



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
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Food
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
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y la
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THIRTY-FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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REPORT ON FAO ACTIVITIES (2008–2009) IN THE REGION AND ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. The 2008–2009 biennium has been characterized by events that have changed the economic and social paradigm of recent years. In the 1990s, owing to an abundance of cheap food and agricultural products, the world relegated agriculture and the rural world to a secondary position. In Latin American and Caribbean countries in particular, the number of undernourished people decreased steadily, with few exceptions, kindling hopes for a hunger-free region in the near future. These hopes have been dashed: first, by a reversal of the downward trend in agricultural product prices, which has reduced food purchasing power, especially that of the poor and, second, by one of the most serious economic recessions in recent history, which has diminished people's opportunities for income (growth, employment, remittances, foreign investment, etc.), hitting developing countries extremely hard. A decade and a half of progress with poverty reduction vanished in just a few months.
2. The new economic reality of high food and energy prices does not seem to resemble the trail of a comet, which disappears and is soon forgotten. World population growth and rising individual consumption, limited availability of production resources and assets and the impact of human activities on the environment are making the challenges facing the agriculture sector more difficult than has ever been known. The fight against hunger and malnutrition is also coming up against new challenges that can be met only by a new management capability and a firmer political will.
3. This paper summarizes the main activities carried out by the Organization to assist the region in the 2008–2009 biennium, with special emphasis on activities that met the recommendations of the last Regional Conference. Any comments that the Regional Conference may have seen fit to make must be seen in the light of the new responsibilities that it has been assigned in the context of the major reforms currently being implemented in FAO, as mentioned in next section, entitled 'FAO governing structure'. In accordance with established practice, the Programme Implementation Report 2008–2009, which covers all the activities, will be submitted to the Council and Conference of FAO.

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FAO governing structure

4. The Conference stated that, in the framework of FAO reform, the Regional Conferences should assume more relevant functions, as an integral part of the governing structure, in the establishment of programme priorities in the region, as in the supervision and evaluation of those programmes.

5. The Report of the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO – Immediate Plan of Action (CoC-IEE) is the document defining the guidelines for FAO reform, and details the new roles and responsibilities of the Organization's different Governing Bodies. The Regional Conference, in its new role as Governing Body, takes part in analysing the regulatory framework and the coherence of global (and regional) policies for defining intervention priorities at regional level. The regional priorities interact with the Organization's general framework for defining FAO priorities at global level. Based on an examination of policies and the regulatory framework, the Regional Conference supervises and evaluates the Organization's actions and puts forward recommendations for improving them.

6. The specific amendments to the Basic Texts adopted by the Conference of FAO at its last session in November 2009 have included new responsibilities for the Regional Conferences, one of which is to report to the Council, via the Finance and Programme Committees, on programme and budget issues, including: "(d) To review and advise on the programmes or projects carried out by the Organization which impact upon the region."

Food security and Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (HFLAC)

7. The Conference requested that FAO continue to give priority to the fight against chronic undernutrition and child malnutrition and that it map hunger and malnutrition in the region, to identify and mobilize resources for triangular cooperation on food security. The Conference also supported the FAO proposal to set up an Observatory on Food and Nutritional Security, and requested that FAO continue to work in support of the 'Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative', by means of specific actions (Recommendation 30).

8. Since the Spain-FAO Trust Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean came into operation in 2007, an increasing amount of resources has been mobilized for financing and implementing FAO projects and activities currently being conducted in the region in the sectors of rural development, the fight against hunger and malnutrition and emergency response. The Fund manages 11 ongoing projects worth a total of USD 31 million. These regional projects on food security include the regional programme to strengthen the impact of public policies on the eradication of hunger and chronic child malnutrition (2008–2011), which supports countries (with priority given to Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru) in increasing the impact of their public policies on two fronts: by building institutional capacity to facilitate multisector public action for the efficient and effective implementation of food and nutritional security interventions in areas within those countries with populations living in extreme poverty and with chronic child malnutrition, using the participatory territorial approach; and by training public officials and members of civil society in policy and programme management, based on reciprocity and consensus at both national and territorial levels.

9. In late 2007, conceptual discussions began on the design and implementation of a Regional Observatory of Food and Nutritional Security. Given the situation of rising international food prices, in May 2008 the Observatory started publishing a weekly internal report and a two-monthly bulletin on the food situation in the region. The Observatory also published the document *Panorama del Hambre en América Latina y el Caribe 2008* (Hunger Situation 2008), which is an annual report on the region's medium- to long-term food security and nutrition situation. The report included a map of child malnutrition indicators in Bolivia, and work is now under way to calculate a food and nutritional security index for Bolivia, Colombia

and Peru. In September 2008, a regional workshop was held on the GIEWS¹ Workstation as a technology tool for use in the Observatory. In parallel with developing the Regional Observatory, technical and financial support has been given to the national observatories of Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay and, in 2009, work commenced with Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Central America. In 2009, the Regional Observatory's three regular publications were consolidated and working documents to boost research into food and nutritional security began to be published. The Network of Research and Training in Food and Nutrition Security (REDSAN) is also being strengthened by the launch of the second research contest at the Second International Conference on Food and Nutritional Security Measurement in Household Surveys (Campinas, Brazil, 2 to 4 September, 2009).

10. At the meeting of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative Working Group (GT2025), held in Buenos Aires in October 2008, it was agreed to reinforce the work of the secretariat of the Initiative in the following areas: (1) Parliamentary Front against Hunger (FPH); (2) right to food; (3) support to processes of institutional recognition and coordination of food and nutritional security and exchange of experiences between countries; (4) social mobilization and corporate social responsibility initiatives of regional or subregional scope.

