



MARKET INFORMATION ORGANIZATION
OF THE AMERICAS
MIOA
XII Meeting of the Executive Committee
Buenos Aires, Argentina

April 9 – 10, 2008

List of Participants

Mr. Terry Long, President of MIOA and Representative from the Northern Region

Mr. Marco Moscoso, Vice-President of MIOA and Representative from the Central American and the Caribbean Region

Mr. Pedro Martinez, President Ex Officio

Mrs. Andrea Dansa, Representative from the Southern Region

Mrs. Adriana Senior, Representative from the Andean Region

Mr. Luis F. Palmer, USDA

Mrs. Susan Sadocha, FAS

Mr. Frank Lam, Executive Secretariat, IICA

Mrs. Blanca Guarneros, Mexico (Observer)

Agenda

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

8:30 am	Call to Order	Terry Long
8:40 am	Welcoming Remarks	Lic. Gerardo Petri, National Market Director Dr. Victor Arrua, IICA Representative
9:00 am	Update by the Executive Secretariat	Frank Lam
9:45 am	Meeting of Members from the Caribbean Region	Terry Long
10:15am	Break	
10:45am	Regional Reports	
11:30am	Progress on the Panama Meeting	Marco Moscoso
12:30pm	Lunch	
1:30 pm	Rules of Procedure	Fernando Palmer Frank Lam
3:00 pm	Break	
3:30 pm	Rules of Procedure (continued)	
4:30 pm	Summary of discussions	Terry Long
5:00 pm	Close of Meeting	

Thursday, April 10, 2008

8:30 am	Call to Order	Terry Long
8:40 am	Update on the Central American Project	Marco Moscoso
9:40 am	Presentation by the SIM in Argentina	Andrea Dansa
10:30am	Break	
11:00am	Review of the Strategic Plan of Action	Terry Long
12:00pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Future Technical Workshops	Group Discussion
2:30 pm	Break	
3:00 pm	Legal Status of MIOA	Group Discussion
4:00 pm	Future Promotional Efforts of MIOA	Group Discussion
4:30 pm	Summary of Discussions	Terry Long
5:00 pm	Close of Meeting	

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

1. The XII Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) of MIOA began at 8:30 am, at the Grand Boulevard Hotel, in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.
2. Mr. Terry Long, President of MIOA, welcomed the Members of the Executive Committee and opened the session. The following guests accompanied the EC during the first session: Mr. Gerardo Petri, National Market Director, and Mr. Victor Arrua, IICA Representative in Argentina.
3. Mr. Petri thanked MIOA for selecting Argentina as Host Country for the Meeting of the EC, and wished success to the Meeting. Mr. Arrua, on behalf of the Director General of IICA, also thanked the EC Members for their presence and wished the best to the participants. Finally, Mr. Long thanked the EC Members for their presence.
4. Mr. Long presented the Agenda of the Meeting, and the Minutes of the previous meeting were signed. Mrs. Guarneros indicated that the Representatives from Spain and Italy before the World Union of Wholesale Markets were interested in learning more about MIOA. Mrs. Dansa also informed on the relation that exists with the Representatives from Spain. Mrs. Guarneros requested authorization for Mr. Pedro Martinez to introduce the Organization to the Representatives from Spain and Italy.
5. Mr. Lam presented the documents to be discussed during the Meeting of the EC, and went on to present the report prepared by the Technical Secretariat (TS): a) Meeting of the Caribbean Region. MIOA was introduced to the new Member Countries (Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad & Tobago), during that meeting information was provided on the status of Market Information Systems (SIMs) in the participating countries; b) Agreements by the EC. Agreements by the EC in previous meetings were reviewed; c) Consultation on ways to administer interests earned from the funds administered by IICA. The results of the consultation made to the Directorate of Administration and Finance of IICA on the administration of interest generated by these funds were presented. Mr. Martinez asked the EC to submit to IICA a request so that this interest be deposited in the Fund of MIOA. Mr. Long expressed concern about the possibility of endangering the Agreement signed with IICA because of the interest that will be earned in the months previous to renewal of said Agreement. Mrs. Senior indicated that this would be a good opportunity to present the addendum, since this represented an additional income for the Organization. Mr. Long added that if there was consensus among EC Members to request the addendum, such request should be made; d) Legal status for MIOA. The findings of the consultation made to the Legal Department of IICA were presented. Also, the TS consulted on the possibility of incorporating MIOA as a non-profit organization (501-c3) in the United States of America, and the advantages and disadvantages of doing so; e) Financial Report. The profit and loss statement was presented for the period ending in March of 2008. Mr. Moscoso presented a request to ask the United States of America (USDA-AMS) to also incorporate its contributions to MIOA. Mr. Long added that he was not sure as to how to estimate such contributions, however,

they are willing to do it so that in the future those estimates can be presented. Mrs. Sadocha asked if IICA was the entity which actually performed the audits or if other entity was auditing the funds of MIOA. Mr. Lam noted that IICA performs internal audits and that an external audit would be good for the Organization, as long as the effort that this would entail is taken into consideration.

