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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Thirty-fourth Session

Mexico City (Mexico), 29 February - 3 March 2016

Report on FAO activities in the region 2014-2015

Executive Summary

- The Latin America and the Caribbean region has succeeded in reducing malnutrition and poverty mainly through a commitment towards effective public policies targeting the most vulnerable part of society, with legal frameworks that support the various initiatives. An example of those commitments is the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).
- FAO has provided priority support to initiatives that contribute to reducing hunger and poverty, such as national conditional income transfer programmes; support for family farming through public procurement programmes; the fair trade market; technical cooperation for the development of school meal programmes; intra-regional trade facilitation; and the reduction of food losses and waste. Support was also provided to the CELAC Plan of Action to prevent and reduce the risk of disasters.
- Major intra-regional cooperation has been provided through trilateral south-south cooperation, (SSC) with technical and financial resources provided by the region's countries. Cooperation with civil society, academia and the private sector has made it possible to align projects and programmes more closely to the expectations of those groups, and has sought greater cooperation among them.

Actions suggested for the Regional Conference

- Strengthen the coordination and results of the various CELAC working groups operating in the framework of the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication (CELAC FNS Plan), thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Encourage the development of activities in the framework of the Regional Committee of Experts of the Regional Alliance for the Reduction of Food Losses and Waste.
- Follow up FAO initiatives under the CELAC FNS Plan of Action, for the management of food security disaster risks.
- Continue strengthening school meal programs to promote the culture of healthy nutrition.

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| ➤ Support initiatives in the various public policies, which result from the Regional Alliance for the Reduction of Food Losses and Waste. |
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Please send any questions on this document to the Secretary for LARC 34, Tito.Diaz@fao.org
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I. Introduction

1. In 2015, Latin America and the Caribbean attained the international hunger reduction targets for both the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit. This was the result of a combination of factors, including the political commitment of the region's countries and the implementation of more integrated public policies for eradicating hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

2. Those policies have succeeded in integrating technical contents in the wide-ranging institutional discussion of regulatory frameworks between the State and civil society; and they have permeated political agendas with intervention strategies on food and nutritional security, seeking consensuses at all levels.

3. The work of FAO is targeted on the goal of eradicating hunger by 2025 and improving nutritional status through various initiatives, including, in particular, the CELAC FNS Plan.

A. Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative and CELAC FNS Plan

4. The main regional activities undertaken in the past two years in the framework of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (Regional Initiative 1) were aimed at strengthening political support for food security in the region's countries.

5. In this context, support for the design and implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025 takes pride of place.

6. Support continued to be given to various SSC strategies on food security, such as: the Plan to Eradicate Hunger in the Petrocaribe-Alba zone and the Hunger-Free Meso-American Plan promoted by the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID).

7. Work in Bolivia, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic focused on developing food security policies and plans; legal and institutional frameworks to facilitate the upholding of the right to food; national strategies to eradicate hunger; sustainable school meal programs with participation from family farming; and new policy tools to tackle malnutrition in all its forms.

8. Assistance was provided to Costa Rica, as CELAC President Pro Tempore for 2014 (PPT 2014), to develop the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025, requested of FAO with support from the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the 2015 CELAC Plan of Action. Technical cooperation was also provided to foster national dialogues to improve knowledge of the Plan; improvements in the coordination and systems for presenting reports from the various government agencies involved in the Plan's four pillars; and the identification of policy areas that pose challenges that require strengthening in the near future.

9. Support has been provided to Ecuador, as PPT 2015, in disseminating the Plan, on actions such as: (1) presentation of the first Progress Report on the Implementation of the CELAC FNS Plan, at the side event organized with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the United Nations (GRULAC), during the 39th Session of the biennial FAO Conference held in Rome in June 2015; and (2) a presentation made in conjunction with ECLAC in the Central American Agricultural Council of the Central American Integration System (SICA), which included an evaluation of the needs of the Central American region.

