



<p>JOINT WORKSHOP: ENABLING INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS WITHIN A GLOBAL CONTEXT</p>

<p>Rome, Italy 10 February 2017</p>
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<p>SUMMARY REPORT</p>

1. The Joint Workshop was held back- to- back with the meeting of the Steering Committee of GFAR and co-organized by GFAR and IICA Secretariats. The list of participants is contained in *Appendix 1*.
2. The American Region is characterized by having some of the most advanced agricultural research capabilities in the world. The Region produces the largest surpluses of food in the world, that compensate the food deficits encountered primarily in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Yet these comparative advantages are straining under threats such as climate change and diminishing water resources, the threats of transboundary pests, the nutritional implications of the production models adopted (both in under-nutrition and obesity), the control of markets, land and natural resources by forces distant from producers and on the wider scale, the implications of the rural exodus for the future of farming, food and the security of rural and urban societies themselves.
3. These challenges cannot be met by research knowledge alone. Turning new knowledge into impacts requires the full engagement of all those concerned with the future of agriculture and food in the region, and beyond, from farmers and consumers to CSO's, universities, the private sector and public research and extension agencies and policy bodies.
4. The aim of this Workshop was to discuss how, in practice, existing capacities could be better mobilized through Collective Actions in agri-food research and innovation, addressing the Region's key needs, and how the stakeholders can best contribute to GFAR's aims in an effective manner.

I. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

5. Mr. Victor Villalobos, Director General of IICA, opened the workshop, recalling the opportunity for participants to present different activities that the organizations dealing with innovation and agricultural research in the American Region are undertaking, and to identify ways and means to strengthen their cooperation both at the intergovernmental level with FAO and through joint actions among Partners in GFAR to face current challenges.

6. Mr. Juan Lucas Restrepo, Chair of GFAR highlighted the importance of this workshop to visualize the capacity and good plans of organizations in the American Region who need to work together and cooperate in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. He raised the need for enabling environments for true collaboration, dialogue and Collective Actions, as the only way to face the current challenges. Finally he reminded meeting of the roles of GFAR and IICA to bring different organizations together and move forward towards better governance for agri-food innovation and research.

7. Ms. Marcela Villarreal, Director of FAO's Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development, shared her strong belief that Collective Actions are the only way forward to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, bringing together different stakeholders and voices to discuss common issues and identify possible ways forward. She acknowledged the existing diversity in the American Region, calling for appreciation of that diversity and its different voices when finding innovation solutions that respond to the actual needs of users. Ms. Villarreal recalled that agriculture is mostly about smallholder farmers and emphasized the need to include them in the discussions and Collective Actions towards better innovation and agricultural research systems.

II. SETTING THE SCENE

8. Mr. Juan Lucas Restrepo, Chair of GFAR and Director General of CORPOICA, Colombia, shared the transformation his organization has gone through in the last couple of years. He highlighted the importance of increasing human capacity and noted the greatly increased number of researchers in CORPOICA holding a PhD degree. He also shared the need for making the team multi-disciplinary and involving the end-user as part of the knowledge and innovation development process. He also highlighted the need for organizations to recognize the role and contributions of other institutions and organizations in research and innovation processes and the need to link and work with them. CORPOICA is helping people get together, optimizing the relationships of different actors, acting as a player and supporting multi-stakeholder platforms. The communication strategy of CORPOICA was seen as very important, to share with others the work done and visualize the impact. CORPOICA has its own website page with more than 700,000 visits and uses social media tools, including facebook and twitter. His

presentation finished with the key message of the importance of working in networks and jointly with other relevant actors. His last slide showed more than 50 organizations, from different sectors, with whom CORPOICA has joined their capacity and resources towards innovation, research and development.

9. Mr. Victor Villalobos' presentation highlighted the main challenges of agriculture of the Americas; shared information regarding the current state of innovation in the Region; confirmed IICA's commitment to advance a hemispheric agenda in innovation for a competitive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture; and motivated the dialogue to find "innovative" ways to trigger sustainable innovation processes in the Americas. Regarding the situation of agriculture in the Americas, Mr. Villalobos reminded participants on the heterogeneity of the Region and the importance of family farming for food security in the Americas (17 million units are family farms, constituting 35% of cultivated land, 40% of the agricultural production and providing 64% of the rural employment). He showed information on the potential capacity of the Region in terms of agricultural services and its relevant role for global food security, on one hand, and yet the very low productivity growth in most of the American countries, soil degradation, water scarcity and lack of public financial investment on the other.

10. Mr. Villalobos explained the role of IICA and the mechanisms for technical cooperation in the American Region. The Inter-American Institution for Cooperation in Agriculture was established 75 years ago to support and encourage the efforts of its 35 Member States to achieve agricultural development and well-being for rural populations in the Region. As mechanisms for technical cooperation, he named the PROCIs; Fontagro and collaborative instruments including CIAO, COSAVE and the Innovagro Network.

