



## Partnerships for Food Security in the Caribbean Region

FAO recognizes that no single body can undertake the mammoth task of eradicating hunger on its own and has placed partnerships at the very heart of its operations. Common food security goals have been achieved through the establishment of strategic partnerships. FAO works together with a large number of partners: UN agencies, Member Governments, bilateral donor agencies, development banks, regional organizations, producer organizations and cooperatives, academic and research institutions, private sector companies and associations, special purpose coalitions and many others. Partners bring technical skills, financial resources, local knowledge and historical and practical experience to the task. These contribute to increasing efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

### PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) initiative in Antigua and Barbuda was designed and implemented through a partnership between key development organizations, and benefitted from the wealth of experience brought to the table by each agency. In 2012, FAO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) signed an agreement to cooperate with the Government to jointly design and implement a set of coordinated, coherent and effective actions with the purpose of eliminating hunger and extreme poverty in the country. Other partners include the World Food Programme (WFP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). This interagency collaboration presented a Plan of Action that included a roadmap for the elimination of hunger in the country. Initial focus has been placed on backyard gardening and the school meals programme.

The strengthening of the School Meals Program, especially the preparation of nutritious meals using local products is one of the key successes. This programme has been reviewed to identify areas for improvement and to ensure the preparation, distribution and consumption of safe healthy nutritious food by students. The School Meals Program operates in 20 schools, and FAO is working with the government to expand it. Another important dimension of the programme is the establishment and operationalization of an Intersectoral Technical Management Advisory Committee to improve governance in all sectors.



The challenges facing Antigua and Barbuda are far from unique. An important part of the Zero Hunger Challenge pilot in that country is documentation of the experiences to provide lessons on how to strengthen ongoing food security programmes in other countries. Based on the example of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada have established their own Zero Hunger Challenge programmes.

Another example of partnerships in action is FAO's work with other agencies to reduce CARICOM's food import bill which is more than USD 4.5 billion. The main focus is to increase production and utilization of domestic food and feed products. One of the key commodities identified for development is cassava and the consensus is that to successfully use cassava as a partial substitute for wheat flour (bread) and maize (poultry feed), a value chain approach should be employed to reach the required production and utilization targets.

FAO has been identified to lead the official working group on cassava which includes CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Secretariat, IICA, Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA), Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Barbados Cassava Task Force.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Based on FAO's experience in implementing the Food and Nutrition Security Agenda for the Caribbean regions, some critical lessons learned are:

- Partnership, coordination and collaboration are key
- Promotion and communications are important
- Adequate resources are critical for successful implementation
- Identification of vulnerable people is not always easy

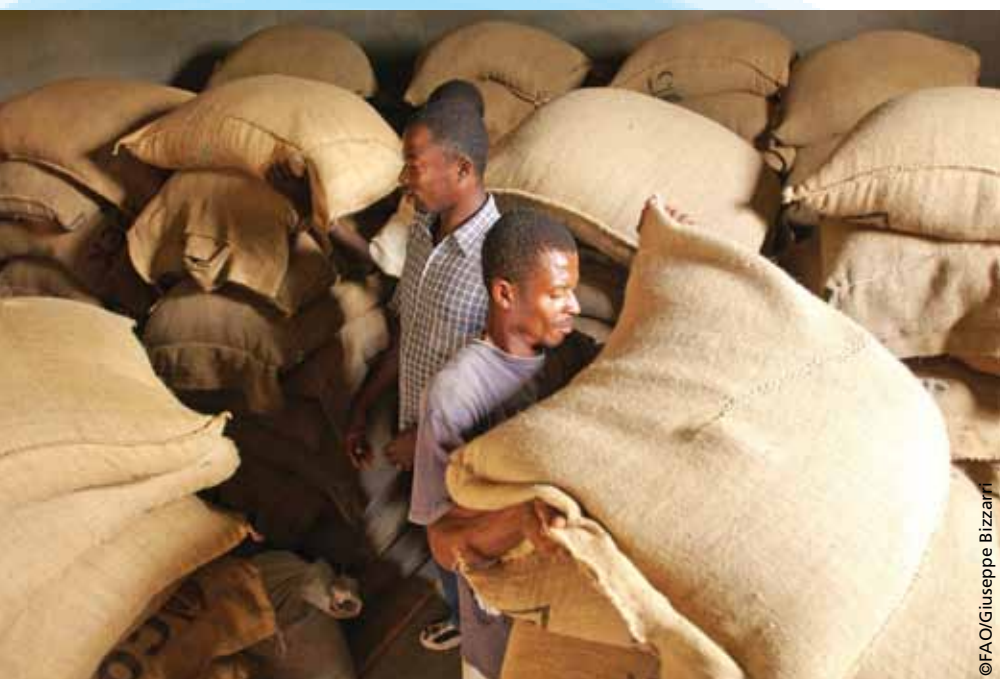


©FAO/Giuseppe Bizzarri

- Ownership and the capacity to implement are important for good governance
- Strong leadership and relevant institutional structures are required
- High priority must be assigned to the programme, and political commitment is essential
- Priority must be given to scaling up viable value chains for enhanced FNS.

## CONCLUSION

FAO is committed to complementing and supplementing the work of governments, other development agencies, civil societies, academia and the private sector in the pursuit of zero hunger and increased food security.



©FAO/Giuseppe Bizzarri