11. In 2008 and 2009, the secretariat of the Initiative, which is supported by project GCP/RLA/160/SPA, promoted the prioritization of food security in national agendas by means of wide-ranging awareness raising activities (Chefs against Hunger, story competition on food security topics (entitled *Descontar el Hambre*), articles, network of leader writers). Work has also been done with Parliaments (appropriate institutional and legal framework, sufficient budgets), including the creation of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger, a process which commenced in 2008. The Front's membership includes such institutions as the Central American, Andean and Latin American Parliaments, together with MPs from more than 20 national parliaments. The Front held its first Forum in Sao Paulo, Brazil in October 2009.

12. In the area of promoting the right to food, progress reports have been produced for 12 countries with a targeted total of 17 by the 2009. In coordination with other FAO units, support has been given to law preparation and discussion processes in Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua and Paraguay. Attendance and distance courses in food and nutritional security and the right to food have been promoted, in collaboration with the RLC Policy Training Unit and institutions in the region (Latin American School of Social Sciences [FLACSO], Henry Dunant Foundation, University of Campinas, Colombia's national training service [SENA]) in which more than 4 500 students have participated. Of special note in the area of exchanges of experience on programmes are three seminars on conditional cash transfers held since 2006, to which a fourth was added in November 2009, attended by representatives from 15 countries.

13. The presence of urban and periurban agriculture has been consolidated in the region, where a number of national and local governments have adopted it as a food and nutritional security strategy, including 85 Colombian municipalities. Projects TCP/ARG/3102 and UTF/COL/027 are supporting smallholder farmers in Argentina and Colombia by implementing 'field schools' to improve yields, reduce production costs and ensure product quality, enabling farmers to access the market with their own local trademark and so improve their incomes and food security. Instructional material targeted at smallholder farmers and technicians has been produced, and a conservation agriculture project has been implemented in Guantánamo, Cuba, which has encouraged further activities for promoting its adoption in Cuba, especially in periurban agriculture in provincial centres. Follow-up has also been given to the development of conservation agriculture in Nicaragua.

14. A series of training workshops have been held through the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention on revising draft international standards for plant protection measures and strengthening information sharing, providing training on the use of the international plant protection portal. The members' active participation in the implementation of the

¹ GIEWS: Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture.

Convention has also been promoted and the regional technical committee on forest pest quarantine was set up. Project TCP/PAN/3104 provided support to the Government of Panama in modernizing its agrifood health and safety system.

15. FAO has supported members by means of training workshops on specifications and the establishment of pesticide equivalence in Andean countries. The harmonization and modernization of registration systems has been promoted in Central America. Similarly, training workshops were held to support countries in drawing up plans of action for implementing the Rotterdam Convention. FAO has provided technical assistance and training for performing inventories and supervising tasks of safeguarding and eliminating obsolete pesticides in Paraguay and Bolivia. An assessment of the current status of obsolete pesticides in the countries of the Andean region was also carried out during the biennium.

16. Support was given to strengthening national programmes on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), with a national diagnosis on the conservation status and use of PGRFA conducted in 20 countries and the establishment of a National Information Sharing Mechanism on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 15 countries. This, together with the outcomes of the Regional Meeting on the State of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean has made it possible to identify strengths and prioritize needs at national and regional levels for the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of PGRFA, the management and promotion of diversity in farming systems, plant improvement, and seed production and distribution. Countries contributed to the preparation and publication of the Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which was endorsed by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in October 2009.

17. FAO has continued its food security activities in the region by means of a Household Survey Programme to provide countries with technical assistance for improving household budget surveys to meet the need to evaluate and monitor the food and nutritional security situation using the Food Security Statistics Module (FSSM). The FSSM is used to produce a set of food security indicators for policy-makers and decision-makers to help to target their poverty reduction programmes and actions more effectively, including the Millennium Development Goal indicator on reducing hunger, using food consumption and income data from national household budget surveys. FAO conducted a regional training activity in Costa Rica in 2008, where officials from more than 12 countries in the region used the FSSM. At national level, the Bolivia and Peru prepared their food and nutritional security status reports as inputs to national food security programmes and to food security surveillance systems. Both countries presented their work at the meeting of the FAO working group on agricultural statistics with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 10 to 12 November 2009.

Fight against child malnutrition

18. The Millennium Development Goals include government targets for improving schoolchildren's health and nutritional status. One of the priority actions established in the national food and nutritional security policy of some countries in the region has been to incorporate and update food and nutrition curricula in education programmes at different levels.

19. In view of the above and the fact that one government objective is to support and improve knowledge and practices that contribute to family food security, and aware that school is the ideal vehicle for meeting this priority, FAO has been strengthening the basic education curriculum in the area of nutrition and food security, as well as in the use of the school garden as a teaching tool, not just in basic science subjects but in other areas of the curriculum too. This, accompanied by training actions, has provided children, teachers and parents with the necessary knowledge of nutrition and food security to enable them to eat a proper diet in the future and to recognize its importance for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

20. The educational strategy is based on: supporting teaching practices to improve the dietary knowledge, attitudes, practices and habits of children in basic education; training teachers and families; and producing a series of teaching aids for pupils, teachers and parents in support of this strategy. In addition, it promotes a healthy atmosphere at school by means of healthy school shops (*tiendas saludables*) to promote the sale of healthy food and more nutrient-rich and varied school meals by using food produced at school. Support has been given to the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, the Bahamas, and Barbados.