11. Regarding areas of possible collaboration with other organizations in the Region, Mr. Villalobos mentioned:

- Recommendations and lobbying for agricultural innovation policies
- Strengthening innovation systems
- Building new paradigms for public and private financing
- Establishing bridges between different actors
- Supporting institutional and capacity building

12. Finally, he reminded that IICA facilitates dialogue, training and relations between different actors in all the countries of the Region and called for new and different sources of learning. In this regard, reference was made to several opportunities offered for obtaining advanced degrees in Mexico and technical short-term placements in IICA Member States. An example of a successful approach that could be replicated in other regions is the IICA-CONACYT scholarship program. Since 2012, this program has been offering between 100 and 300 scholarships per year to nationals of IICA Member Countries to pursue graduate studies in agriculture and related areas

in Mexican higher education institutions. At present, 961 students are participating in this program.

13. Ms. María Rodríguez, Secretary of FORAGRO explained the status and the reform and renewal of this Regional Forum, which, although originally conceived as an inclusive forum, has been largely driven by the focus of public research institutions. During her presentation, a brief history of the Forum was explained and some initiatives of FORAGRO were mentioned, including the promotion of hemispheric dialogue, capacity building and exchange of ideas and political presence. Ms. Rodríguez shared the view of the new FORAGRO as a more inclusive forum, facing the challenge of securing the participation and representativeness of the multiple stakeholder groups of the Region's research and innovation systems.

14. She also shared the characteristics of the renewed FORAGRO, including its guiding principles: the need to strengthen its role as a Forum, adding and combining people and organizations with specific expertise to discuss issues of mutual interest; be a unique organization, relevant and useful to its stakeholders; represent and ensure active participation; have a strong link with a technically and politically recognized Inter-American institution - IABA; new vision and mission.

15. Ms. Rodríguez also explained the renewed functions of FORAGRO, being to: act as a catalyst and promoter of improvements, raise awareness, inform and advocate with political and technical bodies, including governments, academic sector, private sector and civil society, in support of agricultural research, development and innovation and fair access to its benefits to respond to the needs of the agricultural sector and rural communities in the Americas; generate and exchange relevant information and knowledge on priority research, development and innovation-related issues to support decision-making processes by policymakers and stakeholders; and facilitate inclusive mechanisms to improve representation of its stakeholder groups.

16. The new FORAGRO is characterized also by a more inclusive governance, better articulation with regional mechanisms and bodies and as a space for multiple national, regional and global actors. Finally, she described FORAGRO's role as a Partner and Steering Committee member in GFAR, highlighting: how the American Region is represented in GFAR's governance model; IICA as sponsor of FORAGRO and regional cooperation mechanisms and itself a partner in GFAR; how GFAR, through FORAGRO's work, can support Collective Actions in the Americas and beyond; and how IICA and FORAGRO can contribute to the achievement of GFAR outcomes.

17. After Ms. Rodríguez' presentation, Ms. Audia Barnett representing PROCINORTE made a presentation on the regional platform, being a mechanism for sharing knowledge among the three countries of scientific excellence in agriculture in North America. After noting PROCINORTE's mission and vision, Ms. Barnett explained that based on the areas of trilateral interest, task forces of PROCINORTE currently focused on: plant health; animal health; genetic resources and tree fruits. She reminded participants of the strategic objectives of PROCINORTE: share knowledge on agreed

priority themes by mobilizing public sector researchers and scientists, incorporate science for regulation when appropriate; strengthen mutually supportive regional networks in priority topics of relevance for agricultural trade; and contribute to deliberations of regional/hemispheric agricultural science and technology bodies, in particular FORAGRO, GFAR, GCARD and the G20 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists. In addition, she indicated that PROCINORTE's strategic plan 2015-2020, confirmed focusing on priorities shared among Canada, Mexico and the United States; continuing its catalytic role in knowledge sharing between researchers and regulators from member organizations; creating a platform to mobilize knowledge from the three scientific centers of excellence for the benefit of other countries in the hemisphere; and contributing to agricultural dialogue through appropriate policy bodies as specific themes for the platform.

18. Ms. Barnett finished her presentation by stating that PROCINORTE, recognizing the need to be more visible, had initiated a Communication Strategy. Similarly, it was preparing to adopt, monitoring and evaluation system, as it consolidates its role as a mechanism for dialogue and as it seeks to overcome financial limitations. Based on the nature of the Task Forces, the work of PROCINORTE was said to be focused in specific technical areas.

