



FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Thirty-fifth Session

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Summary of the recommendations of the regional commissions

I. Introduction

1. The regional technical commissions examine key issues and technical aspects in forestry (the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission [LACFC]), livestock (Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean [CLDLAC]), fishery (the Commission on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean [COPESCAALC] and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission [WECAFC]), and statistics (FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean).
2. These commissions operate as technical advisory bodies of the Regional Conference and their recommendations supplement and underpin discussions held during their sessions on the programme of work and the regional priority framework.
3. The decisions and recommendations of the regional commissions are therefore considered in the Regional Conference and in the guidelines and development of its regional priorities, programmes and key initiatives for the region.

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II. LACFC report

A. General information

Establishment, functions and members

4. The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) was established during the 4th session of the FAO Conference (1948) with the primary function of serving as a neutral forum for the countries in the region to examine forestry issues. The Commission has 33 member countries which work in subregional groups (Caribbean, Mesoamerica, Amazon and Southern Cone).

Date, place and number of participants at the last session

5. The LACFC held its 30th Session in September 2017 in Tegucigalpa, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Honduras. Delegates from 18 member countries attended the Session along with representatives of five organizations including, as observers, United Nations agencies and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

B. Introduction and sectoral context

6. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has abundant forest resources. The region's total forest area amounts to 935.5 million hectares, which corresponds to 46.4% of the region's total surface area. This is equivalent to 23.4% of the total forest area of the world. Approximately 46% of the region's forest area is described as primary forest and 2% corresponds to planted forest, while the remaining 52% is naturally regenerated forest. For comparison, the global figures are: 32% primary forest, 7% planted forest and the remaining 61% naturally regenerated forest.

7. The region continues to lose forest area, however the rate of loss has slowed. The rate has reduced from 4.45 million hectares annually between 1990 and 2000 to 2.18 million annually between 2010 and 2015. This corresponds to a decrease in net loss from 0.44% annually in 1990–2000 to 0.23% annually in 2010–2015.

C. Relevant activities during the period¹

8. The LACFC Secretariat reported on FAO cooperation as regards experience sharing on forest inventories, the preparation of the Central American Pest Management and Forest Health Strategy, the regional workshop on indicators of climate change and food security and nutrition associated with sustainable forest management, the implementation of the forest and landscape restoration mechanism in Guatemala and Peru, strengthening the national forest financing systems of Bolivia and Nicaragua through South-South cooperation, promoting forest governance, the process of preparing voluntary guidelines for the sustainable management of public production natural forests in tropical countries, support for Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and strengthening monitoring capacities within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD).

D. Main conclusions and recommendations

For the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

9. Emphasize that the forest sector is subject to multiple agendas and demands from other sectors that are inconsistent and contradictory, and make it difficult to implement sustainable forest management actions.

¹ Available in LACFC document: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt636s.pdf>

10. Facilitate accordingly spaces for cross-sectoral coordination at the Regional Conference, particularly of the forest, agriculture and environment sectors, regarding its importance as a dialogue mechanism for performing its role as an implementing agency of the Green Climate Fund.
11. Promote the inclusion of trees in family estates as mechanisms for the generation of economic income, soil conservation and protection of water resources and their contribution to increasing resilience to climate change in rural areas.
12. Demonstrate that achieving the global challenge of zero net deforestation requires the efforts and cooperation of all production and environment sectors, as well as the commitment of countries.
13. Distribute the report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (GANESAN) entitled “Sustainable forest activity in support of food security and nutrition” to emphasize the contribution of forests to food and nutritional security.

For the attention of the FAO Programme of Work

14. Measure the contribution of the forest sector to countries’ gross domestic product (GDP), recognizing all goods (timber and non-timber forest products) and ecosystem services that forests contribute, including rural employment.
15. Provide technical assistance from FAO to improve the monitoring capacity of the indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to inform the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, emphasizing the contribution of forests.
16. Strengthen its role as an implementing agency of the GCF, as a mechanism of financial support so that countries can meet the commitments agreed at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
17. Use distribution, dissemination and positive experience sharing as conflict resolution mechanisms in the forest sector, particularly for conflicts concerning establishing forest plantations and environment and forest sector interaction.
18. Promote policy advocacy and good practice in timber concessions and value chains, including timber and non-timber forest products, and the documentation of successful smallholder forest producer association practices, as well as the promotion of micro-enterprise development.
19. Identify good practices and experiences in various countries regarding new incentive schemes for restoration of productive landscapes.

