



Volume 86, Number 1

Thursday, 5 June 2003

## A SUMMARY REPORT FROM THE MEXICO ACTION SUMMIT ON-LINE COVERAGE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/SD/SDMEX/](http://WWW.IISD.CA/SD/SDMEX/)

### SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEXICO ACTION SUMMIT: POVERTY, AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY: A CALL TO ACTION

2-3 JUNE 2003

The Mexico Action Summit convened in Mexico City, Mexico, from 2-3 June 2003. Approximately 200 participants representing governments and public agencies, international organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting, which was organized by the Monterrey Bridge Coalition and the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC). The meeting was held under the patronage of President of Mexico Vicente Fox and the Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, the Mexican Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, and the Mexican Secretariat of Social Development.

The Mexico Action Summit is part of the continuing global momentum for sustainable development, spanning the UN Millennium Summit, the Doha Development Round, the Monterrey Conference, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the G8 and the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Cancun Ministerial Conference and beyond. Participants at the Mexico Action Summit explored how increased food production to feed the rural poor can be made compatible with natural resource management and biodiversity stewardship. Participants also examined how international trade and domestic subsidy policies can be reformed to make sustainable development possible. The meeting provided an action plan for cooperation between business, governments, multilateral institutions and civil society from developing and developed countries, calling the G8 and other leaders to act now to address hunger and poverty while protecting and restoring the world's natural environment for future generations.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MEXICO ACTION SUMMIT

In September 2000, the UN Millennium Summit, held in New York, US, adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), setting targets for, *inter alia*, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality,

reducing child mortality, combating disease and ensuring environmental sustainability. The eight MDGs comprise 18 targets and 48 indicators and are universally accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. To support the MDGs, the UN launched the Millennium Project in 2002. Over a period of three years, the Millennium Project intends to devise a plan of implementation to allow developing countries to meet the MDG targets by 2015.

The UN International Conference on Financing for Development was held in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, with the goal to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development while advancing to a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system. The Monterrey Conference marked the first quadripartite exchange of views between governments, civil society, the business community and institutional stakeholders on global economic issues. The final Monterrey Consensus provides the new global approach to financing development. The Consensus recognizes the dramatic shortfalls in resources necessary to achieve the international development goals, including the MDGs, and the need to mobilize and increase the effective use of financial resources. It addresses the need for a new partnership between developed and developing countries, including commitments to mobilize domestic resources, attract international flows, promote international trade as an engine for development, and increase international financial and technical cooperation for development, sustainable debt financing and external debt relief. It further states that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, and that globalization should be fully inclusive and equitable.

Challenging countries to uphold promises made at the Monterrey Conference, the Monterrey Bridge Coalition was created in 2002 by the Future Harvest Foundation, which is an initiative created by the 16 Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The Coalition is a multi-year, multi-sector initiative undertaken to build strong, mutually supportive linkages between sustainable agricultural production, biodiversity protection and trade policies, to fight global hunger and poverty. It aims to include environmental, trade, hunger and poverty interests, business and finance sectors and governmental actors at all

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levels. Focusing on policy and implementation strategies that will reduce hunger and poverty and provide stewardship for the earth's biodiversity, it is based on two concepts: that sustainable and adequate food production is consistent with sustainable protection of biodiversity and natural resource management; and that meeting the MDGs for food security, poverty reduction and biodiversity protection can only be achieved by an integrated effort.

In November 2002, the Monterrey Bridge Coalition held a strategic planning session at the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, US. Participants agreed that the outcomes of the WSSD, the UN Millennium Summit and the Monterrey Conference lack the specificity to mobilize adequate global support for their realization, and decided to organize the Mexico Action Summit to produce specific recommendations for progress. Participants further agreed that the Future Harvest Foundation would act as the secretariat for the Coalition.

### **REPORT OF THE MEETING**

Under its overarching theme of "Poverty, Agriculture and Biodiversity: A Call to Action," the Mexico Action Summit included sessions on: the international context: trade and development; food production and biodiversity; hunger, poverty and biodiversity; and partnerships – working together for a sustainable future. It also included a number of keynote presentations, a roundtable on agriculture and rural development in the policy mainstream and a concluding session focused on a call to action.

#### **OPENING SESSION**

Robert Thompson, IPC Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Highlighting the MDG to cut poverty by half by 2015, he stressed the challenges to enhance investment in rural development and double agricultural productivity while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. He also underscored participation of the poor in the benefits of trade liberalization.

Masa Iwanaga, Director General of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), highlighted Mexico as the home of the Green Revolution, saying the country's vision of well-being for its people through improvements in agriculture has become a new international development paradigm. He stressed the value of international agricultural research for improving the livelihoods of the poor and for fostering environmentally sustainable agriculture. He concluded that change is impossible without international political action and recalled the meeting's objective to develop an action plan that could be heard and acted upon.

