

15th INTER-AMERICAN MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, ON HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 11-12 June 2008

“Agriculture and Health: Alliance for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas”

Annex 3

RIMSA15 (Eng.)
June 25, 2008
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Rio de Janeiro Declaration

“Agriculture and Health: Partnership for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas, RIMSA - 15

We, the Ministers of Health and Agriculture, gathered in Rio de Janeiro on June 11 and 12, 2008 for the 15th Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA 15) with the object of coordinating sectoral public policies to contribute to the health and agricultural development based on the criteria of equity, and well-being for the peoples of the Hemisphere taking rural development into account;

renew our commitments to continue promoting intersectoral strategies for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), understanding that the progress made can be undermined by current global developments that have a greater impact on the most vulnerable groups;

reaffirm our commitment to coordinating efforts to meet the objectives of the Health Agenda for the Americas 2008-2017 and the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan;

Mindful of:

- a) The agreements and negotiations arising from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, noting the global growth in the demand for food, raw materials, and energy; the expansion of areas dedicated to crop production and barriers to increase the productivity of crop and livestock production; the impact of international trade on domestic markets; the situation of national programs for the conservation of natural resources; and the medium- and long-term effects on agriculture, public health and the environment;
- b) The progress in the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Costa Rica Consensus and relevant points of the Road Map approved at

the Bali Conference, 2007 noting the impact of climate change and its effects on agriculture, the environment and human and animal health;

- c) The agreements of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: the challenges of the climate change and bioenergy, held in Rome, June 3 to 5, 2008;
- d) The FAO initiative “Hunger-free Latin America and Caribbean”;
- e) The initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Food Program (IDB-WFP) to eradicate chronic child malnutrition in the Region, endorsed by the Regional Directors of the United Nations agencies for Latin America and the Caribbean and the OAS General Assembly;
- f) The agreements and commitments made by the Heads of State and Government at the V Latin America and Caribbean–European Union Summit (LAC-EU, Peru 2008), establishing shared and specific responsibilities with regard to the items on the Lima Agenda;
- g) The progress in the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in the Region, and the need to coordinate efforts to set up early warning and response systems to address the risks of threats to public health of zoonotic origin, animal diseases that restrict production and hinder the food trade, and foodborne diseases, which must be managed throughout the food chain;

Considering,

That the actions for responding to the challenges analyzed at this meeting, require universal public policies involving local approaches and strategies that have an effective impact in terms of reducing the gaps in access to goods and services and enjoying the benefits of agricultural and agri-food development of the Region;

That there are concrete examples in the Region of regional, national and local intersectoral strategies for reducing poverty, promoting local health development, and creating opportunities for rural endeavors, especially on the part of the most neglected and excluded social groups;

That the evolution of agricultural and agri-food production chains and their adequate articulation with the global production systems are necessary for economic growth and the creation of opportunities for equitable development, health and the environment and specially the just distribution of the added value of these chains;

That an integrated approach to zoonosis control, agricultural health, and the nutritional quality and food safety and the supply of safe water linking the public and private sectors is imperative for the promotion of alternative and innovative financing responses;

That it is necessary to coordinate the work of the various regional, national, and local stakeholders to facilitate effective action aimed at guaranteeing food security, food safety, better nutritional quality of food, the improvement of nutrition and health conditions, and zoonosis control and elimination within the framework of sustainable development.

DECLARE:

1. Our commitment to acting in our own areas of competence and to advocating for regional coordination and the technical and financial cooperation in order to:
 - a. Strengthen actions aimed at generating evidence, raising awareness of the population, forging partnerships, mobilizing resources to prevent, adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change on health and agriculture, based on building national capacities, the evaluation based on indicators, the health metric and the required financing;
 - b. Promote consensus to take advantage of the opportunities in international trade and tourism and in general the market mechanisms associated with the sustainable development in the improvement of agriculture, health and rural life;
 - c. Promote the creation of partnerships between the private and public sector oriented to the competitive and sustainable development of the food chains, especially, create a consensus on the market mechanisms for the equitable distribution of the added value that is generated in the different stages of these chains;
 - d. Adopt the approach of health determinants and identify and reduce the gaps and disparities among population groups with convergent and synergistic strategies;
 - e. Advocate policies that foster improvements in the quality of life and the integral development of vulnerable groups with social development indicators beyond the unmet basic needs in rural and urban areas to channel development and achieve the MDGs; adhering to regional initiatives such as: Faces, Voices, and Places; Healthy and Productive Municipalities and Communities; Microcredit for Rural Women; and the rural endeavors of Agro-Ecotourism, preserving and promoting the maintenance of the biodiversity and original agricultural practices of native people, restoring traditional local and indigenous knowledge, coupling it with the knowledge and potential of new practices;
 - f. Promote action within and among countries to prevent and reduce the presence of endemic, neglected and emerging diseases whose behavior has proven to be or may be influenced by social and environmental determinants associated with climate change, changes in ecosystems, and the transformation of production systems;
 - g. Establish or strengthen multisectoral agreements and effective regulations to improve the nutritional quality of food and reduce or eliminate the substances that could adversely affect health, through regulatory and voluntary measures on eliminating trans fats from the human diet and replacing them with healthy oils, within the framework of public policies oriented to promote healthy lifestyles and the reduction of the associated risks;
 - h. Carry out systematic reviews of the scientific evidence and promote research that contributes to decision taking, the formulation and evaluation of the food safety and nutrition policies, to direct public information and consumer education:
 - i. Advocate for intersectoral coordination at every level in all circles, promoting cooperation among countries with the support and collaboration of international financing and cooperation organizations.

2. Our adherence to the recommendations of the 12th Meeting of the Directors of National Rabies Control Programs of Latin America (REDIPRA), and especially commit to acting in our own areas of competence to execute and sustain the activities necessary for the elimination of dog transmitted human rabies from the Hemisphere by 2012.
3. Our adherence to the recommendations of the 11th Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-mouth Disease (COHEFA), and in the framework of the Hemispheric Plan for Foot and Mouth Disease Eradication, we assume the commitment of implementing the initiatives of cooperation between countries in order to speed up the elimination of the disease from the Hemisphere.
4. Our adherence to the recommendations of the 5th Meeting of the Pan American Commission for Food Safety (COPAIA), and we especially commit ourselves to adopting measures to strengthen national food safety systems.
5. Member States and international organizations are strongly encouraged to strengthen regional and global coordination mechanisms for early alert and response to health risks within the framework of the International Health Regulations (2005) with linkages to INFOSAN for human health and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for animal health.
6. Our interest in ensuring that the international organizations support, and strengthen financial and technical cooperation to the countries of the Region, pursuant to the commitments assumed in this declaration promoting the necessary coordination and harmonization of public policies between the associated areas. Within this framework we acknowledge the need of implementing the goal established by the developed countries to commit 0.7% of the GDP as official development aid.¹
7. Our interest in continuing to promote the initiatives of intra-regional and inter-regional south-south cooperation, promoting an active role of the multilateral cooperation agencies in the triangular processes of cooperation among countries.
8. Our support to the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nation in relation to the lifting of economic sanctions, blocking and international embargoes that negatively impact on health and nutrition of the populations of the Hemisphere in particular of those most vulnerable groups.
9. Our indication to the Directors of PAHO and IICA to submit this declaration to their respective Governing Bodies and promote its dissemination in the international community.
10. Our interest in seeing this declaration, and especially the commitments contained herein, considered and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the Hemisphere at the 5th Summit of the Americas and other High Level hemispheric fora that promote policies and concrete actions to face the challenges and demands of this Declaration.
11. Our thanks to the government of Brazil for its support and hospitality given during the 15th RIMSA and to PAHO and IICA for the excellent organization of the meeting.

¹ Canada and the United States of America noted that there were two parts of the text that they felt were outside the scope of the mandate of RIMSA. These two areas are referenced in paragraph 6 (2nd sentence) and paragraph 8 and did not feel that they could provide endorsement of the language without further consultation with their respective departments of foreign affairs and development assistance.