

LARC/08/REP

REPORT

Brasilia, Brazil,  
14 to 18 April 2008

# Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations serviced by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (as of 18 April 2008)

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Paraguay
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Colombia	Honduras	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Venezuela
Cuba	Mexico	
Chile	Nicaragua	
Dominica	Panama	

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America and the Caribbean

First	Quito, Ecuador, 18-25 September 1949
Second	Montevideo, Uruguay, 1-12 December 1950
Third	Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1-10 September 1954
Fourth	Santiago, Chile, 19-30 November 1956
Fifth	San José, Costa Rica, 12-21 November 1958
Sixth	Mexico City, Mexico, 9-20 August 1960
Seventh	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 17-27 November 1962
Eighth	Viña del Mar, Chile, 13-29 March 1965
Ninth	Punta del Este, Uruguay, 5-16 December 1966
Tenth	Kingston, Jamaica, 2-13 December 1968
Eleventh	Caracas, Venezuela, 12-20 October 1970
Twelfth	Cali, Colombia, 21 August - 2 September 1972
Thirteenth	Panama City, Panama, 12-23 August 1974
Fourteenth	Lima, Peru, 21-29 April 1976
Fifteenth	Montevideo, Uruguay, 8-19 August 1978
Sixteenth	Havana, Cuba, 26 August - 6 September 1980
Seventeenth	Managua, Nicaragua, 20 August - 10 September 1982
Eighteenth	Buenos Aires, Argentina, 6-15 August 1984
Nineteenth	Bridgetown, Barbados, 5-13 August 1986
Twentieth	Recife, Brazil, 2-7 October 1988
Twenty-first	Santiago, Chile, 9-13 July 1990
Twenty-second	Montevideo, Uruguay, 28 September - 2 October 1992
Twenty-third	San Salvador, El Salvador, 29 August - 2 September 1994
Twenty-fourth	Asunción, Paraguay, 2-6 July 1996
Twenty-fifth	Nassau, Bahamas, 16-20 June 1998
Twenty-sixth	Merida, Mexico, 10-14 April 2000
Twenty-seventh	Havana, Cuba, 22-26 April 2002
Twenty-eighth	Guatemala City, Guatemala, 26-30 April 2004
Twenty-ninth	Caracas, Venezuela, 24-28 April 2006
Thirtieth	Brasilia, Brazil, 14-18 April 2008

**REPORT OF THE THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Brasilia, Brazil, 14-18 April 2008)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Report on FAO activities (2006-2007) aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit target

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

1. Urged the countries of the Region to increase their efforts to achieve food security. It reiterated that the main cause of food insecurity was not in the level of food production; production indices for the different agricultural commodity groups indicated accelerated progress in the last fifteen years. The problem resided in the fact that a large proportion of the resource-poor population did not have access to foods available on the market. The Conference emphasized the need for growth in Latin America and the Caribbean to bring about a higher level of social inclusion and to be accompanied by policies to enhance the distribution of income.
2. Called on all the countries of the Region who improve the food security of indigenous and other ethnic groups that had far more severe conditions of food insecurity than the national average.
3. Underlined the need to formulate long-term agricultural and rural development strategies, with a territorial approach and with participatory public policies.
4. Stressed the importance of implementing public policies that were specifically directed towards family farming.
5. Drew attention to the opportunity for the capitalization of agriculture that resulted from the process of rapidly increasing agricultural commodity prices in relatively stable macroeconomic frameworks.
6. Urged the countries of the Region to implement immediate assistance actions for Haiti.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

7. Requested that FAO continue to give priority to the fight against chronic undernutrition and to the eradication of child malnutrition.
8. Requested that FAO continue to work in support of the "Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative" and towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, working complementally with the other UN agencies, in particular WFP and IFAD.
9. Suggested that FAO provide technical support to the formulation of long-term agricultural and rural development strategies, with a territorial approach and participatory policies. In addition to agricultural production variables, such activities should consider aspects of trade, distribution and access to food.
10. Requested that FAO support actions that were aimed at including small farmers in the benefits of better agricultural prices.

11. Recommended that FAO give priority support to the building of national capacity to respond to emergencies resulting from natural disasters. Such support should include an expansion of national capacity to engage in activities of prevention and early warning, mitigation, assistance to vulnerable groups and rehabilitation and reactivation of agricultural production.

12. Urged FAO to significantly broaden and intensify its support activities to Haiti, including the promotion and facilitation of South-South cooperation. The Conference reiterated that technical cooperation with Haiti should continue to be an FAO priority in the Region.

13. Indicated that FAO should emphasize actions directed towards broadening and deepening South-South cooperation.

**Reports of the Regional Commissions: Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) and Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGLAC)**

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

14. Emphasized the need to boost the joint efforts of countries to prevent, control and eradicate transboundary diseases, with an emphasis on the control of foot-and-mouth disease in the Region.

**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

15. Requested that the LACFC pursue lines of work on payment for environmental services, sustainable forest management, including the responsible management of forests plantations, the prevention of wildfires and the management of forest statistics, including information on environmental variables.

16. Requested FAO technical support for the updating of animal health laws and regulations, the strengthening of national services and the systematic recording of environmentally sustainable livestock development experiences.

17. Indicated, in the case of both the LACFC and the CODEGLAC, the activity report should include updated information to supplement the recommendations from their last meeting, which would permit a more relevant analysis at the Regional Conference.



## **Matters arising from the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of FAO**

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

18. Took note of the organizational changes that had resulted from the decentralization of the Organization in the context of Reform, in particular the establishment of the Sub-Regional Office in Panama and of the three Multi-Disciplinary Teams: for South America in Chile, for Mesoamerica in Panama and for the Caribbean in Barbados; and the changes in the organization of the technical officer groups in the Regional Office.

19. Indicated that the ongoing reform process should: a) contribute to the strengthening of FAO; b) enable the Organization to fully perform its mandate; c) reinforce FAO capacity to provide rapid and appropriate responses to the needs of developing countries; d) optimize the human resources of the Organization; e) foster greater transparency and democracy in FAO decision-making; f) strengthen the functions of governance through greater participation of the governing bodies in the determination of programmes, in the ongoing supervision of work implementation and in the use of the financial resources of the Organization, and g) maintain a structure of technical support for gender equality.

20. Stated that, in the framework of FAO reform, the Regional Conferences should assume more relevant functions, as an integral part of the governing structure, in the establishment of programme priorities in the Region, and in the supervision and evaluation of those programmes.

## **Food safety: Effective participation of developing countries in Codex Alimentarius meetings**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

21. Urged the countries to redouble their efforts to participate in all Codex activities.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

22. Expressed its deep concern over the low participation of the countries of the Region in the process of drafting Codex standards. It indicated that the low level of participation was mainly due to a lack of economic and human resources, which was exacerbated by the geographic dispersal and the multiplicity of meetings. It recommended that the organization of meetings be modified, with consideration given to their possible centralization in Rome and/or Geneva, where countries could participate through their officials attached to FAO or WHO.

23. Urged that FAO continue and broaden its support to the building of technical capacity in the countries of the Region, both to enhance their participation in the formulation of standards and to facilitate the implementation of those standards

24. Requested that FAO support an appropriate dissemination of Codex activities and results at all the steps.

## **Pressing global and regional issues: Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (HFLACI)**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

25. Urged the countries to promptly designate their national focal points to help establish a network, in the framework of the Initiative, that would help to coordinate actions and define the type of activities that needed to be implemented in each country, in accordance with its concrete needs.

26. Recommended strengthening and deepening cooperation between countries, as well as mechanisms for triangular cooperation on food security, taking into account available supply and the identification of synergies.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

27. Examined a classification of country policies, reviewing public expenditure targeting five objectives: agriculture and rural development; social protection and food; nutritional assistance and health, water and sanitation; and nutritional education. It agreed with the identification of the main challenges that were listed for 2008-2010, in particular the establishment of a network that would help coordinate actions and define the type of activities that needed to be implemented in each country, according to its concrete needs.

28. Considered that the Initiative should include the strengthening of cross-sectoral coordination in order to address food security and the fight against hunger and malnutrition in an integrated manner.

29. Requested that FAO map hunger and malnutrition in the Region. It also supported the FAO proposal to set up an Observatory of Food and Nutritional Security.

30. Recommended that the next meeting of the HFLACI Working Group, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the second half of 2008, should include the following items on its agenda: a) prioritization of food security on national agendas; b) updating of the state of the Initiative in each country and of the mapping of hunger and malnutrition in the Region; c) refinement of the matrix of food and nutritional security policies and programmes; d) establishment of the Observatory of Food and Nutritional Security, its functions and objectives; e) strengthening of communication channels between all actors of the Initiative; f) mechanisms for the participation of civil society; and g) local management plans to strengthen food and nutritional security.

31. Suggested that FAO identify and mobilize resources together with other UN agencies for triangular cooperation on food security.

**Round Table: Follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development – ICARRD (Porto Alegre, Brazil, March 2006)**

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

32. Reaffirmed the view that taking into account the specific characteristics of each country for agrarian reform and rural development policies were fundamental tools for combating hunger and poverty in the Region and for implementing a more inclusive development model. Integrated agrarian reform, combining public policies of access to land, credit, agricultural insurance, technical assistance and infrastructure, was an important requisite for increasing food production and food security.

33. Recalled the importance of promoting specific policies for rural women, indigenous populations and traditional communities, in the framework of integrated agrarian reform.

**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

34. Reiterated that the conditions that had given rise to the ICARRD continued to exist and that its conclusions and guidelines were as relevant as ever. It requested that FAO, in particular through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, redouble efforts to disseminate the conclusions and to support the implementation of its recommendations.

35. It stressed that FAO should continue to promote follow-up to the ICARRD in the Region, creating regional arenas of cooperation and exchange of experiences and supporting those that already existed.

36. Underlined the fundamental role of policy dialogue between governments and civil society. It recommended that FAO promote mechanisms of dialogue that would lead to the consolidation arenas and the realization of appropriate channels for the participation of social movements in the design of public policies.