6. Mrs. Senior suggested inviting a guest speaker to the Regular Meeting to be held in Panama to address the issue of "Food Inflation". She went on to ask what would be the best moment to make this proposal. Mr. Long responded that a committee and a process were already in place, and he invited those who had these types of suggestions to present them to this committee.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-01: A request shall be sent to IICA for crediting the funds of MIOA administered by IICA. This request shall be sent to the EC for revision before being signed by Mr. Terry Long, President of MIOA.

Party Responsible: EC and Technical Secretariat

7. Mr. Moscoso revisited the Central American and Dominican Republic Project with regards to the letter requesting support from the countries of the Region. This letter has not been sent yet. Mr. Palmer added that no letter had been received, and Mr. Long suggested that Mr. Palmer and the TS work together to have that document translated as soon as possible.
8. Mr. Martinez requested the EC to consider signing the agreements before the end of the session. Mrs. Guarneros supported this proposal. Mr. Palmer also deemed the proposal reasonable. Mr. Long suggested preparing a summary by the end of the session and having a "list of pending issues" with parties responsible for each issue. However, that does not necessarily translate into a stronger commitment. Mr. Moscoso emphasized that it is crucial to obtain support on the contents of the Agreement or commitment from all EC Members.
9. Mr. Long presented the results of the Caribbean Meeting. He said that, with the exception of Jamaica, there is a greater understanding of the Region, and countries are willing to work together with MIOA. He acknowledged the efforts made by IICA in this respect.
10. Mrs. Dansa informed that in the Southern Region some Delegates have changed. In Chile, Mr. Jorge Esquivel and Mr. Bernave Tapia will be the new Delegates. The Delegates of Brazil and Paraguay remain the same. No response has been received from Uruguay.
11. Mrs. Senior informed that in the Andean Region progress has been achieved on normalizing and standardizing the information coding system and process standardization. This is being done in two areas: prices and markets, and supply of agricultural commodities. With regards to the supply of agricultural commodities, Colombia is being represented by DANE, MADR, and CCI, and is participating in an initiative lead and supported by the European Economic Community. With regards to prices and markets,

Bolivia and Colombia have already participated in an exercise to prepare the Pan-American Dictionary. At this moment, work is under way in Ecuador, but given the slow pace of their response, work will be sent to Peru to make progress simultaneously in both countries. In the past few months, there has been greater exchange of information with Ecuador. This exchange of information began in August of 2007, and continued in the days previous to the annual meeting of MIOA. It continued in the past few months. During that time, the MAD in Ecuador was restructuring its information system. Presently, reports prepared by the consultants have been received suggesting the configuration of the system and its different instruments; the CCI has received draft versions of some documents, and final versions are expected soon in order to express an opinion, as requested by Mr. Hernan Velazquez. In the case of Ecuador, a list of the areas where support had been requested was available; this list included: **a.** Structure of the SIMA, **b.** Support for designing the tools needed to evaluate information consistency, **c.** Product analysis, **d.** Management and adoption of regulations on weight and measurements, **e.** Product cards, **f.** System sustainability, **g.** Other related issues: market intelligence, etc.