21. In addition to these actions, the household production and consumption of micronutrient-rich foods is being promoted, which improves the quality and variety of family diets.

22. Two FAO projects (TCP/ARG/3102) and UTF/COL/027) for the application of good agricultural practices transferred from 'field schools' for growing beans, hothouse tomatoes, leafy vegetables and sugar cane/brown sugar loaf (*panela*) have enabled small family farmers in Argentina and Colombia to market produce under their own local trademark. Their improved yields, lower production costs and higher selling prices, in recognition for better quality, have improved the farmers' incomes and food security. In the department of Antioquia, Colombia, the departmental authorities and FAO are implementing a project to train 125 municipalities and more than 100 producer organizations in good agricultural practices, home gardens, nutrition and marketing.

23. Three-year multisector programmes have been drawn up and financed in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru as part of the thematic area Window on Children, Food Security and Nutrition in the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. The systematic linkage of these joint programmes of the United Nations system with food security initiatives, programmes and projects in the respective countries will help to speed up efforts for achieving Millennium Development Goal 1.

24. To cope with the impact of successive crises on the food and nutritional situation of vulnerable groups, it is essential to build the Organization's national, subregional and regional capacity for providing technical assistance to the nutrition plan and livelihoods.

Rural and urban agricultural development and small producers

25. The Conference suggested that FAO provide technical support for the formulation of long-term agricultural and rural development strategies, with a territorial approach and participatory public policies that take into consideration the aspect of access to food.

26. Studies are being conducted into the income dynamic of poor rural households in 13 countries based on the latest household surveys and on labour market and rural poverty policies in five countries. These studies will be used as the basis for formulating assistance to food and nutritional security and rural development policies. Via the GIADR Interagency Working Group for Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO is helping to design, formulate and implement a survey on the rural territorial approach in the public policies of 10 countries, which will serve as the basis for formulating assistance to rural development policies.

27. In the area of agro-industry development, FAO organized the Regional Forum on Agro-Industries in Latin America (Lima, October 2009), which called upon the governments and entrepreneurs of the region's member countries to devise strategies for developing competitive agro-industries that incorporate small- and medium-scale agro-industrial producers and their business organizations as key actors in agrochains. The development of competitive agro-industries is crucial for creating jobs and providing income-generation opportunities, as well as for boosting demand for value-added agricultural products. Their development could provide employment in poor rural areas, not just in traditional farming activities but in other more specialized activities such as processing, packaging, transporting and marketing agro-industrial products.

28. With respect to the territorial issue, FAO has implemented a country support programme on policies for specific quality linked to geographical origin and traditions in order to assist processes of preserving and enhancing this quality by means of effective rural development mechanisms. Two regional workshops were held on the topic in Santiago (December 2007) and in San José (October 2009). A regional technical cooperation project was developed (TCP/RLA/3211), which was adopted in December 2009 and will start to be implemented in 2010.

29. In the agro-industrial area, a training manual on cost-effective management tools for improving food quality and ensuring food safety was developed for small- and medium-scale agro-industrial entrepreneurs. It identifies low-cost, practical and effective management tools to help small and medium agro-industries to build their capacity for producing safe, high-quality processed fruit and vegetables. The manual was used in four training workshops, the first of which was for training trainers in Central America (January 2007), after which national workshops were held for technicians and managers of small and medium fruit and vegetable agroprocessing industries in Nicaragua (February 2007), Honduras (February 2008) and Guatemala (February 2009). Under this Norwegian-financed project, training courses were implemented in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala during the aforementioned period in order to disseminate combined techniques for fruit and vegetable preservation. This enabled training to be given to technicians and small- and medium-scale fruit and vegetable agroprocessors. The training manual on fruit and vegetable preservation using combined techniques was distributed during these courses and a CD on post-harvest fruit and vegetable management was presented and distributed. In addition, laboratories were equipped with gauges/instruments for measuring water activity and beneficiaries were trained in the laboratories (Nicaragua and Guatemala).

30. FAO supported the institutionalization of value chains in Costa Rica. A conference on value-chain financing was held for the entire region and a bilingual publication was produced, as well as a course in Spanish.

31. In the past biennium, the presence of urban and periurban agriculture in the region has been consolidated. Following several years of FAO work with national technicians and small producers, a number of national and local governments have adopted urban and periurban agriculture as a food and nutritional security strategy. In 85 municipalities of Colombia, this has increased fruit and vegetable consumption significantly (from 47 grams to 63 grams per person per day), as the result of six months of training and the implementation of demonstration centres to put into operation thousands of home gardens producing 18 species of fruit and vegetables, which are supplementing the diet by means of innovative preparation, preservation and consumption techniques. The aim is for consumption to have risen to 200 grams per person per day in three years' time. A noteworthy case is Brazil, where the recent national urban and periurban agriculture policy is linked with other socio-economic policies in the Social Safety Net, which covers all Brazilian states. Recent progress has also been made in supporting the implementation of local/national urban and periurban agriculture programmes in Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico, in which FAO has facilitated the process and trained local human resources. By means of the Medellín Declaration and the 2010–2012 Urban and Periurban Agriculture Agenda, concluded in 2009, these and other countries of the region, together with civil society organizations, researchers, academics and producer organizations, agreed to continue with sustainability actions for institution- and capacity-building and for increasing research investment aimed at developing new technologies for the sustainable intensification of urban and periurban agriculture.

