



MARKET INFORMATION ORGANIZATION
OF THE AMERICAS
OIMA
XI Meeting of the Executive Committee
Miami, Florida, USA

December 6 - 7, 2007

List of Participants

Mr. Terry Long, President of OIMA

Mr. Marco Moscoso, Vice-President of OIMA

Mr. Pedro Martinez, President Ex Oficio

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

Mrs. Blanca Guarneros, Mexico

Mr. Miguel Garcia, Executive Secretariat, IICA

Mr. Frank Lam, Executive Secretariat, IICA

AGENDA

December 6, 2007

8:30 am	Call to Order	Terry Long
8:45 am	Update by the Executive Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Caribbean Week- Website- Budget- Other Issues	Frank Lam
9:45 am	Discussion of the Meeting in Quito	Terry Long
10:15 am	Break	
10:30 am	Discussion (continued)	
11:00 am	Rules of Procedure	Terry Long
11:45 pm	Lunch	
1:15 pm	Rules of Procedure	
1:45 pm	Central and Caribbean Region Project	Frank Lam
2:30 pm	Meeting in Panama	Marco Moscoso
3:00 pm	Break	
3:15 pm	Proposal from Argentina	Andrea Dansa
4:00 pm	Regional Training and Workshops	Pedro Martinez
5:00 pm	Close of Meeting	

December 7, 2007

8:30 am	Call to Order	Terry Long
8:45 am	Caribbean Food Crops Society	Terry Long
9:45 am	New Countries from the Caribbean	Frank Lam
10:15 am	Break	
10:30am	Training and Assessment Needs	Terry Long
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Assessment of OIMA – What to do next?	
2:30 pm	Break	
2:45 pm	Future Activities – Projects for 2008	
3:45 pm	Other Pending Issues	
4:30 pm	Next Executive Committee Meeting	
5:00 pm	Close of Meeting	

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Welcoming Remarks

The session began at 8:30 am. Mr. Long, President of OIMA, welcomed the participants.

Next, Mr. Long, reported on the status of some countries in the Region vis-à-vis Free Trade Agreements with the US.

1. Call to Order, Approval and Discussion of the Agenda

- 1.1. Mr. Long presented the agenda of the XI Meeting of the Executive Committee for discussion and approval. The agenda was approved by the EC.
- 1.2. The Minutes of the X Meeting of the EC were also presented for their signature.

2. Update by the Executive Secretariat

- 2.1. Mr. Frank Lam, on behalf of the Executive Secretariat, IICA, presented the results of the participation of OIMA in the Caribbean Week Agriculture (CWA), the follow up to EC Agreements, the Financial Report of OIMA, and the budget of the VIII Regular Meeting to be held in Panama in 2008.
- 2.2. Mr. Frank Lam began his presentation by informing about the different activities planned and implemented by the Technical Secretariat (TS) of OIMA in 2007. As regards the results of the CWA, Mr. Lam briefed the EC on the participation of OIMA in the Trade Show during the CWA, in October of 2007, and on the presentation "Transparency of Agricultural Markets in the Americas" made during that event. Moreover, he informed that the Letter of Understanding between IICA and OIMA will expire on 12/31/08. Mr. Lam went on to talk about the up keeping of the website by the Administrator at IICA Headquarters.
- 2.3. Mr. Lam informed that countries in the Caribbean had been contacted, and letters of understanding were already sent to Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Belize. He also informed that Haiti and Guyana had already signed the Letter of Intent; and the Bahamas had requested an assessment in order to establish a SIMA. Also, a project is about to begin, an important component of which is the SIMA, linking tourism with agriculture. Mr. Lam suggested keeping in contact with the Caribbean moving forward at least with regards to the following countries: Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dominican Republic.
- 2.4. Mr. Lam went over the agreements reached during the IX and X Meetings of the EC. Agreements # 7 and # 8 from the IX EC Meeting are still pending. With regards to Agreement # 7, Mr. Moscoso informed that work is in progress. Everything is expected to be ready by the next meeting in Panama (2008). As to Agreement # 8, Mrs. Senior informed that a consultation was made, and one option is to create an NGO, which could be headquartered in Miami, Florida, or in some other Member Country of OIMA. From the X EC Meeting, Agreement #

2 is pending, but work is also in progress. Comments are still being received on Agreement # 4, relating Rules of Procedure. Mr. Frank Lam went on to present the Financial Report of OIMA for the period ending in October of 2007. He underscored the two last contributions made by the United States of America, as well as those from Mexico, Colombia, and Canada. No information has been received from Ecuador. Mr. Luis Palmer informed that no charges had been made by IICA in order for the USDA to reimburse expenses incurred in.

