responsible way”, he added.

Von Braun summarized the six main points that should be included in a joint Africa-Americas agenda: sustainable growth in agricultural production; climate resilience (including the protection of soils, ecosystems, water and forests); healthy diets and food safety; open, trustworthy and rules-based trade; funding for transformation; and science and innovation related to all of the above.

Africa-Americas initiative for the transformation of Agri-Food Systems must be based on political agreements, say three specialized organizations from both continents

The institutions agreed that these continents can learn from each other but that immediate agreements are needed because the time has come for concrete action



Martin Bwalya, Head of the Centers of Excellence of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD); Jean Jacques Muhinda, Eastern Regional Head of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); Manuel Otero, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); and the IICA Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit and IICA Goodwill Ambassador on Sustainable Development Issues, Keithlin Caroo.

San José, 27 July 2022 (IICA). The implementation of the Africa-Americas Initiative for the transformation of Agri-food systems must be based on firm political commitments that bring together, in practice, the common agricultural characteristics of both continents, stated the representatives of international organizations who participated in the first summit of the top agricultural authorities of these two regions.

The Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems took place in San José, Costa Rica, from July 27-29.

Manuel Otero, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Martin Bwalya, Head of the Centers of Excellence of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and Jean Jacques Muhinda, Eastern Regional Head of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), agreed that these continents can learn from each other but that immediate agreements are needed because the time has come for concrete action.

"There is a culture that unites us and only a little more than 3,000 kilometers of Atlantic Ocean between Brazil and Senegal. There are many opportunities for knowledge exchange but little room for maneuver, because the challenges are becoming more and more relevant", said Otero.

"From a technical perspective, it is already feasible for Africa and the Americas to work together to achieve the transformation of agri-food systems; however, in practice, there are many political and institutional challenges. This initiative is not only about the Summit; what matters is what happens after it. The idea is to recognize who should be responsible for the different actions", said Martin Bwalya of AUDA-NEPAD.

Addressing the ministers, deputy ministers and agricultural authorities of some 40 countries participating in the meeting, Bwalya said: "We need to recognize and involve the ministers in this transformation and define what our value proposition is in order to advance in the transformation of agri-food systems in Africa and the Americas, with an emphasis on countries and teamwork".

Jean Jacques Muhinda, from AGRA, said that the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems is only the starting point of a long-term alliance that will strengthen South-South cooperation between the two regions. "It is the beginning of a journey with concrete steps; an example is the next African Green Revolution Forum, in which six or seven Latin American Ministers of Agriculture will participate with the support of IICA", Muhinda said.

The Director General of IICA explained that the organization's Executive Committee, during its most recent session this month, urged the agricultural community to use a science-based approach to promote this transformation while paying special attention to farmers.

"Food security is at the top of the global agenda. At this time, agriculture is seen differently in society, and the bioeconomy has helped us as a bridge between production and the environment. Climate action is fundamental; from now on, agriculture can only be seen as sustainable", added Otero.

The Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems has the support of Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, the World Bank Group, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Americas can help Africa become the world's food basket, said scientist Rattan Lal at a summit that brings together ministers from the two continents

Since December 2020, Dr. Lal and IICA have obtained positive results in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean through the "Living Soils of the Americas" initiative, which has coordinated public and private efforts in combating soil degradation, a phenomenon that threatens food production and security.



Scientist Rattan Lal, co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize, winner of the World Food Prize and IICA Goodwill Ambassador, participated in the panel "Climate Change and Resilience" at the Summit.

San Jose, 28 July 2022 (IICA) - Africa has the ability and resources to become the world's food basket, and the American continent can help it to achieve this, said award-winning scientist Rattan Lal at the first Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems in Costa Rica, which brings together ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from 40 countries.

Lal, considered the world's leading authority on soil sciences, gave a detailed overview of the main obstacles facing agricultural production in Africa and said that, despite the problems, the African savannahs can be transformed into a great source of food, as the Brazilian ones have been, if scientific knowledge is transformed into action.

The scientist, co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize, World Food Prize winner and IICA Goodwill Ambassador, participated in the panel “Climate Change and Resilience” at the Summit together with the Ministers of Agriculture of Nigeria, Mohammed Mahmood Abubakar; of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saboto Caesar; of Somalia, Said Husseinm lid; of Uganda, Rwamirama Bright Kanyontore; and the Deputy Minister of Costa Rica, Rocío Valerio Rodríguez.

“A green revolution in Africa must be based on science and on the soil. People are a reflection of the soil in which they live. When the soil is degraded, people suffer. At the same time, if people do not have a good quality of life, the soil deteriorates. This is a vicious circle that never ends”, said the scientist, Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center (C-MASC), at The Ohio State University.

Since December 2020, Dr. Lal and IICA have obtained positive results in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean through the “Living Soils of the Americas” initiative, which has coordinated public and private efforts in combating soil degradation, a phenomenon that threatens food production and security.

The specialist considered that the work carried out by his team together with IICA could be of great use to the African continent: “It would be a privilege to be able to help together with IICA. Africa and South America were united millions of years ago and were later separated by geological movements, but today we can create a bridge and work together to implement a plan that increases their food production and, at the same time, contributes Among the problems facing agriculture in Africa, Lal said that the main one is drought. He also mentioned land degradation, increasing urbanization and climate change.

Dr. Lal stated that small-scale farmers should be paid for the services they provide to the entire planet by carrying out good practices on their land, which in turn favor carbon sequestration in the soil and contribute to the global fight against climate change.

“Everyone says that producers should be rewarded, but nobody rewards them. They need resources to take care of the soil”, he explained. And he added that the private sector can play a very important role in providing the technology that producers need to carry out conservation and regenerative practices.