Victor Lichtinger, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, stressed linking different international goals and taking them into consideration when developing domestic policies. He also highlighted the need for linkages between poverty and environmental degradation, and for environmentally sustainable agriculture. Noting that trade subsidies impact livelihoods in developing countries, he underlined the challenge to ensure access to international markets for marginalized farmers. He underscored that biodiversity should be used for the benefit of local communities, and called for balancing the advantages and risks of biotechnology for the benefit of people in developing countries.

#### **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES: POVERTY, AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY: A CALL TO ACTION**

Ahmed Mohamed Hamani, Prime Minister of Mali, highlighted increasing poverty and environmental degradation and downward trends in African food production and international financing for agricultural development. He called for a reduction in trade distortions and for implementation of prior international commitments. He also acknowledged the need for African countries to create the conditions for proper use of new resources through good governance and the establishment of strong legal frameworks.

Susan Whelan, Canada's Minister for International Cooperation, underscored the loss of dignity for many developing country farmers from failing to meet their families' basic needs. Noting the degradation of natural resources that threatens the livelihoods of the poor and agriculture as a driving force of economic growth in developing countries, she reported on a Canadian initiative to combat poverty and hunger, highlighting the country's increase in international assistance and its investments in the agricultural sector.

Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize winner (Mexico), highlighted the history of the Green Revolution. He said that Mexico achieved self-sufficiency in wheat from 1956 until the 1970s, while new food production technologies have saved 1.1 billion hectares of forest since 1950. He advocated use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for developing countries, to increase nutritional quality and heighten resistance to insects and disease, herbicides and abiotic stresses. He noted GMOs' potential for reducing the use of insecticides and allowing small farmers to cultivate more land without animals.

#### **SESSION I: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

Judith Symonds, Executive Director of the Future Harvest Foundation, introduced Piet Bulkman, the session's moderator. Bulkman, Vice-Chairman of the IPC and Chairman of EuronAid (the Netherlands), said that the approaching WTO Ministerial Conference will have a fundamental impact on hunger and poverty eradication policies.

Luis de la Calle, Mexico's former trade negotiator, stressed that trade can make a positive contribution to development through expanding markets, lowering the cost of production and reducing risk. He then made some suggestions to turn the Doha round into a development round. He recommended that developing countries move from a defensive to an offensive agenda, reach domestic consensus, and abandon mercantilism. He also stressed market access, removal of subsidies, and clear leadership in favor of free trade. He proposed simplifying trade rules and providing capacity building not only for negotiating but for implementing the agreements to gain market access.

Pedro de Camargo, Brazil's former agricultural trade negotiator, noted that the WTO Ministerial Conference will face a serious confrontation between developed countries, while developing countries will demand substantial progress. He underscored that the value of trade as a development instrument is recognized, and that trade distortions have to be eliminated. He underlined the problems subsidies cause for the developing world, especially Africa, and urged developed countries to remove them.

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Raul Montemayor, Business Manager, Philippine Farmers Union, compared the situation of small farmers in developing countries to that of "pinweight boxers" fighting a strong Mike Tyson who cheats. Noting that there is no alternative to the current international trading system, he said governments should work to increase the competitiveness of their small farmers while the international trading system should provide special treatment for developing countries and rectify distortions resulting from subsidies in developed countries. He said trade rules should enable everyone to survive and win.

Mark Ritchie, President, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, noted prior warnings of the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that the Uruguay round would hurt the poorest farmers. He highlighted the current crisis in world trade negotiations and promoted ongoing efforts to organize trade specifically to benefit the poor rather than exploit them. He urged countries to focus on dumping - selling a product on the international market for less than its production costs - within the WTO rather than complain about developed country subsidies. He warned that global institutions founded to promote social and economic justice are under threat from American unilateralism as well as civil society discontent, and called for their reform, renewal and rejuvenation.

Opening participant discussion, Bulkman noted that liberalization and increased market access cannot fight poverty unless combined with domestic agricultural policies in developing countries. Participants addressed the environmental implications of trade liberalization, potential anti-dumping measures from developing countries, and the "molecular divide" between developed and developing countries regarding biotechnology development.

On anti-dumping, de Camargo said the solution is not cultivating duties but eliminating distortions internationally, including by use of WTO procedures. Montemayor noted that dumping is difficult to prove and there is no penalty other than paying the price difference, and called on dumpers to examine the morality of such action. On modern biotechnology, Ritchie stressed the need for new institutions to fill the gaps in the global system. De la Calle noted the lack of a civilized debate on the potential advantages of biotechnology for developing countries, and said those countries seeking to export should not ignore it.

One participant distinguished costs of agricultural production in various countries from standardized OECD figures. Another announced the consensus of a recent IPC meeting that developed country subsidies must be reduced or eliminated and that developing countries need more rural investment and reform of their agriculture sectors. One participant questioned how to adjust who wins and who loses from elimination of subsidies, while another raised the issue of non-tariff barriers (NTBs).

