THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY AND FAO

A collaboration for shared development goals
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

In pursuit of its own ambitious hunger eradication goals, Antigua and Barbuda has taken up the Zero Hunger Challenge which was launched in June 2012 at the Rio+20 Conference. Pockets of undernutrition, with both stunting and wasting, have been reported in the child population in Antigua and Barbuda. FAO is collaborating with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to jointly design and implement a set of coordinated, coherent and effective actions to achieve zero hunger in two years. After the initial assessment period, two programmes were identified for priority action: a home-based garden initiative and a school feeding programme. Significant progress has already been made towards building 500 family gardens and expanding the school meals programme to all schools. The Zero Hunger initiative is implemented in conjunction with the three broad thematic areas previously identified by the government and FAO, which include: i) sustainable crop intensification in support of food security and nutrition; ii) sustainable management of forest and trees; and iii) sustainable management of land and water resources.

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FAO works closely with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to achieve the shared goals of improved food security and nutrition, agriculture and food safety, land and water management issues, environmental protection, disaster risk management and sustainable development. To date, the partnership has produced numerous successful joint projects, including a regional food security and nutrition policy and action plan for the Caribbean sub-region, several national food security and nutrition policies and action plans, and a food security and nutrition information and early warning system for the CARICOM sub-region.
THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas has been a member of FAO since 1975, and currently their partnership focuses on three priority areas: i) sustainable management of fisheries resources; ii) sustainable forestry management; and iii) enhancing agricultural trade. In the Bahamas, the Ministry of the Environment sees the development of the forestry sector as a priority for the country. The natural pine forests are an untapped and important natural resource. Production and use of timber resources would not only make the Bahamas less dependent on imports, it would also retain financial resources in the country and create job opportunities. Relevant legislation has been enacted and administrative arrangements and financial commitment put in place to implement a forest management programme. FAO is implementing a technical cooperation project on the island of Abaco to pilot a sustainable management programme for the approximately 180 000 hectares of natural pine forests. The project is building the capacity of field staff to effectively manage and monitor forest field operations, which will include sustainable logging practices.

BARBADOS

Barbados has been a member nation of FAO since 1967, and FAO is currently working within the country to strengthen rural communities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, FAO has developed a programming framework that will guide their actions in Barbados through the end of 2016, crafted in response to the country’s National Medium-Term Development Strategy. The framework identifies four priority areas: i) food security and food safety; ii) enhancement of productivity and competitiveness in agriculture and fisheries; iii) sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries resources; and iv) agricultural health and food safety. Among the numerous ongoing projects within the country, there is an initiative to reduce post-harvest losses along the food chain in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) subregion, which is being implemented by strengthening the chain of actors and service providers, as well as increasing governmental awareness of the region. Another effort is currently underway to strengthen the small ruminant sector, thereby increasing food security and nutrition. The project is building farmers’ capacities in feeding, breeding, housing and general care for the animals, ultimately leading to long-term development of the sector.
BELIZE

Belize has been a member of FAO since 1983, and FAO currently supports the country in four priority areas:

i) sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies;
ii) innovations for food security and nutrition;
iii) national agricultural health, food safety and quality standards;
iv) and climate change adaptation and risk reduction. Examples of recent activities include assisting the government in the formulation of a national extension policy and national irrigation policy and strategic plan; an input supply project to immediately boost local food production as part of the FAO initiative on soaring food prices; organic vegetable production; improving post-harvest storage; a coordinated citrus greening management programme; and assisting low income farmers in adopting new sustainable farming systems. FAO is also supporting a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in its assessment and response to the illegal logging situation in the Chiquibul Forest—Belize’s most prized forest due to its size and rich reservoir of natural and cultural resources.

DOMINICA

FAO and the Government of Dominica continue to work together to achieve the shared goals of eradicating hunger and developing a sustainable agriculture sector, focusing particularly on food security and nutrition, rural development, plant and animal health/food safety, and risk management/climate change. Dominica is currently known as the Nature Isle, but has made it a stated intention to also lay claim to the title “the Organic Island”. FAO is helping the country to move closer to that goal by assisting the Dominica Organic Agricultural Movement (DOAM), an NGO formed by a cross section of farmers and traders in the organic food production industry. DOAM coordinates programmes and activities for the development of the local organic industry and ensures that foods grown under certifiable organic conditions are marketed effectively locally, regionally and internationally. FAO assistance will help to create a Plan of Action to support implementation of the Strategic Plan, taking into account the local environment and the relevant experiences and best practices of other organic movements in the Caribbean. FAO’s Food Security through Commercialization of Agriculture (FSCA) programme has also helped develop pineapple value chains in the country.

