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Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector

1. The private sector, representing participants from agrifood, livestock, fisheries, forestry, aquaculture, poultry and food and beverage processing, distribution, and marketing systems, and made up of large, small and medium-sized enterprises/producers, cooperatives and other economic associations in the region, supports FAO's proposed regional priorities for its next biennium regarding improved nutrition, better production, a better environment and a better life.
2. We are grateful for FAO's work in facilitating the organization of the consultation with the private sector on the eve of the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, and to Member Nations for facilitating the participation of representatives of the private sector and opening the space for the reading of the declaration. It is essential to further strengthen cooperation between FAO and the private sector, and to achieve sustainable development in the region, leaving no one behind.
3. We face constant challenges, resulting from transformations that impact food, nutrition, agriculture, the economy, the environment, and food security. The response requires advances in policymaking at the international and national levels, as well as collaboration among the public, private, scientific and civil society sectors, in the search for innovative solutions that transform agrifood systems in an inclusive and sustainable way.
4. Committed to bringing about a solution to the challenges identified by FAO, we contribute to the global development of agrifood systems, the elimination of poverty and hunger, the comprehensive improvement of people's well-being, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the necessary adjustments to the realities of Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. In this context, we wish to state the following:

Towards better production: efficient, inclusive, and sustainable

- a. The world is preparing to feed a growing population against a backdrop of resource scarcity. The intensification of the main drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition – extreme weather events, a weakening economy, inflation and rising food prices, and growing inequality – requires increasingly efficient, safe, inclusive and sustainable production.

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

- b. Technology offers an opportunity to implement sustainable practices related to the protection of water resources, sustainable agriculture and care for the environment, to ensure the promotion of people's human rights throughout the production chain. In developing countries, however, the lack of infrastructure and technical expertise underscores the need to address the broader challenges they face. In this sense, it is important to work collaboratively with the private sector to create a circular economy ecosystem in which institutions cooperate in the provision of financial instruments and mechanisms to support efficient businesses and projects. Here we highlight our understanding of efficiency in food production, with a lower use of resources, a lower carbon and water footprint, and a greater capacity to meet the food demands of the various sectors of social classes in the nations.
- c. The global food trade must run smoothly without borders to meet the global demand for food. It is important to continue developing multilateral trade standards, minimizing barriers that distort trade, and promoting, through appropriate public policies, associative models of production and consumption based on economies of scale in favour of local development, such as business associations and cooperatives of producers, distributors and consumers, in order to achieve inclusive economic growth by improving sustainability. International organizations, such as the Codex Alimentarius, provide a basis of guidelines with a view to achieving harmonization. But we must also ensure that they act fully in accordance with the scientific and technical evidence that is presented.

Towards better nutrition: ending hunger and achieving food security

- d. We agree to increase efforts to ensure food security and adequate nutrition, with the aim of eradicating hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. It is necessary to promote and have ample spaces for participation in which the voices of the different participants in the productive network converge.
- e. The Latin American region has a 32 percent poverty rate (ECLAC, 2023), with family incomes that are insufficient to access a healthy diet. The problems of malnutrition are due to factors of food insecurity, economic challenges and healthy lifestyle habits, among others. Therefore, the cause is multidimensional, and the private sector plays an important role in collaborating to reduce it.
- f. A comprehensive and holistic view of the agrifood system is required, and it is essential that existing regulatory frameworks are strengthened, and adequate food programs are put forward, while promoting consumer education to form healthy lifestyle habits. Any food policy proposal should seek to strengthen the infrastructure of multilateral regulatory environments, such as the Codex Alimentarius, to reassure the world that increased trade does not entail risks associated with food safety and security, health, the environment, animal and plant life, or fundamental consumer rights. We believe it is prudent to evaluate the results of public policies related to the degree of food processing, and we reiterate that the definition of regulatory frameworks that considers the particular nature of the contexts will not be possible without approaches based on robust science.

Towards a better environment: sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change

- g. We support FAO's statement that food production systems must be adaptable and resilient, in order to cope with the effects of climate change. This can only be achieved if policies, incentives and capacities are developed in a way that encourages the adoption of digitalization, new technologies – which enable higher yields with less use of resources or lower levels of greenhouse gas emissions – and practices that favour efficient resource management, the circular economy, sustainability and resilience of food production chains, improving ecosystem services in general. It is also important to have financing mechanisms capable of minimizing the risks arising from such loss and damage.

- h. Today, barriers to trade are emerging in terms of the placement of environmental restrictions on food imports by developed countries. At this juncture, it is essential to keep food-producing countries such as the Latin American region in mind. Governments and multilateral organizations need to take measures to close the gaps that may arise, such as by implementing community protocols/certifications through regional integration mechanisms that help incentivize and promote good environmental and animal welfare practices.
- i. The experience of the different sectors of the production system and the available scientific information are essential to ensure the efficient creation of policies and regulatory frameworks on environmental issues. We must generate articulation and alliances.

Towards a better life: reducing inequality, rural poverty and building resilience

- j. Economic policies and practices regarding sustainability are needed to foster economic growth, create jobs and reduce poverty and inequality.
- k. The private sector generates wealth through its workers. It is essential to continue promoting the development of public-private partnerships that stimulate these efforts to promote the productive linkages of small producers with companies, in order to improve food intake and increase family incomes in the agricultural, poultry, fishing and other sectors that generate employability.
- l. We ask for the support of Member Nations, so that FAO can assert its voice with that of the private sector in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. We are committed to working collaboratively with the public sector, universities and international institutions to find and embrace innovative solutions that transform agrifood systems, making them more inclusive, competitive and sustainable.
- m. In conclusion, the private sector reaffirms its commitment to continue collaborating in building processes equipped with concrete measures for the reduction of poverty, hunger and inequalities in our region, and requests Members' support in ensuring that FAO can work through institutional dialogue mechanisms to fulfil the regional priorities identified in coordination with the private sector.