



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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15th INTER-AMERICAN MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE (RIMSA): PRELIMINARY REPORT

1. Pursuant to Resolution CD17.R19 of the Directing Council, the Director of PAHO/WHO convened the 15th Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA 15). At the generous offer of the Government of Brazil, the meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro from 11 to 12 June 2008 and, for the first time, was organized jointly by PAHO/WHO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
2. Meeting since 1968, RIMSA brings together the Ministers of Health and Ministers of Agriculture of the member countries of PAHO/WHO. It is the highest-level political forum for the discussion of needs and strategies in veterinary public health.
3. The framework for RIMSA 15 was basically the Health Agenda for the Americas, linked with the Millennium Development Goals, and the second stage of AGRO Plan 2003-2015, which promotes the improvement of agriculture and rural life, designated a priority issue in the Declaration of Mar del Plata of 2007 and the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas.
4. The confluence of global and regional challenges to public health and the improvement of agriculture and rural life represents an unprecedented scenario that poses a challenge to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, the objective of RIMSA 15 was to analyze the determinants of health and development in the shared orbit of the agriculture and health sectors. The main theme of the meeting was: "Agriculture and Health: Alliance for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas."
5. The opening ceremony was presided over by the Vice Governor of Rio de Janeiro State, Dr. Luiz Fernando de Souza Pezão.

6. By unanimous vote, the Officers of the Meeting were elected as follows:

<i>President</i>	Brazil	Dr. Reinhold Stephanes, Minister of State of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply and Dr. José Gomes Temporão, Minister of Health
<i>1st Vice President</i>	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Hon. Rupert Emmanuel Herbert, Minister of Health
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	Bolivia	Dr. Juan Alberto Nogales, Health Vice Minister and Sports
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Canada	Dr. Dorothy Geale, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

7. Dr. Mirta Roses Periago, Director of PAHO, and Dr. Christopher Hansen, Deputy Director of IICA served as the Secretaries *ex officio*, and Dr. Albino Belotto, Principal Adviser on Veterinary Public Health of PAHO and Director of PANAFTOSA, served as Technical Secretary of the Meeting.

8. The following Member States were represented at the meeting: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela; Associate Member Puerto Rico was also represented.

9. The following international organizations participated as observers in RIMSA 15: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization; Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS; Institute of Public Health of the Community of Madrid; Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges; Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism; Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm; Mexico-American Commission for the Eradication of Screwworm; and World Society for the Protection of Animals.

10. The dynamic of RIMSA 15 was different from that of previous meetings, since it consisted of three parts: the opening of RIMSA 15, where the frame of reference for the meeting was presented; the AGROHEALTH Forum, in which the agenda items were analyzed; and, finally, the Conclave of Ministers, where the political debate took place.

11. The frame of reference presented at the opening of RIMSA 15 considered the follow-up reports on the activities of RIMSA 14, the report on the mandates of the Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life, and the results of the technical forums for regional coordination of the surveillance, eradication, and control of the principal zoonoses, the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease, and food safety--in particular, the conclusions of the 12th Meeting of Directors of National Rabies Control Programs of Latin America, held in Brasilia from 11 to 12 October 2007; the 11th Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-mouth Disease; and the 5th Meeting of the Pan American Commission for Food Safety, the latter two of which were held at the same location as RIMSA 15 on 9 and 10 June, respectively. These reports were included as working and information documents in RIMSA 15.

12. The AGROHEALTH Forum opened with a presentation by the Secretary of Livestock Protection of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply of Brazil, Ignacio Afonso Kroetz, who introduced the item: *Health and Livestock Production in Brazil and South America*. This was followed by three panels:

Panel 1: Facing New Challenges: Climate Change, Food Security, and Economic Growth, coordinated by Mr. Benjamín Dixon Cunningham, Vice Minister of Livestock and Forestry of Nicaragua. The rapporteur was the Hon. Douglas Slater, Minister of Health of St. Vicente & the Grenadines.

Panel 2: Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health: How to Meet the New Challenges, coordinated by the Hon. Celsius Waldo Waterberg, Minister of Health of Suriname. The rapporteur was Dr. Miguel Ángel Pangrazio Vera, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraguay.

Panel 3: Rural Development and Health: Targeting Efforts for Social Inclusion, coordinated by Dr. Bautista Rojas Gómez, Secretary of State for Health, the Dominican Republic. The rapporteur was Dr. Helia Molina, Chief of the Division of Healthy Policies and Health Promotion of Chile.

13. The conclusions of the panels were presented by the rapporteur of RIMSA 15 and considered by the ministers.

14. The opening of the Conclave of Ministers in the afternoon of the second day of RIMSA 15 began with an address by Dr. José Gomes Temporão, Minister of State for Health of Brazil. Afterward, he addressed those present in the name of his Excellency Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Dr. Reinhold Stephanes, Minister of State for Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply of Brazil.

15. During the Conclave, the ministers discussed the priorities for the coordination of public policies for food and agriculture and health development.

16. The Conclave issued the Declaration of Rio of Janeiro "*Agriculture and Health: Alliance for Equity and Rural Development in the Americas, RIMSA 15*". The preliminary text of the declaration and conclusions of the panels was placed on the PAHO and PANAFTOSA websites for changes up to 15 July 2008, when the final versions will be published for the consideration of the Governing Bodies of PAHO and of IICA.

17. Actions proposed for the Executive Committee:

- (a) Take note of the preliminary report and its Annexes.
- (b) Urge Member States to establish or strengthen partnerships and policies to address the determinants of health in the area shared by the health and agriculture sectors identified by RIMSA 15.
- (c) Request the Director to submit and final text of the Declaration of RIMSA 15 to the 48th Directing Council of PAHO and to move forward in the negotiations with the Secretary General of the OAS for its placement on the agenda of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

For additional information on the meeting, please visit the RIMSA 15 website:
http://www.panaftosa.org.br/Comp/Eventos/rimsa_15_novo/english/default_i.html

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