32. A subregional workshop on local convenience stores as allies for feeding poor urban areas in Latin America was held Medellín, in December 2009, and the Medellín Declaration on support for local convenience stores was drawn up. The aim of the workshop was to understand the role of local convenience stores in Latin America and to formulate guidelines for central and local public policies and action programmes that would incorporate them into strategies for food supply and distribution in urban centres. The core input for making public policy recommendations on the matter was the information contained in an FAO socio-economic analysis of food shops in poor

urban areas of Latin America, based on surveys in eight Latin American cities: Buenos Aires (Argentina), Asunción (Paraguay), Río de Janeiro (Brazil), Tarija (Bolivia); Lima (Peru), and Manizales, Medellín and Soacha (Colombia).

33. Technical assistance was provided to city councils in Colombia for formulating policies and strategies to boost food supply and distribution to poor urban families. Under project TCP/COL/3202 on strategies for food supply and distribution to the cities of Bogotá, Medellín and Manizales, studies were conducted on the market integration of small producers, the informal food sector and marketing infrastructure, and policy documents and plans of action were drawn up for implementation by city councils. The project placed much emphasis on training technical and executive council staff.

Natural emergencies

34. The Conference recommended (recommendation 11) that FAO give priority support to building national capacity to respond to emergencies resulting from natural disasters. Such support should include an expansion of national capacity to engage in activities of prevention and early warning, mitigation, assistance to vulnerable groups and rehabilitation and reactivation of agricultural production.

35. Under technical cooperation projects and other projects financed by the European Commission and Spain, some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have received FAO assistance for disaster prevention and mitigation, as well as for emergency response and rehabilitation in the agriculture sector. In the 2008–2009 biennium (figures up to July 2009), a total of USD 55 million was mobilized for actions in response to disasters caused by hurricanes, tropical storms, cold waves, earthquakes and transboundary animal diseases, as well as to the crisis caused by food price rises. These actions have included assisting populations in recovering their farming livelihoods, reactivating food production, and activities aimed at improving disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.

36. Owing to the greater frequency and intensity of disasters and damage incurred in the agriculture sector, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean are increasingly requesting FAO support to build their local capacity for agriculture sector risk management. In response to these requests, the strategic priority of the FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division is to strengthen national and regional emergency and rehabilitation coordination units, as well as to incorporate into their projects activities that help to boost local risk management capacity-building.

37. Specific risk management projects are under way in four Andean countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru), as well as in Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Belize. Projects are being implemented to build the capacity of the region's veterinary services in the control and prevention of transboundary animal diseases.

Support to Haiti

38. The Conference urged FAO to significantly broaden and intensify its support activities to Haiti, including the promotion and facilitation of South-South cooperation. The Conference reiterated that technical cooperation with Haiti should continue to be an FAO priority in the region.

39. FAO has increased its presence in Haiti significantly. The programme of work for the country during the 2009–2012 period provides for a total investment of more than USD 61 million. USD 35.3 million of this sum have already been financed and/or identified, and financing for the remaining USD 25.6 million is being sought. The Organization is using the new national programming instrument to cooperate with technical support and financial institutions to improve the coordination of activities. Since 2007, FAO has also been working with other

international organizations to strengthen Haiti's Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR) and to improve the performance of international cooperation in the agriculture sector. The priority interventions in the country are:

Agriculture and rural development

- Institutional capacity-building in the agriculture sector.
- Promotion of sustainable agriculture and improved land management.
- Recovery of agriculture.
- Modernization of rural infrastructure.
- Promotion of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Recovery of agro-industry.
- Strengthening the production support structure.
- Promotion of a new marketing strategy.
- Increased access to financing for smallholder farmers and comparison of the effects of the financial and economic crisis.

Environment, risks and natural disasters

- Sustainable management of water resources and catchment basins.
- Reduction in the environmental vulnerability of the poor, and adaptation to climate change.

Food and nutritional security

- Strengthening national food policies.
- Strengthening food and nutritional security support structures.

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)

40. The Conference requested that the LACFC pursue lines of work on payment for environmental services, sustainable forest management, including the responsible management of forest plantations, the prevention of wildfires and the management of forest statistics, including information on environmental variables.

41. Training documents have been prepared on payment for environmental services, especially in conservation areas.

42. As part of the UN-REDD Programme², actions have been initiated in Bolivia, Panama, and Paraguay in order to support the countries in the preparation process for employing mechanisms defined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. This preparation process includes such activities as performing national inventories, determining emissions levels and strengthening governmental organizations connected with forests and climate change. The processes are widely participatory and include civil society organizations and indigenous peoples.

43. A regional study was undertaken to identify best practices in sustainable forest management, following which a panel of experts from Latin America and the Caribbean analysed 41 cases submitted by individual countries and selected 25 success stories. The project is considering using these cases to promote sustainable forest management in the region. In addition, FAO is implementing a technical cooperation project to build the capacity of Southern Cone countries to monitor, evaluate and report on progress made in sustainable forest management.

44. FAO, jointly with countries in the region, prepared voluntary guidelines for the responsible management of planted forest. A Southern Cone subregional workshop on the responsible management of planted forest was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2008 to support

² UN-REDD: United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries.

implementation of the voluntary guidelines. Prior to that, in September 2008, five national workshops were held in Concepción (Chile), Asunción (Paraguay), Montevideo (Uruguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina) and São Paulo (Brazil).

45. Colombia and Brazil conducted bilateral technical training activities and Brazil supported Bolivia in the matter of forest fires. This cooperation is based on an FAO-supported Regional Cooperation Strategy on Fire Management, which includes subregional networks formed between countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America respectively.

