



COMMISSION OF SMALL SCALE, ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

XVII SESSION

Lima - Peru, 27-29 October 2021

SUMMARY OF THE PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED AT THE XXXVI FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LAC AND THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

In recent decades, agriculture (including livestock, fisheries and aquaculture) in Latin America and the Caribbean has been characterised by a solid growth. The region has become one of the world's leading food suppliers, accounting for 14 percent of global food production and 23 percent of global agricultural and fisheries exports.

Such a growth has resulted in considerable environmental costs; such as water scarcity and pollution, soil degradation, loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, declining fish stocks and forest cover, and high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which contribute to climate change.

Today, Latin America and the Caribbean faces the challenge of transforming its food systems to ensuring more sustainable and resilient production. This will also contribute to fighting all forms of malnutrition and reducing poverty among the most vulnerable rural and coastal communities. This transformation can be a source of multiple opportunities in that it will require the introduction and scaling up of technological innovations, increased investment in human capital and research, improved policies and regulations, and greater opportunities for advancing gender equality.

The transformation of the region's food systems was one of the main topics of discussion at the Thirty-sixth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)¹, which took place in Managua, Nicaragua from 19 to 21 October 2020. The Session was webstreamed due to mobility restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Regional Conference (RC) is the highest governing body of FAO in the Region, it was attended virtually by 545 participants from 33 Member Countries. Participants included two Vice-Presidents of the Republic; one Prime Minister; 92 Ministers and Vice-Ministers; 14 Ambassadors; representatives of 10 UN agencies; nine intergovernmental organisations; 10

¹ FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Thirty-sixth session. Published at: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/larc36/documents/es/>



civil society organisations; one representative of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger; five private sector organisations and five scientific and academic organisations, to discuss challenges and priority issues related to food and agriculture, in order to promote regional coherence with global policy issues.

During the Thirty-sixth Regional Conference, FAO's priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean for the biennium 2020/21 were established, based on the FAO Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Programme (MTP) for 2018-2021, the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), the 2030 UN-Agenda and the national contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For 2020/21, it was proposed to consolidate FAO's three Regional Initiatives (RIs): RI 1: *Transforming food systems towards healthy diets for all*; RI 2: *Hand in Hand Initiative for prosperous and inclusive rural societies* and RI 3: *Sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, in order to respond more effectively and with greater impact to the current regional context and emerging trends.*²

During the RC the country-led and country-owned, data-driven Global Hand in Hand Initiative was launched, which aims to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development with a view to eradicate poverty (Sustainable Development Goal [SDG 1] and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). By promoting progress towards SDGs 1 and 2, the key goals of the 2030 Agenda, the Initiative contributes to the achievement of all other SDGs. The Initiative builds on a robust gap-bridging approach by promoting contact between recipient and donor countries, private sector organisations, international financial institutions, research institutions and civil society organisations to mobilise means and resources to support faster implementation of actions to achieve SDGs 1 and 2.

Potential contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to FAO RC priorities

Regional Initiative 1: Transforming food systems into healthy diets for everyone

Under this RI, the RC recommended FAO to support measures and investments aimed at achieving more sustainable food systems, which is essential in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda goals.

A growing supply of fishery and aquaculture products through environmentally and socially compatible production practices and at affordable prices, becomes one of the pillars to increase the availability of healthy and high biological quality food, which will improve the nutritional state of the population, in particular, the most vulnerable. FAO will support institutional and policy measures to promote further inclusion of these products in sustainable, safe and affordable food systems. This would be achieved through: i) efficient expansion of sustainable production; ii) more inclusive trade and distribution systems of food from fisheries and aquaculture; iii) international trade agreements for food from artisanal fisheries and micro- and small-scale aquaculture; iv) promotion of seafood consumption across the population at all levels and age groups; and v) strengthening safety and quality of food from fisheries and aquaculture.

Availability is an indispensable pillar, but not sufficient, so it will also be necessary to facilitate economic access to the most vulnerable population through: i) fiscal and social policies that facilitate economic

² Report of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Thirty-sixth session. Published at: <http://www.fao.org/3/ne267es/ne267es.pdf>



access; ii) integration of fishers and small-scale fish farmers into public procurement schemes, including school feeding programmes; iii) stimulation of healthy and responsible consumption habits in harmony with local culture; and iv) incorporation of new species of low cost and high nutritional value into the family shopping basket.