GRENADA

The Government of Grenada partners with FAO on several strategic priority areas, including i) the development of a risk management apparatus for the agricultural sector; ii) improving food security and nutrition; iii) increasing the availability of certified and quality seeds in the country; iv) enhancing agricultural health and food safety; v) support to risk reduction and climate change; and vi) reducing transboundary diseases. In one project in the country, FAO provided equipment and assisted with the tendering process for an abattoir the government built as part of a redevelopment programme for the town of Grenville. The abattoir has been built on the grounds of the School for Agriculture and is expected to have the capacity to slaughter up to
55 small and large ruminants each day. It was designed according to FAO guidelines for the construction of small abattoirs. FAO’s assistance contributes to the sustainable production of meat which meets the highest international standards and can also be sold in the domestic market for consumption by locals and tourists alike. With the development of this market, more producers will be encouraged to intensify their livestock operations, contributing to an eventual reduction in imported meat and meat products.

GUYANA

Good working relationships with the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health have helped FAO and Guyana work together to achieve shared development goals in the country. Their partnership is guided by the four priority areas of: i) nutrition and food security; ii) agriculture and rural development; iii) sustainable natural resources and climate change; and iv) agriculture health and food safety. In an effort to enhance the capacity of Guyana to collect, manage and access agricultural market data and information, FAO has been providing technical assistance to develop a comprehensive Agriculture Market Information System. This system is aimed at improving domestic and regional trade in agricultural commodities and enhancing the lives of rural populations. Achievements thus far include a website showcasing the work and services provided by Guyana Marketing Corporation, as well as enhanced staff capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture to implement a crop production data collection system to allow for better crop forecasting and production planning.

HAITI

FAO’s assistance to the Government of Haiti focuses on four key priority areas: i) capacity building for policies and strategies for food security and nutrition; ii) promoting agricultural sectors through private and public investment and agricultural support services; iii) increasing natural resource management capacity and resilience to climate change; and iv) strengthening risk management capacity for natural disasters and food crises. FAO’s Road to Recovery programme in the country has contributed significantly to the reduction of food insecurity levels by rebuilding the irrigation systems and access roads, reinforcing the banks of rivers and streams, and relaunching activities associated with watershed management, particularly tree planting, in order to prevent flooding. More recently, the emphasis of FAO’s programme has shifted towards development operations. The Haiti Resilience Initiative was developed for the 2014/15 biennium, to increase resilience of
family farmers, contribute to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and reduce rural poverty. Particularly significant is the Government’s request for FAO assistance in support of its Agricultural Recovery Plan. In November 2013, FAO convened a Regional Technical Meeting (in Panama) with South-South Cooperation partner countries to garner increased support for the Agricultural Recovery Plan. This set the stage for much stronger coordination between countries in the region providing assistance to Haiti.

JAMAICA

Jamaica has been a member of FAO since 1963, and FAO representation in the country works closely with the government to support national efforts to promote food security and sustainable development, with a focus on four priority areas: i) value chain development; ii) creation of an enabling framework for the transformation of the agriculture sector; iii) sustainable management of resources; and iv) national food security. FAO has provided technical support to assist the government to respond to repeated outbreaks of the beet armyworm, which threatens to destroy the livelihood of small vegetable farmers in the southern part of the country, as well as erase productive gains in the cultivation of onions. The project is ongoing and will help to establish a comprehensive monitoring and forecasting programme using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. Additionally, to support a Farmer Field School (FFS) approach to on-farm crop and pest management, 20 extension officers and ten farmers are currently receiving intensive training in FFS methodologies and crop management techniques. The trained extension officers and farmers will then train approximately 150 other farmers. FAO is also helping in the development of a disaster preparedness and emergency response plan for the local agriculture sector.