III. CLDLAC report

A. General information

Establishment, functions and members

20. The Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLDLAC) was set up by FAO at the request of the countries in 1987.

Date, place and number of participants at the last session

21. The 13th session of the Southern Cone and Andean Chapter (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Plurinational State of Bolivia, May 2016) and the 14th session of the Mesoamerican Chapter (San José, Costa Rica, December 2017) were held during the last biennium. The number of participants including delegates, private sector, academics, civil society and observers was 60 for the Southern Cone and Andean Chapter and 100 for the Mesoamerican Chapter, along with delegations from five Caribbean countries (Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago).

B. Introduction and sectoral context

22. LAC livestock production has maintained its rapid growth rate. The region's countries produce around one quarter of the world's meat and poultry. As regards eggs and milk, the region provides approximately 10% of the global production of both products and about 7% of the world's pork. Demographic growth, increase in purchasing power and urbanization are translating into greater demand for products of animal origin, particularly in developing countries.

23. The LAC livestock sector is facing the challenge of increasing its production by reducing threats to the environment. Public and private resource allocation and cross-sectoral working are vital.

C. Relevant activities during the period

24. The Meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock in Panama (June 2016) was organized and supported with the aim of encouraging government sector participation. Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay and Dominican Republic have signed up as active members.

25. The alliance of FAO with the Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (RIOPPAH) has been strengthened, thus improving agricultural health programmes in the region. As regards the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), a tool called TICSAN has been developed for a prompt response to possible threats to animal health.

26. A binational programme has been proposed for strengthening Animal and Plant Health Services between the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

D. Main conclusions and recommendations

27. The need for evidence and tools to brief and prepare the sector for Sustainable Livestock Development (SLD) has been identified. Government policies and joint strategies (investment, funding and innovation) need to be strengthened to achieve the necessary changes for a sustainable increase in production.

28. Set up a Laboratory for Livestock Policy Dialogue and Analysis (LAPP) as a means of providing evidence to influence decision makers in policy formulation and design in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

29. Express the political will of the member countries of CLDLAC in the future that the sector participates in nationally determined contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.
30. Create a sphere of action in the Mesoamerican subgroup that can contribute to guiding and preparing government sustainable livestock policies.
31. Support producers to achieve low-carbon sustainable animal production, making efforts to facilitate initiatives by multiple interested parties through the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock and its spheres of action.
32. Manage the incorporation of health and phytosanitary issues in national disaster risk management systems.
33. Promote the inclusion of ministerial departments and international organization representatives in authorities responsible for formulating national plans for monitoring the use of antimicrobial agents and zoonoses, adopting the “One Health” approach.
34. Improve the use of ICTs to generate early warnings, as well as the implementation of the risk-based approach.
35. Strengthen the capacity of veterinary services and public-private livestock sector organizations to support continuous monitoring of diseases and pests, with a regional approach.

For the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

36. Adopt and include the CLDLAC recommendations in terms of technical cooperation for the livestock sector in its biannual programme of work.
37. Encourage a Livestock Policy Dialogue and Analysis Laboratory (LAPP) to be set up in subregional integration authorities such as the Central American Integration System (SICA), linking the LAPP to the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), with the aim of facilitating the formulation and design of public policies contributing to SDG. Departments of agriculture with their resources can encourage the creation of LAPPs.
38. Manage or increase South-South Cooperation between LAC countries to strengthen capacities and share experiences, especially from those countries that have made progress on hunger and poverty reduction goals, particularly on issues addressed in CLDLAC: policies and innovations for the sustainable development of the sector, health risk management, family livestock production and cooperation and mobilization of resources, where the private sector with its investment can also encourage South-South exchange between countries.
39. Strengthen the participation and inclusion of Caribbean countries in CLDLAC.

For the attention of the FAO Programme of Work

40. Organize training in funding mechanisms for climate change mitigation and adaptation processes, such as the GCF and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to give guidance to countries for preparing proposals to select these resources.
41. Examine the possibility that the LAPP, in the case of Mesoamerica, be hosted within the CAC with the objective of providing evidence and technical support for formulating policies for the livestock sector in the countries.
42. Assist CLDLAC in establishing the sphere of action in the subregion which will contribute to formulating government policies.

43. Considering that the human-animal-ecosystem interface requires multisectoral attention and that the FAO / World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) / Pan-American Health Organization – World Health Organization (PAHO-WHO) Tripartite Agreement was drawn up for this reason, the recommendation is to strengthen coordination between these organizations to jointly assist countries in understanding and implementing the “One Health” approach.