**Policies to promote and/or strengthen the participation and joint action of public and private actors in rural development**

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

37. Underscored the need to introduce coordinated actions to ensure local populations had access to food, beyond any distributive effects that economic growth could generate.

38. Stressed the importance of combined public and private action, within the framework of public policies to achieve inclusive and sustainable rural development, in order to remedy the sharp contrast of persistent hunger in a major food producing region and persistent poverty in spite of positive economic growth.

39. Stated that this contrast required other forms of development indicator that were more representative of social and environmental conditions and that complemented those

in the "Green Revolution" model, which lacked the terms social equity and redistribution of wealth.

40. Recognized that a combination of economic growth with more equitable distribution of income was a necessary condition for overcoming hunger. It indicated that incentives for family farming were not sufficient to resolve rural poverty and needed to be supplemented with additional investment in infrastructure and agricultural services.

41. Underscored the need to introduce coordinated actions to ensure local populations had access to food, beyond any distributive effects that economic growth could generate.

42. Stressed that there was a strong cultural element in the process of improving food security. Enhancing quality of diet and increasing the proportion of protein and fresh foods required educational support from government institutions, with the involvement of private actors, civil society organizations and international agencies.

43. Indicated the need for state policy with a long term horizon and more effective actions to improve production, reduce vulnerability and eradicate rural poverty. It emphasized the pressing need to eliminate the chronic child malnutrition that existed in most countries of the Region and not only in the poorest.

44. Indicated the need for combined public and private actions to reduce the high costs of transaction that were making it difficult for family farming to enter markets and value chains, to broaden preferential access to financial services (credit and savings) and non-financial services (technical assistance, marketing support), to institutionally develop technological innovation, to achieve food safety and quality, to build a strategic and normative framework for national animal health systems and to elaborate institutional provisions for land-use management.

45. Stressed the need to reduce the high costs of intermediation for the insertion of family farmers into market chains, by creating strategies that reflected the requirements and capacities of small producers. It suggested the promotion of various measures, including trade fairs, the strengthening of "fair trade" structures and support to the formation of cooperatives and associations, to boost the participation of family farming in value chains. It also underlined the need to reassess the role of certain institutions that had been disbanded or relegated, such as national boards and institutes of promotion.

46. Emphasized the importance of agricultural insurance and the relevance of technical assistance plans for the production and marketing of the products of family farming.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

47. Expressed its agreement with the background document on the importance of family farming for food security, agricultural production and scope for the alleviation of rural poverty in the Region. It indicated the need for a closer definition of family farming, characterizing and categorizing its broad heterogeneity.

48. Indicated the importance of FAO supporting the strengthening of grassroots organizations to facilitate the integration of family farming into agricultural markets.

49. Underlined the need to further institutional recognition of the right to food, in an agreed legal framework, with inputs from government and civil society. In this connection, it reiterated its support for the “Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative”.

### **Transboundary diseases**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

50. Emphasized the need for a regional approach to the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary diseases. National efforts were important but were not sufficient. It was fundamental to establish cooperation between countries and to coordinate sanitary activities at borders, ensuring coherence and synergy in the nature, time and location of actions undertaken by the different countries.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

51. Underlined the need for FAO documents to clearly and unequivocally indicate the diseases that were not present in the Region. Because of the export-oriented nature of livestock products of Latin America and the Caribbean, it was essential to highlight this characteristic that distinguished and favoured the Region. Special care should have been taken in this regard when drafting document LARC/08/3. Without detracting from the need to continue developing prevention efforts, the Conference highlighted the qualities and assurances that the existing prevention and control systems provided for boosting confidence in the public health resources of the countries of the Region.

52. Expressed its concern over excessive measures that unjustifiably restricted market access in the event of outbreaks or sanitary difficulties. It stated that FAO should contribute towards the promotion of the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), as the unjustified application of sanitary restrictions to a wide range of products of animal or plant origin, when originating in an area with a declared outbreak of disease, had seriously affected the member countries of the Region.

53. Expressed its satisfaction with the coordination that had been achieved between FAO and other international agencies whose remit included animal health. Requested that such cooperation continue and be deepened.

54. Requested that FAO and other international institutions promote and provide technical support to cooperation between countries for the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary diseases, involving governments, research centres and agricultural producers, optimizing skills availability and drawing upon different experiences.

### **Opportunities and challenges of biofuel production for food security and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

55. Debated the many implications of biofuel development for the fight against hunger and poverty, and for environmental sustainability, regional development and international

relations. It stressed that the design of public policy on biofuel production should give primary consideration to the right to food and to the food security of the population, especially of the most vulnerable social sectors.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

56. Recognized the complexity of the issues and the need for further examination to maximize the possible opportunities of bioenergy production and to minimize the possible risks of adversely affecting food security and the environment.

57. Believed that FAO could make an important contribution by supporting the mapping of the bioenergy capacity of each country and the biofuel production potential of interested countries.

### **Other matters**

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

58. Recommended that FAO broaden and strengthen its cooperation activities directed towards building phytosanitary capacity. It specifically requested the implementation of a project, currently under review at the Regional Office, to establish cooperation activities between countries of the Region, directed towards the development of technical capacity for phytosanitary prevention and control. The programme in question could serve as a model for subsequent work.

59. Requested that FAO, together with the countries of the Region, conduct a study on the recent increase in the prices of agricultural inputs, including an analysis of the causes, outlook and options to reduce the impact on production costs and agricultural profitability.

60. Welcomed the offer of Venezuela to host, during the second half of 2008, a meeting of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to define alternatives to deal with the challenges generated by higher food and agricultural input prices and to determine related South-South cooperation actions.

## **INTRODUCTORY ITEMS AND SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS**

### **Inaugural session**

61. The Conference held an inaugural session prior to the Opening Ceremony. The session was presided over by the Minister for Agriculture of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mr Reinhold Stephanes; the Minister for Agrarian Development of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mr Guilherme Cassel; the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf; the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO, Mr Mohammed Saied Noori-Naeni; and the FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr José Graziano Da Silva.

### **Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur**

62. The Conference unanimously elected the Conference Officers listed in Appendix D.

### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

63. The Conference adopted in general the Agenda and Timetable. It also approved the procedural modality for Item 11, "Round Table: Follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)".

### **Report on FAO activities (2006-2007) aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit target**

64. The Regional Representative informed the Conference of FAO's activities in the Region, in the framework of the recent economic evolution and the changes in agricultural and rural development and in the food security of the countries of the Region. The economic growth that had been accomplished between 2003 and 2007 represented a period of growth that had not been achieved since the 1970s. This had permitted a reduction in poverty and indigence and, therefore, in undernutrition in the countries of the Region. However, progress had differed among countries; in general, the most significant advances had been in South America, while achievements in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean had been lower. In all cases, the indigenous populations and other ethnic groups continued to present much less favourable indices.

65. The Conference was also informed of the priority that FAO was attaching to the fight against chronic undernutrition and the eradication of child undernutrition, factors that led to the intergenerational transfer of poverty and perpetuated conditions of indigence among the poorest social sectors.

66. The Conference agreed that food insecurity in the Region was not exclusively caused by a problem of food production; the production indices of agricultural commodities showed accelerated growth in the last fifteen years. The main problem was the lack of access to food by part of the poor population because of the high level of socio-economic inequality that existed in the Region.

67. The Conference was informed of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and priority actions determined by the 29<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference. In particular, the Regional Representative stressed that since October 2006 a food security officer and a technical team in the Regional Office in Santiago, Chile, had been supporting the "Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative". Other activities mentioned included: a) evaluation of priority food security programmes in Bolivia

(Alto de La Paz) and Colombia (Bogotá Sin Hambre); b) urban and periurban agriculture programmes in Brazil and Venezuela; c) development of semi-attendance courses on food security in various countries of the Region; d) assistance in the measurement of household food security and support to the Network of Research and Training in Food and Nutrition Security (REDSAN); e) reorganization of the multidisciplinary work groups in the RLC (transboundary diseases, bioenergy, health and food safety, food security, policies to combat hunger, environmental sustainability, urban and periurban agriculture, and nutritional education); f) extended coverage of the SPFSs in partnership with NGOs; g) promotion of South-South cooperation; h) technical cooperation for the prevention and control of transboundary diseases; i) technical assistance to improve food safety including the harmonization of standards and biosecurity; j) broader coordination with other regional agencies.

68. The Conference took note of the information presented concerning the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit target and the support provided to the implementation of the “Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative” and requested that FAO continue working on these priorities. It also expressed its concern over the lack of updated statistical data in the report.

69. The Conference concluded that the analysis presented and the experience gained by the countries in the Region indicated that growth in Latin America and the Caribbean needed a high degree of social inclusion which needed to be complemented with policies that would improve income distribution. This would require high-level decisions in each country.

70. The Conference signalled the need to formulate agricultural and rural development strategies that had a long-term territorial approach and to design participatory (public/private state sectors. It suggested that FAO support this activity in those countries that requested such support, which could help formulate of state policies for food security and the elimination of hunger. Such policies should consider production and include aspects of trade, distribution and access to food. In the same vein, analysis of social development and environmental sustainability variables should be included. The experiences that several countries had gained in this regard should be put to good effect.

71. The Conference stressed that specific public policies should be formulated for family farming, given its importance and its contribution to the countries of the Region.

72. The Conference considered appropriate the development and implementation of purchasing modalities that prioritize local, national and/or regional products when addressing the need of food security programmes.

73. The Conference considered that the higher agricultural commodity prices and the relatively more favourable macroeconomic frameworks represented an opportunity to capitalize agriculture. It requested that FAO support actions to help small farmers benefit from such conditions.

74. The Conference recommended that FAO give priority support to the building of national capacity to respond to emergencies resulting from natural disasters, taking into consideration national and regional experiences. Such support should include the building of national capacity to engage in prevention and early warning, mitigation, assistance to vulnerable groups and rehabilitation and reactivation of agricultural production.