10. The PPT was offered technical cooperation to strengthen the leadership role of the national coordinators of each Member State in the process of implementing the CELAC FNS Plan; and the process of articulating and coordinating actions was improved.
11. Support was provided to set up the CELAC FNS Digital Platform, making it possible to mobilize SSC. The Platform contains information on the main policies and programs of the region's countries in promoting food and nutritional security, incorporating a mechanism for intra-regional trade facilitation in the development process, with inputs contributed by LAIA. It also contains a space with the international and regional standards ratified by the countries, which will help to place the "Human Right to Food" as a high priority in the countries.
12. FAO created a monitoring system for the CELAC FNS Plan in the region, which is being fully implemented from the FAORs, Subregional Offices, and Regional Office.
13. Support was provided for the 2nd meeting of the CELAC Working Group on the Advancement of Women, held in San Salvador in 2015, in which the central topic was: "Food security and the sustainable future: the empowerment of rural women". Member countries requested technical assistance from FAO to formulate the gender strategy for implementation of the CELAC FNS Plan.
14. The TCP/RLA/3508 project is being implemented to facilitate dialogue mechanisms and the creation of regional and national capacities to tackle malnutrition in all its forms, through food and nutritional education, in support of the CELAC FNS Plan.
15. In the framework of triangular SSC, the FAO School Meals Project, which has an impact on the nutrition status of school pupils, is assisting 17 countries with support from the Ministry of Education of Brazil. In October 2015, an international seminar was held in Panama to disseminate good practices on school meals and promote intersectoral and interagency articulation, while also launching the Study on the Impact of the Implementation of Sustainable Schools in Latin American and Caribbean Countries.

B. Family farming and rural territorial development

16. Having been created at the first meeting held in Brasilia in 2014, the CELAC Working Group on Family Farming met in Quito, Ecuador during 2015, and it held the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Family Farming in San José, Costa Rica. At the latter meeting, States undertook to contribute to the fulfilment of the CELAC FNS Plan. The 2nd Ministerial Meeting approved the Declaration and Plan of Action for 2016, which defines the following priority work areas: (i) public procurement and supply systems; (ii) rural services (technical assistance, extension, access to credit, insurance, markets, and incentives for partnership); (iii) generation of opportunities for rural youth in compliance with national legislation; and (iv) sustainable intensification of family farming production. In this framework, the headquarters of the Union of South American Nations (UNASAR) in Quito, Ecuador, hosted the preparatory meeting for the 2nd Regional Conference on Rural Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held next year in that country.
17. The new approaches to territorial development (institutional innovation), innovation in rural services, institutional procurement and supply systems (technological innovation) and the generation of opportunities for employment and enterprise for youth and women (social innovation) were addressed at the regional seminar "Innovation for the development of rural territories", held in Brasília in November 2015, with FAO support.
18. A new digital platform has been developed with information on family farming, which includes public programmes, national and regional laws, and up-to-date statistics at the service of the region's countries. This also includes information from other regions.¹

¹ See <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/es/>

19. At the regional level, support was provided for the work of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, which have produced a draft framework law on family farming, for discussion and approval in the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO).
20. Dialogue mechanisms for family farming policies were further strengthened; work with the MERCOSUR Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) was consolidated; and a document was prepared systemizing the 10 years experience of REAF as a mechanism for discussing public policies on family farming. The Central American Agricultural Council of the Central American Integration System (CAC SICA) held the first regional meeting on Dialogue and Public Policy Tools for Family Farming, linking the Central American Strategy for Territorial Rural Development with the subregion's family farming agenda.
21. In 2015, the 17 national committees and one regional committee on family farming, which had been created in 2014 during the International Year of Family Farming, remained active as inclusive mechanisms (government and civil society, producer organizations, academia, etc.) for discussion on public policies for family farming.
22. Special support was provided for the design and implementation of programmes to support family farming in Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay. Access by family farmers to productive resources and rural services was promoted, supporting the design and implementation of financial instruments giving access to credit and insurance; extension and technical assistance systems were strengthened, valuing agro-ecological practices; and family-farmer access to institutional markets through public procurement programs was promoted, through various projects.
23. Institutional capacities for territorial management were strengthened, by articulating family farming policies with social protection and rural employment programmes that promote territorial rural development.
24. Grenada and Cuba implemented a cooperation initiative in the framework of triangular SSC, to promote and consolidate specialized knowledge on the topic of urban and periurban farming.

