Meeting of
Ministers of Agriculture
of the Americas

MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE AMERICAS 2013
"Water to feed the land"

DECLARATION OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE ARGENTINA 2013

1. We, the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture of the Americas, in accordance with our remit, meeting in the City of Campana, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina from 25 to 26 September 2013 to engage in dialogue, make commitments and request the support of international cooperation agencies in order to promote the development of competitive, sustainable and socially inclusive agriculture; advance toward the attainment of hemispheric food security[1] achieve rural well-being and poverty reduction; encourage the adaptation of agriculture to climate change; and improve the conditions for access to and the use of water in agriculture, endeavoring to implement integrated water management.

Considering that:

2. At the hemispheric level, this Declaration is consistent with the agreements and the mandates adopted by the Heads of State and Government in the Summits of the Americas, including the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development (Bolivia 1996) in which the countries issued the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra and the Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Americas, and the resolutions of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on the subject of water, namely, AG/RES. 2760 (Bolivia 2012) and AG/RES. 2349 (Panama 2007).

3. The Declaration provides follow-up to the agreements of the hemispheric ministerial meetings on agriculture and the rural milieu held previously, in accordance with the objectives of competitiveness, sustainability, equity, and governance set forth in the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action and the Declaration of Ministers of Agriculture San Jose 2011.

4. This Declaration contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and supports the efforts of the United Nations on behalf of the integrated management of water resources set out in initiatives such as the *International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015;* the *Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)*; the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;* resolutions 66/288 and 64/292 of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

[1] Bolivia understands this to mean food security and food sovereignty.

"The Future We Want" and *"The Human Right to Water and Sanitation"*; and the *International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.*

5. Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development recognizes sovereign right of the states over their own resources.

Mindful that:

6. In order to strengthen food security, it is necessary to increase agricultural productivity and, at the same time, use resources sustainably; and, in that regard, agriculture in the Americas is called to play a major role in the current international context characterized by the constant growth in the demand for food.

7. In order to contribute to the sustainable development of the countries, with social inclusion, agriculture faces major challenges, including the need to increase production and productivity with a view to meeting the rising demand for food of a continually growing population; the loss of fertility of farmland caused by soil degradation; the competition from growing urbanization; the effects of climate change; the pressure on the use of water exerted by different sectors of the economy and society, and inequitable access to water.

8. Water availability and affordability are key factors for improving agricultural productivity and, therefore, development. Improved soil quality often equates to increased available water for crops and improved production during periods of drought.

9. Freshwater is a finite, vulnerable, essential and strategic resource for sustainable development.

10. Our hemisphere has abundant water resources, but their distribution and availability are highly uneven and vary significantly between regions and countries, as reflected in the fact that vast territories of the Americas consist of arid and semiarid land.

11. Climate change and its resultant effect of climate variability are modifying the spatial and temporal patterns of the water cycle.

12. The countries are engaged in efforts of different kinds to improve integrated water resource management, the adaptation of agriculture to climate variability and the fight against desertification and drought.

13. The integrated management of water in agriculture in each country calls for a multidimensional and participatory approach that takes into account the economic, social, environmental, and political-institutional aspects of territories and the national context.

14. Agriculture is an important user of water, therefore its different stakeholders are faced with the challenge of using the resource efficiently and promoting its conservation, while keeping the pollution of surface and groundwater to a minimum. Agriculture,

therefore, must make more efficient and productive use of water in order to obtain larger quantities of food and other agricultural products and byproducts with less water and fewer social and environmental effects.

15. Smallholders, in particular women farmers, face inequalities in access to and use of water resources in parts of the Americas, and are often entirely dependent on rainfall for agricultural activities.

16. Innovation contributes to optimizing the integrated management and sustainable use of water resources in agriculture, since it makes it possible to raise productivity and thereby free up water for other uses, reduce environmental degradation and improve the food security and well-being of the population.

Bearing in mind that:

17. The demand for water is multi-sectoral in nature, as it is needed for different purposes especially agriculture, it is therefore essential for there to be integrated and coordinated water management.

18. Integrated water resource management should be done in accordance with public policies implemented through integrated programs and projects that promote development within the framework of international conventions and agreements that have been signed in each country.

19. The existence of a multi-sectoral institutional framework to address the needs of numerous users and various aspects of integrated water management poses a challenge for the activities of the ministries of agriculture, in particular, and of the agrifood sector, in general.

20. Devising and implementation of national public policies for integrated water management calls for a multi-sectoral and participatory approach to meet the needs of the different groups of users in an equitable manner.

Urge:

21. The donor countries to support agriculture projects in the Hemisphere, the international financing and cooperation agencies, the research centers and the regional agricultural research and innovation mechanisms to foster the implementation of national and regional programs designed to increase national capabilities, innovation and transfer of technology, the adoption of innovative practices and products and sharing of know-how for the sustainable use of water in agriculture and the rural milieu.

22. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (Canada), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-ROLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the

Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and other, related agencies to spearhead, coordinate and support a technical cooperation program designed to promote the integrated management of water in agriculture that necessarily includes the strengthening of the capabilities of the ministries of agriculture and other institutions in the sector.

Request:

23. That the Secretariat of the Summit of the Americas of the OAS and the Chair of the VII Summit of the Americas, Panama 2015, consider including on the agenda of that Summit topics related to the comprehensive management of water, in general, and to the agreements adopted in the present Declaration, in particular.

Commit:

Public policies

24. To develop and consolidate participation by the ministries of agriculture in defining and implementing national policies for the integrated management of water, with the aim of ensuring access to and supply of water in the quantity and quality necessary for facing the challenges of agriculture and rural development, dealing with diverse geographical conditions, different uses and various users.