De Camargo cautioned against addressing NTBs before the issues of dumping and tariffs have been resolved. Ritchie noted current animal and human health issues that may constitute new NTBs to be addressed in the future. Regarding potential benefits of trade liberalization, he argued that the Uruguay round did not liberalize trade overall, and highlighted new initiatives to liberalize the coffee trade that may improve prices, quality and sustainability of production methods in the future. De la Calle recommended that countries not ready to undertake disciplines required by the WTO should not attempt them. He emphasized that small countries should not compete directly with developed coun-

tries but produce products in which they have comparative advantages. Montemayor noted that developed country farm subsidies exist to maintain farmers' lifestyles. He said that developed countries have the right to provide these subsidies, but that developing countries should have the right to assist farmers hurt by them.

One participant stressed the need to invest in capacity building, secure funds for agriculture, and deal with rural poverty through not only agriculture but also structural adjustment. De Camargo and Montemayor highlighted lack of income in developing countries and noted that removal of subsidies would provide development opportunities. Ritchie expressed confusion about future food needs, noting there are overfed as well as underfed in the world. He also recalled that the WTO is supposed to set trade rules rather than tear down previously set ones. Bulkman concluded the session, outlining that in the short run trade liberalization should work to the benefit of developing countries, while in the long run it should be accompanied by domestic agricultural policies.

## **SESSION II: FOOD PRODUCTION AND BIODIVERSITY**

This session commenced with a keynote presentation by Pedro Sanchez, World Food Prize Laureate 2002 (US). Sanchez stressed that Africa has the lowest agricultural productivity in the tropics, the region's major problem being soil fertility depletion. He reported on the Millennium Project, which seeks to develop a business plan to achieve the MDGs. He outlined six critical policies to combat poverty, as developed by Jeffrey Sachs, which include: investing in human development; raising agricultural productivity among small holders; reaching an adequate threshold of infrastructure; creating a sound investment environment for manufacturing for export; empowering poor people through participation and democratic governance; and protecting ecosystems. He stressed that only eight per cent of the world's hungry populations are victims of extreme events, while the vast majority suffer from chronic malnutrition. Presenting the strategy of the Hunger Task Force of the Millennium Project, Sanchez underscored one overarching issue, restoring agriculture as the engine of economic growth. He also outlined three community-level entry points, including drastically increasing agricultural productivity, making rural markets work for the poor and improving the nutritional status of malnourished children. He stressed that biotechnology applications and removal of subsidies should not be addressed as priorities for combating hunger.

Participants highlighted animal production, fertilizer subsidies, soil fertility and the need for native species. Sanchez responded that soil fertility impacts animal production, which affects nutrition and well-being. He noted the World Bank's elimination of fertilizer subsidies as one reason for soil depletion in the 1980s, and stressed government policy-making on water management and replenishment.

The session on food production and biodiversity was moderated by Hans Jöhr, Assistant Vice President, Nestlé (Switzerland). Jöhr highlighted competition between increasing food needs and biodiversity and the role of science and technology in helping to meet demands and enhance biodiversity.

Jorge Soberón, Director, CONABIO (Mexico), stated that agriculture evolved from a long history of genetic, ecological and cultural diversity. He noted that traditional farming still maintains the evolu-

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tionary process based on genetic variation, and warned that genetic diversity is being actively eroded by many mechanisms. He highlighted the need for agricultural sustainability and productivity as well as the need to link biotechnology to the needs of non-industrial farmers rather than to big industries' interest in short-term profits.

Siphiwe Mkhize, Minister for Agriculture, Embassy of South Africa in the US, discussed the Agricultural Development Programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He explained that NEPAD represents a holistic initiative for the economic and social revival of Africa, and is based on a common vision and conviction that it is Africa's duty to eradicate poverty, move on a path of sustainable growth and development, and participate actively in the world's economy. Noting that the Agricultural Programme is at the implementation stage, he stressed the goal of eliminating hunger, poverty and food insecurity, and the recognition of agriculture as the engine of economic growth. He highlighted challenges and opportunities for agricultural development in Africa, such as ensuring that natural resources serve as the basis for economic growth, which will result in sustainable participation in the global economy, and improving the systems' resilience by tackling the degradation of natural resources and biodiversity erosion.

Nancoma Kéita, Minister of Environment of Mali, underscored that natural resource management is related to education for local people and presupposes meeting their needs regarding health, drinking water and energy supply. He said natural resource management is a necessary condition for farmers' survival and called for education projects.