44. Continue with the awareness and knowledge management work on the subject of antimicrobial resistance, with the aim of facilitating the formulation of national plans for monitoring antimicrobial use in the countries.

IV. WECAFC report

A. General information

Establishment, functions and members

45. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in 1973 and comprises 33 countries and the European Union as members. The Commission’s objective is to promote the conservation, management and development of living marine resources in the WECAFC area of operation.

Date, place and number of participants at the last session

46. The Commission’s 16th meeting was held in Gosier, Guadalupe, in June 2016. Twenty-eight member countries, the chairpersons of Committees on Fisheries (COFI) 31 and 32 and observers from four regional fishery bodies and four intergovernmental organizations participated.

B. Introduction and sectoral context

47. The lack of regional organization of fisheries management in the WECAFC area allows continued overexploitation of many biological resources along with a risk of the collapse of these resources. Landings declined with about 40% over the last two decades. The WECAFC area is currently the fifth most exploited fishery region in the world. Rebuilding of fish stocks and marine fisheries production to the levels of 1970 and the early 1980s will require collaborative fisheries management and better general governance of the sector.

C. Relevant activities during the period

48. In the intersessional period approximately two-thirds of the agreed Programme of Work was carried out; 30 member countries participated in its activities; six of the 11 joint Working Groups (Queen conch, spawning aggregations, recreational fisheries, sharks, data and statistics, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing) have been active; eight regional technical workshops were held; 54 FAO projects supported the Commission’s work; and 14 publications were issued. Member countries were supported by 23 FAO Technical Cooperation Programme projects with a total budget of USD 5.3 million. Also, 31 trust fund projects were implemented at regional and national level up to a total value of USD 18 million.

D. Main conclusions and recommendations

49. The Commission adopted five regional fisheries management recommendations on: 1) the Queen conch management and conservation regional plan; 2) spiny lobster management and conservation; 3) subregional fisheries management plan for flyingfish; 4) management of deep sea fisheries on the high seas; and 5) management of shrimp and groundfish resources. The Commission

also adopted two resolutions on: 1) sea cucumber management and aquaculture, and 2) Marine Protected Areas as a fisheries management tool. Non-binding fisheries management measures were presented and adopted at the 16th WECAFC session.

50. The Commission agreed to initiate a process to establish a regional fisheries management organization in the WECAFC area of operation. Although several member countries demonstrated a preference for establishing a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, others preferred an intergovernmental organization outside the FAO framework. No decision was therefore taken on this matter at the Commission's 16th meeting. The first preparatory meeting on establishing the RFMO has been scheduled for November/December 2018.

51. The Interim Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable Fisheries, established in 2016, where the Commission collaborates with the Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism (CRFM) and the Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America (OSPESCA), is achieving its objectives. A total of five meetings has been held between the secretariats. The mechanism will be valid until the RFMO is established.

52. The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of WECAFC, at its 8th session held in Mérida, Mexico in November 2017, discussed the increased pressure on sea cucumber populations, among other things. It noted that fishery will collapse in the next few years.

53. Governments should review the available information for supporting the development process of RFMOs and determine their position regarding transforming WECAFC into an RFMO. In this respect it is essential that senior level government officials participate in the 17th session of WECAFC and in the preparatory meetings for establishing the RFMO.

54. Expenses related to the participation of experts and staff of national fisheries authorities in WECAFC meetings, as well as working groups and projects, should be budgeted for by governments, to allow for proper representation and participation by all member countries in the activities of WECAFC.

For the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

55. Support WECAFC's decision to start the process to establish an RFMO.

56. Recognize the improvements in functioning and performance of WECAFC and its increased collaboration with CRFM and OSPESCA and to ask WECAFC member countries to allocate proper resources to support the continuation of the process to transform WECAFC into an RFMO.

57. Identify priority activities for discussion and incorporation by the 17th session of WECAFC in the Programme of Work (2018–2019).

For the attention of the FAO Programme of Work

58. Assist the Commission in the process of establishing an RFMO.

59. Continue to allocate resources from the regular programme to WECAFC for the organization of sessions and meetings of its statutory bodies, taking into account the essential contribution of WECAFC to the implementation of the FAO Strategic Objectives in the region and the promotion of COFI decisions at regional level.