75. The Conference urged the countries of the Region to implement immediate assistance actions for Haiti. It also urged FAO to significantly expand and intensify its



activities of support to that country, including the promotion and facilitation of South-South cooperation. The Conference reiterated that technical cooperation with Haiti should continue to be an FAO priority in the Region.

76. The Conference recognized FAO's efforts to boost South-South cooperation and indicated the need to give greater emphasis to actions that would broaden and deepen such cooperation.

### **Reports of the Regional Commissions: Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) and Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC)**

77. The Conference was informed of the results and conclusions of the meetings of the LACFC and the CODEGALAC. The activities of each were highlighted and the agreed recommendations explained.

78. The Conference expressed its appreciation of the information provided and indicated that in the case of both the LACFC and the CODEGALAC, the presentation of activities should include updated information to supplement the recommendations from their last meeting, which would permit a more relevant analysis at the Regional Conference.

79. The Conference stressed the need for the LACFC to pursue lines of work on payment for environmental services, sustainable forest management, including the responsible management of forest plantations, the prevention of wildfires and the management of forest statistics, including environmental variables.

80. The Conference was pleased to note that the 13<sup>th</sup> World Forestry Congress would be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 18 to 25 October 2009 and called for extensive participation by the countries of the Region.

81. In relation to the CODEGALAC, the Conference stressed the need to boost joint country efforts to prevent, control and eradicate transboundary diseases, and especially to control foot-and-mouth disease in the Region. The Conference highlighted the importance of FAO technical support for updating animal health laws and regulations, strengthening national services and systematically recoding experiences of environmentally sustainable livestock development.

### **Matters arising from the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference**

82. The Conference was informed of the results of the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of FAO, especially the reform orientations derived from the Report of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO and the Management Response "In-Principle", and follow-up actions undertaken through the work of the Conference Committee for IEE Follow-up, whose final report was to be submitted to the Special Session of the Conference to be held in November 2008.

83. The Conference was also informed of progress in the implementation of the Gender and Development Plan of Action, the Joint UN System Activities and the Report on Animal Genetic and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

84. The Conference took note of the organizational changes that had resulted from the decentralization of the Organization in the context of the Reform, in particular the

establishment of the Sub-Regional Office in Panama and three Multi-Disciplinary Teams: for South America in Chile, for Mesoamerica in Panama and for the Caribbean in Barbados; and of the changes in the organization of the technical officer groups in the Regional Office.

85. The Conference expressed its thanks for the information presented on the IEE review process and reiterated the instruction of the 34<sup>th</sup> Conference that the process should be transparent, open and participatory, with an outcome that responded to the interests of the membership, especially of the developing countries, in the sense of a strengthening of the Organization.

86. The Conference indicated that the ongoing reform process should: a) contribute to the strengthening of FAO; b) enable the Organization to fully perform its mandate; c) reinforce FAO capacity to provide rapid and appropriate responses to the needs of developing countries; d) optimize the human resources of the Organization; e) foster greater transparency and democracy in FAO decision-making; f) strengthen the functions of governance through greater participation of the governing bodies in the determination of programmes, in the ongoing supervision of work implementation and in the use of the financial resources of the Organization and; g) maintain a structure of technical support for gender equality.

87. The Conference stated that, in the framework of FAO reform, the Regional Conferences should assume more relevant functions, as an integral part of the governing structure, in the establishment of programme priorities in the Region, and in the supervision and evaluation of those programmes.

### **Opening Ceremony**

88. The Conference was inaugurated by His Excellency the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who was accompanied by the following members of his Cabinet: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Celso Amorim; Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, Mr Reinhold Stephanes; Minister for Agrarian Development, Mr Guilherme Cassel; Special Secretary for Aquaculture and Fisheries, Mr Altemir Gregolin; Acting Minister for Social Development and the Combat against Hunger, Mrs Arlete Sampaio. Also present were the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO, Mr Mohammed Saied Noori-Naeni, and the FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr José Graziano Da Silva.

### **Statement of the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO**

89. On behalf of himself and of all the member countries, the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO thanked the President and the people of Brazil for their hospitality. In his statement, he referred to two principal themes: the escalation of agricultural commodity prices and progress in the follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

90. With regard to higher agricultural prices, he analysed the causes from both the supply and the demand side and stressed his concern over the impact on the balance of trade of the poorest net food-importing countries and on the food security of the neediest populations.

91. When informing the Conference of the follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, the Independent Chairman of the Council underlined the need to seize

this unique opportunity to achieve reform with growth. He emphasized that the IEE had recommended that the Regional Conferences play a more important role in decision-making in FAO. He stated that Latin America and the Caribbean had played a fundamental role since the inception of the process.

### **Statement of the Director-General of FAO**

92. The Director-General of FAO thanked the President, Government and people of Brazil for their hospitality and efficient support in the organization of the Conference. He recalled that the economy of Latin America and the Caribbean had experienced accelerated growth in recent years (2003-2007) in a context of general world economic growth. This had made it possible to reduce the population living in extreme poverty in the Region by almost one-third. The number of undernourished people had fallen by 7.3 million, a drop of 3 percent. Nevertheless, the Region was still a long way from achieving the World Food Summit target of halving the number of hungry by 2015. There were still 52.1 million hungry people, representing 10 percent of the regional population. The indigenous populations, whose income was 45 to 60 percent below the regional average, continued to be those most seriously affected.

93. The Director-General referred to the main topics of the Conference, identifying the challenge presented by soaring food prices and their impact on the import bill of low-income food-deficit countries, and the need to implement immediate measures to boost local food production.

94. The Director-General emphasized the importance of the Summit on World Food Security that was to be held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008, with the participation of the Heads of State and Government of member countries. He stressed that the Summit was particularly timely given the demonstrations against higher food prices that were spreading across the continents. He added that it would be a unique opportunity to adopt the policies, strategies and programmes that were needed to face the challenges of agricultural development and food security in the world, beyond the recent increase in agricultural prices.

### **Address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil**

95. His Excellency Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, greeted the Director-General of FAO and welcomed all the participants to the Conference. In his statement, he indicated that the fight against hunger and poverty had returned under the spotlight because of escalating food prices. He warned against simplification or reductionism when analyzing this complex process. He explained that the phenomenon had more than one cause and was due to a combination of factors that included the higher price of oil and the consequent increase in cost of energy, transport, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs; reduced harvests in certain major grain exporting countries; and higher consumption in countries with large poor populations.

96. The President underlined his commitment to the realization of the Right to Food, both nationally, through public policies to promote food and nutritional security, and internationally, through cooperation. He reiterated his support to the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative and stressed the need for global policies that were equally committed to the elimination of hunger and poverty.

97. He stated that it was essential to complement emergency measures with actions to reduce the vulnerability of countries. Such actions included building national capacity,

reducing socio-economic inequality and expanding the volume of international resources for the financing of development. They also included the opening up of new markets and opportunities, which would require the elimination of distortions in international agricultural markets and a satisfactory conclusion to the Doha Round of the WTO.

98. The President reasserted the potential of biofuels as an instrument of economic and social change. He stressed that they could serve as a fundamental tool to generate income and overcome food and energy insecurity, so long as they were developed with caution and in accordance with the reality of each country. He invited everyone to attend the International Conference that would be held in November 2008 in São Paulo, Brazil, for measured discussion of the challenges and opportunities of biofuels.

99. The President underlined the need for developing countries not to succumb to the logic and dynamic of the countries of the North. He recalled the principle of shared but distinct responsibilities and the need to achieve an international order that was more just and equitable, and free of hunger and poverty.

100. President Lula concluded by reiterating his resolute support to FAO's activities to achieve food security and undertook to attend the forthcoming Summit on World Food Security that was to be held in Rome in June of that year.

#### **Food safety: Effective participation of developing countries in Codex Alimentarius meetings**

101. The Conference was informed of Codex Alimentarius activities and in particular of the participation of the countries of the Region in those activities.

102. The Conference indicated the importance of the Codex in generating standards for the protection of consumer health in relation to food safety. It stressed the strategic prominence that the Codex had gained since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), given that the Codex standards were the international reference for WTO agreements on safety and fair practices in food trade.

103. The Conference expressed its deep concern over the low participation of the countries of the Region in the drafting of Codex standards, a situation that is shared with the other developing countries. It stated that the low level of participation was mainly due to a lack of economic and human resources, and was exacerbated by the geographic dispersal and the multiplicity of meetings at all levels (committees, working groups, intergovernmental task forces).

104. The Conference recognized the importance of the FAO/WHO Trust Fund to facilitate the participation of developing countries in meetings, and the efforts that donors had made in recent years. However, the Conference expressed its preoccupation over the inequality in the distribution of funds that resulted from the criteria adopted for the classification of countries. The Conference concluded that support from the Trust Fund was inadequate.

105. The Conference noted that Codex meetings were a venue for intergovernmental international negotiation, in which decisions were adopted by consensus or vote, which meant that the greater participation of certain members at the expense of others, or of one region at the expense of another, could undermine the healthy equilibrium of decision making.

106. The Conference recommended modifying the organization of meetings and that consideration be given to their possible centralization in Rome and/or Geneva, where countries could participate through their officials attached to FAO or WHO. It also recommended that the parameters and modes of allocation of Trust Fund resources be changed so that there was more equitable treatment for all the developing countries.

107. The Conference urged FAO to continue and to broaden its support to technical capacity building in the countries of the Region, both to enhance their participation in the formulation of standards and to facilitate implementation of those standards.

108. In spite of the above difficulties, the Conference urged countries to redouble their efforts to participate in all Codex activities and asked the Codex Secretariat to ensure greater dissemination of activities and results at all steps of its process.

### **Pressing global and regional issues: Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative**

109. The Conference was informed of activities directed towards developing the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, with an analysis of progress in five policy areas: identification and appraisal; awareness and dissemination; training, measurement and assessment; intervention models; and proposals 2008-2010. It also examined a classification of country policies, reviewing public expenditure for five objectives: agriculture and rural development; social protection and food; nutritional assistance and health; water and sanitation; and nutritional education.