III. MEETING THE NEEDS OF FARMERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE AMERICAS

19. Mr. Fernando López, of COPROFAM, a sub-regional farmer organization, highlighted the diversity of the American Region in terms of its agricultural diversity and cultural diversity. He also recalled the importance of family farming and the challenges it faces, including land tenure and natural resources being held by a few people. Another challenge identified by Mr. López was regarding the technological gap, which tends to be focused on value chains, not on productive systems. Other challenges identified included climate change, the need to recognize and give more value to family farming, support farmers to participate in market chains and value-added projects. However, the Region has platforms and participation mechanisms that could be improved to discuss these gaps and challenges, for example CAC in Central America. He also mentioned platforms that are being supported by IFAD and IICA, jointly with some governments.

20. There have been some experiences of joint activities between farmers in the Region, including the exchange of experiences and information between farmers from Central and South America in family farming systems; marketing and value addition. Other experiences for technological evaluation, with the participation of farmers, were mentioned by Mr. López, including the biological control of fruit pests and the development of impact indicators for livestock.

21. He mentioned the importance of South-South cooperation, access to information and knowledge management. According to his constituency, the only way innovation

can be owned by family farmers is if it is framed by policies in which research, extension, technology transfer, rural development and sustainability are the main elements. Research and innovation must be participatory and their impact indicators need to include not only economic indicators, but also cultural and social indicators, to evaluate if agricultural research and innovation really improve the livelihoods of farmers. On the other hand, farmers must be empowered to participate in decision-making processes and influence research agendas at national and international levels.

22. Ms. Maria Giulia de Castro, from the World Farmers' Organization, set out WFO's mission: to represent and advocate on behalf of farmers and to create the conditions for the adoption of policies aimed to improve the economic environment and livelihood of producers, their families, and rural communities. She also mentioned that the aim of the WFO is to bring together farmers' organizations and agricultural cooperatives from all over the world, representing the global farmer community.

23. The World Farmers' Organization supports farmers in helping them to access markets, knowledge, credit, among others. In terms of innovation, the main challenges faced by farmers are the lack of empowerment in rural areas; the obstacles for accessing markets and information.

24. As examples of GFAR Collective Actions with the participation of WFO, Ms. De Castro mentioned a workshop held on fostering Innovation in agriculture to improve inclusive trade in the farming sector, as well as a joint action for direct seeding to adapt to climate change. She finally stated that multi-stakeholder joint actions were the only way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

VI. STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS

25. Mr. Karim Hussein, GFRAS Executive Secretary, recalled that GFRAS is a global forum on extension and rural advisory services (RAS). RAS act as brokers and facilitators of the sharing of new technologies, practices, and knowledge in agricultural innovation systems. GFRAS was created as a global network in 2010, with support from SDC, GFAR, FAO, country and regional institutions and others. Its overall aim is to enhance the performance and strengthen the roles of RAS so that they can better serve family farmers and rural producers. In this way RAS contributing to improved livelihoods in rural areas and the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty. Rural advisory services aim to empower farmers and better integrate them in systems of agricultural innovation. GFRAS has 16 regional networks as members and some 35 country fora across the world. These include more than 400 members from 17 countries and 9 country fora that are part of the regional network RELASER: the Red Latinoamericana de Servicios de Extensión Rural, created in October 2010, in Santiago de Chile.

Mr. Hussein identified the following needs: research and agricultural extension benefit from working together, and in a relationship of equals within an innovation systems framework – not in the old linear technology transfer mode from research to extension to farmer. Therefore, it is a need to strengthen the relationship of actors in the agricultural sector and farming systems and to strengthen the capacities of RAS at the levels of the policy and enabling environment, institutions and organisations, and individual capacities. There is a need to work in a collaborative manner, linking different actors, including linking advisory services and researchers via innovation platforms. The GFRAS regional networks and country fora are existing innovation platforms that should be built on and strengthened with the participation of other actors in the agricultural innovation system (see www.g-fras.org for more).

26. Mr. John Kennelly, President of GCHERA, raised the question of how different organizations could solve current challenges for which no one single solution is sufficient as they are collective problems. He emphasized we have to work differently, addressing these issues collectively. Innovation should respond to change. It is important to consider how individuals respond and have the capacity to respond to these problems. How are we preparing individuals to solve these challenges? The education system is one of them. As the problems we are facing are global, the education system needs to be global in nature: able to interact and get a better understanding of those problems. Education should provide an environment where individuals can really be well prepared and be drivers of change. One way is by sharing best practices. Mr. Kennelly informed that GCHERA wants to start a pilot study where they want to engage several universities to share best practices and engage in studies and capacity development in terms of leaderships, values, ethics, etc. Universities would commit and partner with GCHERA and partners to cross-review curricula that need to be changed. IICA could be a good partner in this initiative as they can help to identify universities and provide support. It is time to create a learning environment where students develop leadership, partnership, etc.

27. Mr. Villalobos from IICA noted that some universities are reluctant to change their curricula, in the same way as some farmers don't want to change. It is attached to culture. How to make the change? We need to bring young people from other expertise and professions to agricultural education programmes.

