

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRIES AND SECRETARIATS OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK OF THE AMERICAS

TOWARDS THE UNFCCC COP 27 – EGYPT 2022

(Consensus document)

The increase in food insecurity and the global climate crisis pose an interrelated threat across the planet that must be addressed with urgency at the local and national levels, as well as regionally and globally. In this context, the agricultural sector of the Americas is a global leader in food production and exports and is also highly vulnerable to climate change. Our sector observes with great concern that agricultural production, livelihoods and natural resources have been affected by the increasing impacts of climate change, exacerbating problems associated with increased poverty, hunger and food prices, and affecting vulnerable populations and global food security.

This has been expressed recently in various dialogues such as the UN Food Systems Summit (New York, United States in September 2021), the IX Summit of the Americas (Los Angeles, United States¹ in June 2022), the Meeting of Ministers on Climate Change and Agriculture, “On the Road to the 2022 Summit of the Americas and Beyond” (San José, Costa Rica, in May 2022), the XLII Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) (San José, Costa Rica, in July 2022).²

Several regional and subregional ministerial declarations in the Americas recognize the need to accelerate adaptation and its benefits, and the contributions of agriculture to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in line with the internationally assumed commitments, and recognize the vulnerability of the sector to the adverse effects of climate change. These declarations caution against initiatives and proposals that neglect the contributions of agriculture to food security and sustainable development, as they can lead to missed opportunities and increased vulnerability of the poorest people.^{3, 4} In this context, we, the Ministries and Secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock of the Americas:

Affirm that agriculture in our region, particularly in the Caribbean and Central America, is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In addition, the greater capacities in these subregions are needed to develop and implement solid strategies for achieving and maintaining the conditions required for a sustainable agriculture. Addressing climate change in agriculture needs to be a primary concern and shared

¹ For this Summit, the countries of the Americas agreed and presented hemispheric messages from the agriculture sector that were presented at the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit IICA/JIA/Res. 531 (XXI-O/21: the transformation of agri-food systems and the role of agriculture in the Americas).

² IICA/CE/Res. 687 (XLII-O/22: The Strategic Role of the Agri-Food Systems of the Americas in Reference to the Attention of the Processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

³ CAS/Council. Declaration I of September 13, 2022, "Position of the Ministers of Agriculture for the 27th Conference of the Parties on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change"

⁴ The proposal for positioning the SICA countries towards the 56th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB56) of May 27, 2022.

responsibility, as it also creates the opportunity to leverage greater policies and investments in an effort to achieve the resilience of our agri-food system.

Emphasize that agriculture in the Americas has been working to enhance its sustainability for years by incorporating practices and technologies that lead to a sustainable increase in food production as well as a lower environmental footprint. For this reason, we affirm that agriculture is part of the solution to the climate crisis.

Underscore that capitalizing on opportunities to transition agri- food systems to greater sustainability requires dynamic and effective agricultural science and innovation systems, where actors in different roles (research, extension, producers, and others) can work together by drawing from different sources of knowledge (scientific, local, traditional, indigenous, etc.) to co-design and fine-tune locally appropriate solutions with the needed social, environmental, and economic results. Proposed solutions should encourage the participation of family agriculture, young people and greater gender equity in agri- food systems. Climate actions promoted to achieve a more sustainable agriculture must be based on science, safeguarding and increasing the productivity and efficiency of agri-food systems to avoid worsening the food crisis. Global trade can support this ongoing transition and we emphasize that trade rules should be science based. We recall that Article 3 of the UNFCCC calls for measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, to not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.

Highlight that the costs and risks associated with the impact of climate change and the investments for the needed transformation of agriculture cannot be shouldered by the farmers alone. Financing programs must take into account public budgets, international financing for development, banking systems and capital markets. These financing programs should integrate incentives for sustainable production and emissions reductions that are accessible to all countries in the region, de-risk public and private investment throughout the food systems and provide education and communication programs for sustainable production. This must be complemented by regional initiatives and partnerships that capitalize on available capacities and resources as well as multisectoral innovation platforms. We welcome global efforts to catalyze greater technical assistance to implement approaches to avoiding and minimizing loss and damage in agriculture, including risk management tools and climate information services.

Recognize, for the reasons expressed above, that COP 27 presents an opportunity to highlight the relevance, contributions and needs of agriculture in the Americas, and to highlight action that can be scaled. We express the need to advance the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, to guide the technical work, facilitate implementation and make visible the value of agriculture's contribution to food security and sustainable development.

Therefore, we express our willingness to:

1. Continue to strengthen the presence of the Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture, Livestock and

Fisheries in the areas of national, hemispheric and global climate processes; with the support from IICA and other international organizations.

2. Advance the implementation of the agricultural elements of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), noting the need for a stronger enabling environment and effective international financing to permit an increase in scale and scope of the implementation of actions in our hemisphere as well as strengthening the resilience of family agriculture.
3. Work to improve access to climate funding for countries in the region, taking into account ongoing negotiations and relevant international commitments, including the most vulnerable countries, to strengthen adaptation, to improve the effectiveness of said financing, and call for strengthening Inter-american cooperation, regional cooperation, north-south cooperation, and south-south cooperation.
4. Strengthen our efforts to promote agricultural best practices such as those aimed at improving water management, soil health, increasing carbon in soils, reducing food loss and waste, promoting bioeconomy and circular economy, rational and precise use of fertilizers, agrosilvopastoral systems, and other measures that provide multiple co-benefits.
5. Make evidence-based decisions that allow for sustainable productivity increases in agriculture, as well as the production of health and safe, and accessible foods, while recognizing that the great diversity of existing production systems in the region requires solutions adapted to local realities and that any transition must be just and leave no one behind.
6. Strengthen mechanisms that facilitate access to scientific and technical knowledge and information, as well as the traditional and ancestral knowledge of our indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities, to inform the design and implementation of actions that respond to the impacts of climate change experienced in our countries.
7. Continue recognizing that the Americas are home to one of the largest reservoirs of biodiversity, water resources, and tropical forests in the world, for which we reaffirm our commitment to accelerate global climate action, especially given the urgent need for action in this critical decade.
8. Express our support and hope for a successful outcome of COP 27 in terms of prioritizing a just transition towards an agriculture that is better adapted, more resilient and able to store more carbon across the sector; facilitated by increased climate investments, effective levels of financing, conducive to international climate cooperation, collaborative innovation, and capacity building, and reaffirming that there are many kinds of agriculture. We express the need to mobilize our leadership to support the technical negotiations under the Convention.