In recent decades, the Latin America and the Caribbean region has made significant progress in poverty reduction. However, it is estimated that almost half of the rural population (47.9 percent) continues to live in poverty. In fact, the rate is four times higher in rural areas than in urban ones, with nearly 30 percent of people living in extreme poverty in rural areas.

Despite the diverse realities throughout the region, most of the rural population continues to depend on small scale family farming for their livelihoods.

Whereas the essential role of family farming for food security and hunger and poverty eradication is well acknowledged in the region, this sector faces significant constraints in terms of their access to resources, basic facilities, public services, finances and extension.

These constraints undoubtedly hinder access to markets, technology and innovation, affecting farmers' productive capacity and impairing them from achieving sustainable increases in productivity, limiting their integration into dynamic markets.

FAO's Regional Initiative on family farming and inclusive food systems is focused on boosting territorial economies and promoting sustainable rural development with a special emphasis on strengthening efficient and inclusive food systems which are sensible to nutrition and the needs of family farmers.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

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1 Family farming involves all family-based agricultural activities, and it is related to several areas of rural development. Family farming is a way of classifying agriculture, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production managed by a family and depending mainly on family labor, including both women and men.
The Regional Initiative works with governments in the region to facilitate access of producers to different assets (such as land, water, energy, and infrastructure) and rural financial services (loans, savings, insurances) as well as non-financial services (technical assistance, innovation and knowledge). One key aspect of its work is to strengthen producers’ organizations and involve communities in sustainable rural development, with particular attention to the development of social protection policies (cash transfers, employment training, etc.) and their links with productive policies and programmes in rural areas.

To promote sustainable rural development, the Initiative focuses on strengthening inclusive food systems -centered in nutrition- through mechanisms such as public procurement programs for family farming, school feeding programs, the improvement of public supply systems and the strengthening of value chains.

Likewise, the Initiative fosters inclusive food systems as a way to fight malnutrition, focusing on increasing the availability of fresh and healthy foods, improving diversity in diets to fight obesity, and decreasing dependency on imports and vulnerability to economic and natural shocks.

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More information

In its work to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty, FAO has identified five key priorities, each channelled through a Strategic Programme. This initiative is being implemented in the context of:

The FAO Strategic Programme to REDUCE RURAL POVERTY

www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/so3