110. The Conference was informed that in paragraphs 14 and 37 of document LARC/08/8, there had been an involuntary omission of the fact that Argentina had had a law on food security since December 2002.

111. The Conference agreed with the identification of the main challenges presented for 2008-2010, in particular the establishment of a network of national focal points to help coordinate actions and define the activities that needed to be implemented in each country under the Initiative, in accordance with concrete national needs. The Conference urged the member countries to designate their focal points as soon as possible.

112. The Conference considered that the Initiative should include the strengthening of cross-sectoral coordination in order to address food security and the fight against hunger and malnutrition in an integrated manner.

113. The Conference asked FAO to map hunger and malnutrition in the Region. It also supported the FAO proposal to set up an Observatory of Food and Nutritional Security.

114. The Conference recommended that the next meeting of the HFLACI Working Group, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the second half of 2008, should include the following items on its agenda: a) prioritization of food security on national agendas; b) updating of the state of the Initiative in each country and of the mapping of hunger and malnutrition in the Region; c) refinement of the matrix of food and nutritional security policies and programmes; d) establishment of the Observatory of Food and Nutritional Security, its functions and objectives; e) strengthening of communication channels between all actors of the Initiative; f) mechanisms for the participation of civil society; and g) local management plans to strengthen food and nutritional security.

115. The Conference also recommended strengthening and deepening cooperation between countries, and mechanisms for triangular cooperation in food security, taking into account available supply and the identification of synergies. To support such actions, it suggested that FAO identify resources and mobilize them together with other UN agencies.

116. The Conference stressed that support to Haiti should be a priority objective of cooperation pursued under the Initiative.

**Round Table: Follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development – ICARRD (Porto Alegre, Brazil, March 2006)**

117. The Conference was informed of activities conducted in continuity of the progress made at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD).

118. The Conference reiterated that the conditions that had given rise to the ICARRD continued to exist and that its conclusions and guidelines were as relevant as ever. It requested that FAO, in particular through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, redouble efforts to disseminate the conclusions and to support the implementation of its recommendations.

119. The Conference reaffirmed the view that agrarian reform and rural development policies, taking into account the specific characteristics of each country, were fundamental tools for combating hunger and poverty in the Region and for implementing a more inclusive development model. Integrated agrarian reform, combining public policies of access to land, credit, agricultural insurance, technical assistance and infrastructure, was an important requisite for increasing food production and food security.

120. The Conference confirmed that the concept of agrarian reform meant discouraging the concentration of production resources and seeking a sustainable territorial reordering that would benefit both the rural and the urban populations. It also recalled, within the framework of integrated agrarian reform, the importance of promoting specific policies for rural women, indigenous populations and traditional communities.

121. The Conference noted the effort that many countries of the Region had made to promote policies of agrarian reform and access to land through dialogue and cooperation. In this connection, it stressed that FAO should continue to promote follow-up to the ICARRD in the Region, creating regional arenas of cooperation and exchange of experiences and supporting those that already existed.

122. The Conference also underlined the fundamental role of policy dialogue between governments and civil society. It recommended that FAO promote mechanisms of dialogue that would lead to the consolidation of arenas and the realization of appropriate channels for the participation of social movements in the design of public policies.

## **REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

### **Opening of the Technical Committee meeting**

123. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO opened the Technical Committee meeting. He welcomed the delegates and observers and thanked the Government and people of the Federative Republic of Brazil for hosting the event.

### **Election of the Technical Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur and Drafting Committee**

124. The Committee unanimously elected the Technical Committee Officers listed in Appendix E.

### **Adoption of the Technical Committee Agenda and Timetable**

125. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable as in documents LARC/08/1-Rev.1 and LARC/08/INF2 (see Agenda in Appendix D).

126. At the request of the Delegations, the Committee proposed including discussion of the topic "Higher commodity prices and their impact on food security" in the proceedings of Thursday 17. It also stated that this topic should crosscut all Technical Committee discussions.

### **Policies to promote and/or strengthen the participation and joint action of public and private actors in rural development**

127. The Committee stressed the importance of combined public and private action, within the framework of public policies to achieve inclusive and sustainable rural development, in order to remedy the sharp contrast of persistent hunger in a major food producing region and persistent poverty in spite of positive economic growth.

128. The Committee stated that this contrast required other forms of development indicator that were more representative of social and environmental conditions and that complemented those in the "Green Revolution" model, which lacked the terms social equity and redistribution of wealth.

129. The Committee recognized that the combination of economic growth with a more equitable distribution of income was a necessary condition for overcoming hunger. It indicated that incentives for family farming were not sufficient to resolve rural poverty and needed to be supplemented with additional investment in infrastructure and agricultural services.

130. The Committee underscored the need to introduce coordinated actions to ensure local populations had access to food, beyond any distributive effects that economic growth might generate.

131. The Committee stressed that there was a strong cultural element in the process of improving food security. Enhancing quality of diet and increasing the proportion of protein and fresh foods required educational support from government institutions, with the involvement of private actors, civil society organizations and international agencies.

132. The Committee stressed the need for state policy with a long-term horizon and more effective actions to improve production, reduce vulnerability and eradicate rural poverty. It also emphasized the pressing need to eliminate the chronic child malnutrition that existed in most countries of the Region and not only in the poorest.

133. The Committee indicated the need for combined public and private actions to reduce the high costs of transaction that were making it difficult for family farming to enter markets and value chains, to broaden preferential access to financial services (credit and savings) and non-financial services (technical assistance, marketing support), to institutionally develop technological innovation, to achieve food safety and quality, to build a strategic and normative framework for national animal health systems, and to elaborate institutional provisions for land-use management.

134. The Committee concurred with the background document on the importance of family farming to food security, agricultural production and scope for the alleviation of rural poverty in the Region. It indicated the need for a closer definition of family farming, characterizing and categorizing its broad heterogeneity.

135. The Committee agreed with the analysis in the document of the new challenges that agribusiness and supermarket dominance of the value chain placed on family farming. In addition, the asymmetries that existed between market players and greater use of the consignment sales modality had made it more difficult for family farmers to enter markets and had led to the loss of family production units. While the expansion of agribusiness had generated some employment, the new jobs were more precarious and less stable.

136. The Committee stressed the need to reduce the high costs of intermediation for the insertion of family farmers into market chains, by creating strategies that reflected the requirements and capacities of small producers. It suggested the promotion of various measures, including trade fairs, the strengthening of “fair trade” structures and support to the formation of cooperatives and associations, to boost the participation of family farming in value chains. It also underlined the need to reassess the role of certain institutions that had been disbanded or relegated, such as national boards and institutes of promotion, and to look into the possibility of these supporting the development of family farming in the new agricultural market conditions. It was important for FAO to support the strengthening of grassroots organizations to facilitate the integration of family farming into agricultural markets.

137. The Committee underlined the importance of agricultural insurance and the relevance of technical assistance plans for the production and marketing of the products of family farming.

138. The Committee stressed the importance of regional cooperation and strategic partnerships between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for rural development, the enhancement of agriculture, the training of farmers and trade in agricultural products along the lines of complementarity.

139. The Committee underlined the need to further institutional recognition of the right to food, in an agreed legal framework, with inputs from government and civil society. In this connection, it reiterated its support for the “Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative”.



## **Transboundary diseases**

140. The Committee was informed of FAO's activities in follow-up to the recommendations on transboundary diseases from the 29th Regional Conference.

141. The Committee underlined the need for FAO documents to clearly and unequivocally indicate the diseases that were not present in the Region. Because of the export-oriented nature of livestock products of Latin America and the Caribbean, it was essential to highlight this characteristic that distinguished and favoured the Region. Special care should have been taken in this regard when drafting document LARC/08/3. Also, without detracting from the need to continue developing prevention efforts, the Committee underlined the capabilities and assurances that the existing prevention and control systems provided in order to bolster confidence in the public health resources of the countries of the Region.

142. The Committee expressed its concern over excessive measures that unjustifiably restricted market access in the event of outbreaks or sanitary difficulties. In this connection, the Committee stated that FAO should contribute towards the promotion of OIE international standards, as the unjustified application of sanitary restrictions to a wide range of products of animal or plant origin, when originating in an area with a declared outbreak of disease, had seriously affected the member countries of the Region.

143. The Committee requested that its report include the information of OIE representative on the forthcoming Regional Conference of that organization which would be held in Havana, Cuba, in November 2008, to examine linkages between sanitary problems and corresponding trade restrictions.

144. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the coordination that had been achieved between FAO and other international agencies whose remit included animal health. It requested that such cooperation continue and be deepened.

145. The Committee emphasized the need for a regional approach to the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary diseases. National efforts were important but were not sufficient. It stated that it was fundamental to establish cooperation between countries and to coordinate sanitary activities at borders, ensuring coherence and synergy in the nature, time and location of actions undertaken by the different countries.

146. The Committee underscored the need for cooperation between countries to improve actions of prevention, control and eradication of transboundary diseases. It requested that FAO and other international institutions promote and provide technical support to such cooperation between countries, involving governments, research centres and agricultural producers, optimizing skills availability and drawing upon different experiences.

147. The Committee was informed of the outcome of four subregional projects to support the prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), covering 33 countries of the Region, which included training activities for the early detection of HPAI; the availability to the 33 countries of a geo-referenced epidemiological system; training in basic laboratory diagnosis; the establishment of four regional laboratories for additional technical assistance; the existence of national contingency plans in each country; participation in first-hand simulations and availability of a remote course on such simulations; familiarity in each country with at least two systems of compensation to offset production losses; availability of a continental strategy and platform of interactive

communication of risk and information; creation of scientific networks of experts; and availability of investment projects.

148. The Committee was informed of FAO's technical support activities for the control and progressive eradication of foot-and-mouth disease. FAO had put in place a technical assistance project to develop national projects of investment by banking institutions directed towards the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease.