12. Mr. Moscoso informed that in the Central American and the Caribbean Regions delegates have not changed. Moreover, El Salvador is receiving support for its Market Intelligence Project. Mr. Lam added that countries that participated in the Meeting at the Caribbean requested a diagnosis of their SIMAs. Finally, the Pan-American Dictionary is being consolidated at the Regional level.
13. Mr. Long went on to say that the Northern Region had rescheduled the meeting for the month of May, in Mexico City. The goal is to have a trilingual website and share some of the progress made with the ISO Certification. He also informed that other USDA delegations are interested in participating in that meeting. Mrs. Guarneros suggested holding the meeting at the end of May, and provided a list of hotels where such meeting could take place. She promised to send tomato specialists.
14. Mr. Moscoso updated the EC on the Regular Meeting of MIOA to be held in the Panama City. Two final options were presented: the Continental Hotel and the Panama Hotel. He informed that the current per diem for Panama City was insufficient to cover lodging and food expenses. Furthermore, he confirmed that Panama had agreed to sign the contract with the hotel. Mr. Lam suggested considering other dates to hold the meeting. Mrs. Dansa suggested that the \$75.00 amount be reviewed, because this amount was not fulfilling its purpose. Mrs. Senior suggested holding the Meeting of the EC and the Regular Meeting of MIOA on October 7-10. Mr. Long said that the \$75.00 amount could be adjusted, and that those countries requiring payment of exit taxes and visas should be identified in order to reimburse Delegates for those expenses.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-02: Increase to \$100.00 the allowance to pay for local transportation, taxes, and other expenses related to transportation of the participants. In those cases where specific payments such as exit taxes and visas are required, such payments shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis and, if necessary, participants shall be reimbursed.

Party Responsible: Technical Secretariat

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-03: Hold the Executive Committee Meeting on October 7, and the Regular Meeting of MIOA on October 8-10 at the El Panama Hotel. Moreover, MIOA shall sponsor the closing dinner in order to accommodate the budget.

Party Responsible: Technical Secretariat and Marco Moscoso

15. Mrs. Guarneros indicated that Mexico City would be the best option for holding the 2009 Meeting of MIOA. She went on to say that September is not the best month, and suggested instead the month of August or October. She also asked to whom they should address the letter making this offer, and who should sign it. Mr. Long replied that this letter may be signed by the same person who signed the Letter of Intention on behalf of the country. Mr. Martinez added that the Organization should assess the convenience of continuing using per diems since their estimation is based on needs different from the needs of MIOA. Mr. Lam indicated that the final decision on per diems was the purview of the EC, and each case should be considered individually. Mr. Long added that MIOA is flexible enough to adapt depending on the case, and recommended following the existing procedure.
16. Mr. Lam and Mr. Palmer presented the draft version of the Rules of Procedures, and explained that the EC is expected to approve this draft version before presenting it to the General Assembly at the Panama Meeting. Mr. Long asked if there were any objections and, if so, how they were handled. Mr. Palmer replied that no suggestions were received. Mr. Lam went on to read the Rules of Procedure to the EC to review rule by rule, and suggestions made by the EC were incorporated into the document.

Mr. Terry Long closed the session.

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17. Mr. Terry Long opened the session and invited Mr. Lam and Mr. Palmer to continue with the discussion and evaluation of the Rules of Procedure of MIOA with participation of the EC. Finally, Mr. Lam stated that the new version of the document would be sent to the EC for approval, and following that, the document will be shared with the Members to be voted but not discussed at the upcoming Regular Meeting to be held in Panama City, as per the existing Rules.
18. Mr. Marco Moscoso indicated that the letter for the countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic was ready. It only needed to be signed by Mr. Terry Long, President of MIOA.
19. Mrs. Andrea Dansa presented a proposal from Argentina for the strengthening of the fruit and vegetable Market Information System (SIM), focusing specifically on 5 (five) wholesale markets through: a) a diagnosis of the collection process of the fruit and vegetable prices in the wholesale markets or in other relevant markets by USDA experts, b) setting up stages to train technicians and/or agents from SAGPyA designated for that purpose, c) developing a consistent fruit and vegetable information system. Mr. Long responded that he agreed with the proposal, and that AMS could support Argentina. To this end, he suggested Mrs. Dansa that a written request be submitted to MIOA or to AMS-USDA describing the specific areas where support was required. Mrs. Guarneros offered to the Delegation of Argentina the experience of Mexico in market price collection. Mrs. Senior added that Colombia had learned a good deal from AMS in the area of price collection. Mrs. Dansa thanked the support to the proposal from Argentina. Mr. Martinez suggested that Argentina establish a short, medium, and long-term plan, and familiarize with the experience in other countries such as Costa Rica. Finally, Mr. Long advised that Argentina, through the Secretary of Agriculture, should issue a letter requesting support to the USDA underscoring the role of MIOA as facilitator of this relation.
20. Mr. Long suggested that in the case of the new Member Countries, the same process that was applied with the other countries should be followed. Furthermore, he asked the TS to prepare the Terms of Reference. Finally, he recommended including this diagnosis in the 2008 expense plan, as well as in the Regular Meeting to be held on October in Panama City.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-04: Prepare the Terms of Reference (TOR) to perform a diagnosis of the SIMs in Member Countries of MIOA in the Caribbean.

