

Fifth International Meeting of FORAGRO, Montevideo 2008
Institutional innovations for an Agriculture with Knowledge in the
Americas in the 21st century

DECLARATION OF MONTEVIDEO 2008

We, the participants of the V FORAGRO Meeting, in our capacity as such, **consider** that in order to achieve food security, face the challenges of agriculture and rural development in the current context, reduce rural and urban poverty, increase food production and quality, improve the equity in the distribution of production profits, prevent negative impacts on the environment and preserve and make good use of the natural resources in the Americas, it is necessary to promote an agriculture with knowledge and to adopt the perspective of innovation, which requires undertaking innovations in the technological policies and in our organisations.

To this effect, **we consider it is essential** that the hemispheric innovation agenda should be compatible with these objectives and that the development thereof should be sustained by a **renewed partnership** at the level of political decision-making, the public and private stakeholders of the national and international agricultural research and innovation (R&I) systems and the civil society in general. This partnership should be oriented at the following **objectives**:

1. To project sustainable agriculture in order to achieve development and food security as the core of any economic and social strategy of the nations, and specifically with a key role regarding national and regional development.
2. To promote the growth of production, productivity and quality as a means of contributing to competitiveness, agricultural diversification, food security and sovereignty, equitable profit distribution, prosperity of rural inhabitants and the development of new production and value-added opportunities.
3. To harmonize agricultural and rural development with environmental sustainability, to strengthen the role of agriculture as generator of food, inputs for agro-industries and other raw materials, and as a source of bioenergy, without affecting food security.
4. To counteract the effects of climate change on agriculture through technological innovations that contribute to adapt the production of crops and animal species to this change, focusing on the most vulnerable regions and sectors and to assist in the sustainable preservation of natural resources, particularly biodiversity and water resources.
5. To foster institutional innovations at micro, meso and macro level in order to promote the development of research, extension and technological innovation in agriculture and forestry through inclusive and participatory models with the various public and private players.
6. To contribute to hunger reduction and income generation by creating production alternatives through the development, access and use of agricultural knowledge, science and technology that may be applicable to the various systems that make up the heterogeneity of agriculture.

Considering the above, the participants of the Fourth Meeting of FORAGRO, acting on our own behalf, **declare the following intentions:**

1. To promote a dynamic management of the priorities identified during the FORAGRO meeting for the R&I processes that may counteract food insecurity, taking advantage of the opportunities and facing the challenges of the current world and regional socio-economic conditions.
2. To position the relevance of agricultural knowledge and technological innovation at the core of political decision-making in the countries and in the field of hemispheric integration.
3. To continue developing solid arguments to justify the allocation of greater resources to research, extension and the development of technological innovations by the governments of the region, the private sector and the international cooperation.
4. To highlight the need for greater public investment and to promote greater contribution from the private sector, seeking to reverse the low investment in science and technology in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries.
5. To support institutional innovations in extension and transfer in order to socialize knowledge and new technologies, while recognizing and incorporating indigenous practices, particularly for family and peasant agriculture.
6. To intensify the efforts for the development of research, technology transfer and technological innovation to improve production and quality in family and peasant agriculture.
7. To intensify the cooperation efforts to bridge the gaps in capacities for development of R&I, consolidating the existing national and regional institutionality, as well as the connectivity of the region to international agricultural research systems and those of other continents.

The following are the **topics considered to be the most relevant for hemispheric cooperation**, the order of which does not imply a greater or lesser priority:

- Policies and organisational changes to manage the protection or appropriation of public goods resulting from the research and innovation processes
- Management of information, communication and collaborative learning among actors, in order to achieve technological innovation in agriculture
- Adaptation to climate change with a focus on soil and water
- Institutional innovations for research and innovation to support family agriculture regarding its contribution to food security
- Conservation and use of genetic resources
- Development and safe use of new agricultural biotechnologies
- Promotion of technological innovations for sustainable agriculture
- Development of agroenergy without affecting food security

In order to approach these issues, **the following proposals** should be implemented:

1. The strengthening and consolidation of FORAGRO as the appropriate hemispheric mechanism to facilitate the dialogue and coordination between the different sectors – public, private, university, NGOs, farmers and international research organisations – on strategic agricultural issues from the technological perspective.
2. The promotion and cooperation for developing a hemispheric programme on institutional innovations for research, extension and technological innovation, with a central strategy focused on the coordination, exchange of experiences and cooperation between countries.
3. The consolidation of the programmes and networks on agricultural research and their articulation, recognizing the relevance of the PROCIs, as strategic mechanisms to strengthen regional cooperation on agricultural research and technological innovation, as well as that of the Regional Research Centres.
4. To foster actions aimed at having countries allocate appropriate investment levels to technological R&I in the region and to strengthen FONTAGRO by urging countries that are not yet members to consider joining the organisation and consolidating it as a regional funding platform.
5. To intensify the links of the Region with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), with other Regional Forums and initiatives such as the Ibero-American INIA System.
6. To promote a renewed agenda of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and to specifically coordinate the development of elements for the strategic repositioning of LAC in the CGIAR and new strategic partnerships with the International Centres on priority topics for research and technological innovation that have an impact on agriculture and food security in LAC.
7. To promote the dissemination of the consensus reached and set forth in this Declaration of the Fifth International Meeting of FORAGRO, and request it be submitted to the following instances:
 - General Directorate of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) at the Ministerial Meeting and the XV Inter-American Board on Agriculture (IABA).
 - Ibero-American General Secretariat at the upcoming Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, El Salvador, in the framework of the Summit of Heads of State and Government
 - Presidency and Commission on Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery of the Latin-American Parliament, PARLATINO, at its next sessions
 - Executive Committee and members of FORAGRO at national, regional and international Fora and discussion and decision-making platforms

These proposals and other recommendations made by the participants of the Fifth Meeting of the Forum should lead the Executive Committee of FORAGRO to formulate a new Action Plan that includes a hemispheric strategy for promoting the sustainable and competitive development of agriculture and food security from the perspective of technological innovation and with a focus on the above mentioned priority issues.

Montevideo, July 30, 2008