149. The Committee was informed of FAO's technical support activities for the control of other transboundary diseases that affected the countries of the Region. These included the "Continental Plan for the Eradication of Classical Swine Fever in the Americas", supported by 19 countries of the Region; the strengthening of prevention systems for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy; and control of the New World Screwworm.

### **Opportunities and challenges of biofuel production for food security and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean**

150. The Committee examined the FAO report on bioenergy and the exchange of experiences and information, identified as a priority line of action by the 29th Regional Conference. In particular, it considered the possible consequences of developing agriculture for liquid biofuel production on food security, the environment and the smallholder economy.

151. The Committee debated the many implications of biofuel development on hunger and poverty, and on environmental sustainability, regional development and international relations. It stressed that the design of public policy on biofuel production should give primary consideration to the right to food and to the food security of the population, especially that of the most vulnerable social sectors.

152. The Committee recognized the complexity of the issues and the need for further examination to maximize the possible opportunities of bioenergy production and to minimize the possible risks of adversely affecting food security and the environment.

153. The Committee believed that FAO could make an important contribution by supporting the mapping of the bioenergy capacity of each country and the biofuel production potential of interested countries.

154. The Committee considered it premature to discuss the drafting of a Voluntary Code of Conduct for the production and use of biofuels.

### **Adoption of the Technical Committee report**

155. The Committee unanimously adopted the present report.

### **Closure of the Technical Committee meeting**

156. The Committee reiterated its thanks to the Government and people of the Federative Republic of Brazil for their hospitality.

157. The Chairperson of the Technical Committee thanked the delegates for their participation and brought the Technical Committee meeting to a close.

## FINAL ITEMS

### **Date and place of the Thirty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean**

158. The Conference noted with satisfaction the offer of the Delegation of Panama to host the 31<sup>st</sup> FAO Regional Conference, to be held in 2010. The offer was unanimously endorsed by the delegations present. It also requested that the Director-General take this recommendation into account when deciding the place and date of the next Regional Conference, after consultation with the Government of Panama.

### **Other matters**

159. The Conference recommended that FAO broaden and strengthen its cooperation activities directed towards building phytosanitary capacity. It specifically requested the implementation of a project, currently under review at the Regional Office, to establish cooperation activities between countries of the Region, directed towards the development of technical capacity for phytosanitary prevention and control. This programme could serve as a model for subsequent work.

160. The Conference requested that FAO, together with the countries of the Region, conduct a study on the recent increase in the prices of agricultural inputs, including an analysis of the causes, outlook and options to reduce the impact on production costs and agricultural profitability.

161. The Conference welcomed the offer of Venezuela to host, during the second half of 2008, a meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to define alternatives to deal with the challenges generated by higher food and agricultural input prices and to determine related South-South cooperation actions.

162. The Conference recommended that the next Regional Conference include the topic of agroecology and organic production systems. It also requested that FAO help to identify resources for the establishment of a network of institutions working in the field of agroecology in the countries of the Region. Such a structure should include an ongoing programme of meetings and support for the development of networks of South-South cooperation in agroecology.

163. The Conference reiterated the need to strengthen South-South complementary trade relations.

164. The Conference pointed out that the Spanish title for FAO placed the two terms "agriculture" and "food" in reverse order to the title in the other official languages.

165. The Conference listened with appreciation to the presentations made by the Director-General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), by the Deputy Regional Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), by the Regional Representative of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and by the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). The statements of the representatives can be found on the Internet page of the Regional Office.

166. The Conference took note of the statements submitted by the "Special Conference for Food Sovereignty, Rights and Life" and by the "National Forum for Agrarian Reform and Rural Justice of Brazil. The statements of both organizations can be found on the

Internet page of the Regional Office.

**Adoption of the report (including the Technical Committee report) and closure of the Regional Conference**

167. The Conference thanked the Government and people of the Federative Republic of Brazil for their hospitality and for the excellent facilities made available for its proceedings.

168. The FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean thanked the Government and people of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the efficient organization of the Conference and the delegations for their effective work. He reiterated FAO's commitment to follow-up the recommendations of the 30<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference.

169. The Minister for Agricultural Development of the Federative Republic of Brazil congratulated the Delegations on the outcome of the Conference, thanked all the participants for their work and brought the 30<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean to a close.

## STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

*Mr President of the Republic,  
Mr Chairman of the Council,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Honourable Delegates,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

### Introduction

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be with you today for the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

On behalf of the Organization and on behalf of you all, I should like to express to His Excellency President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, to his Government and to the Brazilian people our profound gratitude for their hospitality and their warm welcome.

### State of food insecurity in the world and in Latin America and the Caribbean

Since 2003, the global economy has been growing at an average annual rate of 3.5%. This progress has been higher in Latin America and the Caribbean where economic growth averaged almost 5% annually.

The region has made good use of this favourable situation. Between 1990 and 2002, the region's population in extreme poverty reached 97 million. In 2007, this figure fell by almost one-third to 69 million.

At the global level, despite the commitments of the World Food Summit (WFS) of 1996 and of the Millennium Summit of 2000, analysis of the latest figures on food insecurity reveals that the downward trend in the number of hungry has ceased: there were 862 million undernourished people in 2002-2004, compared to 854 million in 2001-2003.

In the region, however, the number of undernourished people fell by 7.3 million between 1990-92 and 2002-04, a reduction of 3%. Latin America and the Caribbean have therefore made encouraging progress towards the achievement of the first Millennium Development Goal. But the region is still a long way from the World Food Summit goal of halving the number of hungry by 2015.

In 2002-04, 52.1 million people – 10% of the region's population – were still victims of hunger. The hardest hit remain the indigenous populations whose incomes are 45 to 60% below the regional average.

The *Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative* has set itself the ambitious target of eradicating hunger altogether: a challenge that is within our reach.

Latin America and the Caribbean have a 31% surplus in food resources. The region's problem of hunger is therefore not one of production but, rather, one of access to food.

The increase in exports should generate higher earnings and hence more income available for distribution.

*Mr President of the Republic,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

### **Global and regional problems and challenges**

The current increase in food prices is a major challenge, as the food security of millions of people throughout the world is today under threat. Between January 2007 and January 2008, the FAO Food Price Index rose 47%. This was driven mainly by cereal products (62%), vegetable oils (85%) and dairy products (69%). In 2008, despite an anticipated increase in world cereal production of 2.6%, the prices of most cereals are expected to remain high and some could increase still further. Cereal reserves will continue to decline to 405 million tonnes by the end of the 2008 crop year, their lowest level since 1982.

As a result, the food import bill of the 82 low-income food-deficit countries, four of which are in your region, namely Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, will increase by 35%. It is therefore essential to protect the vulnerable populations of the region. That will require immediate measures to rapidly increase local food production and to avert the effects of further price escalation.

That is why, last December, I launched an initiative to support the most affected countries and to protect the neediest populations against soaring food prices, by making it easier for poor farmers in low-income food-deficit countries to access inputs in order to boost local production. We encourage governments, international institutions and bilateral development agencies to contribute to this initiative, for while FAO has already allocated 17 million dollars of its internal resources to this programme, we need 1.7 billion dollars if we are to achieve its intended global impact.

### **Biofuels**

The current boom in biofuels is widely debated in the world. FAO recognizes that these new products could be developed on the basis of concurrent market, energy and agriculture considerations. At this stage, we can still organize this sector so as to benefit the poorest by enhancing incomes and facilitating local access to energy.

This is a very complex issue. The positive or negative nature of the impact of bioenergy development on food security will depend on the adopted national and international policies on domestic production and distribution, but also on factors affecting international trade, notably subsidies and import duty.

### **Climate change**

Urgent action is needed on different fronts to address the problems associated with climate change. The hurricanes and tropical storms of Central America and the Caribbean, the recent floods in Bolivia provoked by “La Niña” and the torrential rains that hit Ecuador are all recent examples of its devastating impact.

I should like to express my deepest solidarity with the countries affected by these natural disasters and to assure them of FAO’s commitment by their side. In addition to emergency aid, the Organization will continue to help rebuild agricultural production capacity and to reduce the vulnerability of the populations concerned.

## **Agricultural development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the period 2006-2007**

According to data for 2006, agriculture accounts for 6.4% of the region's gross domestic product and has an annual growth of 4.6%. For its part, the broader agricultural sector that includes upstream and downstream linkages accounts for 30% of the region's gross domestic product and plays an influential role on world agricultural markets.

Agricultural production can advance further. At the end of the 1990s, there were 162 million hectares of arable land in the region, but this area could be extended to 223 million hectares in 2030, without compromising forestland.

### **Crops**

In 2007, Latin America and the Caribbean produced 170 million tonnes of cereals, making the region the most important in terms of production gains.

We need to continue investing in rural infrastructure and in technology if we wish to improve production. It is important to focus research on the development of varieties that are resistant to climate change in order to be able to feed a world population that will reach 9 billion in 2050.

### **Livestock**

The region is the world's leading exporter of beef and poultry and the third exporter of pigmeat. The region needs to redouble its efforts to prevent and control transboundary diseases, if it is to continue playing a lead role on the global livestock market. Their eradication needs to be a regional priority. At the moment, the two main threats to the region's animal production are foot-and-mouth disease and avian influenza.

Currently, the countries of the region are still free of the H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza, but the virus could enter the region any time through international trade or the movement of migratory birds. Hence the importance of strengthening the measures of prevention and rapid response.

### **Forestry**

Forest production in Latin America and the Caribbean continued to grow in 2006-2007 due to an increase in domestic demand and in exports to Asia and North America. There is also the effect of additional supply from highly dynamic forest plantations in the countries of the South.

The forestry sector accounts for more than 25 billion US dollars of regional exports. It provides direct employment to over 2 million people and indirect employment to a further 10 million.

But Latin America and the Caribbean are experiencing serious problems of degradation and deforestation that need to be addressed.

### **Fisheries and aquaculture**

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is very important for the region. In 2005, fishery products – comprising 90% from the sea – accounted for 22% of the world total.

Aquaculture is very dynamic in the region and has doubled its share in production to 7% since 1996.

