

CFS50 Side Event 17

Strengthening legal frameworks for food security and nutrition: The role of parliamentarians and their alliances

12 October 2022

On 12 October 2022, FAO, through the Development Law Service of the Legal Office (LEGN), the Partnership and UN Collaboration Office (PSU), the Regional Office for Africa and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, collaborated with the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) and the Spanish Senate Parliamentary Alliance for the Right to Food to organize a side event at the [50th session of the Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#). The side event under the theme "Strengthening legal frameworks for food security and nutrition: The role of parliamentarians and their alliances", aimed at promoting experience sharing and capacity building on how the law-making, budget-allocation, oversight and representational mandates of parliamentarians can be leveraged for food security and nutrition (FSN). Organized in a hybrid format, the workshop brought together over 150 in-person and virtual participants from all over the world, and was moderated by the Deputy Legal Counsel of FAO, Ms Annick VanHoutte.

In a video message, the ADG for LAC, Mr Mario Lubetkin, presented the appreciable work FAO has done since 2009 with the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean (PFH), a regional network made up of more than 400 legislators from regional, sub-regional and national parliaments. The Deputy ADG for Africa, Mr Yurdi Yasmi, then highlighted the multi-dimensional challenges to FSN in the continent and the role that parliamentarians play in addressing them. On her part, Ms Villarreal, Direct of PSU, spoke about the critical role of parliamentarians in the fight against food insecurity and malnutrition. She underscored that "food security and nutrition indicators tend to show significant improvement in the presence of strong political will informing public policies and programs anchored in legislation".

Three panelists from Parlatino, PAP and the Spanish Senate then made presentations on the work of their respective parliaments on strengthening legislative frameworks for FSN. Honorable Mr Armando Castaingdebat, who is a member of Parlatino and the President of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger of Uruguay, presented the collaborative work of Parlatino and the PFH to promote the adoption of regional model laws and national legislation on FSN. They supported the development of over 50 pieces of legislation that are important for the achievement of SDG 2 on zero hunger.

Honorable Mr Didier Molisho Sadi, who is the Chairperson of the Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment at PAP and a member of parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo, spoke about the work of PAP in proposing model laws to African parliaments in its capacity as the parliamentary organ of the African Union with advisory mandate. He presented PAP's ongoing work towards a model law on food and nutrition security in Africa in collaboration with FAO. Mr Molisho Sadi further reaffirmed the commitment of PAP "to continue deploying its parliamentary mandate and forging the necessary strategic partnerships to promote the adoption of legislative, budgetary and oversight instruments that can enable African States to overcome hunger and food insecurity".

Honorable Ms Elena Diego, who is a member the Spanish Senate and the Spanish Parliamentary Alliance for the Right to Food, shared the experience of collaboration between the PFH and the Spanish Parliamentary Alliance, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, as “a two-way cooperation that contributes to strengthening laws and democracies in the framework of the 2030 Agenda”. She referred to the creation of an Ibero-American Parliamentarian Alliance promoting SGD2 with a focus on gender equality. Ms Diego also highlighted the importance of parliamentary cooperation to advance legislative frameworks that respond to current multiple crises, including on food chains, school feeding, food trade and family farming.

In her reflections on the messages of the panelists, Ms. Gerda Verburg, Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, stressed that parliamentarians should leverage their wide-ranging mandates to the promotion of nutrition, with particular attention to gender and youth. She further underlined the need to adopt a human rights-based approach that would enable citizens to claim their rights and request members of parliament to carry out their obligations towards their constituencies.

The moderator summed up the main messages of the speakers and reaffirmed the commitment of LEGN to continue providing technical support to the activities of PAP, PARLATINO as well as to national parliaments in Africa, LAC and elsewhere. When the floor finally opened to the audience, exchanges took place on questions such as how and the extent to which parliamentarians work on gender mainstreaming, regulatory impact assessment etc. Recommendations were also made for Parliamentary Alliances to work closely with civil society organizations and for the CFS to establish a Parliamentary Mechanism to strengthen its multi-stakeholder platform.