Raymond Offenheiser, President, Oxfam America, stressed that the Cancun WTO Ministerial Conference will fail unless it puts development at the centre of trade agreements. He said this would require abandoning rigged trade rules and double standards that favour the rich, and designing rules that explicitly empower the poor. He also noted that trade agreements should eliminate subsidies that promote overproduction and dumping to the detriment of producers in developing countries. Finally, he suggested eight concrete actions for developed country governments including: agreeing to a clear schedule for phasing out agricultural subsidies that facilitate dumping; extending duty-free access to all lower income countries; adopting stronger disciplines on the use of food aid through more specific guidelines for WTO compliance and stronger FAO monitoring capacities; becoming more disciplined regarding domestic subsidies that affect production and international trade; avoiding the export of subsidized products; allowing developing countries to use additional duties until trade distorting support is eliminated; agreeing to clear provisions allowing governments to issue licences for the import of generic drugs; and removing investment from the Doha round.

One participant commented that development problems are created by and in developing countries. Offenheiser agreed, but noted the lack of loans for agriculture, as well as a highly deteriorated institutional context. He said that trade is not the exclusive answer, but that governments need revenue flows to pursue development policies. On a participant's remark regarding European subsidies, he stressed the need for developing countries to organize and announce clearly that if there is no agreement on agriculture, there will be no trade round.

José Luis Solleiro, Director General, AgroBIO (Mexico), addressed biotechnology's potential contribution to sustainable agriculture, given a projected doubling of population and tripling of food demand in 40 years. He called for an agricultural revolution with new technologies to permit, *inter alia*, improved water management, risk management and restoration of soil fertility. He stressed benefits GMOs can provide to humanity, such as recuperating soils, rescuing threatened species, domesticating wild species, reproducing superior specimens, producing biodegradable pesticides, and generating species resistant to pests and pathogens, environmental factors and climate extremes.

Questions focused on the usefulness of biotechnology for small farmers, the encouragement of accelerated recombinations of genetic pools in the future, the treatment of expenditures on soil fertility as investments rather than subsidies, and the maintenance of genetic diversity through public transfers for peasant agriculture.

Solleiro commented that governments must spearhead effective agriculture policies to improve biotechnology's usefulness to everyone. Soberón denied a general risk from transfers of genetic material between very different organisms. Sanchez noted potential benefits to peasant communities and soil from carbon sequestration projects under the Kyoto Protocol. Jöhr asked how to align goodwill and resources to match the objectives set out at this conference. Sanchez noted the world's consensus on the MDGs of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability and partnership for development. He urged that these goals be mainstreamed and noted an emerging convergence on the need to tackle poverty and hunger among some biotechnology companies. He stressed that although fertilizers should be reduced, they are needed; pesticides are not.

### **ROUNDTABLE: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE POLICY MAINSTREAM**

Carol Kramer-LeBlanc, Director, Research and Scientific Exchanges Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, US Department of Agriculture, introduced the session on agriculture and rural development. She asked panelists how policies and incentive structures could lead to enhanced rural development, productivity, incomes and biodiversity, and how agricultural, rural development and biodiversity advocates can make their voices heard.

G. Edward Schuh, Director, Freeman Center for International Economic Policy, University of Minnesota, US, stressed agricultural and rural development within macro-economic policy and the larger global economy. He noted that macro-economic issues hindering agricultural modernization include manufacturing sector protection, export taxes and currency overvaluation, as well as lack of subsidies for inputs to agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. He said that as a result, human capital migrates away from agriculture, leaving disproportionate poverty in rural areas.

Chelston Braithwaite, Director General, IICA, stressed that agriculture must be seen as contributing to food security, social stability and environmental conservation, and called for integrating the economic and political dimensions of development. He urged movement away from mitigation and management of environmental externalities toward recognition of the value of environmental services and the opportunities to develop environmental services markets. Outlining IICA's new

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efforts to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas, he stressed the need to move from the agricultural to the territorial economy, and from participation to cooperation mechanisms. He emphasized the need to take a holistic approach to territorial development, while mobilizing resources for the rural sector.

Csaba Csaki, Senior Policy Advisor, World Bank, presented on the World Bank Rural Development Strategy, acknowledging declining interest in agriculture among the lending and donor institutions and reaffirming the World Bank's commitment to agriculture. He noted a shift in emphasis toward a focus on poverty and the rural poor that addresses all components of rural space and elements of rural life. He supported trade liberalization and reduction of subsidies as essential conditions for agricultural growth in the developing world, but prioritized the policy and institutional environment, noting that subsidy reduction will not help unless developing countries pursue institutional reform and adjustment programmes, such as land reform.

Philippe Vialatte, Principal Administrator, Directorate-General Development, European Commission, discussed the European Community's agriculture and rural development policy. He highlighted the Community's new approaches to rural development, from a focus on individual projects to a new integrated focus on poverty reduction, food security and natural resource management. He noted the difficulty of achieving policy coherence between development and other EC priorities such as trade, the common agricultural policy (CAP), the common fisheries policy and consumer protection standards. He stressed that few EC resources can be allocated to rural development in developing countries if recipient countries do not include it in their own poverty reduction strategies.