Regarding urbanization, Lal said that the population of the major cities in Africa is growing 10 to 12 times in 30 to 40 years.

“By 2100”, he stated, “the largest city in the world will be Lagos, Nigeria, with 85 million people. You have to think that a city of 30 million requires 200 tons of food per day, so urban planners have to take into account that 20% of agriculture must be done within the city limits, with more hydroponics and backyard crops”.

“If Africa has the political will to do it, together with IICA we can help. But there must be a timeline to reach these goals. Africa must be part of the solution”, concluded Lal.

Afterwards, Mohammed Mahmood Abubakar, Minister of Agriculture of Nigeria, pointed out that his country is promoting technologies for innovation in agricultural activity. “We seek to develop climate-smart agriculture, improve productivity, strengthen key crop value chains and increase resilience”, he said.

Rocío Valerio Rodríguez, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, said that the Americas and Africa are “two continents with many things in common, which we must use in our favor. This Summit is being held in post-pandemic times and with a military conflict that has disrupted world markets and trade flows. Food insecurity is affecting an increasing number of people”.

Said Husseinm lid, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation of Somalia, considered that “famine is a man-made disaster, especially in Africa. Africa is a very rich continent and can feed its population, but we face different problems for political and economic reasons. Africa can have a good relationship with the Americas that will bring many benefits”.

Meanwhile, the Ugandan minister Bright Kanyontore recognized that “there are numerous opportunities for cooperation with a positive impact on the environment, for instance by reducing the use of pesticides and favoring good agricultural practices with production efficiency. Uganda has sought cooperation, which has given us the opportunity to be more resilient. In conclusion, continental organizations such as AGRA contribute to exploring investment opportunities in areas of science, technology and innovation”.

Collaboration in science, technology and innovation must be at the center of Africa-Americas cooperation to leverage sustainable development

These conclusions were highlighted at the round table on Science, Technology and Innovation that was part of the first day of the “Africa-Americas Summit on Agri-food Systems”, a meeting that brings together ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from 40 countries.



The Minister of Agriculture of Ethiopia, Oumer Hussien Oba; the Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) of Livestock of Honduras, José Ángel Acosta; Cleber Oliveira Soares, Secretary of Innovation, Sustainable Development and Irrigation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply of Brazil; the Minister of Agriculture of Burkina Faso, Delwendé Innocent Kiba; Oseyemi Olurotimi Akinbami, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); and the IICA Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit and IICA Goodwill Ambassador on Sustainable Development Issues, Keithlin Caroo.

San José, 28 July 2022 (IICA) – Collaboration in science, technology and innovation must be at the center of a strengthened cooperation between Africa and the Americas in order to realize the potential of both continents, reinforce their role as guarantors of global food and nutritional security, and create a level-playing field for productive, sustainable and inclusive agricultural sectors that contribute to the sustainable development of both regions.

These conclusions were highlighted at the round table on Science, Technology and Innovation that was part of the first day of the “Africa-Americas Summit on Agri-food Systems”, a meeting that brings together ministers, deputy

ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from 40 countries with the aim of strengthening bi-regional cooperation to face the challenges of global food security and reinforce the role of both continents in terms of productivity.

Participating in the discussion panel were Cleber Oliveira Soares, Secretary of Innovation, Sustainable Development and Irrigation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply of Brazil; Oseyemi Olurotimi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); the Minister of Agriculture of Ethiopia, Oumer Hussien Oba; the Minister of Agriculture of Burkina Faso, Delwendé Innocent Kiba; and the Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) of Livestock of Honduras, José Ángel Acosta.

“Brazil today is a world agricultural power thanks to the investment we have made in science, technology and innovation. The Ministry of Agriculture guides its strategies by anticipating the future of agriculture, of Brazilian agriculture, and in order to cooperate on issues of contemporary agriculture with the Americas, Africa and other continents. Nine plant species are the food base of this planet and are produced in countries with a temperate climate. For this reason, tropical climate countries have an immense opportunity,” Soares said, in a presentation long-awaited by African countries, which see Brazil as a major partner for the development of their tropical agriculture.

“We are here to share our vision, to work together on a low-carbon, bio-inputs agenda, with an African and Latin American network to lower costs for producers. With an innovation hub for both our continents”, he added.

Oseyemi Olurotimi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), indicated that “the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the importance of science, technology and innovation for the well-being of the global population. Progress in this field is necessary not only to recover from this crisis and for future crises, but also to face other global challenges such as poverty, malnutrition, disease, food insecurity, inequality, climate change and many other issues”.

He then added: “It is my expectation that this Summit will provide a comprehensive overview of the potential for science and cooperation in priority areas for agri-food systems, and will help identify the institutional policies and regulations needed to promote science, technology and innovation to improve agri-food systems and create platforms that facilitate research”.

In his presentation, Akinbamijo also underscored that “both continents comprise a group of developing countries that belong to the periphery, which share similar situations of vulnerability and comparable challenges. Both regions have struggled against colonialism and have fought for their independence; both have been dependent and have had asymmetrical relations with industrialized countries. These two regions have experienced the economic damage caused by structural adjustment programs, and they share a great variety of natural resources, biodiversity and opportunities for tropical agriculture. Both

continents have a primary role in guaranteeing food security, environmental sustainability and resilience. However, despite these opportunities, both continents are sadly described as having the most undernourished, food insecure and discriminated populations.”

After identifying these similarities, he added that “the priority areas for the application of science, technology and innovation must include crops, livestock and the current productivity of agriculture, administration efficiency and the management of precision and digital agriculture”.