C. More efficient and inclusive agricultural food systems in Latin America and the Caribbean

25. To move towards more efficient and inclusive agricultural food systems in the region, three strategy lines were promoted: (i) invigoration of trade and regional integration; (ii) inclusive business models through value chains, including strategies to reduce food waste and losses; (iii) policies and mechanisms to promote public-private investment in food supply systems, which were incorporated into the CELAC FNS Plan.
26. The study titled "Development of Intra-regional Trade in Food and FNS Strengthening" (FAO / LAIA, 2015) showed that the region has sufficient food to feed its entire population, and that there is future potential for the intra-regional importation and exportation of agricultural food products.
27. In a collaboration between LAIA, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the first regional dialogue was held on opportunities and challenges for collaboration between family farming and public food supply systems. The network of public food marketing and supply systems in Latin America and the Caribbean was set up as an institutional strengthening mechanism, in which the public sector can invigorate local economies, create food stocks, promote family farming and supply their social protection and school meal programs.
28. A regional strategy for reducing food waste and losses (FWL) was defined, which includes a regional network of FWL experts; national training committees in Central and South America; a training programme on post-harvest losses in the Caribbean; and guidelines for setting up a regional alliance and an international code of conduct.
29. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has prepared a policy for the development of the cassava-growing sector; another has been developed in Central America for fruit, vegetables, tubers and grains; and one in the Andean zone for quinoa and seeds. The Andean Network of Quinoa

Producers and Traders has been launched, and support has been provided for supply systems in Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador.

30. Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Chile, Dominica, Grenada, Guatemala and Uruguay received assistance to strengthen food safety and control systems.

31. Regional studies highlighted the contribution made by indigenous peoples to the sustainability of Andean and Amazonian agricultural food systems, and the role played by women in the processing and informal sale of food products in Belize, Bolivia and Guatemala.

D. Reduction of agricultural disaster risks and food and nutritional security

32. The CELAC 2015 Plan of Action requested technical support from FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) to design and implement regional initiatives for the prevention, reduction and management of disaster risks. FAO has implemented a participatory consultative process with eight priority countries.² Specific priorities have been identified for disaster risk management and resilience (consolidated in work paths for each country); and technical and financial support has been mobilized. This process strengthened resilience and risk management capacities, and promoted SSC.

33. FAO and ECLAC jointly held the 6th Annual Seminar on Agriculture and Climate Change, which agreed upon an agenda of solutions to the agriculture challenges posed by climate change, particularly in terms of adaptation.

34. A programme was formulated to strengthen disaster risk resilience in the Central American dry corridor, with the aim of providing a programmatic framework for promoting resilience (50,000 households).

35. The countries of the dry corridor were prioritized in the framework of the FAO global and corporate initiative, titled “Early Warning - Early Action”, with a view to mobilizing resources for rapid response and rehabilitation actions in the context of the El Niño phenomenon.

36. A process has been launched, in coordination with the Agriculture Council of the South (CAS), to strengthen national systems for the management of food security risks in CAS member countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

E. Haiti

37. Haiti remains a priority both for FAO and for the region, so the three regional initiatives and SSC efforts converge in that country. Exchanges were organized with Chile, Cuba, Ecuador and Peru, with the aim of strengthening Haitian capacities.

38. FAO approved US\$ 758,000 in funding from its Technical Cooperation Programme to promote the implementation of the Triennial Agricultural Development Programme; to support the processing and marketing of milk; and to strengthen capacities for the marketing of quality seeds in family farming. Other programmes to strengthen food security were approved with funding from other partners totalling US\$ 7.8 million.

39. FAO is providing support for FNS governance, and for the updating of the National FNS Plan (PNSAN), while also supporting implementation of the CELAC FNS Plan.