Participants underlined the risk of romanticizing small farmers, the incompatibility of the CAP and global poverty reduction goals, and the experience of sub-Saharan Africa with macro-economic reforms. Schuh commented that migration policy is unpopular with politicians as it can entail loss of constituency, but that trade negotiations cannot make progress until labor migration and adjustment issues are addressed. He stressed that rural development must include non-farm activities. He remarked that subsidies for fertilizers in Africa had been a good policy but that other problems also exist, such as lack of adequate transport systems and financial intermediaries to lend money for farm inputs.

Vialatte noted that promotion of international commodity agreements and the CAP are policy coherence issues, but bureaucrats working in different areas in the EC are now gaining awareness on the consequences of their policies elsewhere. Csaki observed that fertilizer subsidies in Africa had disappeared because they were paid from the World Bank's International Development Assistance funds and countries have different priorities for those funds. He called for a broad dialogue on this issue and expressed hope for NEPAD's success.

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Ambassador Sheila Sisulu, Deputy Director, World Food Program (WFP), spoke on the links between HIV/AIDS, poverty and hunger. She stressed that food is the first "medicine" for survival of HIV/AIDS victims. She added that with increasing urbanization, poverty is no longer rural and subsistence farmers cannot feed everyone. She stated that the global problem is not insufficient food but unequal access;

meanwhile, worldwide incomes are more polarized than ever before. She noted little progress toward reducing poverty and hunger and called for increased efforts to feed the poor, combat HIV/AIDS, and protect the world environment and human life.

Responding to participants' questions, Sisulu highlighted the WFP's stringent process for targeting the most needy, their efforts to purchase food locally, and the requirement for donor governments to cover the cost of moving food to the recipients. She noted FAO and WFP contributions to the WTO regarding trade and food insecurity, and stressed the need to intensify agricultural education at the school level.

### **SESSION III: HUNGER, POVERTY AND BIODIVERSITY**

Ricardo Sanchez, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNEP, called elimination of poverty a crucial form of environmental protection. For ecosystems of high importance, he advocated sustainable production methods rather than protected area "islands." He highlighted investment to create employment and high value added products without use of more natural resources. He also called for urban agriculture programmes to help feed city dwellers and generate employment, and for distribution systems to link sustainable production, particularly among indigenous communities, to outside markets.

Sarah Scherr, Director, Ecoagriculture Partners (US) and Senior Advisor, Future Harvest Foundation, commenced the session by giving a global overview on biodiversity, poverty and agriculture.

Alexander Ray Love, Executive Committee, Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, introduced the Partnership's efforts, stressing its strong African participation. He addressed the radical decline in development assistance targeted to the agricultural sector and related infrastructure, and highlighted the Partnership's success in shifting this trend. He emphasized the impacts of the AIDS epidemic, and noted that focusing on good performance countries would ignore most of the hungry people who are not located in such countries.

Rolando Perez, Managing Director, Latin American Capital (US), spoke on transferring mechanisms from Northern capital markets to the South for the benefit of farmers. He said the Uruguay round created the ability to bring the financing techniques of the North to the agriculture sector of the South through *de facto* "dollarization" of crops in Latin America. He explained that farmers with no access to other credit can obtain financing for crops produced for domestic markets through the commodity asset-backed financial trade.

Koji Yamanaka, Senior Adviser, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), highlighted unfavorable African statistics for rural poverty, productivity, food supply, resource sustainability and government action in the agriculture sector. He outlined JICA's aims in Africa, including small-scale rural development, improvement of security, prevention of desertification in semi-arid areas, extension support for farmers, improvement of rural infrastructure, and integration of biodiversity into all activities surrounding rural development. He described one success story that provides lessons on appropriate small-scale techniques for irrigation, aquaculture, and prevention of erosion.

Martha Isabel Ruiz Corso, Regional Coordinator, Project Conservación de la Biodiversidad de la Reserva de la Biosfera Sierra Gorda (Mexico), reported on ongoing efforts in the Sierra Gorda natural reserve, noting the challenge to reconcile conservation of natural

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resources and social development of the local communities. Emphasizing the need to establish a new paradigm of rural sustainable development, she outlined education and reforestation efforts, a programme addressed to women, efforts to diversify production skills and activities aimed at community involvement. She underscored the need for civil society organization, establishment of local initiatives, governance from the ground up, mechanisms for compensation, and development of a regional alternative economy.

Participants' questions focused on the potential application of micro-credit and financial mechanisms to Sierra Gorda and on small farmers and enterprises. One participant suggested establishing food banks in Mexico. Scherr asked for specific suggestions on how the private sector can contribute to the proposed "connected approach" to biodiversity protection and poverty elimination.

Love noted a real opportunity for the private sector to assist in analyzing the current hunger situation and stressed that technology and credit issues have to be addressed simultaneously. Noting the need for special treatment for agricultural companies, Sanchez said the financial sector has the capacity to mobilize national economies, while the non-financial sector can address conditions such as climate change. He also highlighted the risk for successful Costa Rican afforestation efforts to fail because of lack of funding.

