

PRIVATE SECTOR DECLARATION OF THE AMERICAS

Private Sector Dialogue: Promoting Agri-Business Within The Americas

SIGNED

On this, the twenty-seventh day of October, in the year Two Thousand and Nine

ON BEHALF OF

The Private Sector Representatives inclusive of farmers of the Democratic Countries of the Americas at the inaugural Private Sector Dialogue of the 5th Hemispheric Ministerial and 15th Regular Inter-American Board of Agriculture Meetings

HELD ON

October 27 in the year 2009

In

Montego Bay, Jamaica

.....
Mr. Earl Jarrett

Preamble

We, the Private Sector Representatives, inclusive of farmers, of the Democratic Countries of the Americas, guided by a spirit of cooperation, integration and solidarity, have gathered in Montego Bay, Jamaica for the inaugural Private Sector Dialogue of the 5th Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting and 15th Regular Inter-American Board of Agriculture Meeting, to discuss the challenges to Agricultural Development in the Hemisphere.

We recognise that:

- I. Agriculture and Agri-business are critical pillars for national development and food security and, in this regard, the Private Sector is committed to greater levels of development of these key sectors.
- II. Agriculture is important for building capacity and improving the quality of life in rural communities.
- III. Collaboration between the Public and Private sectors is critical to the development of a vibrant Agri-business sector.

In consideration of the foregoing, the Private Sector submits the following as three priority areas of focus to be addressed:

- i. Research and Development, Innovation and Technology Transfer
- ii. Finance, Credit and Risk Management
- iii. Enhanced Marketing of Agri-business within the framework of Regional Trade Agreements

Research & Development, Innovation, and Technology Transfer

Ministers are encouraged to:

- i. Review the support given to national and regional Agricultural Research Institutes and the methods of integrating their activities for greater efficiency and relevance to the needs and requirements of the Private Sector.
- ii. Facilitate and forge strategic partnerships with Research Institutions across the Hemisphere to enhance their technical capacity.
- iii. Recognize the value of the rich biodiversity of our member countries, advance initiatives to catalogue, register and preserve these assets, and implement the legislative framework to ensure long-term benefits to the region.
- iv. Support the increased establishment and development of Agricultural Colleges and Centres of Excellence in the Hemisphere, and incorporate Agriculture into the Educational Curriculum at every level.
- v. Enhance the profile of the Agri-business sector by initiating programmes which promote the financial viability and attractiveness of the sector as a profession.

- vi. Facilitate the establishment of an effective information system along the Agri-business chain including a database of opportunities within the sector to attract investment.
- vii. Create incentives for investors in Agricultural Research which could include tax credits and other fiscal stimuli.

Finance, Credit, and Risk Management

In order to ensure greater flow of capital into the Agricultural Sector, Ministers are being requested to support the Private Sector in the following ways:

- i. Develop and implement a clear policy and plan that recognizes the multi-sectoral role of Agriculture and Agri-business in national development.
- ii. Ensure land availability and effective utilization including an accelerated land titling process.
- iii. Provision of adequate infrastructure, in particular, road and water systems, utilities, and other Information Communication Technologies.
- iv. Provide greater access to financing at a reasonable cost by considering the establishment of a Hemispheric Fund to provide Credit Guarantees for financial institutions, and to provide funding for rehabilitation after natural disasters.
- v. Strengthen risk mitigation mechanisms, including crop, livestock forestry and fisheries insurance at the national level.
- vi. Strengthen the legislative and enforcement mechanisms to combat Praedial Larceny.
- vii. Implement policies that will transform small and subsistence farming into Industrial Farming Enterprises by encouraging clustering and value chain programmes leading to the development of Industrial Farms.
- viii. Facilitate the introduction of more innovative financial methods such as the factoring of farmers receivables and greater equity participation.

Enhanced Marketing of Agri-Produce within the Framework of Trade Agreements

Recognizing that significant efforts have been made to negotiate various trade agreements, the Private Sector in the Hemisphere urges Governments to implement programmes and mechanisms to fully exploit the opportunities created by trade agreements.

We call on the Ministers to:

- i. Review the relevance and role of Commodity Boards in the context of a globalised world.
- ii. Establish a Hemispheric Agricultural Development Fund to support Agricultural and Agri-business development.

- iii. Improve the institutional capacity and coordinating mechanism of organisations involved in trade facilitation to ensure effective exploitation of opportunities created by trade agreements.

Conclusion

The Private Sector thanks the Ministers for this opportunity to participate in this Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting and we trust that our recommendations will be duly considered as we seek to forge an alliance for the further development of the Agriculture/Agri-business sector in the Hemisphere. We look forward to continued interaction in the form of the Private Sector Dialogue being a permanent feature of the Hemispheric Ministerial Meetings.