- 2.5. Mr. Miguel Garcia noted that the contributions made by the countries must be certified. Also, regarding the legal status of OIMA, he recommended that a more in-depth analysis be made by experts. Mrs. Adriana Senior supported this recommendation and suggested hiring a lawyer to assess the situation. Also, the money of OIMA should be making some profit. Mr. Garcia stated that the corresponding consultation will be made. Mrs. Susan Sadocha noted that in some organizations these resources are placed in separate accounts. Mr. Long explained that in his Unit the money for a specific project is earning interests, so this possibility should be further investigated so that the resources of OIMA earn interest. Mrs. Senior inquired about the expenses incurred in the Meeting in Nicaragua and expenses for Jamaica. She stated that in Nicaragua little money was spent and significant progress was made. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Moscoso explained that in the case of Nicaragua, participating countries had funded a percentage of the expenses, hence the impression that little money was spent. Also, Mr. Palmer noted that expenses for participating in the meeting in Jamaica were very high, particularly the airfare, the stand, etc. Mr. Lam, on behalf of the Technical Secretariat, expressed concern about the situation mentioned by Mrs. Senior. He proposed that EC meetings take place through conference calls or videoconferences in order to reduce costs. Regular meetings would still be held every two years.
- 2.6. Mr. Long said that participation in the CWA was of strategic significance, since it provided an opportunity to identify several countries in the Caribbean Region. He considered this activity a sound investment.
- 2.7. Mr. Garcia suggested that a policy be established related to expenses. Mrs. Senior stated that expenses had been dropping and supported the suggestion that annual meetings be held. She further suggested that a budget be allocated to every activity. Finally, she suggested evaluating administrative expenses incurred in by IICA, since these are usually lower in other countries.
- 2.8. Mr. Martinez explained that the EC has entrusted the President of OIMA with the responsibility of managing the budget and doing anything differently would be a step backwards. Mr. Garcia said that the EC must set up its own policies regarding operational issues, and urged the EC to review the auditing mechanisms included in the Letter of Understanding signed with IICA. Finally, he stressed that IICA has a mandate to strengthen institutions and it is possible that in the near future it will separate itself from OIMA. Mrs. Senior noted that the financial report is only for information purposes. Mr. Garcia explained that the activities of OIMA are not based on a budget, and suggested that during the December meeting the EC focuses on the issues of planning and budget. Mr. Lam added that until now only the Panama Meeting had been planned along

with the corresponding budget. He said that the Technical Secretariat could prepare an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) based on the Strategic Plan, the objectives and expected results in order to allocate resources. Mr. Martinez added that it is very difficult to allocate a budget when you only have a single funding source. Mr. Moscoso said that planning cannot be tied to the budget, but should rather be based on the Strategic Plan.

- 2.9. Mr. Long agreed with the idea of preparing an expense plan, and suggested that during the December Meeting the EC prepare a plan based on the activities proposed for the following year. Moreover, for the next meeting, in the Spring, the EC should review the 2008 expense plan. Finally, Mr. Long stated that, based on his experience, “overhead” expenses usually range from between 10% and up to 18%.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-01: During the December Meeting, the EC shall prepare an Expense Plan for the following year. For 2008, this Plan shall be prepared during the meeting of the EC in Argentina.

Party Responsible: EC and Technical Secretariat

BREAK

3. Meeting in Quito

- 3.1. Mr. Long indicated that the evaluation indicated that the main weakness was preparation of the agenda. It also seemed that some participants would like to receive greater financial benefits from Per Diems. However, OIMA was not created to provide financial support to individuals.
- 3.2. Mr. Lam added that OIMA enforces IICA policies, for example, those related to Per Diem allocation, purchasing the least expensive airplane ticket, etc. Mr. Martinez added that the regions, with the exception of Central America and the Caribbean, and North America, are experiencing communication problems. He urged the other regions to consider this. He proposed that the EC approve the agenda of the Regular Meeting in the previous EC meeting. He went on to mention the lack of attention paid to the issue of natural disasters, the complaint about the repetition of topics, and the suggestion of visiting markets and the SIMA in the host country. Finally, he stressed the importance of inviting experts to share other views in relation to market information, and documenting as much as possible success stories resulting from the effort undertaken by OIMA.
- 3.3. Mrs. Andrea Dansa added that the Organization is currently in a critical but positive situation, and stated that the objectives and the budget should be directed to the countries that are momentarily lagging. For example, a meeting could be set up in the Southern Region in addition to the EC meeting in Argentina. Finally, she expressed support to the idea of visiting the markets in the countries.
- 3.4. Mr. Lam suggested that OIMA should strategically link the different regular meetings. He also proposed that the Technical Secretariat and the EC schedule