Party Responsible: Technical Secretariat

21. Mr. Pedro Martinez presented a proposal to build the technical and professional capacities of the staff working in the SIMs as market reporters with the purpose of creating mechanisms to promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge among the parties responsible for the tasks associated with market reporters, and the transfer of processes

and methodologies used by the Member Countries of MIOA. Mrs. Senior supported the proposal and suggested doing so before the Meeting in Panama. Mr. Long asked how market reporters would be selected. He also asked how the hands-on part of the proposed workshop would be conducted, given the existing limitations in logistics. With regards to the facilities at IICA, Mr. Long said that the USDA has facilities available with internet access. However, the location of these facilities is not the most convenient. He inquired on the possibility of holding the event before the Regular Meeting in Panama. Mrs. Guarneros informed that Mexico also has training facilities available. Mr. Lam suggested that the EC appoint a small committee to draft a more elaborated proposal, based on the proposal presented by Mr. Martinez. He went on to suggest that MIOA should have a medium to long-term vision in order to work toward more specific results, for example, prepare cases illustrating the effort of MIOA in the region. Mr. Long stated that it might be best to hold a regional pilot workshop instead of a hemispheric workshop, given that some countries required more of this type of support. Moreover, he suggested focusing on training those who manage the information collection teams. Mr. Martinez concluded his presentation by expressing his support to the idea of creating a small task force. Mr. Moscoso indicated that, in principle, he agreed with the idea of holding regional workshops to train those responsible for collecting information. Mr. Lam indicated that in order to make the actions of MIOA more sustainable, written and electronic documents could be published, which would be available to their users. Mrs. Sadocha suggested exploring the possibility of building on the platform of IICA to establish distance-learning training programs to maximize the resources of the Organization, and increase country participation. Mr. Long and Mrs. Senior offered their support to lead this training activity. Finally, Mr. Long recommended asking Mr. Martinez to lead this training, request the necessary support to the EC, and present a comprehensive proposal to the EC during the upcoming Panama meeting.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-05: Prepare a short- medium- and long-term strategy to implement training programs in the Member Countries of MIOA.

Party Responsible: Pedro Martinez

22. Mrs. Senior presented the results of the consultation on the possibility of requesting a legal status for MIOA. Mr. Lam presented the results of the consultation made to a legal firm in Florida. Mr. Long asked whether it would be of any benefit to MIOA to request a legal status, considering the funding limitations that donors could have, including the USDA. Mr. Martinez stated that it was important to learn the position of the USDA as a donor on the proposal that MIOA obtain a legal status.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-06: Consult the legal advisor of the USDA about the implications of requesting a legal status for MIOA (developed country versus developing country), and its eligibility to receive funds from the USDA and from other donors.

Party Responsible: Terry Long

23. With regards to the promotional efforts of MIOA, Mr. Long stated that the potential relations with Mercasa, CTA, etc. were important to the Organization, and in the summer of 2008 he may visit the Headquarters of the CTA in Holland, and to explore the possibility of considering the CTA as a partner or a donor. Mr. Long also informed that representatives from India will be invited to the upcoming Regular Meeting of MIOA, and asked if the complimentary rooms could be reserved for these guests.

AGREEMENT CE-XII-2008-07: Consult the CTA on its participation in the Regular Meeting of MIOA, to be held in Panama City, Panama.

Party Responsible: Technical Secretariat

24. Mr. Marco Moscoso presented the proposed agenda for the Regular Meeting of MIOA, and the XIII Meeting of the EC for discussion and for making the necessary changes. Following are some of the main changes made: 1) Approval of the Rules of Procedure, 2) Addition of special guests, 3) Presentation of new Member Countries, 4) Presentation of the 2009 host country, 5) Regional meeting and voting of the Executive Committee of MIOA, 6) Evaluation, 7) Visit to the market (optional). Mrs. Dansa reminded of the possibility of visiting the Central Market of Panama, and it was agreed to leave this visit as optional for those who wished to go. MIOA shall cover transportation expenses since this visit was considered an official activity of the Organization. Mr. Long asked how much time had been allotted to the Regions, to which Mr. Lam responded that a maximum of 2 (two) hours would be allotted to this activity. Mr. Moscoso referred to the proposal presented by Mr. Miguel Garcia to update each country once the evaluation is completed, and it was agreed that the regions, not necessarily the Regional Representatives, will present the situation of each country, and there will be time for interaction among the participants.

The session was closed at 5:00 pm.