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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Thirty-seventh Session

Quito, Ecuador, 28 March - 1 April 2022

Statement by the Chairperson of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

Chairman,
Distinguished Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. It is an honour to address the Regional Conference today to present the summary of the recommendations made by the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, which Nicaragua had the honour to chair from 19 to 21 October 2020, in Managua.
2. The Regional Conference, which was held virtually due to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, was attended virtually by 545 participants from 33 Member Nations. Attendees included two Vice-Presidents of the Republic, one Prime Minister and 92 ministers and vice-ministers, as well as ambassadors, representatives of United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, the private sector, and scientific and academic organizations.
3. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Regional Conference discussed the following policy matters of importance to the region:
 - a) sustainable food systems to provide healthy diets for all;
 - b) Hand-in-Hand towards prosperous and inclusive rural societies;
 - c) sustainable and resilient agriculture.
4. The Regional Conference welcomed the work undertaken and completed in the region during the 2018-2019 biennium, and the achievements in response to the priorities and recommendations defined by the Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Regional Conference. In addition, it took note of the arrangements pertaining to the process of reviewing the Strategic Framework to guide FAO's future strategic direction and to promote the efficient and effective achievement of results on the ground; appreciated the further anchoring of the new Strategic Framework in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and recommended that FAO continue organizing its support to Members from Latin America and the Caribbean around three Regional Initiatives so that they may achieve the Strategic Objectives and advance towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, focusing efforts on the agrifood and nutrition sector, rural populations and sustainable development.

5. Chairman, in this context and in relation to policy and regulatory matters, the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean agreed that FAO:

- a) support governments in designing, implementing and assessing recovery policies and programmes for the economic and social crisis caused by COVID-19, with emphasis on job creation, social and productive inclusion, healthy food for the whole population, school feeding, access to and sustainable use of water for agricultural production and increasing production and exports, highlighting the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development and risk management to increase resilience to crises in any of these three dimensions.
- b) support governments, upon their request, in the design, application, monitoring and evaluation of public policies that assist the region's progress in achieving SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", in coordination with different government actors, parliamentarians, non-governmental and consumer organizations by means of comprehensive strategies that include, inter alia, an efficient and sustainable increase in food production, education for healthy food habits and access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food for the entire population.
- c) provide support to governments to improve the technical quality, efficiency and impact of public policies aimed at promoting and accelerating the sustainable and inclusive development of rural territories in the region, especially those that are lagging further behind in terms of poverty and hunger, including capacity-building, as well as the use of technology and innovation so that family farming and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture can produce and trade safe food in accordance with government priorities and requirements.
- d) support Members to increase productivity and sustainable production within the farming, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry sectors, to facilitate consumer access to healthy food, to continue contributing to world food security and to create jobs in rural and urban areas, fostering recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; support countries to fulfil their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on agriculture and the rural sector as well as other commitments of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- e) support Members of Latin America and the Caribbean so that they may participate in an active, informed and coordinated manner at the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, by involving governments, the private sector, the scientific and academic world and civil society in the preparations.

6. Finally, Chairman, on behalf of the President of Nicaragua, His Excellency Mr Daniel Ortega, and in my capacity as Chairperson of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, I wish once again to thank Members for the confidence they placed in our country.

7. We also wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our satisfaction with the strategic direction of the Organization at global and regional level, and the need to continue efforts towards implementing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, with the aim of accelerating - through science, technology, innovation and digital solutions - the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to the eradication of hunger and extreme poverty, and the promotion of sustainable natural resource management.

8. Thank you very much.