a number of interrelated topics in the short term based on the needs of the SIMAs. Mrs. Sadocha elaborated on the comments made by Mr. Martinez regarding the different funding sources. Her country and her agency are more interested in organizations that are focused on achieving specific goals. With regards to the comments made by Mrs. Dansa, Mrs. Sadocha indicated that it is important to work with those countries that are lagging. Finally, with regards to the comments made by Mr. Lam, she considered it important to develop a long term strategy.

- 3.5. Mr. Long mentioned that Mr. Palmer, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Moscoso are responsible for the agenda of the next meeting and recommended making the most of the time allotted for the presentations, as well as the topics of these presentations. Mr. Lam suggested requesting presentations in advance and that the Committee serve as moderator during the presentations.
- 3.6. Mr. Moscoso added that per diems are not always in line with expenses, and recommended a case-by-case analysis by the EC. He also requested the evaluation form. Mr. Palmer indicated that some of the requirements to the host country had not been met. Mr. Long asked the Technical Secretariat to share the responsibilities with the host country. Mr. Lam informed that the following minimum requirements should be met: 1) Simultaneous interpretation during the event, 2) Conference rooms, 3) Signing of contracts with service providers. Social activities, field trips, souvenirs, etc. are not mandatory but are always welcomed. In the specific case of Ecuador, the host institution did not sign the contracts with local service providers, so the IICA office undertook that responsibility.
- 3.7. Mr. Moscoso expressed his commitment as the Representative from Panama to support the 2008 event. Mrs. Blanca Guarneros proposed evaluating the participants from each Member Country since the same people participate all the time, and many of them have not contributed anything to the Organization. Also, it is necessary to look for participants at the highest levels. Finally, she expressed her disagreement with the airplane ticket policy, mainly because they made her fly via Colombia. Mrs. Dansa said that in Argentina, you have to wait until the last minute because it is necessary to obtain a permit from the Secretary of Agriculture. Mr. Long proposed recommending an appropriate timeframe for delegations to confirm their participation. Mr. Lam said that two months would be reasonable. Mr. Long suggested sending the agenda and the invitation together, and expecting confirmation for both one month before the event. He then suggested moving on to the presentation on the Central and Caribbean Region Project.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-02: The agenda and the invitation to the Regular Meeting shall be sent to the Delegates two months in advance. The Delegates shall confirm their participation the following month.

Party Responsible: EC and Technical Secretariat

BREAK

4. Central and Caribbean Region Project

- 4.1. Mr. Frank Lam presented the proposal for the Central and Caribbean Region Project stressing the importance of focusing on the five project components. He also noted the fact that OIMA will be the executing agency.
- 4.2. Mr. Moscoso thanked for the support received by the EC. Mr. Long asked what the next step was. Mr. Lam showed concern because the recipient countries have not officially endorsed the project. Once they do so, the EC may present the proposal to the donor agencies. He recommended the following options: a) Setting up a "Petit Committee" and submitting the proposal to the donor agencies, and then requesting support from recipient countries, b) Requesting support from the recipient countries, and then presenting the proposal before donor agencies, or c) Carrying out both activities simultaneously.
- 4.3. Mr. Moscoso added that the project belongs to OIMA, hence, the EC should make the formal presentation before the countries. Furthermore, he supports the idea of carrying out both activities simultaneously. Mrs. Senior indicated that the project is very well structured. Mr. Lam said that the members of OIMA have the capacity to support this project; therefore there is no need to depend exclusively on external consultants. He also said that the recipient countries are aware that OIMA will not fund the project.
- 4.4. Mr. Palmer said that the project is well structured and ready to be presented to donor agencies. At this time, the EC must approve it and move forward with the project. Mr. Long asked who should endorse the project, since OIMA operates two or three levels below the Minister. He supported the idea of creating a Petit Committee. Mr. Moscoso volunteered to prepare a letter requesting support to recipient countries, and to identify the addressees.
- 4.5. Mrs. Dansa suggested that the letter be directed to directors, and they will forward it to Ministers. Mr. Lam recommended that country delegates promote the project within their institution with Mr. Moscoso providing follow up. He also recommended that the President of OIMA lead efforts to address donor agencies. Mr. Lam will send an Executive Summary to the President of OIMA.
- 4.6. Mr. Long accepted the suggestion made by Mr. Lam. He also proposed obtaining a Letter of Commitment from the countries before moving forward.