46. In Nicaragua several emergency and technical cooperation projects have been carried out on community-based integrated fire management to prevent wildfires, as the risk has increased considerably as a result of hurricanes and forest pests. Some projects are still ongoing.

47. A training manual on integrated fire management is being translated into Spanish. The translation is being done through Chile's National Forest Corporation (CONAF) and the manual is expected to be used widely by countries in the region.

48. The voluntary fire management guidelines drawn up between 2005 and 2007 are still in great demand in Latin America. In 2008 and 2009, approximately 2 000 copies were distributed to national and international non-governmental organizations, as well as to government agencies.

49. The Forest Resources Development Service, the Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the FAO Representation in Cuba are defining a support project for the fire management sector in Cuba via the Technical Cooperation Programme Facility (TCPF).

50. In March 2009, the *State of the World's Forests 2009* was published, which reports on global forest statistics, especially environmental variables. In 2008, FAO published the latest *Yearbook of Forest Products*.

51. FAO continues to support countries in the region in performing forest inventories, including Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru.

52. In September 2008, the Southern Cone Countries' Network on Invasive Forest Species was set up with its secretariat in Asunción, Paraguay, and a forest protection and health programme is being established.

Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC)

53. The Conference requested FAO technical support for updating animal health laws and regulations, strengthening national veterinary services and systematically recording environmentally sustainable livestock development experiences.

54. FAO supported the formulation of investment projects for strengthening the animal health programmes of expanded MERCOSUR countries by means of project TCP/RLA/3108 (completed). The specific outcome of FAO assistance has been technical collaboration with the agriculture and livestock ministries of expanded MERCOSUR countries in drawing up a Regional Animal Health Programme that includes investment projects for building the capacity of animal health services in each member country and of regional coordination bodies.

55. Two FAO technical cooperation projects have been formulated and approved to support: the subregional coordination mechanism for the eradication of foot and mouth disease from the Andean Community; the harmonization of regulations and reinforcement of policies and strategies in programmes for the eradication of foot and mouth disease from Andean countries, including the revision of legal frameworks; and capacity-building of the five countries' veterinary services (the projects, with a budget of USD 6.75 million, started up in August 2009). These projects are financed by Spanish and Italian cooperation agencies.

56. Successful sustainable livestock development experiences in the region were compiled and systematically recorded, resulting in the FAO publication in Spanish *Ayudando a desarrollar una ganadería sustentable en Latinoamérica y el Caribe: lecciones a partir de casos exitosos*

(‘Helping develop sustainable livestock production in Latin America and the Caribbean: lessons from successful experiences’). Hard copies of the document were distributed and an electronic version was posted on the FAO web page.

57. An Ad Hoc Group on Sustainable Livestock Production has been established in the framework of CODEGALAC-Southern Cone and a pilot study has been initiated in five countries for validating a model to estimate costs and fringe benefits of recovering degraded grasslands, with the participation of research centres in Brazil (EMBRAPA³), Argentina (national agriculture and technology institute [INTA]), Uruguay (national institute for agricultural research [INIA]), Chile (University of Chile) and Colombia (Colombian corporation for agricultural research [CORPOICA]).

58. A portal on sustainable livestock production and climate change was designed and is hosted on the FAO-RLC web page, and the first electronic forum was held on climate change, as recommended by the CODEGALAC meeting in Brasilia. An agreement was also signed to support Chile’s national climate change policy, and an international workshop on livestock production and climate change was held in Santiago, Chile, with FAO support.

59. In March 2009, a group workshop was held in Santiago (Chile) to evaluate technologies for the recovery of degraded grasslands and soil and the use of indicators to monitor the problem, using the proven methodology of EMBRAPA (Brazil). The primary objective is to reduce pressure for more land and greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time slowing deforestation by increasing per hectare productivity and profitability, associating crops and legumes with pasture and using good soil management practices, all of which results in a sustainable livestock system.

60. At the meeting in Quito in November 2009, it was proposed to request FAO technical and professional assistance to facilitate partnership-building for implementing programmes on the recovery of degraded areas and on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Further efforts aimed at the public/private sector of each country in the region, included: boosting investment in research and sustainable development; increasing the commitment to develop integrated tree–crop–livestock farming systems; raising stakeholder awareness of the priority of these issues; identifying areas at higher risk of natural resource degradation and supporting technology transfer to ensure that small producers have access to the value chain; as well as fostering the production of animal protein by small rural households, promoting their involvement in associations and community organization processes and encouraging sustainable production systems by means of credit or financing packages.

Food safety and Codex Alimentarius

61. The Conference urged FAO to continue and to broaden its support to technical capacity-building in the countries of the region, both to enhance their participation in the formulation of standards and to facilitate implementation of those standards.

62. FAO provided financial support to enable delegates from all countries in the region to take part in the training workshop prior to the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC 2008). During 2008 and 2009, FAO undertook numerous regional activities on common priority issues (workshops/seminars/training courses) in support of technical capacity-building in countries of the region, both to enhance their participation in drawing up standards and to facilitate their implementation of those standards. They included: risk analysis; design of policies and strategies for food safety control systems; risk-based inspection; hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) systems for small- and medium-sized enterprises; assistance with effective food safety and agrifood health control systems to comply with the requirements of international regulations on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary

³ The Brazilian agricultural research corporation EMBRAPA, for its acronym in Portuguese: *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária*.

standards; strengthening institutional management (legislation, inspection, laboratories, management personnel, communication) for the implementation of science-based standards; microbiological safety assessment; good hygiene practices for food handlers and a database on risk assessment of *Vibrio* spp bacteria in seafood; biosafety of genetically modified foods; risk analysis of food contaminants; safety of livestock feed and rations; determination of equivalence in SPS measures and systems; private plant protection, animal health and food safety standards; sampling for mycotoxins; food quality linked to geographical origin and traditions. More than 20 specific Codex courses were given: enhancing participation in Codex activities; Codex new electronic tools; the Codex process and you; support to Codex contact points and committees in the region; Codex for inspectors; Codex for food producers.