F. Progress in south-south cooperation and resource mobilization

40. Brazil remains the most important partner in FAO triangular SSC in the region; Cuba has contributed with the Caribbean on issues such as risk reduction and urban and periurban agriculture. Memoranda of understanding have been signed with the National Food Supply Agency of Brazil (CONAB), with the ITAIPU binational enterprise and with the Pan-American Association of Veterinary Sciences (PANVET), to strengthen the countries’ institutional capacities. New resource

² Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

partners, such as Chile and Mexico, are working with FAO to support African countries, following the example of Brazil and Venezuela.

41. Work was done with AMEXCID to mobilize triangular SSC to support Central American countries; with the Chilean International Development Cooperation Agency (AGCID) in support of Costa Rica, Guyana and Jamaica; and with the Peruvian International Cooperation Agency (APCI) to launch triangular SSC with Haiti.

42. Nicaragua succeeded in mobilizing SSC from several countries for the policy dialogue processes that it is implementing. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and several regional projects supported implementation of the CELAC FNS Plan, incorporating components and/or actions to promote SSC between the countries. Argentina, Peru and Uruguay were pioneers in providing south-south cooperation through the FAO SSC Portal.³

43. Petrocaribe is an innovative tool of SSC (financial and technical resources), the details of which are set out in the publication “Petrocaribe-10 años de lucha contra el hambre y la pobreza” [Petro-Caribbean – 10 years of combating hunger and poverty].⁴

44. AMEXCID is taking steps (under the Partnership for Prosperity) to obtain cooperation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the European Union, Canada, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Possibilities are being explored with the FAO Investment Centre, for channelling investments and financing by international banks to support regional initiatives and the CELAC FNS Plan.

G. Partnership achievements

45. The institutionalization of the work with civil society has fostered frequent and transparent dialogue and has made it possible to expand collaboration in the CELAC Working Group on Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development (GT AF/DTR); in the Regional Agricultural Ecology Seminar; in REAF/MERCOSUR; in the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger; and in the implementation of projects, etc. It has allowed for a more qualified participation in the FAO Regional Conference and on its Food Security Committee. The key stakeholders (including Vía Campesina, Coprofam, Maela, Amigos de la Tierra, CITI and others) are now linked to the Partnership for Food Sovereignty (formerly CIP in Latin America and the Caribbean).

46. The work with academia has taken a new course, following the workshop held with the countries in Santiago on FAO Regional Initiatives 1 and 2. A review was made of the respective Country Planning Frameworks, and collaboration actions were specified on the basis of common interests and the potentials of each national counterpart. The aim is to hold a similar workshop in the Caribbean with countries related to Regional Initiative 3.

47. National articulation processes are being evaluated to strengthen cooperatives, using the MyCoop proposal, developed by the International Labour Organization of the United Nations (ILO), as the main instrument.

48. Work is ongoing with the private sector to create a regional committee on food waste and losses, and to set up national committees in which the key actors are firms that produce and distribute food products.

H. Achievements on statistics and information systems

49. In 2014, a network of focal points was set up and kept active for replying to questionnaires seeking FAO statistical data. This resulted in an increase in the number of countries answering the questionnaires on agricultural production (from 16 in 2013 to 24 in 2014) and an improvement in the quality of the replies.

³ See <http://www.fao.org/south-south-gate way/es/>

⁴ See <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/es/c/6f572928-dcac-4b45-8df4-b7b92b69bba9/>

50. A Regional Plan of Action was developed to improve agricultural and rural statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was approved by the steering committees of the project “Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics”. In conjunction with the Brazilian Geography and Statistical Institute (IBGE) and the Mexican National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), FAO led the development of the regional public good project “Development of a Methodology for Implementing Agricultural Statistics Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”, approved by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for US\$ 1.1 million to provide training on key agricultural statistics issues.

I. Progress on the alignment of FAO work

51. FAO has implemented its new planning framework, approved by its governing bodies in 2014, at the world, regional and national levels. Through corporate tools, such as the Field Program Monitoring Information System (FPMIS), all of the resources applied in the countries were linked to the FAO Strategic Planning Framework. Moreover, all activities contributed to an output, an outcome and a strategic objective. In 2015, the national representations selected the outputs to which they will contribute in 2016-2017. The Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), agreed upon with the governments, also reflect the FAO Strategic Framework, by linking all activities to the selected outputs. Those outputs, contained in the CPFs, were reviewed and agreed upon at the corporate level with the coordinators of the Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Regional Initiatives, and were incorporated into their work plans and budget. The process has placed special emphasis on planning and priorities at the national (CPF) level.