BREAK

AGREEMENT CE-XI 2007-03: The EC supports the project proposal. The Representative of the Central America and Caribbean Region shall send a letter requesting support and commitment to recipient countries. February 28, 2008 shall be the deadline to receive a response from the countries. With respect to donor agencies, the President of OIMA shall lead efforts to contact them. The Technical Secretariat shall prepare an Executive Summary.

Party Responsible: President of OIMA, Representative of the Central America and Caribbean Region, and the Technical Secretariat.

5. Presentation on the 2008 Regular Meeting to be held in Panama

- 5.1. Mr. Marco Moscoso presented the different options and dates for holding the meeting in Panama City. However, a proposal was made to hold the meeting in the week of September 22 – 27. He indicated that around five quotes have been requested from hotels in the downtown area.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-04: The Regular Meeting of OIMA 2008 shall be held on the week of September 22 – 27. The host country and the Technical Secretariat shall present a more detailed proposal on the next meeting of the EC.

Party Responsible: Frank Lam and Marco Moscoso

6. Next Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee

- 6.1. Mrs. Andrea Dansa formally proposed Argentina as the host country for the next EC meeting, in April of 2008. Mr. Long, on behalf of OIMA, accepted the proposal. Mrs. Dansa added that the meeting in Argentina would allow them to position OIMA in the country and in the region.
- 6.2. Mr. Martinez suggested inviting one member from each country in the Southern Region to meet with the EC before or after the meeting. He also suggested rotating the different countries to hold EC meetings in all of them.
- 6.3. Mr. Moscoso suggested that the meeting with the members of the Southern Region would entail additional coordination efforts. Mr. Long asked if Argentina had set a date. Mrs. Dansa suggested early April. Mr. Long recommended holding the meeting in Argentina in early April, and taking advantage of this meeting to set up a regional meeting with a representative from each country in the Southern Region. OIMA will pay for transportation costs and Per Diems of one representative from each country.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-05: The XII Meeting of the EC shall take place in early April of 2008, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Additionally, a regional meeting shall be held with the participation of one representative from each country in the Region.

Party Responsible: EC and Technical Secretariat

The session was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Friday, December 7, 2007

Call to order

The session began at 8:30 am. Mr. Long, President of OIMA, welcomed the participants to day 2 of the meeting.

7. Training

- 7.1. During his presentation “Technical Training Workshops”, Mr. Martinez spoke about the role of OIMA in building capacity within the SIMAs. The workshops focused on four issues: 1) Data collection, 2) Techniques and procedures used in data collection, control and follow up, 3) Data analysis, 4) Development of tools over the Internet. These issues may be discussed in regional workshops, by hiring the services of a group of external experts or based on the experiences of the EC.
- 7.2. Mr. Long indicated that market reporters are the ones who usually make a difference in a SIMA, although analysis and dissemination are also important. Mrs. Senior agreed with the idea that workshops should be implemented at the regional level. Mrs. Dansa supported the initiative as well. Mr. Long asked what the next step will be. Mr. Martinez suggested that each region develop the workshops based on its particular needs, with support from the Technical Secretariat.
- 7.3. Mr. Lam added that one way of promoting greater country involvement was by offering new services and products. He further suggested that OIMA look for verifiable outcomes in the SIMAs, and said that the proposed workshops should be integrated into a more systematic and sustainable program. Mr. Moscoso supported the proposal made by Mr. Martinez of holding regional workshops; however, he stressed that this could increase costs since the workshops would need to be delivered several times. Mrs. Guarneros added that training should take place at the regional level.
- 7.4. Mr. Long agreed with the idea of holding regional workshops, except for those related to the Internet, which could be implemented at the hemispheric level. Countries are making significant efforts, and to the USDA it would be interesting to learn about what they are doing. He also suggested that each region take ownership of the idea, and make proposals, which may then be presented by the Regional Representatives at the next EC meeting. Mr. Martinez volunteered to prepare the curriculum of the workshops.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-06: Regional Representatives shall present the proposals prepared by the countries during the next EC meeting. Mr. Martinez shall prepare the curriculum of these workshops.

