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Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

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Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## 37<sup>th</sup> Session

Quito, Ecuador, March 28 – April 1, 2022

### Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Organizations

1. On March 4 and 7, 2022, in preparation for the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC37), we met with family farmers, rural communities, artisanal fishermen and women, consumers, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant populations, peasants, women, youth and people with disabilities from the entire region who, for decades, have fought for food sovereignty and better living conditions in their territories to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and inequalities.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change have deepened the social and economic exclusion and marginalization of family farmers, fishing communities, indigenous peoples and women, among other groups, thereby generating greater gaps in guaranteeing the human right to food, as well as access to the basic food basket, income and local markets to sell our products. Along with this there is the health crisis, which has had adverse effects on health, education and work in families and communities, in addition to the criminalization of environmental defenders.
3. If the impacts and setbacks caused by COVID-19 are not addressed, the Sustainable Development Goal 2 of Zero Hunger by 2030 will not be achieved, and those whose livelihoods are based on food and agriculture, who are among the most vulnerable groups in the region, will once again be left behind.
4. Faced with this scenario, the region's Civil Society Organizations and actors have prepared the following statement to be presented to the FAO and the ministers and high-level officials of the Member Nations:
  - (a) We call for an end to agricultural policies that, in most countries, emphasize large-scale production for the export of natural resources and raw materials, resulting in processes that intensify the development of extractive megaprojects, the loss of biodiversity, climate change and the violation of human rights, while encouraging the consumption of ultra-processed products.
  - (b) It is imperative that the policies and economies in the countries decentralize the capitalist approach to production and markets, while strengthening the circular economy and local markets for the promotion of sustainable agriculture and fishing. We urge Members to adopt an approach aligned with agroecology, which is a productive system and way of life based on the conservation of the environment, preservation and multiplication of native seeds, reproduction of ancestral knowledge, healthy diets and sustainable rural development.

Documents may be consulted at: [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

- (c) We urge States to effectively address climate change. They must adopt a joint strategy on disaster mitigation and prevention, while promoting sustainable food production systems with a focus on agroecology, which will help mitigate the effects of climate change and promote organizational structure and management systems in the territories. In addition, it is essential to impose sanctions on those entities that are the biggest polluters in the territories.
- (d) We demand concrete actions and strategies that link the governance and management of the territories with natural and water resources, so as to combat desertification and improve soil quality through composting, natural methods and biomass.
- (e) We urge that Free, Prior and Informed Consent be guaranteed as a collective human right that affects the land, territories and natural resources of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, while promoting territorial restitution and restoration to safeguard our rights and territories in free trade agreements and private sector instruments for economic development.
- (f) We reiterate that States are responsible for complying with the instruments, agreements and commitments endorsed at the national and international level, specifically the framework on human rights, public policies and programs for access to adequate food and nutrition, land and territory, decent work, social protection and inclusion, biodiversity and environmental conservation, culturally sensitive healthy diets, ancestral knowledge, health, education and access to income for a decent life.
- (g) We call on governments to ensure, at all levels, mechanisms to prevent and safeguard against possible conflicts of interest in food and nutrition security policies, since food systems should contribute to social justice and equity, taking into account that economic and commercial interests must be subordinated to the higher objectives of health and culturally sensitive nutrition, environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation.
- (h) We urge States to effectively apply regulatory measures that limit or prevent the production and marketing of genetically modified foods generated by transnational corporations and strengthen sustainable food systems based on agroecology and the knowledge and practices of family, peasant and indigenous agriculture.
- (i) We urge States to apply effective regulatory measures to restrict access to and consumption of ultra-processed products, as well as to restrict advertising and implement front-of-package labelling to warn consumers about products that cause malnutrition and chronic non-communicable diseases.
- (j) We demand policies that guarantee healthy diets, based on the consumption of natural, minimally processed, pesticide-free foods, with quality, safety and sustainability in food production, as well as diets, in accordance with the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs).
- (k) We urge governments and their institutions to define specific actions to reduce food loss and waste.
- (l) We urge governments to design and implement targeted and inclusive public policies, with an adequate budgetary allocation, aimed at meeting the demands of family farmers, rural communities, Afro-descendant populations, Indigenous Peoples, the fisheries sector, consumers, women, youth and people with disabilities, among others.
- (m) Also, policies should focus on social protection, governance of lands and territories, environmental conservation, financing of sustainable production, technical assistance, rural social insurance, commercialization of healthy foods free of agrochemicals, income generation, complementary health coverage, intercultural education and equitable working conditions for all genders and generations.
- (n) We urge FAO to establish a multisectoral participatory monitoring mechanism to analyze compliance with Regional Initiatives, in which Civil Society Organizations are strategic

actors that contribute to their design, implementation and monitoring. In this regard, it is essential that the Regional Initiatives of the FAO programme for the 2022-2023 biennium recognize the contributions, experiences and ancestral knowledge of family, peasant and indigenous farmers, considering them as rights-holders that should participate in decision-making processes.

- (o) We require that Member Nations and FAO provide simplified access to financing and technical assistance to strengthen the participation and work of Civil Society Organizations within the different sectors in which we participate.
- (p) It is essential that Member Nations and FAO recognize the leading role of women and youth in rural areas and promote their full and effective participation in public policies and decision-making within the countries. This requires training processes and specific budgets for rural youth and women, farmers, peasants, fisherwomen, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, consumers and women's groups in the region.
- (q) We urge States to create multisectoral national committees to design action plans with targeted public policy guidelines, based on the United Nations Decade for Family Farming (2019-2028), the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (2022), the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and other instruments adopted such as the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, the 2030 Agenda, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and ILO Convention 169, among others.
- (r) We demand the democratization of digital technologies based on the principles of accessibility, affordability, inclusion and participation, as well as permanent training processes and culturally sensitive technological innovations, based on agroecology and the ancestral knowledge of the peoples and sectors mentioned above.
- (s) We ask States to carry out national, sub-regional and regional agricultural censuses, which target the generation of data that highlights the problems of the food and agriculture sectors.

5. Finally, we, as Civil Society Organizations, reaffirm our commitment to continue collaborating in the development of policy instruments that guarantee the rights of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, and preserve our territories and natural resources with concrete actions for the reduction of poverty, hunger and the inequalities that persist in our region.

**We continue to promote and facilitate  
the unity of Latin American and Caribbean peoples  
to achieve food sovereignty and security!**