MONTSERRAT

FAO’s work on the volcanic island of Montserrat spans many sectors, including animal health initiatives, forestry assessments, aquaculture and fisheries assessments and a comprehensive study on mangroves. Montserrat was a beneficiary of an FAO programme to eradicate the tropical Bont tick, considered one of the most detrimental tick species present in Africa and the Caribbean due to the economic losses incurred from hide damage, milk production reduction and death of livestock. Through the implementation of national tick control and eradication projects, the programme helped revive the livestock industry, reduce beef imports and enhance food security in the region, and
Montserrat was ultimately declared “provisionally free” of the tropical Bont tick. Other FAO initiatives in the country and region include strengthening phytosanitary capabilities, preparing for the expansion of domestic fisheries, enhancing smallholder agricultural production and marketing, trade facilitation, public information and communication for the Caribbean amblomyoma programme, and strategy formulation for agricultural mechanization policy.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

FAO’s partnership with the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis focuses on three priority areas: i) capacity building for groups and cooperatives with an aim to foster the development of viable livelihoods and competitive agribusiness; ii) aquaculture development; and iii) the creation of sustainable food production systems for food security and nutrition, sustainable use and adaptation of agricultural biodiversity. In the country’s aquaculture sector, most fisheries are artisanal, but they make an important contribution to food security. Around 460 small-scale fishing vessels make up the fishing industry, with 2,000 fisherfolk representing 14 percent of those employed on the islands. Local catches contribute 500 tonnes of fish for local consumption. The government is aiming to transform the industry through improved technology to increase fisheries production. In addition to co-managing the sector and implementing the ecosystem approach to fisheries, FAO is helping to strengthen fisherfolk organizations on the islands, as they need to be organized if they are to be equal partners with the Ministry. Strong fisherfolk organizations may also take a leading role in the efforts to reduce praedial larceny of fish and fisheries gear and equipment.

SAINT LUCIA

The Government of Saint Lucia and FAO work together to achieve development goals with a focus on three main priority areas: i) agriculture and natural resources sustainability and the potential impact of climate variation; ii) food security and nutrition; and iii) enhanced institutional capacities, policy formulation and investment promotion. FAO is currently supporting the government in a programme to modernize meat production in the country through the construction of a modern slaughterhouse/meat processing facility. It will enhance food safety, build consumer confidence in meat and meat products, stimulate livestock production and help locally produced meats to reach high-end market segments, including the lucrative tourist industry, which currently imports all of its meats and meat products.
FAO is assisting the country through the development of general operating and management plans for the operation of the facility.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

FAO’s support to St. Vincent and the Grenadines over the past decade has focused on capacity building, assistance in policy formulation, agriculture planning and agriculture legislation development. Its three main objectives, as agreed upon with the government, are i) fostering agricultural entrepreneurship; ii) boosting production in crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries; and iii) conserving the natural environment/increasing biodiversity. In an income generation initiative, FAO assisted the community in Georgetown, on the Northeast coast of St. Vincent, after losing its traditional sources of income due to the closure of the local sugar factory and the decline of banana production. Decades ago the people of Georgetown were well known for their skills in using bamboo to build baskets and other household items. With the increased use of plastic, the tradition of bamboo weaving was almost lost. The Georgetown Craft Makers Association decided to revive traditional bamboo craft to generate income opportunities for local youth. With the assistance of FAO, the community group registered as a non-profit organisation and employed two local trainers and a facilitator.

SURINAME

Agriculture ranks as the second major economic sector in Suriname as it accounts for 10 percent of total exports earnings; employs 17 percent of the labour force and contributes approximately 10 percent to GDP. Top priorities for the government and FAO include i) modernization and development of food production systems; ii) food and income security for vulnerable livelihoods and communities in environmentally sensitive areas; and iii) enhanced food security policy, legislation and information systems. FAO assisted the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries in planning agriculture for the future by helping the ministry formulateg seven agriculture subsector white papers on rice, bananas, horticulture (vegetable, fruit, root crops), livestock, fisheries, interior development and agribusiness to support the government in achieving food security targets. A national stakeholder consultative exercise has been completed and the Ministry is utilizing the subsector documents in various national planning.
exercises. Other ongoing projects in the country include strengthening aquatic animal health protection systems, preparation of the agriculture sector action plan and disposal of obsolete pesticides.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

FAO and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago focus their partnership on three priority areas: i) food security and nutrition; ii) agriculture and rural productivity and business development; and iii) the modernization of food and agriculture sector. An important aspect of agriculture sector development and food security is the ability to collect and review information and to use the data to develop future strategies. FAO is working with the government to strengthen agricultural data and information, specifically by helping to develop a one-year plan to establish a National Agricultural Data and Information Division, operational guidelines for the division’s systems, processes, programme planning and protocols, as well as a strategic plan and work programme for the division. Other ongoing projects include improving food security in the region, expanding a cocoa drying facility for the Tobago Cocoa Farmers Association, and improving forest and protected area management.