Participants highlighted the status of women in successful rural programmes and rural development policies, the potential for interaction between rural agriculture and poverty programmes in micro-regions and the need to accumulate success stories to build real progress. Ruiz Corso observed that there is much goodwill at the local level if communities are approached correctly, and predicted that success stories could be replicated easily. She said institutions and policies are generally positive for women but communities sometimes need interlocutors in order to understand and take advantage of them.

Love called for concrete on-the-ground approaches to demonstrate successful uses of financing. He noted there is financing available for HIV/AIDS programmes and that programmes using this financing should be multidisciplinary, not just directed at public health. He stressed that available financing should be refocused and rationalized.

Sanchez noted that investment in recovering lost productive capacity is expensive, but that recovery can occur within seven years given a true opening of agricultural markets. He urged that payments for environmental services be considered comprehensively. He commented that urban agriculture will entail a great technical and scientific research effort to ensure success.

Each speaker then specified key recommendations for the conference's proposed Call to Action. Yamanaka stressed the integration of biodiversity into all sustainable rural agriculture development activities. Perez highlighted the value of agricultural commodities as a partial solution for providing adequate financing. Love emphasized coherent strategies and policies, including on trade liberalization, subsidy reductions, and interactions between environmental and other policies. Ruiz Corso emphasized local community participation and prioritization of their needs and aims. Sanchez highlighted future scenarios of high urban and agricultural vulnerability and the need for investment in human health along with agriculture and biodiversity.

Miguel Székely, Mexico's Undersecretary of Prospection, Planification and Evaluation, Secretariat of Social Development, presented on Mexico's social development strategy. Focusing on income generation and using education as an illustration, he addressed personal assets, their use and price in the labor market, as well as types of direct and indirect intervention. He outlined survival, credit, insecurity and budget restrictions, and said that government action focuses on the duration and amplification of assets and the provision of social protection to create security. He outlined the strategy's action principles, including sustainability, transparency, common responsibility, social cohesion, equity and integrity. He concluded that social policy is not only about assistance but also about development.

Alfonso Urbina Jiménez, General Coordinator, Red para el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (Mexico), decried Northern dominance in research leading to control of technological progress and patents. He suggested regulation of profits from such research so as to alleviate the suffering of millions. He then described the history of nanotechnology research. He acknowledged that positive benefits envisioned from it include food production, better health and environmental protection, but cautioned that there could also be negative consequences. He called for international fora, governments and civil society to launch discussions on this topic. Scherr warned of creating another knowledge gap between the haves and have nots and stressed the need for international bodies to try to ensure that the consequences of research are positive.

### **SESSION IV: PARTNERSHIPS-WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

Felipe Manteiga, Director General, IICA, moderated the session on partnerships, emphasizing the need to move forward together on the MDGs' achievement.

Salvador de Lara, Director General, International Economic Negotiations, Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Relations, reported on a high-level dialogue in March 2003 on progress in realizing the Monterrey commitments. He said the dialogue stressed shared responsibility, particularly across national and international efforts. De Lara stressed fortification of the international financial system in order to mobilize resources and promote investment and international assistance. He called for more attention to the voices of developing countries and the issue of debt. He also called for improved access to agriculture markets for developing countries, reduction of subsidies and more ambitious commitments for the developed countries than those of the Uruguay round.

Roberto Zambrano, President, PRONATURA (Mexico) noted that building alliances implies common vision, trust, mutual respect and benefit sharing. He expressed the conviction that development is possible if biodiversity conservation and payments for environmental services are guaranteed, and if communities' needs are addressed. Presenting the case of sustainable coffee in Mexico as an example of multisectorial alliances, he called for alliances based on local partnerships in a national policy framework, to work towards poverty elimination and natural resource conservation.

Gabriel Quadri de la Torre, Adviser, Sistemas Integrales de Gestión Ambiental (Mexico), stressed mobilization of resources to pay for conservation costs, noting that costs are usually low because of low

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land value and productivity. He highlighted the correlation between high biodiversity, high poverty and high incidence of collective land ownership, and stressed combining state regulation, market finance and cooperation to conserve biodiversity. Suggesting that the idea that sustainable use of biodiversity can be used as a conservation strategy is a myth, he stressed that such a strategy must be considered on the basis of public assets, using public-private partnerships (PPP), and within a legal and institutional framework that allows society to pay for the services provided. He also said that low productivity explains poverty in biodiversity-rich areas, and that the only way to maintain biodiversity while combating poverty is through migration.