28. Mr. Keron Bascombe, representing Tech4Agri, a young professionals' platform for research and innovation, shared a video on youth entrepreneurs. He reminded participants that young people's needs are very different from other groups, however they all share something in common: the will to learn and work with others. Young people in agriculture need financial support, access to credit and technology. Education should be more diverse, with different fields of studies and be more flexible. Young people wish to actively participate from the beginning through to the end in research and innovation processes.

29. Mr. Bascombe identified as a Collective Action a project developed with YPARD for mentor's capacity face to face. He also identified the need to better show the work

of his organization and called for joint inclusive and participatory actions between different organizations and stakeholder groups.

30. Mr. Andrea Sonnino of the Tropical Agricultural Platform (TAP) identified the lack of capacity to support agricultural innovation as a need in low-income tropical countries. He explained that TAP is a multilateral facilitation mechanism that promotes greater coherence and impact through capacity development for agricultural innovation systems. Mr. Sonnino noted that TAP promotes a shift of mind-set and attitudes; provides concepts, principles and approaches to better understand the agricultural innovation systems architecture; access capacity development needs; plan and implement capacity interventions; and provide documentation and knowledge for enabling agricultural innovation. TAP promotes capacity to address complex situations, capacity for collaboration; capacity for reflection and learning and capacity to engage in decision-making processes. He explained the Tapipedia Knowledge Hub, which allows partners and other stakeholders to share their capacity development for agricultural innovation systems initiatives and resources.

31. Ms. Mercedes López, of Vía Orgánica explained projects held by her organization, relevant for health and nutrition food; consumers' rights for information, etc.

V. FINAL DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

32. After presentations, participants had the opportunity to discuss and try to identify possible Collective Actions and partnerships in the American Region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in the framework of the **key priority areas**¹ agreed by GFAR's Steering Committee.

33. Discussions in the meeting emphasized the value of working in innovation platforms, as the one-specialization work cannot lead to the targeted development impacts. For innovation platforms to succeed, innovative communication is also needed and need to be made available to parties.

34. The value of agricultural transformative higher education and post-graduate education together with youth leadership and enterprise development was emphasized as vital to addressing rural challenges and attracting youth to agriculture and rural communities development.

35. According to IICA, FORAGRO, GCHERA and other organizations' capacity and expertise in the Region, joint Collective Actions supporting *transformative learning and youth leadership development* could be developed. A meeting, or webinars with leaders of identified projects and other relevant actors were proposed as a first step, to explain the ongoing activities and identify the resources available.

36. Another key priority area in which Collective Actions could be identified and developed in the Region is "*Enabling sustainable rural enterprise*". Practical examples could be shared as a first step among different Regional organizations.

37. Participants agreed on the need to identify organizations in the Region that can partner in Collective Actions. Ambition needs to be big, but activities must be very practical and concrete. Real engagement of all the partners is crucial.

38. Suggested areas of collaboration between IICA and other partners included supporting effective policies on agricultural innovation; building typologies for public, private and producer partnerships; exploring opportunities to retain brains in rural communities and institutional capacity development.

39. One of the activities discussed was to promote policy dialogue at sub-regional level and here the involvement of IICA and FORAGRO is key. Key capacities identified would be important to engage farmers in policy-making processes (*empowering local*

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- Enable and empower sustainable rural communities
- Increasing knowledge flow for development impact
- Supporting transformative learning and youth leadership development
- Changing value systems and metrics to deliver the SDGs
- Enabling sustainable rural enterprise

communities). This important issue needs collaboration and synergies among different partners in the Region.

40. Some of the specific suggestions made for Collective Actions discussed, included the exchange of experiences from IICA's partnership with CONACYT in providing opportunities for students to study at Mexican universities and the possibility of such a model being replicated in other countries in the Americas Region. Participants also discussed the importance of internship programs as a means to provide international experience for students for which IICA could potentially take the lead in developing such programs in other countries.

41. It was agreed to hold a Joint Webinar with the participation of different partners on empowerment of rural communities through women and youth enterprise development bringing in the experience of 14 countries in the Americas with rural communities who made the path from producer to market. Another webinar was agreed on transformative learning and student leadership development. Both webinars are expected to held in Spring 2017.

42. Ms Audia Barnett expressed her satisfaction with the workshop and said she would be reporting favorably to PROCINORTE Board of Directors to inform their decision regarding formalizing the link as mobilizing and representing North American science into GFAR.

43. Mr. Mark Holderness, from GFAR Secretariat and Mr. Victor Villalobos from IICA closed the workshop highlighting that, the more we talk, the more we see opportunities to work together. The co-organizers appreciated the time and willingness of participants to work together in closing this meeting. Good intentions should now go beyond this meeting and be transformed into practical Collective Actions.

APPENDIX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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