60. Assist the Commission to find extra-budgetary resources to implement the 2018–2019 Programme of Work.

V. COPESCAALC report

A. General information

Establishment, functions and members

61. The Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) was established by FAO Council Resolution 4/70, adopted at the Council's 70th Session pursuant to Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution. Its statutes were amended in the 140th FAO Council Session, in November 2010, to incorporate aquaculture and broaden coverage of both sectors to the Caribbean. The Commission has 21 member countries from Mesoamerica, South America and the Caribbean.

Date, place and number of participants at the last session

62. COPESCAALC held its 15th Session from 22 to 24 January 2018 in Panama City. The meeting was attended by 18 delegates from 14 member countries of the Commission, and national observers from intergovernmental organizations.

B. Introduction and sectoral context

63. In 2015 total LAC fisheries and aquaculture production was 14.5 million tonnes. Fisheries experienced a significant decrease from 24 million tonnes in 1994 to 11.8 million in 2015, owing to the synergistic action of climatic factors and overfishing.

64. Aquaculture continues to grow significantly (17% between 1974 and 2015), achieving 2.7 million tonnes, representing 2.5% of global aquaculture production. The sustained average growth rate of this activity continues to drive the economy of many countries.

65. The region has 2.4 million fishers and aquaculture farmers. Fishers account for 85% of the total. Small-scale aquaculture farmers continue to strengthen as a significant self-employment alternative in rural areas and as a production diversification strategy in smallholder farming.

66. Fish consumption has increased in all the countries in the region, although it remains relatively low (9 kg on average) compared with the global average of about 21 kg.

C. Relevant activities during the period

67. Amendments were approved to the name and statutes of COPESCAALC to incorporate small-scale marine fishery in its terms of reference and objectives, with the result that attention will now be focused on this key subsector. Various activities such as the Parliamentary Forum on Fisheries and Aquaculture in LAC and the High Level Meeting on the Blue Growth Initiative have helped to generate new legislative and sector policy frameworks and to establish key South-South and Triangular Cooperation actions. Interinstitutional actions have been developed to include fish in the diet of vulnerable groups; to prevent and discourage illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and to apply small-scale fisheries guidelines. A road map has been generated to minimize resistance to antimicrobials and resource-limited aquaculture farmers were helped to develop low-cost food alternatives.

D. Main conclusions and recommendations

For the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

68. Guarantee assistance to Member Nations to improve their fisheries and aquaculture statistics and research systems, as well as their monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms as these are

the foundations of the sustainable management of fisheries resources and the protection of the livelihoods that depend on them.

69. Support an integrated strategy to prevent, discourage and eliminate IUU fishing in the region, within the framework of the Agreement on Port State Measures and other supplementary international instruments.
70. Encourage actions leading to the sustainable development of aquaculture to increase the availability of food and as an instrument to help eliminate rural poverty.
71. Support the inclusion of Voluntary guidelines for achieving the sustainability of small-scale fisheries within the framework of FAO Regional Initiatives.
72. Promote the inclusion in its Member Nations of the fishery and aquaculture sectors in the multisectoral processes of their national development agendas.
73. Promote and facilitate South-South Cooperation between Member Nations to strengthen capacities in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
74. Support the activities proposed in the High Level International Meeting on the Global Blue Growth Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico in November 2017.
75. Support the proposed statute amendment by the Commission to include small-scale and artisanal marine fishing in its terms of reference and objectives.
76. Recognize the socioeconomic, environmental and food contribution of inland fisheries, and promote the inclusion of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in cross-sectoral dialogue and in the processes and programmes aimed at territorial rural development.
77. Guarantee continuity of assistance for formulating national and regional strategies to increase fish consumption, with the emphasis on the inclusion of these products in feeding programmes for schools and other vulnerable groups.

For the attention of the FAO Programme of Work

78. Hold a regional workshop on evaluating fisheries resources and monitoring, control and surveillance systems.
79. Continue to provide assistance to countries to adopt the Agreement on Port State Measures and other instruments intended to prevent, discourage and eliminate IUU fishing.
80. Study migratory processes in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
81. Assist in strengthening the Aquaculture Network for the Americas and to implement its strategic programmes.
82. Provide technical assistance for the development of low-cost food alternatives for resource-limited aquaculture (AREL) and micro and small-scale enterprise aquaculture (AMYPE).
83. Assist in the implementation of Voluntary guidelines for the sustainability of small-scale fisheries.
84. Extend the coverage of the baseline study on the inclusion of artisanal fishers, AREL and AMYPE in social protection systems.
85. Formulate a general guidelines proposal for the sustainable development of inland fisheries.