For his part, the Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture stated that “we want to benefit from technology and cooperation opportunities. Ethiopia has been engaged in the transformation of low productivity agriculture systems into more efficient and commercial enterprises, with a view to improving our economic situation. We have a large number of national programs, such as the green energy program, designed to face the current environmental problems and implement efforts to mechanize our coffee production, which is our top product, “our green gold” as we call it.

Along the same lines, Oba expressed that “we must take into account, above all, the possibility of sharing experiences. We must take action quickly and change the scenario, and that is why we are requesting action and collaboration for the good of our people, and to obtain concrete results”.

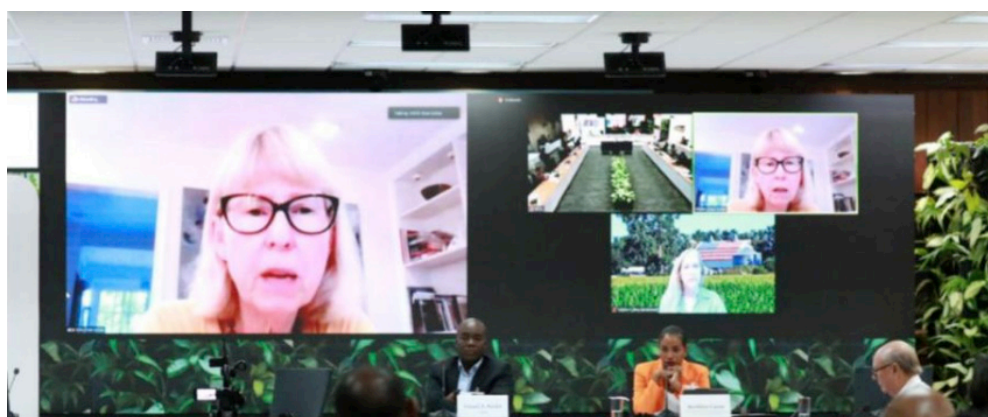
Minister Kiba, from Burkina Faso, underscored the importance and the needs of small-sized farmers and emphasized the relevance of taking action to distribute agricultural inputs and equipment “so that producers can benefit effectively and contribute to achieving food and nutritional security”.

At his turn, the representative of the Government of Honduras, the Deputy Minister of Livestock José Ángel Acosta, indicated that “we are building an agri-food policy that not only ensures food security, but also guarantees that those who have been historically excluded can access food as a human right. The Honduran government works on four pillars of production: Food security, Zero hunger, Affordable food and Increased agricultural exports. If agricultural technological innovation does not reach the poor, there can be no fair policy to ensure food for all”.

In addition to senior officials from some 40 countries, multilateral credit, cooperation and private sector organizations are also participating in the Summit. The meeting has the support of Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, World Bank Group, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

At the Africa-Americas Summit, the United States highlights increased agricultural productivity as an essential tool to reduce poverty

The data indicate that, in developing countries, productivity growth has slowed down in most regions over the past 20 years



Elise Golan, Director of Sustainable Development at the Office of the Chief Economist of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), at the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems”, which is taking place in Costa Rica.

San José, 28 July 2022 (IICA) – The time has come to focus the world’s efforts on increasing agricultural productivity in order to produce more with less.

This was the key message of Elise Golan, Director of Sustainable Development at the Office of the Chief Economist of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), at the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems”, which is taking place in Costa Rica.

Golan presented the Sustainable Productivity Growth Coalition (SPGC) to ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology from 40 countries present at the headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) or connected via videoconference.

The Coalition was launched in 2021 during the UN Food Systems Summit, with the aim of accelerating the transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems through increased production that optimizes agricultural sustainability in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

“Agriculture is facing critical challenges, which have been exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the impact of climate change,” said Golan, who argued that agricultural productivity growth is a very powerful machine for alleviating food insecurity and poverty. “Continuing to improve agricultural productivity is imperative,” she noted.

However, the expert warned that agricultural productivity growth is not the same as production growth. In this sense, she explained that productivity measures the use of inputs, and so increasing productivity means producing the same amount or more food with less use of water, labor and the usual resources. “This includes all types of inputs and of course natural resources,” she warned.

“This is why we say that the time has come to focus our efforts on increasing agricultural productivity,” she added.

The coalition was founded under the premise that increasing agricultural productivity is a critical issue in meeting global challenges, and efforts must be made to accelerate it.

However, the data indicate that, in developing countries, productivity growth has slowed down in most regions over the past 20 years. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean has shown the most significant deceleration, followed by Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural productivity was already low in the 2000s and fell even further in the following decade.

The consequences of the decrease in agricultural productivity include: an increase in food prices; more food insecurity and hunger; higher levels of poverty; greater use of natural resources; and more greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate change.

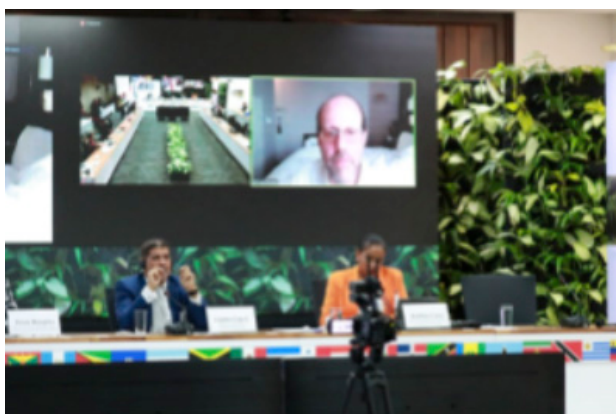
For this reason, the Coalition takes a holistic approach to agricultural productivity that considers the impacts of and interrelationships between multiple aspects, including food security, nutrition, farmers’ income, the well-being of rural communities, equity and inclusion, food waste, biodiversity conservation, use of resources and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Cathy McKinnell, Senior Policy Advisor for the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, added that productivity growth is key for humanity to achieve six of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land).