63. The following materials were produced in Spanish, English and French to support capacity-building activities in the region: a manual on good hygiene practices in the preparation and sale of street food in Latin America and the Caribbean – training package with local examples, case studies and a CD-Rom; a manual on safety assessment of genetically modified foods; analysis of food safety risks – food safety guide for national authorities; guidelines for HACCP application in small and/or less developed enterprises; and a manual on risk-based inspection systems.

64. Projects and/or direct technical assistance in the areas of food safety and Codex Alimentarius are currently under way in the following countries of the region: in Guatemala and Honduras, for improving nationwide safety and quality in the food chain and Codex guidelines; in Guatemala, for assessing capacity and support for the national food control system; in Haiti, Belize and El Salvador, for strengthening the biosecurity framework and for case studies of national policies; in Cuba, for building capacity in food risk analysis; in Chile, for risk analysis and for developing material for an electronic course on *Vibrio* risk assessment; in Panama, for strengthening the animal health, plant protection and food safety system; in the Dominican Republic, for strengthening agrifood competitiveness and laboratory quality assurance; in Trinidad and Tobago, for strengthening the national food safety and agrifood health system; in Jamaica, for establishing the National Codex Committee; in Haiti, for rehabilitating the food laboratory; in Barbados and the eastern Caribbean, for HACCP-based inspection of street food. Direct technical assistance was provided to new food safety agencies/systems in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Chile. Two regional projects are in the process of being approved: assistance in designing and/or strengthening food safety policies; and food quality linked with geographical origin and traditions in Latin America.

65. The Conference requested that FAO support the appropriate dissemination of all phases of Codex activities and results.

66. A number of dissemination and communication activities were conducted on Codex and issues related to food safety and quality, including more than ten FAO/WHO electronic courses on 'Enhancing participation in Codex activities', available on CD-Rom in Spanish and English⁴. Two FAO/RLC electronic courses were designed and are regularly delivered: one on hygienic food handling, which provides tools to ensure food safety and information on Codex basic codes of hygiene⁵; and the other on food safety control systems, which outlines general concepts of food control systems and reviews their components, Codex international standards, case studies and good practices. The FAO/RLC communication campaign *Eat safely* was launched in Latin American and Caribbean countries to prevent food-borne diseases. The campaign provides information in English (*Eat safely*), Spanish (*Come sano*) and French (*Mange sain*) for all Latin American and Caribbean countries on good food safety practices and healthy eating, including food handling and preparation in the home following Codex guidelines⁶.

⁴ See http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/capacity_elearning_codex_es.asp

⁵ See <http://www.rlc.fao.org/nucleo/>.

⁶ The campaign materials are available in English (under the heading *Material de difusión*) at <http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/prioridades/sanidad/comesano.htm>

67. Information exchange mechanisms have been strengthened through the input of regional data and content into the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health⁷ and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN)⁸. The Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES)⁹ has been expanded to include food safety (Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety [EMPRES Food Safety]).

68. In 2009, FAO published a food safety report in Spanish in the *Agricultural and Food Engineering Technical Report* series (No. 6), with case studies on food-borne diseases and their socio-economic impact in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)

69. The Conference requested that FAO redouble efforts to disseminate the conclusions and support the implementation of ICARRD recommendations, and stressed that FAO should continue to promote follow-up to ICARRD in the region, creating regional arenas of cooperation and exchanges of experience and supporting those that already existed. The Conference also underlined the fundamental role of policy dialogue between governments and civil society, and recommended that FAO promote mechanisms of dialogue that would lead to the consolidation of arenas and the realization of appropriate channels for the participation of social movements in the design of public policies.

70. FAO has developed a series of initiatives on ICARRD-related issues. One is project GCP/173/RLA/BRA on strengthening civil society in the areas of family farming and access to renewable natural resources, supported by the Government of Brazil. The project is promoting the organization, jointly with the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, of six national policy dialogues to discuss rural development issues and the establishment of work programmes involving social movements, the respective governments of each target country and FAO. The project also provides for the implementation of an action programme to increase the dissemination and awareness of ICARRD results in the different relevant arenas, by means of the participation of land-related civil society organizations.

71. FAO, jointly with more than 50 social movements, prepared project TCP/3209/RLA, adopted in July 2009, to support follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development: new challenges and options for revitalizing rural communities in South America. The project aims to build the technical and policy-making capacity of leaders of agrarian reform-related social movements to enable them to take part in public policy-making. The project focuses on farmer, fisher, indigenous, women and youth leaders in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, by developing guidelines for training, sharing experience and systematizing good practice in the area of access to land.

72. FAO has committed its support to the functioning of the MERCOSUR Special Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) and operates as an advisory body on family farming matters. FAO participates and provides technical support to the development of the land-access group, in which the land-access institutions of expanded MERCOSUR countries and land-related social movements also participate.