86. Continue assistance for assessing the vulnerability of fisheries and aquaculture to climate change and formulating national adaptation strategies.

87. Assist countries to implement measures leading to compliance with SDG, in particular SDG 14 and the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to other goals.

VI. FAO/OEA-CIE/IICA report

A. General information

Establishment, functions and members

88. The Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean was established under the name of the CMEN Subcommittee on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics by the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI) at its 24th meeting (1964) and officially approved by the National Statistics Improvement Committee (CMEN) at its 8th Meeting (1964). The IASI withdrew from the Working Group in 1995 and was replaced by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Its role is to examine the state of agricultural and food statistics in LAC and to advise member countries on the development and standardization of agricultural statistics services.

Date, place and number of participants at the last session

89. The 28th session of the FAO/OEA-CIE/IICA Working Group on Agricultural Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2017. The number of participants including delegates and observers was 41, from 20 countries in the region.

B. Introduction and sectoral context

90. The increased emphasis on evidence-based decisions in governments and institutions at all levels highlights the role of statistics, in particular in measuring and monitoring activities that are working towards national and international development goals and objectives. Allied with proper policies, sound, timely statistics are instrumental in creating a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable persons. Statistics systems are at the forefront on these issues and play a key part in countries to reduce hunger and poverty through decisions informed by the best possible data. These systems address the growing demand for new statistics and the advanced integration of data and information, particularly when faced with the challenge of monitoring the SDG which will steer the statistical agenda for the next 15 years.

91. Agriculture, in its turn, has a crucial role in the development of the countries in the region. Agriculture itself is a key sector for meeting SDG, particularly as regards poverty, hunger, food security and environmental sustainability goals.

92. The recognized importance of the agricultural sector requires its planning, management and control to be based on sound evidence. The sustained availability of reliable, complete, updated and consistent statistical information is therefore necessary.

C. Relevant activities during the period

93. The FAO/OEA-CIE/IICA Working Group Secretariat reported on the activities carried out as a follow-up to the recommendations made in the previous session and, in particular, on the support given to member countries focused mainly on monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The following activities were carried out during this biennium:

- a) Technical assistance and individual training were provided to 17 countries in the region on agricultural statistics and food security methodology, with the result that several now have the capacity to calculate some SDG indicators under the supervision of FAO, which they did not previously have.
- b) Work was also done on implementing the Regional Public Good Project to improve agricultural and rural statistics in the region. This project, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank of which FAO is the Technical Secretariat, also oversaw 3 publications, the creation of a web site (<http://www.estadisticasagroalc.org>), 3 workshops and a blended learning course.
- c) Two subregional round tables were held (one for Latin America and one for the Caribbean), along with two workshops and one seminar.

D. Main conclusions and recommendations

For the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

94. As the CIE no longer exists and in order to align this statutory body with other similar bodies in other regions, it is recommended that the Regional Conference supports the change of name of this Working Group to “Regional Commission of Agricultural Statistics and Food Security”.
95. Support the decision to set up an organizing committee for each session of the Working Group consisting of a host country representative, a representative of the previous session’s host country, a FAO headquarters representative and the Regional Statistician for LAC.
96. Urge Member Nations to direct resources towards strengthening agricultural statistics and food security systems, based on cooperation, technical assistance and financial support to tackle the challenge of monitoring SDG.

For the attention of the FAO Programme of Work

97. Implement and coordinate 8 working groups for the technical assistance and training of countries in the calculation and analysis of SDG indicators of which FAO is the supervisory agency.
98. Continue providing technical assistance and training to member countries in gathering the necessary data to calculate SDG indicators under FAO supervision and co-supervision, as well as in the methodology for calculating indicators. This assistance should be a combination of regional events and of individual support to countries to enable adaptation to national contexts and should be continuous to keep national technicians up to date and to minimize loss of knowledge owing to high turnover of technicians in national institutions.
99. Compile good national practices in agricultural statistics and food security and distribute them to countries in the region.

General recommendation for the attention of the FAO Regional Conference

100. The ordinary sessions of the various technical commissions are usually organized towards the end of the second year of the FAO biannual programme of work. It is therefore difficult for FAO to report properly to the Member Nations of the region on technical recommendations and decisions to allow them to address these decisions and recommendations properly in the Regional Conferences. It is therefore recommended that ordinary sessions of the Technical Commissions are organized not later than the first half of the second year of the biennium