The Coalition has 100 members, including 20 countries representing all regions of the world, as well as universities, research institutions, foundations, and private industry companies.

IICA is one of its members, along with countries from the Americas and Africa, including Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, Ghana, Liberia and Mauritania.

Nobel prize winner Michael Kremer at Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit: The path for rural areas to overcome poverty is through digital agriculture



This was the key message of Michael Kremer, who was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 2019, to the ministers, deputy ministers, and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology of 40 countries at the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems”, held in Costa Rica.

Michael Kremer delivered his message via videoconference in a panel that also included, among other authorities, the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, Limber Cruz. The forum was moderated by Keithlin Caroo, IICA Special Ambassador for the Africa-Americas Summit.

San Jose, 28 July 2022 (IICA) – Family farmers in Africa and the Americas can obtain fast, effective solutions to their most serious problems through digital agriculture, using smartphones as a tool for knowledge transfer.

This was the key message of Michael Kremer, who was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 2019, to the ministers, deputy ministers, and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment and Science and Technology of 40 countries at the first “Africa-Americas Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems”, held in Costa Rica.

Kremer was the keynote speaker at the session entitled “Opportunities in Digital Agriculture”, in which Limber Cruz, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic; Davis Marapira of Zimbabwe; and Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Trinidad and Tobago, also participated. Mohammed Silim Nahdy, Executive Director of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), also took part in the roundtable discussion.

“Often, farmers live in remote areas and lack information about new technologies. But digital agriculture has the potential to promote mass access to information by rural populations, who can quickly incorporate the new knowledge into their daily tasks with huge potential benefits, as has already been



demonstrated in different countries”, explained Kremer, who is internationally renowned for his studies on alleviating global poverty and is IICA Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Development.

“Once the system of digital agriculture has been set in motion, the cost of adding new members is extremely low, so it is a focus that can expand rapidly”, explained the expert, who used Ethiopia as an example, where farmers use an interactive voice response system to receive personalized, automated messages with

useful weather-related information to help manage their crops.

Kremer also referred to India and its program to analyze soil chemistry and health to provide smallholders with basic information on improving specific agricultural practices based on the conditions specific to each area. Kenya is another country that sends useful information to farmers to help determine when it is best to harvest.

Kremer believes that digital agriculture is an example of innovation that offers solutions to the challenges of climate change, which are affecting agricultural productivity in many developing countries. The expert added that governments must be mindful of this reality.

Kremer is co-founder of Precision Development (PxD), an organization that introduced digital agriculture services to family farmers in Asia and Africa to provide technical assistance and rural extension, both key for the weakest link in the agriculture sector to improve yield and increase income.

PxD has partnered with IICA to bring digital extension services that allow for low-cost, high-impact, two-way communication capable of empowering farmers in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in a joint effort to provide small-scale farmers with tools to produce more and better foods in a framework of sustainability and efficient use of natural resources.

Brazil is the first country to benefit from this initiative, with an initial focus on providing remote assistance to thousands of smallholders in the country’s northeastern region who raise ovine and caprine animals and cultivate corn and beans.

“There is growing evidence that family farmers can reduce their fertilizer spend if they have the information they need to carry out targeted nutrient management. Soil-related audio content is easy to make and easy to understand”, affirmed Kremer, who is also a professor at the University of Chicago.

In the current scenario of crises overlapped with the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Eastern Europe and the impact of climate change, Kremer believes that much can be done if more farmers have access to connectivity and smartphones.

“We have more opportunities to integrate digital agriculture with other services. Digital agricultural extension can integrate with improved weather forecasting services that can help farmers to make important decisions about when to plant, when to harvest and even what to plant”, stated Kremer.

“As weather patterns change as a result of climate change, digitalization can help farmers to adapt and to share information”, he added.

Dominican minister Limber Cruz expressed that “those of us responsible for implementing public policies for historically disadvantaged populations face enormous challenges that cannot be overlooked. It is essential to democratize access to information technologies and knowledge so that their benefits reach the hands of our real producers. This implies access to broadband in rural territories, as well as a profound transformation in knowledge management processes that would allow access to research and knowledge through a user-friendly communication process”.

Cruz regrets that “this conversation was not had before”, adding that, “the future will depend on how we execute everything we have discussed in order to monitor, evaluate and take seriously the opportunities that are at our disposal to move forward with digital agriculture, meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, in turn, help those who lack access to food on a daily basis”.

In turn, Mohammed Silim Nahdy spotlighted the low productivity of the agriculture sector in Africa. “Almost 70% of inhabitants live off of and depend on agriculture and almost 60% of the land is arable. 70% of the population is young and, as such, digitization is a good opportunity to attract them to farming”, he commented.

Rural well-being depends on institutional modernization and functioning, warned experts at the Africa-Americas Summit

This was one of the conclusions of the debate on institutional aspects and policy innovations that took place at the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems, a meeting that brought together ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment, and Science and Technology from 40 countries.



Jeanine Milly Cooper, Minister of Agriculture of Liberia, Ousmane Badiane, Executive President of Akademiya 2063 and Director for Africa of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Indar A. Weir, Minister of Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security of Barbados; Lloyd Day, Deputy Director General of IICA; and Keithlin Caroo, IICA Special Ambassador for the Africa-Americas Summit.

San Jose, 29 July 2022 (IICA) - Institutional innovations and the replication of successful models that have been used in other regions are decisive tools for countries to modernize their food production and improve the quality of life of their vulnerable populations.

This was one of the conclusions of the debate on institutional aspects and policy innovations that took place at the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems, a meeting that brings together ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of Agriculture, Environment, and Science and Technology from 40 countries, with the aim of strengthening cooperation ties between the two continents.