Party Responsible: EC and Mr. Martinez

8. Project proposal by Argentina: Capacity-building and coordination among the SIMAs for vegetables, fruits, and meat.

- 8.1. Mrs. Dansa presented the project proposal, including objectives, methodology, scope, components, etc. Mr. Lam added that the EC should have a policy to support national and regional initiatives. Mr. Martinez indicated that OIMA may support regional projects; however, in this case Argentina is requesting support at the national level. He said that the proposal needs to be further elaborated, and that more support from OIMA could be requested in order to finish it.
- 8.2. Mrs. Dansa recommended directing efforts at training Argentina first, and then training the Region. Mr. Long asked if the government had committed resources to the project. Mrs. Dansa said that Argentina is not requesting financial support from OIMA. However, Argentina undertook this initiative in order to lead the process and disseminate knowledge to the other countries. Assistance was being requested to train market reporters.
- 8.3. Mr. Palmer indicated that this situation was similar to the situation in Serbia, since there is really no SIMA over there. Therefore, not only training is needed but also to create a SIMA, and that calls for a larger project. Mrs. Senior suggested that the USDA train market reporters as some form of bilateral support. Mr. Long added that Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) supports this concept and has been traveling for more than 92 years to assist SIMAs around the world. In the case of OIMA, a letter could be signed to provide this support. Mrs. Dansa considered a letter expressing support was a good idea. Mr. Moscoso said that Argentina has cooperated with Panama through Engineer Jose Pose, and added that the EC meeting in Argentina could encourage support. Mrs. Guarneros congratulated Argentina on its efforts. Mrs. Dansa requested two letters to the EC: 1) Accepting the offer made by Argentina to host the next EC meeting, and 2) Supporting the initiative presented by OIMA. Mrs. Senior suggested taking advantage of the visit of USDA officers to Argentina to deliver some training. Mr. Palmer said that recently he received two delegations from Argentina in Washington who showed interested in creating a SIMA. He suggested bringing all these ideas together and preparing a single proposal.
- 8.4. Mrs. Dansa said that neither OIMA nor the USDA were going to solve the problems and that those two delegations do not provide market information. Mr. Long suggested moving forward and having OIMA send the requested letters. He also said that OIMA could make a presentation during the EC meeting in Argentina.

BREAK

9. Other Issues (Caribbean Food Crops Society, New Countries from the Caribbean, Relations with the CTA, Request made by the Bahamas, Training in Central America, Study by Mr. Mendoza)

- 9.1. With regards to the participation of OIMA in the Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS), Mr. Long mentioned that following the September Meeting in Quito, Ecuador, a presentation called “Agricultural Market Information in the Americas” was made at the CFCS Meeting, in San Jose, Costa Rica, as an effort to help the increase rapport between the Organization and the Caribbean countries. Next, Mr. Long shared the presentation with the EC. Finally, he stressed that the audience in the CFCS Meeting was not the most appropriate for OIMA.
- 9.2. Mr. Lam referred once again to the situation with the Caribbean countries, and it was pointed out that Haiti and Guyana already signed the Letter of Intent of OIMA. Mr. Long suggested holding a meeting in March, in Kingston, Jamaica, after discussing all other potential sites. Discussion continued on whether to invite a representative from the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Dominican Republic (8 countries) to this meeting so that they learn more about OIMA, its mission, objectives, scope and benefits.
- 9.3. Next, discussion began on the inclusion of new countries from the Caribbean to OIMA, and Mr. Moscoso said that until now, the Dominican Republic had indicated feeling more comfortable by being part of Central America. Mr. Lam presented the current structure of IICA, and stressed that Belize belongs to the Central American Region and that the Dominican Republic belongs to the Caribbean Region. Mr. Long suggested following the structure of IICA and considering Caribbean countries as part of the Central America and Caribbean Region for the meeting in Panama.
- 9.4. Next, discussion began on whether to invite the Director General of the CTA to a previous meeting within the framework of a regional meeting of the Caribbean in Kingston, Jamaica.
- 9.5. Mr. Long pointed out that Bahamas had requested an assessment of its SIMA, but suggested waiting until that country became a member of OIMA. He further suggested that in order for countries to become members of the Organization, OIMA should request that they perform an evaluation of their SIMAs.
- 9.6. Mr. Palmer mentioned the training that is being delivered in Central America by Mr. Bruce Brower. Mr. Moscoso expanded on this activity. Mrs. Senior said that she had no information about it. Mr. Garcia indicated that countries are free to buy whatever they want; however, it is important to define how OIMA should respond to this kind of proposals, and suggested notifying that OIMA is not endorsing this activity. Mr. Martinez suggested defining who will prepare the letter and registering the name of OIMA. Mr. Lam informed that he had exchanged some emails with Mr. Bruce Brower and Mrs. Cristina Lopez, and that they had sent an invitation as well as the agenda of the activity. Mr. Long added that given the nature of business people and sellers, he is concerned about this type of relationships. Another concern is whether the purpose was to establish a relationship with OIMA or to sell a software; nevertheless, he gave a

