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5-8 March 2018

Thirty-Fifth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

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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	- Brasília, Brazil, 14-18 April 2008
Thirty-first	- Panama City, Panama, 26-30 April 2010
Thirty-second	- Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26-30 March 2012
Thirty-third	- Santiago, Chile, 6-9 May 2014
Thirty-fourth	- Mexico City, Mexico, 29 February - 3 March 2016
Thirty-fifth	- Montego Bay, Jamaica, 5-8 March 2018

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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- *Results and Priorities for FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Paragraphs 21 and 22)
- *Decentralized Offices Network* (Paragraphs 23 and 24)
- *Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean* (Paragraph 25)
- *Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions* (Paragraph 30)
- *Other Matters* (Paragraphs 31; 34 and 40)

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

- *Ending hunger and eradicating all forms of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Paragraphs 15 and 16)
- *Towards a transformative agenda for sustainable rural development* (Paragraphs 17 and 18)
- *Climate resilient and sustainable agriculture* (Paragraphs 19 and 20)

I. Introductory Items

Organization of the Regional Conference

1. The 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 5 to 8 March 2018, and was attended by 280 participants from 33 Members of which 40 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, 13 Ambassadors, 1 Observer Nation, 50 other Observers, 7 UN Organizations, 22 Civil Society Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations, 9 Private Sector Organizations and 14 Intergovernmental Organizations.

Inaugural ceremonies

2. The inaugural ceremony of the Regional Conference was held on 7 March in the presence of the Right Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, and Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Prime Minister affirmed his country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and stressed the importance for the Caribbean of moving forward towards sustainable agriculture and rural development resilient to climate change, and a region free from all forms of malnutrition, through increased energy security, investment in infrastructure and greater use of technology.

3. The Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, highlighted the importance of creating an efficient, competitive domestic agricultural sector for the food and nutrition security and sustainable rural development of Caribbean countries. Her Excellency Margarita Cedeño de Fernández, Constitutional Vice President of the Dominican Republic and Extraordinary Ambassador of FAO, stressed the importance of recognizing the human right to food in order to mobilize the whole of government and the whole of society in combating hunger and poverty. His Excellency Hugo Roger Martínez Bonilla, *Pro Tempore* President of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, emphasized the importance of continuing the implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger.

4. The senior officers' meeting was opened by Mr Julio Berdegué, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, who thanked the Government and people of Jamaica for their hospitality, welcomed the delegations of Members and noted the role of the Regional Conferences in guiding FAO's work.

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur

5. The Regional Conference elected as Chairperson the Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, who expressed his appreciation for his appointment and welcomed delegates to the meeting; Mr Mario León, Vice-Minister for Agriculture of Paraguay, and Ms Ivannia Quesada, Vice-Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.

6. The Regional Conference elected as Rapporteur Mr Antonio Otávio Sá Ricarte, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

7. The Regional Conference adopted the Agenda and Timetable.

8. The Regional Conference agreed to give the floor to the spokespersons, nominated by civil society organizations and the private sector during the consultation preceding the current session as an expression of interest in the broad participation of actors in the work of FAO and in line with the experience of the previous (33rd and 34th) sessions of the Regional Conference in 2014 and 2016.

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

9. In his statement to the Regional Conference, the Director-General of FAO, Mr José Graziano da Silva, stressed that putting the fight against hunger back on track is FAO's highest priority for 2018-2019. He also highlighted some important challenges still faced by Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the need to revitalize territories that are lagging behind in the eradication of poverty and the importance of implementing more sustainable strategies to address challenges such as climate change. He emphasized that the eradication of all forms of malnutrition is feasible, and urged those in the region to be the first generation free of hunger.

Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

10. As Mr Khalid Mehboob, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, was unable to attend the Regional Conference, apologies were extended on his behalf and his statement was delivered by the Secretary of the Regional Conference.

Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

11. His Excellency Mario Arvelo Caamaño, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security and Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to FAO, referred to the importance of the CFS which serves as a multistakeholder platform in the United Nations, emphasizing how a stronger, more open and flexible CFS can better serve countries. To this end, he called for the active engagement of all countries in the region either through their Rome-based delegations or remotely from capitals, as well as by speaking as much as possible with a single regional voice. The CFS Chairperson also urged countries to establish, or enhance where they exist, national platforms to tackle issues of food security and nutrition that mirror the inclusive structure of the CFS, and highlighted that the continued relevance of the CFS depends upon advancing and successfully concluding the current process for policy coherence and convergence in nutrition.

Statement by the Chairperson of the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

12. Mr Ignacio Lastra Marín, Undersecretary of Food and Competitiveness, representing Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, His Excellency José Eduardo Calzada Rovirosa, in his capacity as Chairperson of the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighted progress achieved over the past two years in following up on priorities identified at that session. This shows that the region's countries are fully committed to FAO priorities and initiatives with the aim of better positioning Latin America and the Caribbean in an increasingly complex international context.