25. To promote long-term agricultural policies based on solid technical and scientific principles which that take into account the sustainable use of water resources, as well as the new challenges arising from climate change.

26. To devise policies that enable the development, commercialization and use of products from innovation including biotechnology, that can reduce agriculture's consumption of water, improve its adaptation to climate change and increase agricultural productivity.

Institutional strengthening and capacity building

27. To foster the strengthening of capacities within the ministries of agriculture, related public institutions and producers' organizations in the following areas : i) design and implementation of policies and instruments for the integrated management of water in agriculture and the rural environment, within the framework of the national policy on this topic, ii) dialogue and consensus-building with the other national economic and social sectors, and iii) coordination of efforts with international organizations to strengthen local capacities and meet national objectives.

28. To promote the participation of representatives of agriculture in the national multi-sectoral institutional mechanisms that deal with matters relating to the integrated management of water and its governance, as well as the preparation and execution of national plans for adaptation of agriculture to climate change and for combating desertification and drought.

29. To encourage, jointly with the educational institutions in each country, renewal and strengthening of the agricultural education systems, including water management in both teaching and research, and adoption of a comprehensive vision.

30. To carry out, without affecting the competitiveness of agriculture, capacity development programs to improve the management and use of water, in agriculture, directed at entrepreneurs, producers, rural folk, women as well as young people and their organizations, ensuring that these programs take into account the different productive systems and conditions of the users, so as to build awareness of the need for efficient utilization of water.

31. To adopt measures to promote agricultural research, extension services, training and education, so that each one of our countries can advance towards the identification and characterization of the uses of water in the different production systems, and by the different types of producers, so that the appropriate actions can be taken in each case.

32. To promote the development and transfer of technologies, for collection as well as productive and efficient use of water, prioritizing the identification of appropriate and attainable technologies for the different types of producers, in particular for effective irrigation, recycling of treated wastewater, as well as water collection, storage and distribution.

Integrated management of water and climate change

33. To promote integrated management of water in agriculture that contributes to its adaptation to climate change, based on scientific principles and in keeping with the legal framework of each country as well as the culture and traditions of the nations, and the knowledge of communities and indigenous peoples.

34. To strengthen and modernize agricultural information systems so that they are interlinked with the national systems responsible for water management, so that there is timely information on the volume of water used by this sector, information that will facilitate decision-making regarding its use.

35. To initiate or strengthen the processes of agricultural planning, implementation of programs and use of technologies that facilitate their adaptation to climate change and availability of water, including, among others, projects relating to diversification, transformation, direct seeding, irrigation systems and relocation of production.

36. To strengthen the public and private inter-sectoral work aimed at risk management for agriculture and the rural milieu caused by meteorological events such as recurrent flooding and drought, taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable economic and social sectors, and/or those located in the areas of greatest impact.

37. To facilitate, in collaboration with the national institutions and regional mechanisms and, as needed, with the assistance of relevant international organizations and the strengthening of:

a. The systems for hydro-meteorological information, early warning, risk management, climatic scenarios, forecast and prevention of extreme events, as a basis for the design and implementation of strategies for adapting agriculture to climate change and for the use of management tools on farms, in production areas, territories, and watersheds.

b. The coordination and integration of hydro-meteorological and early warning information systems and the incorporation of new technologies for satellite and telemetry, geo-processing and geo-referencing.

Innovation and productivity of water

38. To strengthen innovation in production systems throughout the agrifood chain in order to improve the management of water in rainfed and irrigated agriculture.

39. To reinforce the information and dissemination systems on innovations that enable countries to make better use of water in agriculture.

40. To focus efforts on the promotion of innovations designed to increase the productivity of water in the following priority areas:

a. Identification, assessment, and dissemination of techniques and/or technologies for the sustainable use of water in agriculture including, those derived from local and indigenous knowledge.

b. Development and strengthening of precision agriculture (precision irrigation, drip irrigation and sub-irrigation) and other technologies that make more efficient use of water, such as fertigation and hydroponics.

c. Strengthening the capacities of national science and technology and extension systems, and organizations and, in order to increase knowledge and education related to the sustainable use of surface water and groundwater, harvesting of water and the utilization of recycled water in agriculture.

d. Development of biotechnological innovations in agricultural production that would improve efficient management of water such as bioremediation and the development of varieties tolerant to water stress.

e. Improvement of knowledge of watershed management to gain a better understanding of the water cycle for the productive use of water.

41. To improve the interlinking of agricultural innovation systems and exercise proactive leadership in the allocation of human, financial and material resources for conducting research on the efficient use of water in agriculture.

Investment

42. To foster investments in water infrastructure (especially irrigation and drainage agrometeorology and the incorporation of spatial and communication technologies in the efficient management of water, in consonance with national policies.

Water quality: pollution and food safety

43. To strengthen technical assistance programs to improve the quality of the water used in irrigation and throughout the productive agrifood chains, to contribute to food safety.

National and international cooperation

44. To promote public-private partnerships within the agricultural sector and with other sectors that contributes to more efficient management of water in agriculture.

45. To promote South-South and North-South cooperation designed to strengthen the capabilities of the ministries of agriculture and other public institutions related to integrated water management, with the support of all the international organizations that operate in the hemisphere.

46. To promote and strengthen the existing regional mechanisms for the analysis and establishment of strategies with regard to the integrated management of water resources for agriculture.

47. To continue to support IICA's efforts to improve its capabilities for working with its member countries on a hemispheric agenda for water in agriculture, in accordance with the present Declaration.

Signed in the City of Campana, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina on the twenty-six day of September, two thousand and thirteen.