The problems for fisheries are related to the overexploitation of fishery resources, and for aquaculture to the impact on the environment. This situation provides a justification for strengthening the regulatory and institutional framework and for resorting to strategic planning combined with further investment in the aquaculture sector.

*Mr President of the Republic,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

### **Constraints**

The agricultural sector can develop if certain constraints are removed. Three main limitations are holding the region back: lack of long-term strategy, insufficient public investment and management of agricultural expenditures that could be largely improved.

The following are therefore needed:

- An effort of coordination to better integrate the public and private sectors, including small producers.
- Immediate assistance to vulnerable households, which should go hand in hand with investments to enable them to meet their own needs.
- And last, increased spending in both quantity and quality, with increased attention to the monitoring and economic and social evaluations of programmes.

### **Items on the agenda of the Regional Conference**

All the challenges that I just mentioned have been included in the agenda of this Thirtieth Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Another important item on the agenda is the round table on the follow-up given to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

### **Conclusions**

*Mr President of the Republic,  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The development of agriculture is vital to overcome the major global challenges, especially food insecurity and extreme poverty.

In 2008, for the first time in a quarter of a century, the World Bank dedicated its *World Development Report* to the topic of agriculture. FAO is pleased to note that its untiring efforts to explain and highlight the importance of agriculture are beginning to bear fruit.

From 3 to 5 June 2008 in Rome, Heads of State and Government of Member Nations will meet at the Summit on World Food Security, at a time when food riots are spreading across continents. It will be a unique opportunity to adopt the required policies, strategies and programmes to address the major challenges which, in addition to rising prices, are affecting agricultural production, especially in the poor countries. I should like to stress, therefore, the need for your countries to be represented by their Heads of State and



Government in this Summit, in view of the importance of these issues to your region and to the world, and given the present social and political unrest caused by the soaring food prices and inflation.

I should like to express my gratitude to President Lula who, back in June 2007, was the first Head of State to encourage this initiative and who has given exemplary leadership in the fight against hunger with the Fome Zero, PRUNAF, PRODUZIR, GESTAR, Bolsa Familia and Alimentación Escolar programmes.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you every success in your work.

**STATEMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN  
OF THE COUNCIL OF FAO**

*Mr President,  
Mr Director General of FAO,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Ambassadors,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my pleasure and indeed an honour to express on my behalf and on behalf of all Members States of FAO, our most sincere thanks and gratitude to you Mr President and through you to your Government and to the Great People of Brazil for the outstanding hospitality provided to all participants in the 30<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Distinguished Members of the Conference, it is a privilege for me to report to you, as your elected representative, on major issues with the greatest impact on the state of the world's food and agriculture and on the present and future role and effectiveness of our organization.

With the limited time available I touch upon only two major subjects: one is "the growing demand for agricultural products and the rising prices of agricultural commodities" and the other is "the progress on the Independent External Evaluation of FAO".

Let me start with the first issue. The recent rapid increases in the international prices of many basic food commodities have caused lots of uncertainties and ambiguities among the decision-makers and many questions from policy makers, the media, the public, the farmers and the consumers. Above all, those who have the most reason to be concerned are vulnerable people who have to make a very difficult adjustment to the consequences of their decreased purchasing power with its negative effects on their household food security, health and welfare. Needless to emphasize this situation has created great responsibilities for all international and national decision-makers, extending far beyond food prices. Some questions which need answers are :

- Why are food prices rising?
- What is the effect of the demand for biofuel?
- Is the effect of climate change significant?
- Will the price rise continue into the long-term future?
- Who benefits and who loses?

Fortunately, FAO has done a great deal to put these questions in the context of national and international food security and vulnerability framework and has, to some extent, shown both the challenges and the opportunities which have or may emerge. Some of these questions have been dealt with in the "senior officers' meeting" of this Conference and some will be discussed in the forthcoming discussions later today and tomorrow. I will only briefly mention a few points in this respect:

Agricultural commodity prices rose sharply in 2006 and even more sharply in 2007. Comparing December 2006 to December 2007, the increase in the value of the FAO Food Price Index was 37 percent. This price boom has also been accompanied by high

price volatility, especially in the cereals and oilseeds sectors, highlighting the prevalence of greater uncertainty in the market. The continuation of these trends into 2008 has caused serious difficulties and concerns in many countries, and fortunately has received the attention of national and international media. Studying market trends suggests that the long-term decline in real prices of agricultural commodities has come to a halt, signalling a significant change in these markets. It must be stressed that there is no single factor, as being the main responsible element, nor are there any quantitative assessments of the contributions of the major factors over the past two seasons.

On the supply side, weather-related production shortfalls are a considerable factor. Although global cereal output in 2005 and 2006 declined by only one and two percent respectively, more importantly, from the perspective of international markets the output in eight major exporting countries, which constitutes nearly half of the global production, dropped by four and seven percent in those years. Another major factor on the supply side is increasing fuel costs which have raised the costs of both production and transportation. In this regard, we have to be mindful of the fact that crude petroleum prices in real terms (inflation adjusted) are still slightly below the level in 1973.

On the demand side, the changing structure of demand, as a result of economic development and income growth in emerging economies, especially China and India, has been referred to as a major factor contributing to high agricultural commodity prices, but it is interesting to know that, despite the rather rapid increase of demand in these countries, the imports of cereals have been trending down, on average four percent per year since 1980, that is from almost fifteen million tonnes to about six million tonnes and, therefore, have not been the cause of the sudden spike that began in 2005.

The emerging biofuels market is a new and significant source of demand for some agricultural commodities such as sugar, maize, cassava, oilseeds and palm oil. This needs particular and comprehensive consideration both as an opportunity especially in the long-run and as a problem in the short-run.

Regarding operations of the financial markets, agricultural-based derivatives markets offer an expanding range of financial instruments to increase portfolio diversification and reduce risk exposures. The abundance of liquidity in certain parts of the world, matched with low interest rates and high petroleum prices, make such derivatives markets a magnet for speculators for spreading their risk and pursuing more lucrative returns. But it seems more likely that speculators contribute more to raising spot price volatility rather than affecting the price level.

What are the likely impacts? Substantial increases in fuel and food prices will have a negative impact on foreign exchange earnings, incomes and the welfare of many vulnerable countries. Net importers of both fuel and food will be hit particularly hard. Substantial increases in the global cost of imported foodstuffs have already occurred, estimated at US\$ 745 billion in 2007, twenty-one percent higher than 2006 and the highest on record. The sustained rise in imported food expenditures for vulnerable countries is alarming. Today, their annual food imports could cost well over twice what they did in 2000.

The cereal import bill of the world's poorest countries is forecast to rise by 56% in 2008, after a significant increase of 37% in 2007.

International cereal prices have continued to rise sharply over the past 2 months reflecting steady demand and depleted world reserves. Prices of the rice increased the most following the imposition of the new export restrictions by major exporting countries.

By the end of the March prices of wheat and rice were about double their levels of a year earlier while those of maize were more than one third higher.

## FACING THE CHALLENGE

The mixed effects of soaring food prices on household welfare and food security, points to a set of options for policies, programmes and investments to be undertaken by the global community, national governments and other stakeholders. Short-term measures should aim at reducing prices in domestic markets, mitigating their negative effects and boosting supply response to higher prices. At the same time, higher prices provide an opportunity for re-launching agriculture in developing countries through long-term public investments and programmes which will, in turn, catalyze private sector investments in response to higher profitability.

Over the long term, the best way to reduce food prices is to increase agricultural productivity through public investment in agricultural research, rural education, rural infrastructure, capacity building and to create efficient markets especially in rural sector. The design of innovative risk management instruments such as index-based weather insurance can also increase productivity. Investment in institutions and physical infrastructure in order to develop adequately functioning competitive markets allows the price increases to arrive at the farm gate. Meeting this precondition allows greater market participation. Given the increases in food prices, it also assists in providing to farmers the incentives to expand their production and increase their productivity. While these investments will not reduce food prices in the short term, it is important to keep these longer-term measures in mind or else sustainable food security will not be achieved.

In the medium term, to avoid monopolistic behaviours over the value chain, and to raise the producers' share of the price increase, it is important to strengthen the institutions and organizations of smallholder farmers, empowering them in the market and in the value chain.

Furthermore, interventions that facilitate producers' organizations to increase collective power and reduce transactions costs could also help smallholder farmers benefit from price increases. If access to assets for the poor is promoted, increasing market participation can be achieved. The benefits from increased market participation mean not only wider marketing margins (in contrast with self-consumption), but in addition may motivate expansion in the scale of production.

Securing access to land and strengthening the rights of the poor to agricultural assets and resources (land, water) should be high on the agenda of all stakeholders, both government and civil society organizations.

Mr Chairman, let me now turn to an important and comprehensive reform which is ongoing in FAO.

As many of you know, as well as having the honour to have been appointed Independent Chairperson of the Council by you, the Membership, you also appointed me Chair of the Conference Committee for Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE). I would thus like to take advantage of my attendance at this Regional Conference to bring you up to date with where we stand in the process which we initiated with our IEE.

You will all remember that this has been a common journey, with its ups and downs but one which taken as a whole has reinforced our common purpose and unity. In November

2004, the Council agreed to launch an Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE). We rolled up our sleeves established a Working Group of the membership as a whole, and designed a common set of terms of reference, for a fully independent and professional evaluation. This we requested to provide forward looking proposals as to how to make our Organization FAO more effective in the service of us all. The Conference in November 2007 fully endorsed the terms of reference and we established a Committee of the Council to oversee the work.

We chose a highly qualified and professional evaluation team, drawn from all parts of the world and they did not disappoint us. They provided a comprehensive analysis and an extremely comprehensive set of proposals for **FAO Reform with Growth**. The Director-General has joined us the Membership in welcoming the report, its analysis and proposals. This we did in a Conference Resolution last November, which charted the next stage of our work on the basis of work undertaken by Friends of the Chair, involving all members, and which I had the privilege to preside over.