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

13. The Regional Conference considered the following important policy issues for the region:

- a) Ending hunger and eradicating all forms of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean
- b) Towards an agenda to transform sustainable rural development
- c) Climate resilient and sustainable agriculture

14. The Regional Conference requested FAO to support countries in the identification of sources of financing, transfer of technology and capacity-building with a territorial focus, for the successful implementation of relevant policies in the region.

Ending hunger and eradicating all forms of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean

15. The Regional Conference:

- i) Acknowledged that, in spite of the progress made in recent decades, the region is experiencing a period of reversal of the progress made in reducing food insecurity, as well as an alarming increase in overweight and obesity, and persistent micronutrient deficiencies. It highlighted the role of governments and societies as a whole to address this triple challenge.
- ii) Expressed appreciation for FAO's support in designing and implementing policies and allocating resources for food security and nutrition, including: a) national school feeding programmes linked to family farming; b) nutrition education; c) capacity-building for monitoring SDG indicators; d) legal frameworks for food security and nutrition; e) support to Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger; f) progress in implementing the SAMOA Pathway and the adoption of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States; g) progress achieved in gender and indigenous peoples; and h) support to the 2025 CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger (CELAC Plan).

16. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:

- i) Support Members in developing a policy approach for territories with a prevalence of hunger, extreme poverty and vulnerability to climate change, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the CELAC Plan.
- ii) Help governments, in collaboration with other UN Agencies, improving their policy instruments to achieve substantive progress in food security and nutrition of communities that are falling behind, with emphasis on rural women, indigenous peoples, disadvantaged people of African descent and other vulnerable groups.
- iii) Assist governments with the identification, development and implementation of public policies, including those related to the promotion of the human right to food, to influence the transformation of food systems in order to address malnutrition, including overweight and obesity and micronutrient deficiencies in the region.
- iv) Support follow-up on the implementation of the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and support regional networks and initiatives to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition.
- v) Support strengthening institutional and legal frameworks and information systems related to food security and nutrition, in order to develop capacities for resource mobilization and the effective implementation of policies.
- vi) Promote nutritious diets including through the consumption of fish, meat and fresh products, in order to contribute to the improvement of food security and nutrition.
- vii) Support the elaboration and adoption of a voluntary international code of conduct to prevent and reduce food losses and waste.

Towards a transformative agenda for sustainable rural development

17. The Regional Conference:

- i) Noted persistent poverty and inequality in rural areas.
- ii) Stressed the economic, social, environmental and cultural value of family farming.
- iii) Welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028.
- iv) Welcomed also the proclamation of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture and 2024 as the International Year of Camelids.

18. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:

- i) Support governments in developing and strengthening integrated strategies to eradicate rural poverty, enhance social protection with economic inclusion, address in particular gender and ethnic inequalities, as well as to generate employment and entrepreneurship among rural youth for economic and social revitalization of rural territories.
- ii) Help governments to address the causes of migration from rural territories as a result of limited opportunities, food insecurity, rural poverty, limited access to resources and services, violence, and exposure to environmental risks.
- iii) Assist governments in strengthening comprehensive policies for family farming, in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, paying special attention to their potential for safeguarding biodiversity, sustainably managing natural resources and thus providing a favourable environment for reducing rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition as well as promoting a business model for generating income.
- iv) Support the role of fisheries and aquaculture, particularly artisanal, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture producers, in the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.
- v) Support the design and implementation of public policies as well as spaces for dialogue between governments and civil society organizations, multisectoral collaboration and public-private partnerships, including the promotion of producer associations, to enable agrifood systems to generate properly balanced nutritional, social, environmental and economic benefits, increasing opportunities for family farmers as well as youth and the rural poor, commercially viable production, and rural small and medium enterprises.
- vi) Support knowledge exchange for agricultural innovation, including agroecology, biotechnologies and other technologies, to enhance sustainable rural development.
- vii) Support the identification of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).
- viii) Support countries to benefit from an open, fair and transparent international agricultural trading system with a view to facilitating market access and the commercialization of agricultural products, so that family farmers and small-scale producers can also benefit from it.
- ix) Provide technical support to relevant bodies regarding fisheries subsidies which lead to overfishing and overcapacity, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- x) Support the setting up of an integrated strategy to prevent, discourage and eliminate IUU fishing in the region, including through the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures and other supplementary international instruments.
- xi) Promote the dissemination of the Voluntary Guidelines for agro-environmental policies in Latin America and the Caribbean and their implementation upon request, as well as the mobilization of financial resources to this end.