Under RI1, recommendations from the Regional Conference, both to FAO and to governments of Member Countries, include:

- i) Design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies focused on recovering the region's progress towards the achievement of SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", in an articulated manner among the different government actors, parliaments, international cooperation and non-governmental and consumer organisations, through comprehensive strategies that include:
 - a) efficient and sustainable increase of food production;
 - b) improving food safety and quality;
 - c) access to nutritious, healthy and affordable food for all, including food supply, social and fiscal policies, consistent with multilateral trade rules;
 - d) regulation for food marketing and advertising, consistent with multilateral trade rules, to ensure that consumers have consistent and reliable information;
 - e) education on healthy eating habits;
 - f) reduction of food losses and waste and proper management of organic waste;
 - g) promotion of healthy food consumption, including food from family and small-scale farming, crop production, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry activities, and other sustainable systems;
 - h) international trade and its contribution to food security;
 - i) local purchases from micro, small and medium-sized producers for school feeding programmes or the public system, in line with the rules of the multilateral trading system.
- ii) strengthening international trade in food, as part of a rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at the core, in order to maintain predictability and transparency of trade flows, including agricultural trade, in order to secure the supply of safe and healthy food at affordable prices;
- iii) strengthening data collection and analysis systems, with a view to developing a new generation of food and nutrition policies, regulations and strategies, based on evidence, science and technology, addressing malnutrition in all its forms through a sustainable food systems approach to healthy diets;
- iv) facilitate dialogue, agreements and partnerships between the public, private, scientific and academic sectors and civil society, in order to promote technological and institutional innovations and food systems governance for healthy diets and sustainable food systems. To this end, the RC requested FAO, within the framework of its new Private Sector Partnership Strategy, to include provisions to avoid conflicts of interest and to protect FAO from undue influence, in particular in processes concerning the formulation



and implementation of policies, standards and regulations, with regard to financial or in-kind contributions from private sector institutions;

v) continue to mobilise capacities, knowledge and will for effective collaboration with the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, the Forum of Fisheries and Aquaculture Parliamentarians of LAC, civil society organisations, the private sector and the scientific and academic community, which are a source of broad capacities and knowledge in the region, in order to find solutions to the various problems and enhance the results pursued by the countries in the region;

vi) provide support to mobilise resources for the development of policies and innovations that promote healthy diets, including monitoring and evaluation of results, by promoting the harmonisation of monitoring indicators among the countries of the region and the contribution of science and technology in this field;

vii) support member countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in their active, informed and coordinated participation in the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, engaging governments, the private sector, the scientific and academic sector and civil society in the preparatory process; and

viii) support the implementation of initiatives originating in the region that have been adopted by the UN General Assembly such as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021 and the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022.

RI 2: Hand in Hand Initiative for prosperous and inclusive rural societies

Under this RI, the Regional Conference recommended FAO to support member countries in reducing hunger and poverty through a broad rural development approach, promoting economic growth accompanied by social policies responsive to territorial and population diversity, in particular social protection. This is essential for sustainable development and the achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 14. Actions are intended to support more inclusive and robust policies aimed at encouraging private sector investment as a driver of economic development, in particular by helping producers overcome barriers to access financial and business support.

The Hand in Hand Initiative will be a key instrument in supporting Member States, as it also provides a framework for strengthening support to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), especially in terms of employment strategies, with an emphasis on women and youth. Sound value chain analysis and market principles will be applied to inclusive models in favour of value chain development.

Enhance the contribution of goods and services from fisheries and aquaculture to the eradication of hunger and extreme poverty in territories lagging behind in the region, through: i) interventions tailored to the national and local context; ii) food and nutrition security; iii) productive inclusion in the framework of social protection programmes; iv) sustainable and resilient livelihoods; and v) risk management to fight transboundary diseases.

The creation of new opportunities in rural territories, through: i) increased productivity and access to markets; ii) economic growth and the creation of decent jobs; iii) scientific innovation and technological development; iv) economic and social inclusion of family aquaculture and artisanal fisheries; v) fisheries



and aquaculture policies addressing migratory movements; and vi) land and natural resource tenure, governance and management.

Under RI 2, the Regional Conference requested FAO to:

- i) support countries in the region included in the Hand in Hand Initiative and, in the rest of the countries, facilitate the implementation of such an Initiative to reduce the development gaps affecting rural territories lagging behind, by mobilising voluntary contributions for this purpose;
- ii) expand the Hand in Hand Initiative to more countries in the region, including middle- and high-income developing countries;
- iii) support governments to improve the technical quality, efficiency and impact of public policies to promote and accelerate the sustainable and inclusive development of rural territories in the region, especially those lagging behind in terms of poverty and hunger, including capacity building, the use of technology and innovation to enable family farming and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture to produce and market safe food, in line with government priorities and needs;
- iv) assist Members in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies aimed at fostering the development of new rural economic opportunities, including, inter alia, bioeconomy and renewable energy development, rural tourism, enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of rural areas, landscape restoration and the provision of ecosystem services;
- v) strengthen family farming, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture policies and organisations, especially through technological and financial inclusion, market access, associativity, innovation, rural extension, access to natural resources and inputs, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation mechanisms, assisting in the renewal of an institutional framework in line with the new challenges of the sector and in the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028. Global Action Plan);
- vi) support Members in the development of strategies and programmes for the recognition, protection, participation and development of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples within the framework of comprehensive rural development policies;
- vii) assist in the development of policies for rural women and young people, strengthening their access to productive inputs and assets, technological innovation and financial services for the development of agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities;
- viii) support the countries of the region in strengthening agricultural and non-agricultural rural employment, through technological and financial inclusion and the development of social protection and economic inclusion programmes for the rural population, in line with the priorities and objectives of national rural development, food security and poverty reduction policies;
- ix) support Members, at their request, in updating and harmonising their definitions and statistics related to the rural domain, with a view to making visible the real demographic, economic and social weight of rural societies, coastal communities, the importance of small and medium-sized urban localities in the rural world, and the important role of rural-urban linkages for sustainable and inclusive territorial development in the region;



- x) support Members in making informed decisions and in scaling up and making more sustainable public investments for agricultural and rural development;
- xi) assist Members in strengthening their institutional frameworks and governance for rural development, prioritising measures that contribute to strengthening coordination, social participation, and inter-sectoral, public-private, inter-level government, and rural-urban collaboration;
- xii) assist governments to generate knowledge about the cost and effectiveness of public investments to boost agriculture, food systems and other rural economic activities that can contribute to socially and environmentally sustainable economic growth, considering current fiscal and financial constraints;
- xiii) support the implementation of international cooperation and resource mobilisation strategies to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG 1 "End Poverty" and SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", in each national context; and
- xiv) explicitly incorporate artisanal and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture into the work programme on the eradication of hunger and extreme poverty, in preparation for the UN International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYFFA 2022).

RI 3: Sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture

FAO reiterated its commitment to support countries in strengthening the sustainability and climate resilience of food systems to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15. This includes technological and institutional innovation for the efficient use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation and the adoption of sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture practices, including agro-ecological innovations. Special attention will be given to addressing climate change and implementing the Hand in Hand Initiative.

FAO will facilitate the exchange of information and communication technology capacities among countries under the Hand in Hand Initiative and support the creation of a regional innovation centre for digital agriculture (e-Agriculture), in connection with FAO's International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture. It will also support the development of standards for data and operating procedures for data collection, verification, synchronisation and interoperability, thus helping member countries to integrate isolated digital agriculture systems and to formulate cross-sectoral digital solutions while increasing the benefits of investment in digital agriculture.

The RI 3 framework will provide support to make terrestrial and marine ecosystems sustainable. FAO will technically assist member countries in their action plans for the maintenance of ecosystem services, as a means to increase production, preserve livelihoods, diversify opportunities for sustainable development, improve the inclusion and well-being of rural and coastal populations and reduce social and environmental conflicts. This will be achieved through: i) conservation and efficient use and management of water; iii) integration of biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture production and ecosystem protection; iv) sustainable forest management; v) reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and vi) blue growth and sustainable development.

To enhance the resilience of farmers, fishers, fish farmers, the communities in general and ecosystems to climate change, FAO will bolster efforts to improve the capacity of all actors to anticipate climate risks and



hazards with gender-sensitive and multicultural approaches, thereby reducing the impacts of adverse events and adapting and transforming development pathways in the long term. This will be achieved by: i) investing in disaster prevention to reduce the cost to agriculture; ii) risk monitoring, early warning and early action systems; iii) expanding resilient production practices for better adaptation to climate change; and iv) strengthening capacity to respond effectively to disasters and promoting recovery and resilience.

Under RI 3, the Regional Conference recommended FAO to pay attention to the following aspects:

a) increase productivity and sustainable production of agricultural crops, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry, to facilitate consumer access to healthy food and continue to contribute to food security and job creation in rural and urban areas, thus contributing to the recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic with a view to build back better;

b) strengthen national services and international cooperation for the prevention of pests and diseases of animals and plants of economic importance, as well as promote science- and evidence-based regulations and practices that encourage the wise and responsible use of antimicrobials in food production, within the framework of the One Health approach that recognises that human, animal and ecosystem health are interconnected;