⁷ See <http://www.ipfsaph.org/En/default.jsp>

⁸ INFOSAN: International Food Safety Authorities Network

⁹ EMPRES: Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases

Policies to promote and/or strengthen the participation and joint action of public and private actors in rural development

73. The Conference stated that it was important for FAO to support the strengthening of grassroots organizations to facilitate the integration of family farming into agricultural markets.

74. FAO has developed a technical cooperation programme to strengthen civil society, with the aim of improving the conditions to enable civil society to participate in various public and private, national and international bodies to help design public policies. This project was the subject of wide consultation with representatives of social organizations throughout the region. Still ongoing in five countries in the region is programme GCP/173/RLA/BR on national dialogues between civil society and governments in matters relating to access to land and rural development, where civil society is represented by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty. As part of programme GCP/RLA/169/SPA, a project on training and sharing experience on territorial development is being conducted in partnership with the MERCOSUR Coordinating Body for Family Farming Organizations (COPROFAM), the main organization representing family producers at the Special Meeting on Family Farming. The aim of this programme is to help boost the participation of the region's farmer leaders and organizations in public policies, by incorporating the territorial development approach into their initiatives and proposals.

75. With the support of the Italian trust fund for food security, FAO developed a regional project for Central America aimed at strengthening selected agrochains in the subregion. Programme GCP/RLA/176/ITA seeks to improve food security in four Central American countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) by enhancing agricultural product marketing, as well as efficiency and equity in selected agrochains. The great majority of Central America's commercial smallholder farmers have weak links with markets and are unable to add value to their products, which reduces their income and causes food and nutritional insecurity in their families. The project tackles this problem from the standpoint of the agricultural value chain, extending from production in the field, through the processing or value-adding link and finally to marketing value-added products on local and international markets. The project endeavours to resolve the problems arising in specific production chains in certain geographical areas (in particular the lack of direct links with commercial management and value-adding processes), which are of special importance to food security.

Transboundary animal diseases

76. The Conference underlined the need for FAO documents to indicate clearly and unequivocally the diseases that are not present in the region and highlighted the qualities and assurances that the existing prevention and control systems provide for boosting confidence in the animal health resources of countries in the region. The export-oriented nature of Latin American and Caribbean livestock products makes it essential to highlight this characteristic that distinguishes and favours the region.

77. FAO, via its multidisciplinary technical groups for South America, Central America and the Caribbean, has provided support to countries in the prevention of transboundary animal diseases not present in the region, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and has assisted in the progressive control and eradication of foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever and New World screwworm. It also responded urgently to country requests resulting from the occurrence of emerging diseases such as 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus infection at the animal-human interface and outbreaks of low pathogenic avian influenza H5N2 in Haiti and the Dominican Republic and of porcine enterovirus encephalomyelitis in Haiti. In all cases, the diseases not present in Latin American and Caribbean countries were clearly indicated.

78. The Conference stated its concern over excessive measures that unjustifiably restricted market access in the event of outbreaks or animal health problems. It stated that FAO should contribute towards the promotion of the international standards of the World Organisation for

Animal Health (OIE), as the unjustified application of sanitary restrictions on a wide range of products of animal or plant origin, when originating from an area with a declared disease outbreak, had seriously affected the region's member countries.

79. FAO has been working in synergy with OIE to assist countries in improving the quality of national veterinary services, supporting them in complying with international standards for safe trade, as in the case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in nine countries of Central America and the Caribbean, helping to avoid unjustified restrictions on free trade.

80. The Conference requested that FAO and other international institutions promote and provide technical support to cooperation between countries for the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary animal diseases, involving governments, research centres and agricultural producers, optimizing skills availability and drawing upon different experiences.

81. FAO has promoted and boosted cooperation among countries of North America, MERCOSUR and international organizations to lay the foundations for the progressive control and eradication of New World screwworm from Southern Cone and Andean countries, coordinating and complementing the progressive control of foot and mouth disease. In Central America and the Caribbean, FAO has promoted cooperation and complementarity among veterinary diagnostic laboratories with respect to endemic, transboundary and emerging animal diseases, thereby optimizing skills availability.

Opportunities and challenges of biofuel production for food security and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean

82. The Conference recognized the complexity of the issues and the need for further examination to maximize the potential opportunities of bioenergy production and to minimize the possible risks of adversely affecting food security and the environment. The Conference also believed that FAO could make an important contribution by supporting the mapping of the bioenergy capacity of each country and the biofuel production potential of interested countries.

83. A number of joint activities were carried out with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE). In addition, four case studies were conducted on local development based on small-scale biodiesel production using a variety of raw materials (recycled edible oils in Chile, beef tallow in the Bolivia, raw materials from family farming in Brazil, and jatropa in Guatemala).

84. A software programme (Biosoft) was developed to make an economic and financial assessment of biodiesel projects, and training was given to trainers from Central and South America. FAO conducted the regional project GCP/RLA/170/SPA on the implications of public biofuel policies on food security in Argentina, Colombia and Paraguay. A study on the suitability of land for producing agricultural energy crops was carried out in Argentina and Mexico, and for wood energy crops in Chile.