We have now established a Conference Committee of the membership as a whole, with three Working Groups. We are working our way systematically through the findings and recommendations of the IEE, providing our advice to management on the parts which are within their authority and arriving at our own conclusions on the many recommendations which concern us. We need to complete our basic work by July this year so that a special session of the FAO Conference in November of this year can chart the way forward, based on an Immediate Action Plan which includes the elements of a new strategic Framework and Medium-Term plan for FAO.

We have a challenging but exciting opportunity which is not going to come around again quickly if we do not grasp it now to build a better Organization to serve us better. This is not a zero sum game where a shrinking pot of resources has to be fought over perpetually by different interest groups among the membership. Of course we have very legitimate different interests, but we will all gain from more efficiency, and more relevance in what FAO does. We can also have reason for hope that as this increases confidence in the Organization, additional resources will start to flow.

The IEE contains very many worthwhile proposals, probably with a few which we might want to change. But I appeal to you that we do not lose sight of the big picture. The IEE is on balance a positive package and it presents an opportunity: let us continue to build on this opportunity. We have made a very good start. The IEE itself was a good start. The Conference Committee and its Working Groups are a good continuation. Much positive progress is being made in the working groups, but we could be making more. The Latin American and Caribbean region has played a very crucial role from the very beginning of this process. Brazil has chaired the Committee of the Council. Its report was welcomed both by the membership and by the Secretariat of FAO. Your representatives in Rome are very pro actively participating in the process.

The IEE recommends an enhanced role for regional conferences in FAO's decision making. This Conference along with the other regional conferences this year can provide both impetus and important views for us to take forward in the IEE-Follow-up process. I hope that you will take this opportunity in your interventions during the Conference and if you wish so informally to me and other colleagues from your own delegations who are working in Rome to carry our work forward.

Mr Chairman, usually it is impossible for me to resist the temptation to look back into history, of the so called developing world, not only to appreciate its unbounded richness but also to find solutions to the challenges facing us at the dawn of the third millennium.

In this particular case, this temptation has its roots both in the magnificent history of our host region as well as in the recent successes of our host country (Brazil).

Latin America and the Caribbean are the centres of domestication for some of the crops which have become universal and absolutely essential worldwide. Tomatoes originating from Mexico have become associated in everyone's imagination with the cuisine of Italy and the Mediterranean. Maize has become a staple crucial to much of Africa and elsewhere. Cacao and chocolate have become basic to the most popular and globally traded sweets and drinks. Who could imagine our world today without these crops which came from the innovations of the farmers of the Americas? During 2008 there is widespread recognition of the contribution of the region with the International Year of the Potato decided upon by the Member Nations at the General Assembly of the United Nations. Originating in the Andes 8000 years ago, the potato is now the World's Number Four food crop. It is most fitting that this year humanity celebrates its importance to our common heritage.

The remarkable recent achievements of our host country, Brazil, in agricultural development and modernization of this sector both in large scale agriculture and in small farm producers, in any account, is eye catching and involves many lessons to be learned. One example of high importance to the future of agricultural development is the biotechnology. Brazil works on the borders of knowledge in this area. This can serve many developing countries in their efforts to increase their agricultural production targeted in reduced hunger and food insecurity. I am confident that we can find similar examples in other countries of the region. Presence of the highest authorities of countries of the region in areas of agricultural development, food security and rural development provides an excellent opportunity to paying attention to our own collective abilities in overcoming the unacceptable situation of food insecurity and hunger in the world which is almost totally concentrated in developing countries and mainly in rural areas. Sharing of your national or even local experiences and successes could pave the roads for others to benefit from them and to adapt to their specific cases

Finally, at the regional level many Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean are facing the challenges to food insecurity and under-nourishment through national programmes in line with the Millennium Development Goals to half and ultimately end hunger. Our host country, Brazil, has developed an exceptional effort at the decentralised and national levels through *Fome Zero*, recognised globally for its accomplishments.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Conference Members, there is now a regional platform for exchange of experiences, with 15 countries having established or in the process of establishing National Alliances against Hunger. This is an example of both regional and national commitment to alleviating the scourge of hunger.

Distinguished Members of the Conference, I wish you a very successful conference in promotion of the sacred goals of the FAO which is crystallised in its logo "FIAT PANIS" (food for all).

### **Address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil**

*My dear Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO,  
 Ambassador Celso Amorim, Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
 My dear Noori Naeeni, Independent Chairperson of the Council of FAO,  
 My dear Reinhold Stephanes, Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply,  
 My dear Guilherme Cassel, Minister for Agrarian Development,  
 My dear Altemir Gregolin, Special Secretary for Aquaculture and Fisheries,  
 Mrs Arlete Sampaio, Acting Minister for Social Development and the Fight Against  
 Hunger,  
 My dear José Graziano, FAO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean,  
 Ladies and Gentlemen,  
 Distinguished Ministers from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,  
 Honourable Delegates,  
 Excellencies,  
 Friends from the Press,*

Welcome to this Regional Conference of FAO.

The fight against hunger and poverty has returned to the headlines and to the attention of the international community.

The visibility of this serious problem, which I have denounced and fought since the first day of my government, is due to the global increase in food prices. An increase which in recent days, has led many people, desperate for food, to demonstrate in the streets of several cities in the developing world.

There is not just one explanation for this situation. It has resulted from a combination of factors: the higher price of oil; lower harvests in many countries, caused by adverse climatic events; increase in the cost of freightage; changes in exchange rate; speculation on financial markets and increased consumption of food in developing countries, such as China, India and Brazil and many other poorer countries.

We must avoid generalizations and simplifications if we are to address this problem properly.

The impact of weather, for example, is part of the history of world agriculture. The novelty, which is very welcome, is that more people are eating and eating better. That shows progress in the fight against hunger, poverty and inequality.

We need emergency solutions to mitigate the current crisis. But, above all, we need long-term actions to reduce the vulnerability of many countries to an aggravation of those problems.

The situation is serious in parts of the world. In our region, Haiti is severely affected. Last week Brazil sent 14 tonnes of food to that country and has contributed to the World Food Programme so it can buy and distribute food to the Haitian people. We hope that these initiatives will be followed by other countries. We also hope that this tragic situation will convince the rich countries that stability in Haiti must necessarily be based on its economic and social viability.

The crisis in world food security requires an urgent expansion of resources to combat hunger and poverty. Brazil has begun to play its part. In the framework of the International Action against Hunger and Poverty, we proposed the creation of innovative financial mechanisms. We obtained results in the area of health, but we are far from having sufficient instruments to deal with challenges of this magnitude.

The financing of development gained prominence in the agendas of the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the G-8. But unfortunately the developed countries only react with greater resolve in emergency situations.

The so-called world food crisis is above all a crisis of opportunity and distribution. Each day 854 million men, women and children sleep in hunger. That is intolerable to us all.

In my government, the right to food became a central plank of its public policy agenda. We are extending agrarian reform, support to family farming, the provision of loans and technical assistance to the marketing of agricultural products. Adoption of the Food and Nutritional Security Act, in 2006, made access to food a permanent policy of the Brazilian State. We are applying social policies that increase people's income.

The "Bolsa Família" (Family Fund) is the largest programme of transfer of income in the history of Brazil. It now benefits more than 11 million poor families in our country. By providing minimum income and good nutrition to so many Brazilians, we are helping to make them more productive, more healthy and to give better conditions of education for their children.

We are making progress. Latin America and the Caribbean might be the only region to achieve the 2015 commitments of the World Food Summit and the first Millennium Goal of reducing the number of hungry people.

But we want more: we want to eradicate hunger from our continent. The Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative which Brazil and Guatemala launched in 2006 reflects that political commitment.

*Mr dear Diouf,*

The structures that have been created by the international community are not prepared for the millions that are being socially included. We need to produce more and to distribute better. Brazil, as an agricultural power, is keen to increase its production. But that is not enough.

The world also requires global policies that are committed to overcoming the problem and not merely palliatives and sticking plasters.

The inability of many countries to produce their own food is the result of decades, if not centuries, of distortions in international trade of agricultural products. Protectionism is a burden. Equally burdensome are the subsidies to agriculture of the rich which undermine the competitiveness of the small farmer. Such distortions create dependence, when not dismantling entire production structures.

The concept of food security has been distorted by some to justify protectionist practices that affect countries suffering from lack of food and economic options.



Food aid must be complemented by productive cooperation and by the opening of new markets and opportunities.

Real food security needs to be global and based on cooperation. It must be forged from a combination of measures that work in emergency situations, such as this one, but, above all, it requires long-term solutions.

Overcoming the present obstacles obviously requires a successful and early conclusion to the Doha Round of the WTO. An agreement that stops treating agricultural trade as an exception to the rules. That allows the poorest countries to generate income from their production and exports.

It also requires greater cooperation in agriculture, as Brazil has done with its African partners and with its partners in Central America and the Caribbean. An expansion of this type of initiative can benefit enormously from new partnerships that permit triangular cooperation.

Brazil has also focused on the enormous potential of biofuels, as an instrument of economic and social change in the poorest countries. Biofuels generate income and employment, especially in rural areas. They produce clean and renewable energy. They are an example of sustainability, of balance between environmental, social and economic aspects. That is the project in which I place great hope, especially for the future of many countries of Africa, Asia, Central America and the Caribbean.

It is therefore with growing concern that I see attempts to create a relationship of cause and effect between development of biofuels and shortage of food or increase in food prices.

My concern is all the greater when I see little mention of the negative impact of higher oil prices on the cost of producing and transporting food, on the cost of producing fertilizer. When I see that few criticize the harmful and lasting impact of subsidies and protectionism. That many criticize, rather than celebrate, increased food consumption in the more dynamic developing countries.

It is always easier to opt for simplistic answers; to conceal economic interests and political agendas behind supposed social and environmental concerns. It is difficult to discuss these issues on the basis of facts.