c) implement Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) related to agriculture and the rural sector and other United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commitments, for climate change mitigation and adaptation, as appropriate and possible, through the development of transformative cross-sectoral strategies tailored to the contexts, priorities and capacities of different countries and territories, and considering common but differentiated responsibilities;

d) strengthen the regional mechanism for voluntary collaboration of Latin American and Caribbean countries in agriculture and climate change as the Secretariat of the Climate Action Platform for Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLACA);

e) strengthening public-private collaboration and facilitating dialogue in order to move towards sustainable and resilient systems through: i) improved inter-sectoral, public-private and rural-urban coordination, aligning objectives and promoting the achievement of mutual benefits, the generation of information to support national decisions and compliance with international agreements; iii) safeguarding traditional knowledge; and iv) mobilising the necessary resources and investment;

f) promote the development and effective use of risk monitoring services and early warning and action mechanisms that reduce losses and damage to agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sector from climate-related disasters and health threats, that increase producer resilience and disaster risk reduction;

g) strengthen Disaster Risk Management (DRM) work to ensure the resilience of livelihoods and the agri-food system, including risk prevention and early action mechanisms and risk transfer products for small producers, within the framework of comprehensive DRM strategies and recognising that the impacts of adverse events affect men and women differently and require specific responses;

h) support the incorporation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into agricultural sector strategies, including fisheries and aquaculture, especially in the Caribbean SIDS, as part of work to



promote sustainable and resilient food systems, in a context of increased exposure to disaster and climate risk, exacerbated by existing vulnerabilities;

i) strengthen the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, in line with the FAO strategy for mainstreaming biodiversity in the different productive sectors and considering and promoting the implementation of the Plan of Action of the High-level Regional Dialogue on the Integration of Biodiversity in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DRANIBA);

j) devise actions to promote Blue Growth, understanding that they are intended to promote the sustainable use of aquatic resources, in pursuit of economic growth, the improvement of people's lives and job creation and the conservation of ecosystems, in line with multilateral trade rules, including artisanal fisheries and aquaculture;

k) prevent and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, taking into account relevant international instruments, such as the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), capacity building for monitoring, fisheries management and data collection, as well as increasing public awareness of the role of the various actors in this context, discouraging the consumption of products originating from IUU fishing, and, similarly, continue to provide technical support in the framework of the ongoing WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies and within the mandate given by the members;

l) strengthen the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture resources through the management, conservation, production and trade of fish products, as well as efforts to address the negative effects of climate change on the sector; and;

m) support coastal communities to take resilience and adaptation measures and adopt new techniques to cope with sea level rise and saline intrusion and initiate the development of voluntary technical guidelines to facilitate the rapid adoption of best practices that will help fishers, fish farmers and coastal communities adapt to ocean warming;

n) continue to work on promoting conservation, water use efficiency and water scarcity management, as well as access and sustainable water management, in the context of increasing frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, saline intrusion and other threats that are exacerbated by climate change;

o) work on forest landscape restoration, conservation and enhancement of forest cover, including urban forestry, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems, considering indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, and recognising the role of forests and trees outside forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation and continue to support countries with the design and implementation of strategies for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).;

p) revitalise regional networks on forest fire risk management and the promotion of fire risk management strategies, including prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation, the use of technology and innovation, at both national and community level, and strengthen capacities for data collection, assessment and reporting of damage and losses caused by forest fires.

q) encourage the adoption of technological innovations in agriculture and food systems that make them more productive, sustainable and resilient.



- r) support family farming and rural micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to increase their competitiveness, sustainability and resilience;
- s) reduce the effects of environmental shocks, including climate change, with a special focus on family farming, indigenous peoples, rural women, vulnerable populations and AIDS, promoting inclusion and empowerment in the use of new practices, technologies and innovations;
- t) reduce the impact of economic and social crises, including deterioration of terms of trade, debt crises and remittance crises, on countries' efforts to pursue food security and nutrition;
- u) continue to work with the private sector, an important source of investment and technological innovation and an important actor in implementing the necessary changes in the agricultural sector, as well as with civil society, the scientific and academic community; and
- v) secure environmental and climate finance, without excluding any category of countries, and mobilise private investments that contribute to the achievement of SDG 6 "Clean Water and Sanitation", SDG 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production", SDG 13 "Climate Action", SDG 14 "Undersea Life", and SDG 15 "Life of Terrestrial Ecosystems" of the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the Regional Conference: reaffirmed the role of FAO in the technical secretariats of the regional commissions and endorsed the recommendations of the Commission on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC), the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC).

It urged that the regular meetings of the regional commissions be held no later than the first half of the second year of the biennium, so that recommendations and technical decisions could be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner by the Regional Conferences during their sessions.