Improving food and agricultural statistics

85. FAO has responded to the needs expressed by countries in the region in the form of direct requests from governments, and to recommendations adopted by meetings between the FAO working group on agricultural statistics and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Mexico in 2007 and Brazil in 2009, as well as by other regional or expert meetings. The most important aspects are technical assistance to countries by means of FAO field programmes and projects. The main technical support areas are: agricultural censuses; improving institutions and agricultural statistics systems already in operation; agricultural statistics for food security and for information and warning systems; and processing and dissemination of statistical data. All the projects give high priority to improving the technical and operational capacity of national agricultural statistics systems. Most of the projects are financed using FAO Technical Cooperation Programme funds and trust funds. The latest activities relating to the FAO field

programme include: formulation of statistics and agricultural census projects (Haiti, Panama); preparation or implementation of agricultural censuses (Grenada, Haiti, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname); agricultural statistics for food security and for information and warning systems (Bolivia, Peru); support in preparing supply utilization accounts and food balance sheets (Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru); and formulation of a CountrySTAT project in Chile.

86. At its fortieth session in February this year, the United Nations Statistical Commission stressed that agricultural and rural statistics are essential for policy-making and that strategic direction was needed to meet the increasing demand for information at both the international and country levels, especially in the light of the recent food crisis. It also emphasized the important role of agriculture ministries and other institutions in the compilation of agricultural statistics, as well as the coordination role of national statistical offices and national statistical councils. It therefore supported the development of a strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in the report of the FAO working group on agricultural statistics submitted to the Commission, which included: establishing a set of core data that countries will provide; integrating agricultural statistics into the national statistical system; and developing a sustainable statistical system through good governance and statistical capacity-building. It also recognized the important role of FAO as the specialized agency in this field, and welcomed its commitment and effort to involve ministries of agriculture, through its governing bodies, in the development of the global strategy and the implementation plan. It requested that a Friends of the Chair group be formed to coordinate the development of the global strategy for presentation to the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session. The Friends of the Chair group, established immediately after the fortieth session of the Statistical Commission, has been led by Brazil (Mr Eduardo Pereira Nunes) and includes Australia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the United States of America, FAO and the United Nations Statistics Division both as observer and serving as the secretariat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) (observer) and the World Bank (observer).

87. Under the guidance of the Friends of the Chair, FAO and the World Bank prepared a first draft of the global strategy, which then became the subject of a series of meetings and conferences during 2009 (including the meeting of the FAO working group on agricultural statistics with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Río de Janeiro (Brazil), 10 to 12 November 2009) where revisions were made, leading to the presentation of the report to the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission. The main elements of the global strategy are as follows: (a) a conceptual framework, based on a thorough assessment of users' data needs, that broadens the scope and coverage of agricultural statistics to include aspects of fisheries, forestry and rural households and establishes the need for a survey framework that provides a linkage between the farm as an economic unit, the household as a social unit and the land they occupy in the natural environment; (b) a national and international agreement on a minimum set of core data to be provided, because the data requirements identified in the conceptual framework exceed what any country can provide for the same point in time; (c) the integration of agriculture into the national statistical system. The challenges presented in the conceptual framework point directly to the integration of agriculture into the national statistical system. The global strategy provides the framework for achieving integration, which includes the development of a master sample frame for agriculture, its use in an integrated survey system and the implementation of a data management system; (d) the sustainability of agriculture statistics. Under the conceptual framework leading to the integration of agriculture into the national statistical system, good governance will be required to bring together the efforts of the different stakeholders, especially national statistical institutes and ministries of agriculture. While the global strategy provides a framework for integration, it leaves the responsibility for implementation up to each country, and suggests that this may be accomplished through the formation of national statistics councils; and (e) the global strategy concludes with a description of the challenges remaining and outlines the way forward through the development of an implementation plan.

88. The Statistical Commission was asked to note that the global strategy is a long-term plan whose implementation will need to be preceded by a review of the governance of the national

statistical system, an assessment of statistical capacity requirements and the securing of resources to carry forward the effort. This undertaking will require a concerted effort by national, international and donor organizations. FAO will lead the implementation of the global strategy in close partnership with national, regional and international agencies. Work has already begun under the FAO Impact Focus Area on Capacity Building in Information and Statistics, in close collaboration with regional and international institutions.

Improving gender equity and women's participation in policies and programmes for developing the sector

89. One of the priorities of the Plan of Action of the Regional Office has been to mainstream the gender approach into all FAO plans and programmes. It has also focused on actions targeted primarily at rural and indigenous women in situations of exclusion. The main actions have been in the following areas:

90. - Training in socio-economic and gender analysis (SEGA), to build the capacity of staff in the different technical areas of country agricultural institutions, as well as the staff of field programmes and projects. Several cycles of the socio-economic and gender analysis course were held as part of the Spanish-funded FODEPAL distance learning project. In 2009, a joint FAO-ECLAC study was published on the employment of rural women – explaining the figures, which does much to elucidate the precarious employment situation in the region's rural areas.

91. - Support for actions to mainstream the gender approach into public policies and development plans. This includes technical assistance for producing gender-disaggregated agricultural statistics, especially in drawing up agricultural censuses.

92. - Technical assistance and gender mainstreaming into all field projects implemented in the region. The gender approach has been mainstreamed into many projects in the various FAO technical areas, with the region's Gender Officer participating directly in their management and development or providing technical supervision.

Other matters

93. The Conference requested that FAO, together with the countries of the region, conduct a study on the recent increase in the price of agricultural inputs, including an analysis of the causes, outlook and options to reduce the impact on production costs and on agricultural profitability.

94. The two-monthly bulletins *Food Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean* have monitored the trend in fertilizer prices, revealing a price-rise lag and continuing high prices, even when international food prices started to fall, reducing the profitability of production. *Panorama of Food and Nutritional Security in Latin America and the Caribbean 2009* included analyses of the matter.