52. RLC launched a technical decentralization process, strengthening capacities in the subregional offices (SLC and SLM) and supporting the Country Offices. The process has been used as a mechanism to organize and prioritize the human and financial resources needed to achieve the expected results in the region.

J. Gender equity

53. FAO has continued working to construct a regional agenda on policies for rural women under the banner of equal rights, economic autonomy, and fight against hunger. To that end, it implemented the Brasilia Declaration, approved in 2014 at the First Regional Conference on Policies for Rural Women, together with the Brazilian government, ECLAC, FAO REAF MERCOSUR and COMCCA-SICA. Studies, exchange of experiences and meetings have taken place on public policies for rural women, particularly in relation to technical assistance, credit and social protection systems.

54. Support has been provided for the actions of the CELAC Working Group for the Advancement of Women, and the design and implementation of agenda strategy for implementing the CERLAC FNS Plan.

55. Progress has been made with national statistical institutions to improve measurement of the work of rural women in agricultural statistics, particularly in Brazil and the Dominican Republic. Training courses were held for public policy managers on the gender perspective in policies and actions related to food and nutritional security. Pursuant to the FAO Gender Policy, the process of gender mainstreaming throughout the Organization’s actions has continued.

K. Indigenous peoples and public policies on FNS

56. FAO has deployed efforts to create analysis mechanisms and promote the development of differential public policies on FNS, which aim to provide solutions to the needs of indigenous peoples. The project TCP/RLA/3406 “Food and Nutritional Security Policies and Indigenous Peoples in Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Colombia” provided those countries with conceptual tools, information and analysis to enable them to raise the profile of their policies, programmes and projects on FNS among indigenous peoples, and make them culturally appropriate by engaging active participation from the target population groups.

57. As an output of the dialogue and interaction achieved with indigenous organizations in the region, an international seminar was held on “Cultural Diversity, Food Systems and Traditional Life Strategies”, and eight studies were produced on traditional food systems.

58. The FAO Regional Office promoted constitution of the regional network of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), involving 13 countries; and it coordinated the Regional Interagency Group on Indigenous Peoples (GIRPI).

L. Funding for projects in the region, in fulfilment of the Organization’s Strategic Framework⁵

59. FAO executed an average of 305 projects per year in the region under the Organization’s Strategic framework, executing expenditure of US\$ 144.4 million (2014-2015), 85.4% of which was destined for technical assistance, and 14.6% for support in emergency situations.

60. During the biennium, 19.9% was channelled to Strategic Objective 1 (SO 1) (US\$ 28.7 million); 35.1% to SO 2 (US\$ 50.7 million); 18.0% to SO 3 (US\$ 26.0 million); 10.9% to SO 4 (US\$ 15.8 million); and 16.1% to SO 5 (US\$ 23.2 million). In that period 85.2% (US\$ 122.9 million) of project financing came from extra-budgetary sources; and 14.8% (US\$ 21.5 million) came from the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). The main partners contributing funding to the region were Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela. Thanks to resource mobilization efforts, 229 new projects were approved, with a total budget of US\$ 156.4 million, 30.4% more than the amount approved in the previous biennium.

M. FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP 2014-2015)

61. At the start of the biennium, an indicative allocation was approved and communicated to the countries, by country, subregion and region, based on the TCP criteria and other parameters related to food insecurity and poverty.

62. In July 2015, the FAO Technical Cooperation Department authorized additional programming of US\$ 1.9 million, which made it possible to promote the work of the three Regional Initiatives and the CELAC FNS Plan.

63. In total, US\$ 20.9 million (90 projects) was approved; plus four emergency projects totalling US\$1.8 million, financed with a different allocation.

64. TCP investment has been a key mechanism for integrating the Regional Initiatives and the CELAC FNS Plan with the country agendas, promoting processes and complementing ongoing actions.

⁵ According to official FAO figures at November 2015 (FPMIS).