Biofuels are not the villain that is threatening the food security of the poorest nations. On the contrary, if developed with care and in accordance with the reality of each country, they can act as a crucial instrument for generating income and lifting countries out of food and energy insecurity. That is what our friend Sachs says: the role that bioenergy can play in containing the negative impacts of climate change, in creating employment opportunities in rural areas and in building alternative models of development.

Brazil's production of ethanol from sugar cane occupies a tiny part of its agricultural land; it does not reduce the food production area; and it does not use that land for its production. Its expansion has been based on productivity gains and on better use of land used for pasture. There is no risk of production in the Amazon region, nor of displacement of production. The same applies to biodiesel, which we are increasingly anchoring in family farming.

In all cases, we fence biofuel production with guarantees on the environment, labour and food security.

Other countries will have to conduct their studies and decide whether or not they can produce biofuels, and on what scale. They will need to define which plants are best suited to their needs. They will need to select projects on the basis of economic, social and environmental criteria.

More than 100 countries are naturally suited to the sustainable production of biofuels. In many of those countries, less than 20 percent of the population has access to sources of energy for their basic needs. It is each of those 100 countries that needs to take decisions on the merit or otherwise of adopting biofuels. Those decisions should not be imposed by others through pressures and protectionist measures.

The real “crime against humanity” is to discard biofuels *a priori* and to condemn countries, that strangled by lack of food and energy, to dependence and insecurity.

To ensure that the necessary debate on biofuels is conducted in a balanced manner, I am inviting government authorities, scientists and representatives of civil society from all interested countries to participate in the International Conference on Biofuels, which will take place next November in the State of São Paulo in Brazil. We wish to discuss, in a candid and informed manner, the challenges and the opportunities that lie before us.

The role of FAO, my dear Diouf, in this work of clarification is extremely important. I hope that I can continue to count on the balanced approach of its Director-General and his staff.

*Dear companions,  
My dear Diouf and other partners,*

The countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia cannot and should not flee from this debate, from discussion of food security or from discussion of biofuels. This is a debate that needs to be conducted in a rational manner, without emotion, and without ideological bias, either from the right or from the left. We need scientific facts so we can discuss the direction we will offer to the world in coming years.

The poor countries can no longer carry the guilt for the actions of the rich countries. They agreed, under Kyoto, that everyone would contribute towards reducing global warming, but responsibility is being placed on the backs of the poor countries. They tell the poor countries that they cannot clear their forests because they created something called carbon credit, that will finance the poor countries. And I should like to know how many poor countries have already received carbon credit to finance their development without affecting forest. Similarly, poor countries are not responsible for the higher price of oil, poor countries are not responsible for the emission of CO<sub>2</sub>. But the poor countries are the victims of those policies. In the first place, the policy of protecting their markets, precisely when we are about to reach agreement on the Doha Round of WTO. One of the points of the G-20, also represented by our Minister Celso Amorim at the negotiation table, is that if there is no opening of the European agricultural market to the agricultural products of the poor countries, it will be very difficult to have an agreement and someone is going to have to assume the historic responsibility. If there is no reduction in the agricultural subsidies that the rich countries use to finance their producers, it will be difficult for the poor countries to be competitive on the agricultural market.

Now, if we do not have technology, if we do not have oil, and I am not speaking for Brazil, because as far as agriculture is concerned, Brazil is as competitive as any country in the world. I am speaking for tens and hundreds of other countries that do not have

technology, that do not have a developed industrial policy and that do not have technology for agriculture. And worse still, when the poor countries gather their harvest, what they gather is very often not enough to pay for the fertilizer they bought from the multinational companies that are usually in the rich countries of this world.

Either we have this discussion in earnest or, whenever something occurs such as in Haiti, we introduce an emergency measure to send a spot of food to temporarily satisfy the hungry and then wait for the next occurrence. It is very odd that an agricultural producing country, that (inaudible) should have a commodity market if only to adjust the price of soybean, to adjust the price of millet, to adjust the price of rice, of beans. We have to look at the prices determined in Chicago.

If the globalized world is undergoing changes, I believe that the countries considered to be developing and the poor countries need to enforce their logic. The logic of placing our problem at the centre of debate. I will give you an example: in the 1980s and 1990s, every delegate here today must have seen an IMF delegation descend on his or her country calling for fiscal adjustment, care of interest rates, reduction of the State, otherwise the country would go bankrupt. Curiously I never saw the IMF issue a single opinion on the American crisis. How much longer are we going to accept the role of bit players on the international scene? How much longer?

I hope my dear Diouf, and you know how attached I am to FAO, you know that here, in our country, we have in recent years accomplished a revolution in social inclusion that is unprecedented in our history. We know we cannot rectify the errors of 500 years in 5, 10 or 15 years; we know it is a process. But Brazil wants to be proud to be the first country to meet all the Millennium Goals set in Rome. And we will meet those goals because we are in a position to do so, and because we want to set an example for other countries to give priority to the politics of inclusion.

Today, in Brazil, many people are afraid because consumption in the Northeast is higher than consumption in the southern region of the country. But for one reason: for a long time those people had no access to the minimum ration of food. But today those same people are entering supermarkets and taking food home. Because, besides being able to work, those people are beginning, through the policy of transfer of income, to receive a modicum of dignity. If they had received that dignity throughout the last century, Brazil would already be a great power and not an emerging country.

I wish to say to my friend Diouf that he convinced me to go on 3 June to the FAO Conference in Rome. And I will, my dear Diouf, with the intention of entering the debate with all the seriousness that it requires. I understand the concerns, I do not criticize those who fear the danger of biofuels replacing food production. Because I believe that a citizen who ceases to fill his "tank" of food to fill his "tank" of fuel needs very serious treatment.

So, we must not accept the logic and dynamic of those who only view the world from within their continent. I have said in many discussions in Europe on biodiesel, that they should not look at their own territory where everything is so orderly. There are countries so developed that their agriculture, their production is so precise it looks like the home of newly weds. I tell them, look at those policies for the African continent, look at the world from the logic of the African continent, that no longer has the right to spend the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the victim of hunger it was in the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Look at Latin America, at all the poor countries, a few miles from the United States, that are also hungry. Because those who determine the logic of production are not the countries themselves. Those who determine the logic of fertilizers are not the countries themselves. Now therefore, what we need... I am looking here at my colleague Maluf, President of the

CONSEA (National Council of Food and Nutritional Security), what we need to do, my dear Maluf, is to create a CONSEA in each country of the world, so that food security becomes State policy, not the fortunate policy of combatants such as yourself. In Brazil, we have already done that. I hope that the world will do so because, who knows, Celso will find it easier in the Doha Round to approve an agreement in which Brazil does not need to win, but where Europe and the United States need to give way, and those that need to win are the poorest countries of the world.

Thank you very much and good luck.

**AGENDA OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
(14 and 15 April 2008)

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Opening of the Technical Committee meeting
2. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Technical Committee Agenda and Timetable

**II. TECHNICAL ITEMS**

4. Policies to promote and/or strengthen the participation and joint action of public and private actors in rural development
5. Transboundary diseases
6. Opportunities and challenges of biofuel production for food security and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean
7. Consultation and study meetings among delegations
8. Adoption of the Technical Committee report
9. Closure of the Technical Committee meeting

**AGENDA OF THE PLENARY SESSION**  
(16 to 18 April 2008)

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Opening Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

**II. STATEMENTS**

4. Statement of the Director-General
5. Statement of the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO
6. Report on FAO activities (2006-2007) aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit target.
7. Matters arising from the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of FAO.
8. Reports of the Regional Commissions: Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) and Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CPDEGALAC)
9. Food safety: Effective participation of developing countries in Codex Alimentarius meetings
10. Pressing global and regional issues: Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative
11. Round Table: Follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (Porto Alegre, Brazil, March 2006)

**III. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

12. Date and place of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
13. Other matters
14. Adoption of the report (including the Technical Committee report)
15. Closure of the Regional Conference

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****CONFERENCE OFFICERS**

<b>Chairperson</b>	Guilherme Cassel Reinhold Stephanes	Brazil Brazil
<b>Vice-Chairpersons</b>	Simeon Pinder Haynesley Benn Mauricio Dofler Celso Amorim Reinaldo Ruiz Sergio Diaz Carlos Villalobos Pedro Nuñez Mario Arvelo Lucy Montalvo Mario Aldana Zuleika Budhan Francisco Lopez Tostado Benjamin Dixon Gerardo Bogado Hugo de Zela Kermechend Raghoebarsing Arnold Pigott Ernesto Agazzi Gerardo Rojas	Bahamas Barbados Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Costa Rica Cuba Dominican Republic Ecuador Guatemala Jamaica Mexico Nicaragua Paraguay Peru Suriname Trinidad and Tobago Uruguay Venezuela
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Gabriel Marcelo Fuks	Argentina

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

<b>Chairpersons</b>	Laudemir Millar Celio Porto	Brazil Brazil
<b>Vice-Chairpersons</b>	Haynesley Benn Ernesto Agazzi	Barbados Uruguay
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Liz Coronel	Paraguay

## MEMBER NATIONS SERVICED BY THE REGIONAL OFFICE

### ARGENTINA

#### Head of Delegation

Gabriel Marcelo Fuks  
Embajador  
Presidente de Comisión Cascos Blancos  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores,  
Comercio Internacional y Culto

#### Alternates

María del Carmen Squeff  
Representante Permanente Alterna de la  
República Argentina ante la FAO

Ariel Fernandez  
Subdirector de Cooperación Multilateral  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores,  
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### LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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LARC/08/4	Opportunities and challenges of biofuel production for food security and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/08/5	Matters arising from the 34 <sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference
LARC/08/6	Report on FAO activities (2006-2007) aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit target.
LARC/08/7	Round Table: Follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)
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LARC/08/INF/3 Rev 1	Provisional List of Documents
LARC/08/INF/4	Statement of the Director-General
LARC/08/INF/5	Report of the XXIV Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)
LARC/08/INF/6	Report of the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC)
LARC/08/INF/7	Food safety: Effective participation of developing countries in Codex Alimentarius meetings

**NEW STRUCTURE OF THE FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