Rolf Deege, Head of BayerCropScience Guatemala, described a PPP project being undertaken in Guatemala. He said the project aims to address local issues of high poverty, lack of government resources, low prices for agricultural commodities, dependence on agriculture for livelihoods, and misuse of natural resources and deforestation leading to accelerated biodiversity loss. He added that the project trains farmers to apply for certification in Integrated Crop Management, and that it has shown that PPPs are more efficient than traditional approaches, offer better control and cost-sharing, create synergies and help prevent errors.

Sara Scherr described an initiative to find models of success in protecting biodiversity while improving livelihoods and agricultural productivity. She said that many examples that use a wide variety of methods were found. She stated that Ecoagriculture Partners was formed to promote these systems and support the innovators, document and monitor the systems, catalyze interdisciplinary research and raise awareness among consumers of the existence of these models and the possibilities they open.

Cuauhtemoc Balboa Bello, Corporate Manager for Agricultural Development, Herdex (Mexico), outlined successful experiences in Mexican provinces regarding farmer training in cultivation, marketing, distribution and sales of traditional varieties. He said many such varieties have big demand and get high prices internationally. He also referenced activities for the recovery of germplasm of typical Mexican varieties, and for exploring the potential of organic agriculture.

Participants addressed: communities' participation in natural resource conservation; the reasons for and objectives of private sector participation; and public sector actions to attract private sector investments. De la Torre noted a reciprocal effect between protected areas and community participation. Deege stressed the social responsibility of agroscience and the need to decentralize projects.

### **A CALL TO ACTION: CONCLUSIONS AND MOVING FORWARD**

Judith Symonds opened the final session, calling on participants to produce ambitious and optimistic conclusions for the conference's Call to Action.

Thierry Lemaresquier, Resident Representative, UN Development Programme (Mexico), noted the Monterrey conference's aim to ensure availability of financial resources and the WSSD's aim to set goals through Kofi Annan's "water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity" (WEHAB) framework. He highlighted unprecedented buy-in to the MDGs linking poverty, agriculture and biodiversity, saying they set the terms of globalization to benefit the poor. He agreed that agriculture and biodiversity management are not incompatible but must be linked at

all levels. He called for destructive agriculture to be converted into ecoagriculture that enhances rural livelihoods while protecting biodiversity, stating that ecoagriculture systems exist but need much wider adoption. He also stressed a new policy agenda to enrich human life and wildlife, an increased role for public institutions and civic organizations, and increased resources for agricultural development and environmental protection. He urged continued efforts toward private sector social responsibility at the global level and deeper integration of environment and development.

Calling for participants' feedback, Pedro Sanchez then presented the meeting's draft Call to Action. The Call included elements on:

- the need for G8 leaders to act now to decisively address hunger and poverty and to protect and restore the world's natural environment for future generations;
- the need for the MDGs to be the framework that unites all public and private action;
- the realistic possibility of achieving MDGs by 2015;
- the importance of these actions for achieving the elimination of poverty and hunger in compatibility with the protection and restoration of the earth's natural assets;
- the need for new approaches to working together in the policy arena and in the scale-up of ecologically responsible and socially productive agriculture, with the aim of promoting linkages between agriculture, biodiversity and poverty elimination;
- the need to restore agriculture as the priority sector in national and international public policies; and
- the need to eliminate subsidies on agricultural products and to adequately value and promote healthy ecological systems that provide the basis for agricultural production and a well-nourished population.

In the case of tropical and subtropical countries and specifically sub-Saharan Africa, the Call stated that participants endorsed a three-pronged approach to be undertaken at the community scale: to increase agricultural productivity, make rural and national markets work for the poor, and improve schoolchildren's nutrition.

Participants proposed additions, including: reference to HIV/AIDS and to the role of women; specific mention of the Cancun WTO conference and the effects of dumping; emphasis on the multisectoral approach, including NGOs and the private sector; stress on the importance of science and technology; a call to bring together the discourses on economic growth, science and biotechnology and agro-ecology; reference to a six-year timeline for subsidy removal; stress on the need to strengthen national and international research systems; reference to PPP; an element on restoring agriculture as the engine of economic growth while giving priority to the rural space as a whole; and a note that agriculture and environment should be seen as global public goods.

In closing the meeting, Cassio Luiselli, Mexico's Undersecretary of Environmental Regulation, Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, thanked the participants on behalf of the Mexican government. He observed that numerous bridges exist, including between various recent conferences and the upcoming Cancun WTO Ministerial conference. He called for valuation of biodiversity and noted the example of a Mexican programme for paying for environmental services, including biodiversity. He noted that Southern countries have

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historically adjusted to subsidization of Northern agriculture at the expense of their environment. He demanded that this be halted and that biotechnology be used to benefit everyone. He urged participants to go from words to action and establish a concrete agenda for the 21st century. The meeting came to a close at 6:15 pm.

### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR**

**AFRICA ECONOMIC SUMMIT 2003:** The World Economic Forum's Africa Economic Summit will convene from 11-13 June 2003, in Durban, South Africa. It will be the region's premier gathering of leaders from business, politics and civil society and will be the platform to marshal private sector inputs in implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). For more information contact: World Economic Forum; tel: +41-22-869-1212; fax: +41-22-786-2744; e-mail: africasummit@weforum.org; Internet: <http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Africa+Economic+Summit+2003>

**23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IAIA'03):** This conference will meet from 17-20 June 2003, in Marrakech, Morocco. The technical session on Impact Assessment of Trade will address, *inter alia*: capacity building and technical assistance in developing and transition countries; trade-related agricultural policies; relationships between trade rules and multilateral environmental agreements; and corporate responsibility in technology transfer. For more information contact: IAIA International Headquarters; tel: +1-701-297-7908; fax: +1-701-297-7917; e-mail: info@iaia.org; Internet: <http://www.iaia.org/annual-meeting/index.htm>

### **FOURTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CAPACITY**

**BUILDING:** This conference, organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment in collaboration with UNEP, will be held from 23-27 June 2003, in Trondheim, Norway. For more information contact: Trondheim Conference Secretariat; tel: +47-22-24-5700; fax: +47-73-80-1401; e-mail: rita.strand@nina.no; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/abs/abswscb-01/other/abswscb-01-norway-en.pdf>

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC GOODS AND PUBLIC POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY:** The seventh International Conference of the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR) will convene from 29 June-3 July 2003, in Ravello, Italy. It will focus on, *inter alia*, the impact of agricultural biotechnology, public acceptance, intellectual property rights, and governance issues. For more information contact: Vittorio Santaniello; tel: +39-06-7259-5843; fax: +39-06-7259-5721; e-mail: abr@economia.uniroma2.it; Internet: <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr2003/>

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POVERTY, FOOD AND HEALTH IN WELFARE: CURRENT ISSUES, FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:** This conference will be held from 1-4 July 2003, in Lisbon, Portugal. It will seek to influence agendas and set priorities for international agencies and policymakers working to fight poverty, food

insecurity and disease. For more information contact: Madalena Almeida; tel: +351-214-156-121; fax: +351-214-156-383; e-mail: malmeida.lisboa@abreu.pt; Internet: <http://www.pfh2003.org/>

**18TH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM: BIODIVERSITY, TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This session, organized by IUCN- The World Conservation Union, will be held from 5-7 September 2003, in Cancun, Mexico. For more information contact: Caroline Martinet, IUCN; tel: +41-22-999-02-16; fax: +41-22-999-00-25; e-mail: caroline.martinet@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.gbf.ch>

**WTO 5TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE:** This conference will be held from 10-14 September 2003, in Cancun, Mexico. For more information contact: WTO, tel: +41-22-739-5111; e-mail: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org); Internet: <http://www.wto.org>

### **13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS IN AFRICA**

**(ICASA):** This conference will be held from 21-26 September 2003, in Nairobi, Kenya. Conference participants will meet to, *inter alia*: review major advances in understanding HIV/AIDS; critically analyze responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic; discuss responses and their impacts on the course of the epidemic; and set strategies and priorities for dealing with the epidemic from an African viewpoint. For more information contact: ICASA Secretariat; tel: +254-2-27-151-09/44/27; fax: +254-2-27-11-072/231; e-mail: [icasa2003@todays.co.ke](mailto:icasa2003@todays.co.ke); Internet: <http://www.icasanairobi2003.org/secretariat.htm>

**29TH WEDC CONFERENCE: TOWARDS THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS - ACTIONS FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION:** This conference will be held from 22-26 September 2003, in Abuja, Nigeria. It will consider: water supply; environmental sanitation; institutional issues; water resources; and cross-cutting issues such as sustainability, urbanization, poverty and gender linkages, and corruption. For more information contact: Dot Barnard, Conference Co-organizer, Water Engineering and Development Center (WEDC); e-mail: [wedc.conf@lboro.co.uk](mailto:wedc.conf@lboro.co.uk); Internet: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/wedc/conferences/29contents.htm>

**SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES 2003: AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH PRACTICAL, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO WORLD POVERTY:** This conference will be held from 1-4 October 2003, in Boulder, Colorado, US. The overall technical programme of the conference is designed around the MDGs. For more information contact: G. Brigaldino; e-mail: [brigaldino.5542@rogers.com](mailto:brigaldino.5542@rogers.com); Internet: <http://www.sustainableresources.org>

**STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE WITH FOCUS ON AFRICA:** This conference will be held from 14-15 October 2003, in Stockholm, Sweden. It will focus on African development and the steps necessary to integrate Africa into the global market. For more information contact: Africa Forum Publications, Malmo, Sweden; tel: +46-73-907-4348; fax: +46-73-907-4348; e-mail: [africaforum@swipnet.se](mailto:africaforum@swipnet.se); Internet: <http://www.africaforum.org/IC-Stockholm-2003/Stockholm2003.html>