ALC looking for improving farming practices to raise yields

Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) should apply good practices for food production, knowledge-based methods, appropriate use of technology and sustainable management of natural resources, said the general director of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation agriculture (IICA), Victor M. Villalobos. Demand for food is increasing and it is estimated that world population will reach 9 billion people by 2050.

During the Meeting of Leaders of the Agricultural Sector: National Agricultural Planning, held in Mexico, Villalobos presented the keynote presentation "Perspectives of agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean: scenarios for Mexico" where he said that 2050 is expected to the world have 9 billion people, it is urgent to make agriculture more productive, tech, inclusive, competitive, sustainable and responsible activity. "A knowledge-based agriculture, that includes planning, innovation and investment, will allow for a more competitive agri-food sector," said Villalobos.

The meeting was opened by the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) of Mexico, José Calzada, who noted that the Mexican agricultural sector is one of the most dynamic, because in 2015 it exported more than 26 600 million dollars, of which 89% went to the United States.

He stressed that "the main objective is to work together for a more productive field of vision, through a national agricultural planning for which Mexico must travel with sustained changes and away from the inertial changes."

The activity took place also cites the representative of the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO, for its acronym in English), Fernando Soto Baquero; and the chairmen of the committees of the Senate Agriculture of the Republic, Manuel Cota Jimenez, and Agriculture and Irrigation Systems of the Chamber of Deputies, Germán Escobar Manjarrez.

The Director General of IICA also stressed the importance of the application of knowledge in the

field so that there is a higher yield of arable land, improve competition in world markets and have a fair living for producers to avoid migration young people from rural to urban.

He said it is necessary to have an effective policy for the sustainable management of natural and genetic resources and adapt to climate change, which has brought more pests, diseases, drought and extreme temperatures. "You must think about how to produce more with less water, promote reforestation and prevent soil erosion," he said.

In the case of Mexico, he said, the soil condition is critical and desertification has increased, placing innovation and transfer of technology as essential elements for development.

At the meeting, participants will trace lines of action to promote targeted schemes for productive capacity, crop rotation, through an assessment of regions and markets with a long-term vision.

Source: IICA