The discussion featured a presentation by Ousmane Badiane, Executive President of Akademiya 2063 and Director for Africa of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Also participating in this discussion were Indar A. Weir, Minister of Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security of Barbados; Jeanine Milly Cooper, Minister of Agriculture of Liberia; and Charlot Bredy, Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development of Haiti.

Ousmane Badiane presented the work of the Malabo Montpellier Panel, an international group of agricultural experts that collaborates on policy choices with the aim of accelerating progress towards food and nutrition security in Africa.

“Policy changes can be gradual and at the same time transformative if they really promote innovation. We believe that positive changes occur when there are incentives, spaces to innovate, opportunities for dialogue, and when examples and good practices are shared”, said Badiane.

He added that in the last 20 years Africa has experienced rapid growth in the agriculture sector, which marks a big difference from previous times. In the last 20 years, the countries invested 90% more in agriculture than in the 1990s and the GDP increased by 63%. Poverty has decreased by 40% and malnutrition has also declined.

“There are positive things that are taking place throughout the continent and these changes show us that we can be successful. Examples can be replicated elsewhere and scaled up as well. We want to recover what was lost. And we also know that progress is not evenly distributed. Some countries do things better than others. The idea is to replicate successful initiatives and exchange experiences to be ready to innovate”, he added.

Generating employment and protecting natural resources

“The World Bank is committed to fostering South-South Cooperation to build resilient agriculture in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean”, said Anna Wallenstein, Director of Sustainable Development for Latin America of the World Bank Group. “We wish to contribute to an economy that creates jobs while protecting natural resources. To this end, it is essential that the latest innovations reach family farmers, who must learn from each other”, she added.

“The importance of agricultural insurance must be recognized in order to protect the work of producers”, said Minister Weir, who emphasized the need to strengthen adaptation to climate change in countries to build trust among investors.

Haitian Minister Charlot Bredy said that in this Caribbean country, the use of technology in agriculture is still very low. “However, we have made progress thanks to IICA, and for five years now we have incorporated traceability, particularly in mango cultivation, to fight against fruit flies, even in small-scale enterprises”.

“Haitian agriculture is basically family-based, with farms of less than one hectare. Family farming, despite its vulnerability, is very resilient”, said Bredy, who underscored that Haiti has been under the constant threat of food insecurity for five years.

Jeanine Milly Cooper, Minister of Agriculture of Liberia, described the investments that have been made in agriculture in this African country, which focus on resilience and climate-smart production.

“Liberia”, she pointed out, “is a country with high forest cover, which reaches almost 50% of the territory. We have used this to develop solutions related to climate change in conjunction with the agricultural sector”.

Eliminating obstacles to agricultural trade is “vital” to guarantee global food security, warns WTO Director General at Africa-Americas Summit

Summit participants agreed that the war has worsened the distortions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and added to the impact of extreme climate phenomena that have affected farming in various regions of the world.



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

San Jose, 29 July 2022 (IICA) – The current situation of concurrent crises threatening global food security make it all the more necessary to guarantee smooth and predictable international food trade, stated international ministers and experts at the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems.

At the roundtable “International and Regional Food Trade”, the emphasis was placed on how the conflict in Eastern Europe, with the disruptions it is causing in the markets, has led to food price increases that affect the most vulnerable populations, and also has repercussions for energy prices and fertilizer supply.

The war, they agreed, has worsened distortions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and added to the impact of extreme climate phenomena that have affected farming in various regions of the world.

The discussion was opened with a presentation by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and included a presen-

tation by Ambassador Gloria Abraham, chair of the WTO Agriculture Negotiating Group. Also present were Ariel Martínez, Undersecretary for Political Coordination of the Minist

Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina; Reuben Mtolo Phiri, Minister of Agriculture of Zambia; Adelardus Kilangi, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania in Brazil; Pearnel Charles Jr., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, and John Bosco Kalisa, Executive Director of the East African Business Council (EABC).

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala described food trade as “vital”.

“Food trade is vital, as the ministers at the ministerial conference in Geneva recently acknowledged, and it is a key part of our efforts to improve food and nutritional security, and support employment and income. It can contribute to a more sustainable and efficient use of scarce global resources and can help build the foundations of strong, inclusive and resilient prosperity in the future”, said the Director General of the WTO, who referred to the impact on countries that import grains from Russia and Ukraine, and also the difficulty in obtaining fertilizers.

“Given the current situation, countries have made a commitment at the WTO to continue working so that food products can move more easily and to protect the most vulnerable countries”, she said.

“Low-income food-importing countries face serious risks of starvation, particularly countries that are highly dependent on food imports from Russia and Ukraine. For instance, 35 African countries import wheat and 22 import fertilizers from the Black Sea region. The World Economic Forum reports that wealthy Nigerian households spend about 56% of their income on food and that the average household in Kenya spends 47%, while in the USA the figure is below 10%”, she added.

The WTO Director General also referred to restrictions on imports.

“We have to avoid what happened in the previous food price crisis between 2008 and 2009, and again a few years later, when export restrictions exacerbated price increases. Since then, many have been eliminated, but 25 countries still have approximately 40 measures in force. These are positive advances, but the prohibitions and restrictions continue to be excessive in number and we have to work hard to reduce them”, she said.

The Summit brings together at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in San Jose, Costa Rica, ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials in Agriculture, the Environment, and Science and Technology from some 40 countries. The aim of the meeting is

to broaden bi-regional cooperation to address the challenges to global food security and strengthen the role of both continents in terms of productivity.