positive rating to the product. Mr. Garcia suggested having the President or the Technical Secretariat contact Mr. Brower and to ask him not to involve OIMA in his meetings with the SIMAs. Mrs. Dansa suggested that Mr. Moscoso inform the participants in this activity about the position of OIMA. Mr. Long added that from the perspective of the EC, it was important to make it clear that OIMA is not sponsoring this activity and wishing him success. Mr. Moscoso informed that, initially, Costa Rica had not been invited since there is no USAID office in Costa Rica; however, it was finally invited. Mr. Long requested Mr. Moscoso to contact Mr. Brower and ask him not to involve OIMA in any of his activities.

- 9.7. Mr. Long invited EC members to comment on the evaluation conducted by Mr. Mendoza. Mr. Garcia suggested having the EC implementing activities at the hemispheric level, and the SIMAs implementing activities at the national level. He recommended requesting the SIMAs potential projects or ideas to solve their problems and strengthen their capacities, so that by the next meeting a portfolio of potential projects will be available. Also, he recommended revisiting the idea of training inspectors in the USDA Center, in Virginia, in 2008. Mr. Lam expressed concern about the role of OIMA vis-à-vis the demands of the SIMAs, however, he supported the idea that OIMA should serve as catalyst for potential projects. Mr. Long suggested requesting internal plans to the countries, instead of projects. Mr. Garcia made it clear that the main issue was to learn what is it that countries want, and said it was important to know how many ministers know about the study. Mrs. Senior pointed out that each country is responsible for taking measures concerning their SIMAs. Mr. Long said that in the case of AMS (United States of America), a top-level officer participated in the workshop delivered in Costa Rica, and he was briefed on the entire process and on the results of the evaluation. He asked whether the role of OIMA was to be a watchdog for the countries, and deemed it fit to ask countries how they had benefited from the study. Mr. Garcia suggested that in the Panama Meeting, each country is allowed 15 minutes to respond to 5 questions. This may help determine the progress achieved in each one with regards to the findings of the study. Mr. Lam went on to say that in the case of Central America, the findings of the study were confirmed during the work meeting, hence confirming the validity of the study. He also suggested looking at the study from a more positive perspective, eliminating the current adjective. Mr. Moscoso suggested promoting the idea and urging delegates to make a presentation during the meeting in Panama. Mr. Long concluded that the possibility was being considered of requesting delegates to prepare before the meeting in Panama an "Assessment of OIMA". He also said it was important to learn what the priorities of the SIMAs are, and asked the EC to consider using the facilities of the USDA in Virginia. Mr. Lam suggested that in future evaluations, top-level authorities of the SIMAs be informed from the outset.

BREAK

- 9.8. Mrs. Guarneros, on behalf of Mexico, said that this country was interested in hosting the Regular Meeting of OIMA in 2009. Mr. Long thanked Mexico for the offer.
- 9.9. Finally, IICA was asked to consult a lawyer about the different alternatives to obtain a legal status for OIMA.

AGREEMENT CE-XI-2007-07: The Technical Secretariat shall present the different options to obtain a legal status for OIMA.

Party Responsible: Technical Secretariat

The final session of the XI Meeting of the Executive Committee of OIMA was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Terry Long, President of OIMA and Representative from the Northern Region

Marco Moscoso, Vice-President of OIMA and Representative from the Central America and Caribbean Region

Adriana Senior, Representative from the Andean Region

Andrea Dansa, Representative from the Southern Region

Pedro Martinez, President Ex – Oficio