**CARICOM ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

CARICOM’s associate members—Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands—benefit from the FAO-CARICOM partnership as well through projects ranging from fisheries development to sustainable forestry assessments and spiny lobster conservation and management. Agriculture and aquaculture in particular are important sectors in the region due to their impact on food security, as well as their potential for generating income, investment, employment and exports. The associate member countries are also impacted by FAO’s Regional Initiatives in the Caribbean—comprehensive programmes to address food and agricultural issues across multiple countries.
In accordance with FAO’s Strategic Framework, the Organization has implemented several Regional Initiatives to mobilize resources and deliver results on the priority areas agreed upon with its partners. Several CARICOM countries are collaborating with FAO on its Regional Initiatives in the Caribbean.

This Regional Initiative is building on the momentum of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (HFLACI), which was launched in 2005 as a joint commitment by countries and organizations to eradicate hunger within one generation. The Regional Initiative is developing and strengthening political and governance processes towards achieving food security and nutrition objectives.

The Initiative supports regional, subregional and national commitments to the eradication of hunger and the right to food at the highest political level, including the regional Parliamentary Front Against Hunger (as well as national parliamentary chapters) and regional integration bodies’ work plans to address hunger eradication. In particular, the Regional Initiative supports countries in achieving their national food security and nutrition goals through better design and implementation of multisectoral public policies and programmes and the strengthening of related institutions, legal frameworks, information systems and resource allocation. It also seeks to improve coordination among different sectors, ensuring inclusion of different stakeholders such as civil society, parliamentarians, academia, indigenous peoples, producer and consumer organizations and the private sector.
Although important progress has been made in reducing poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent decades, almost one third of the rural population still lives in extreme poverty and is at high risk of food insecurity and malnutrition. Most rural poor are smallholder family farmers and improving their livelihoods will help lift them out of poverty.

The Regional Initiative aims to reduce rural poverty and enhance food security and nutrition through rural territorial development, supporting member countries to create synergies between agriculture and other social and rural development sectors. This approach takes into account the needs and specificities of the territory and aims to create an enabling environment for family farming while sustainably fostering rural livelihoods.

This Regional Initiative addresses two fundamental problems faced by countries across the Caribbean region: first, limited food and feed crop value chain development, and second, low utilization of domestic agricultural products. Both have resulted in a high food import bill, which in 2013 was estimated at US$4.75 billion. Constraints that undermine participation, productivity, investment, value addition, competitiveness and trade have to be addressed. In addition, attention must be given to issues related to quality, standards, governance and the promotion of local food and feed to increase market entry.

Priority countries are expected to develop and establish sustainable food systems through improved policy and governance for increased investment, production, employment, trade and consumption. This will result in improved access to quality food and improved nutrition through changed consumption patterns.
INCORPORATING THE RIGHT TO FOOD INTO REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES

One of FAO’s strongest collaborations with CARICOM to date has been the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, which were approved by the 15 CARICOM member states in 2010 and 2011, respectively. The policy was formulated through a consultative process and with technical support from FAO, and contains several provisions related to the right to food. In identifying poverty, social exclusion and lack of participation in political decision-making as main causes of food insecurity, the policy aspires to give high priority to the most vulnerable population groups and to address the structural causes of hunger in the region.

The overall goal of the Regional Action Plan is to improve access to sufficient, nutritious, safe and culturally acceptable foods for the most food-insecure households and individuals, specifically small producers, indigenous peoples, women and young children. With the support of FAO and a Regional Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security Council, CARICOM member states formulated and implemented national food and nutrition security policies and action plans within the general framework of the Regional Policy. FAO continues to support several CARICOM countries in their ongoing efforts to achieve food security and guarantee the right to food to all citizens.

“The goal of both FAO and CARICOM must be zero hunger—that is the only acceptable level.”

José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General