Gloria Abraham stated that better multilateral trade rules are needed. The former agriculture minister of Costa Rica considered that the recent Ministerial Summit of the WTO was a success, especially in terms of food and agriculture.

“It is important to resume negotiations quickly. We cannot forget the past, and in the present we have to put into practice what has been agreed. Current times, with Covid-19 and the wars, oblige us to change the ways in which we provide assistance”, she said.

“The conflicts have underscored the need for a resilient, robust agricultural system. There is much to be done in terms of import restrictions, above all with the impact of the war in Europe, with special attention for countries that are net importers of foods”, she concluded.

Common challenges

Ariel Martínez focused on the challenges that countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa have in common. “We are all suffering the onslaught of climate change without being the main culprits, we have poor populations and we are suppliers of foods”, he said.

He considered that the two continents complement each other and stated that IICA can play a very important role in drawing up a shared, concrete agenda between the two continents.

Minister Parnell Charles Jr. of Jamaica said that his country is dependent on food imports. “Other countries continue to impose tariff barriers and this hinders food trade”, he lamented. “These measures have a negative effect on the resilient production of foods and the agriculture of our countries”.

“Inter-regional African trade is only 15%. There are barriers that prevent us from growing and reaching the levels of East Asia, which is 40%. We would like to reach that percentage”, said John Bosco of the EABC.

Bosco also referred to the use of phytosanitary measures as an excuse for preventing or hindering trade, which jeopardizes global food security.

Ministers and experts taking part in Africa-Americas Summit are agreed that agriculture is an essential activity with enormous potential to contribute to the global fight against climate change

The Africa-Americas Summit aims to lay the groundwork for greater collaboration between the two continents in the face of the threats to global food security.



Taking part in the discussions were Hipólito Mejía, former President of the Dominican Republic and IICA Goodwill Ambassador; Eugenio Díaz-Bonilla, Senior Visiting Researcher of the IICA/IFPRI Program; Clarkie Lobin Bazwell Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Water Development of Malawi; Zulfikar Mustapha, Minister of Agriculture of Guyana; Fernando Mattos Costa, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay; and Amadou Balde, Senior Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture of Senegal

San Jose, 01 August 2022 (IICA) – Agriculture is a key sector for both climate change mitigation and adaptation, so it is essential that the countries of Africa and the Americas develop their food production's enormous potential to help prevent global warming.

This was the view expressed by the ministers and specialists from the two continents attending the “Africa-Americas Summit on Agrifood Systems,” which is being held in Costa Rica. Ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials responsible for agriculture, environment and science and technology from some 40 countries are taking part in the activity, which aims to lay the groundwork for greater collaboration between the two continents in the face of the threats to global food security.

Hipólito Mejía, former President of the Dominican Republic and IICA Goodwill Ambassador, and Eugenio Díaz-Bonilla, Senior Visiting Researcher of the IICA/IFPRI Program opened the discussion, which was entitled “Advancing the transformation of food systems in the wake of the 2021 United Nations Summit”.

Others taking part were Clarkie Lobin Bazwell Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development of Malawi; Zulfikar Mustapha, Minister of Agriculture of Guyana and Chair of CARICOM’s Special Ministerial Task Force on Food Production and Food Security; Fernando Mattos Costa, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay; and Amadou Balde, Senior Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture of Senegal.

“Today agriculture is grappling with unfavorable conditions, due to a pandemic that has not yet run its course, made worse by the conflict in Europe. We must think in terms of the risks and opportunities before us. Meeting the challenges means increasing production and productivity per unit area, and ensuring environmental sustainability,” Mejía remarked.

Mejía served as his country’s Minister of Agriculture prior to his election as President of the Dominican Republic. He pointed out that rural areas do not only produce food, but also build the identity and sense of belonging of communities.

“In order to convert challenges into opportunities,” he stressed, “the conditions in each country must be geared to global needs, using local resources to generate exports, harnessing communication technologies to take advantage of the demand for what we can produce, and promoting community participation.”

“Africa and the Americas must set an example to the world of unity and integration at this time of crisis,” he urged.

The need for a plan

Díaz Bonilla stressed the importance of establishing the goals that need to be achieved through the transformation of agri-food systems, including quantitative objectives, in order to then design policy instruments and determine costs and the financing required.

“There are special groups that must be taken into account in the transformation process, such as small farmers, vulnerable groups, women, and youth. Agriculture will have to coordinate closely with health, the environment and agribusiness, work with the private sector, and collaborate effectively with development agencies,” remarked Díaz Bonilla, a professional with more than 40 years’ experience who has worked in a number of countries as an economist and diplomat specializing in development and trade issues.

Díaz Bonilla then pointed out that both Africa and the Americas were heavily dependent on the cycle of raw materials or commodities. “When commodity prices rose, we had growth, and when they fell, we stopped growing,” he acknowledged.

He added that countries were engaged in two different processes as far as agri-food systems were concerned: the national roadmaps that emerged from the 2021 UN Summit and the climate change negotiations. “The agri-food sector is essential for adaptation and resilience, so the two issues cannot be separated,” he remarked.

Minister Mattos said that Latin America and Africa’s enormous potential to increase production was being undermined by higher prices of raw materials, a development that had to be addressed with more research and more science, always with sustainability as a priority.

“More biotechnology and more international cooperation are the way forward. An institution like IICA has a very important role to play, as can be seen from this drawing closer together of two continents that are called upon to be major global food suppliers,” the Uruguayan minister added.

Minister Mustapha of Guyana warned that financing must be available to consolidate the transformation of agri-food systems. “The region still faces enormous challenges where agri-food issues are concerned. They include weak infrastructure, poor financing mechanisms and the existence of various barriers to intra-regional trade,” he suggested.

Malawi’s Minister of Agriculture highlighted the need to involve youth in food production to ensure a transformation of agri-food systems that includes greater sustainability.

“Young people,” he acknowledged, “think we have cast them aside. We have to involve them and, as parents, we must include them, otherwise they will opt for sectors other than agriculture. We must target high-school and university students and get them involved in agriculture.”

Multilateral lenders and private sector ratify partnership and joint work with IICA on food security, sustainability, green infrastructure, trade and integration

The call—conveyed in a joint commitment made at the first ever Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit—included the announcement of work in different areas.



Roberto Vega, Director of the Syngenta Value Chain; Jesús Quintana, Director General of CIAT; Christian Asinelli, Vice President of the Development Bank of Latin America-CAF; Beatriz Arrieta, Regional Food Value Chain Manager of Bayer; Jorge Werthein, Special Advisor to the Director General of IICA; and Keithlin Caroo, IICA Special Ambassador for the Africa-Americas Summit.

San Jose, 01 August 2022 (IICA) – Multilateral lending, cooperation and private sector organizations called for deeper joint work with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with a view to transform the agrifood systems, improving conditions of productivity, sustainability and inclusion in the agriculture sector of the Americas and the world.

The call—conveyed in a joint commitment made at the first ever Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit—included the announcement of work in areas such as regenerative agriculture; food security; digital education and connectivity; training; green financing; and establishing new platforms for sharing knowledge, experiences and ties involving governments and national science, technology and innovation systems.

“If we want to change the reality of 20 million young people who neither work nor study, who live in poverty, the millions who live with food insecurity, we must do so together, not just with ministries, but with multilateral spaces, with the private sector. We’re here to ratify a strategic alliance with IICA and we support all efforts because this is a process and it must be continuous”, expressed Christian Asinelli, Vice President of CAF-Development Bank of Latin America.



Christian Asinelli, vice president of the Development Bank of Latin America-CAF.

In the framework of the first ever Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agriculture, the senior financial executive shared the “Strategic Alliances” panel with representatives from Bayer, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta and the United States Department of Agriculture, all of which supported the three-day summit at IICA’s headquarters in Costa Rica.

“We believe that Latin America and the Caribbean should be protagonists. We want to be the bank for the reactivation of our countries, to be the region’s green bank to accompany the countries in their commitments to turn around and start caring for our common homeland. Our commitment is for 40% of our operations in the coming years to be approved with components relating to sustainability. We must make this commitment with our partners, and our partnership with IICA is key in this regard. We want to work so that our region is relevant in the future, because global problems such as climate change, food insecurity and others cannot be solved without this region”, added Asinelli.



Roberto Vega, Global Head Value Chain at Syngenta,; Jesús Quintana, CIAT General Director; Christian Asinelli, Vice President of the Development Bank of Latin America-CAF; and Beatriz Arrieta, Regional Food Value Chain Manager of Bayer.

Jorge Werthein, Special Advisor to IICA’s Director General, moderated the roundtable in which Beatriz Arrieta, Regional Manager, Food Value Chain at Bayer, summarized the joint work conducted by the company and IICA on topics of soil health, training, plant health and regenerative agriculture, among other key issues.

“We established sustainability objectives that we are able to achieve through our cooperation with IICA. Being part of the partnership with Africa is important for Bayer to make progress in its objectives. We are challenged with feeding the world, which is only possible through collaboration such as this one with IICA, in which we bring new technologies and innovation to farmers. This is our focus and we invest large amounts of resources in giving farmers what they need”, explained Arrieta.

Christian Asinelli, vice-presidente do Banco de Desenvolvimento da América Latina-CAF; Beatriz Arrieta, Gerente Regional da Cadeia de Valor Alimentar da Bayer.



“We work to make IICA projects a reality in the countries and we’re convinced that we can transform agriculture through cooperation. We’re ready to implement new projects in Africa and we need partnerships like those established at this Summit to make progress in our vision to feed the world with healthy, nutritious, quality foods”, she added.

Luciano Braverman, Senior Director of Education for Microsoft Latin America, highlighted the joint work of the global tech giant and IICA gear toward promoting digital connectivity in rural areas and developing digital skills among the rural population.

Recently, in collaboration with Microsoft and with the support of the World Bank, IICA launched the Agroedutec program with the Office of the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers of Argentina and the ministries of Education and Agriculture, which would train 5,000 students in 100 agrotechnical schools across Argentina in digital technologies and their application in agriculture.



Luciano Braverman, Senior Director of Education for Microsoft Latin America

The program was conceived by Microsoft and IICA and considers agrotechnical schools to be strategic pieces in the productive development of rural areas and in creating a sense of belonging in young people to the countryside.

“We ratify the commitment and partnership between Microsoft and IICA, which has been very fruitful. Food security is a hot topic and its connection to the digitization of agriculture makes it an important issue in these discussions. A connected population has more possibilities to generate income and be more productive”, said Braverman.

“Acquiring digital competencies is key to changing the quality of rural life. This is part of our mission. In terms of digital agriculture, here at Microsoft we are facing the challenges of the agriculture of the future. We are facing challenges that require collaboration between the public and private sectors, which is decisive in improving production and income”, he added.



Roberto Vega, Global Head Value Chain at Syngenta.

In turn, Roberto Vega, Global Head Value Chain at Syngenta, stated that “finding joint solutions is fundamental and critical for the situations we are facing, and this Summit plays an important role in that”.

He added: “We are speaking with over 40 countries about soil conservation, biodiversity, reducing agriculture’s impact on climate change and empowering small-scale producers. These initiatives are very much aligned with our company’s strategies. The poverty we see today is amoral—as citizens of the world we cannot allow it. With our current knowledge and tools, we can overcome it if, as stakeholders, we commit to really working together”.

Jesús Quintana, Director General of CIAT (International Center for Tropical Agriculture) and Managing Director of the Alliance of Bioversity International, underscored the value of the Africa-Americas joint work. “I haven’t seen this before. It’s not normal for the organizations of two continents to meet with such a willingness to make proposals, with partners who bring ideas, resources and initiatives. It’s historical and the topics are also historical; we’ve spoken about almost everything from climate change to trade; it’s a fruitful dialogue that can take us far. IICA has been fundamental, with almost 80 years at the head”.



Bernard Jacobus Martti, a member of the Board of Directors of Rabobank.

Bernard Jacobus Martti, a member of the Board of Directors of Rabobank, stated that: “this Summit has given us an excellent opportunity to help accelerate opportunities for transformation, to recognize the need to integrate the true cost of food and programs to increase the flow of fertilizers to producers. The role of science in providing solutions, in overcoming insufferable afflictions like poverty and hunger, and in doing so inclusively and resiliently, is fundamental”.

Mohammed Silim Nahdy, Executive Director of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), expressed that “the importance of this meeting is to catalyze society in both continents. The challenges we face are very similar and we can find solutions together. The alliances can be strategic, operative or activity-based. They are all important and we encourage their endorsement.

IICA can work with representatives of the African Union to mobilize these partnerships”.



Mohammed Silim Nahdy, Executive Director of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS)

Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit calls for the creation of permanent mechanisms for integration and collaboration between the two continents to improve their agri-food systems

The States tasked three organizations the IICA, AGRA and AUDA-NEPAD with preparing a roadmap and developing a common agenda for that purpose.



Josefa Leonel Sacko, the African Union's Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, the Blue Economy, and Environmental Sustainability; Manuel Otero, IICA Director General; ; Beverly Best, Director of External and Institutional Relations of IICA; and and Keithlin Caroo, IICA Special Ambassador for the Africa-Americas Summit.

San Jose, 01 August 2022 (IICA). The highest-level agricultural authorities of some 40 countries have called for the creation of specific mechanisms to foster mutual learning and joint action between Africa and the Americas, based on science, technology, and innovation. They are convinced that cooperation between the two continents is a step in the right direction in transforming agri-food systems and addressing the causes of food insecurity, malnutrition, and environmental degradation.

The States tasked three organizations -the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the African Union Development Agency–New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD)- with preparing a roadmap and developing a common agenda for that purpose.

The same three agencies organized the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agri-food Systems, which is being held in San Jose, Costa Rica, with the participation of ministers, deputy ministers, and experts in the

areas of agriculture, environment, and science and technology from the two regions.

The agricultural authorities specified a number of topics for inclusion in the roadmap aimed at identifying opportunities for international cooperation and tackling food insecurity. Among them were the institutionalization of the forum for inter-continental dialogue and the creation of networks, particularly on bio-inputs, and an innovation hub.

Other areas that will be addressed include the promotion of evidence-based good practices, with a focus on soils to address issues such as ecosystem-based adaptation, soil restoration, the intensification of land use, and the reduction of land degradation, as well as soil health and increased carbon sequestration.

“The roadmap must include the adoption of policies and actions, down to the local level, because our farmers are looking to us for support. The African agricultural structure consists basically of family farmers. That is why I tell our leaders, our ministers here, that if we want to transform agriculture, we must include this highly vulnerable group, made up of those who actually supply our food, mainly women,” said Josefa Leonel Sacko, the African Union’s Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, the Blue Economy, and Environmental Sustainability.

IICA Director General Manuel Otero also addressed the ministers and highlighted three areas: “All aspects of the transformation of agri-food systems were addressed at the Summit, but I want to emphasize three innovation, youth, and sustainability because our agri-food systems must be sustainable.”



Manuel Otero, IICA Director General; and Josefa Leonel Sacko, the African Union’s Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, the Blue Economy, and Environmental Sustainability.

Otero stressed that the Institute's initiatives were also available to African countries. "I am referring to the Policy Observatory, where we discuss developments around the world; the Living Soils program led by scientist Rattan Lal, which is devoted to restoring soil health, and for which we have the support of the private sector; and the Digital Agriculture program led by Michael Kremer, winner of the 2019 Nobel prize for economics, based on things that have been achieved in Africa and Latin America," the IICA Director General added.

Both Lal and Kremer participated in the summit and spoke with ministers, representatives of the private sector and leaders of cooperation agencies about the role that Africa and the Americas can play in eradicating hunger and preserving the environment.

IICA, AGRA and AUDA-NEPAD were also tasked with exploring agreements for the design of operational and financial mechanisms to leverage resources for South-South, North-South and Triangular cooperation, and for interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships. They will also be promoting measures that facilitate transparent and distortion-free international agri-food trade.

"We really need to ensure that all stakeholders, farmers and non-state organizations, join us in this movement, to make us stronger. Africa and the Americas can feed the world because there is a lot of potential in the two regions if we work together," added Commissioner Sacko of the African Union. The IICA Director General said his organization will lobby for the participation of ministers of agriculture of the Americas and the Institute itself in the meeting of the Green Revolution in Africa Forum (AGRF), which will be held in September this year in Rwanda.

In fact, one of the tasks of the three cooperation agencies is to present to the African forum recommendations for joint action arising out of the summit in San Jose.

"We want to be better connected with you, we want to learn from you, and we want to build a new way forward together because that is what the world needs," Otero said.

The Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit also highlighted examples of alliances with the private sector that underpin cooperation, especially in the areas of financing, innovation, and science and technology. Involving organizations from that sector is one of the actions included in the roadmap with which the international agencies were tasked.

The meeting in San Jose was supported by Bayer, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, the World Bank Group, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