Climate resilient and sustainable agriculture

19. The Regional Conference:

- i) Encouraged Members to strengthen cooperation and coordination to mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in agriculture including in the development of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.
- ii) Welcomed the signing of the Letter of Intent between Mexico and FAO to strengthen the capacity of Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) members of CARICOM to access climate change financing, integrating this proposal to South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

20. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:
- i) Support governments in strengthening and preparing national, regional and global programmes and initiatives related to the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources; adaptation and mitigation of climate change and disaster risk management for the agricultural sector, including fisheries; and the development of innovative environmental policies for the socioeconomic inclusion of family farmers.
 - ii) Assist countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in particular in the preparation and implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation plans (NAPs) as requested.
 - iii) Assist governments in accessing global climate and environmental funding, through developing capacities and facilitating international cooperation.
 - iv) Organize a regional dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the follow up to the Multistakeholder Dialogue on Mainstreaming Biodiversity to be held in May 2018, with the aim of contributing to the elaboration of an FAO Biodiversity Strategy.
 - v) Support the elaboration and implementation of a regional Blue Growth Initiative for food security, poverty reduction and sustainable management of aquatic resources, taking into account the results of the High-Level Meeting on the Blue Growth Initiative for Latin America and Caribbean in November 2017.
 - vi) Support the sustainable management, conservation, production and trade of fish products, as well as efforts to address the negative effects of climate change to the sector.
 - vii) Support the development of strategies and policies for the conservation and recovery of degraded forests and soils, by encouraging countries to invest in national initiatives on agro-forestry, agroecological and organic production systems, as well as biotechnologies that protect and preserve biodiversity, especially for family farmers, and support experience exchange initiatives at global and regional levels.
 - viii) Encourage FAO to strengthen cooperation and coordination amongst countries in order to exchange experiences in water resources management and social technologies, supporting the development of national and regional programmes and initiatives to fight drought, soil degradation and desertification in particular in the Central American Dry Corridor.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

Results and priorities for FAO in the Latin America and Caribbean region

21. The Regional Conference:
- i) Welcomed the action taken and the results achieved in 2016 and 2017 in addressing regional challenges, in particular through the three regional initiatives supported by the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (*hunger free Latin America and the Caribbean; family farming and inclusive food systems; and sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management*).
 - ii) Recognized the key role of FAO's Strategic Framework in shaping the technical work of FAO and promoting the effective achievements of results in the field.

- iii) Welcomed the alignment of the FAO Strategic Objectives indicators with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicators.
 - iv) Recognized the major contribution of the strategic programmes to the provision of policy products and services, such as standards, voluntary guidelines and legal instruments on a national and regional scale.
 - v) Emphasized the importance of Rome-based Agencies collaboration and partnership and welcomed the progress FAO has made in forging alliances with other UN Agencies and regional institutions, including the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).
22. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:
- i) Continue the implementation of the three regional initiatives already approved at the 34th Session of the Regional Conference, taking into account increasingly important issues such as overweight and obesity, migration, biodiversity and green financing.
 - ii) Concentrate on initiatives with a clear potential for generating tangible large-scale results for sustainable development and for the achievement of SDGs.
 - iii) Develop a strategy focused on accelerating national efforts to achieve SDGs in territories that have lagged behind in reducing hunger and rural poverty, and that are more vulnerable to climate change.
 - iv) Mobilize the extensive and rich capabilities and expertise in the region to achieve solutions to the various challenges, through mechanisms such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, engagement with civil society and the private sector, as well as other partnerships.
 - v) Implement a personnel and resource mobilization strategy to support the mandates of the Regional Conference.
 - vi) Update its technical expertise in accordance with the needs to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve FAO Strategic Objectives and re-profile its workforce in terms of skills, gender parity and geographical diversity targets.
 - vii) Take into account the need for geographical balance in the recruitment of consultants, especially from developing countries, consistent with geographic distribution criteria for staff, whilst retaining merit as the primary criterion for recruitment.

Decentralized Offices Network

23. The Regional Conference:
- i) Endorsed the proposed general principles and criteria for reviewing the coverage of the FAO decentralized network by adopting flexible mechanisms.
 - ii) Recognized the need to review FAO's global coverage in order to provide more effective support to Members, paying particular attention to countries facing major economic, environmental and social challenges.
 - iii) Noted the revision of staffing models of country offices to allow for flexibility and to better adapt to countries' needs.
 - iv) Recognized the efforts made by the Organization in the region to strengthen national and international partnerships with key stakeholders in order to achieve more effective results in the field.
 - v) Noted the strengthening of the internal control systems and welcomed Management's efforts in this respect.

- vi) Welcomed the 40th anniversary celebration as an opportunity to renew the Organization's commitment to its long-term presence in the field, while guaranteeing flexibility, effectiveness and a high level of technical capacity.
 - vii) Highlighted the continuing need to give priority to partnerships and resource mobilization at the decentralized level, with emphasis on South-South and Triangular Cooperation and to further strengthen collaboration among Rome-based and other UN agencies.
24. The Regional Conference noted the outcome of the deliberations by the CARICOM Ministers who:
- i) Appreciated FAO's commitment to review FAO's network of decentralized offices in the Caribbean with the goal of increasing decentralization and flexibility through optimization of the allocation and use of FAO's existing resources and capacities.
 - ii) Requested that FAO, within the human resources policies of the Organization, make an extraordinary effort to incorporate young professionals from the Caribbean into its technical cooperation teams.
 - iii) Commended the Director-General for the broad consultative engagement and looked forward to continuing the collaborative dialogue and efforts to increase the efficiency, opportunity and quality of FAO's services to all member states of the CARICOM region.

Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

25. The Regional Conference:
- i) Endorsed the Multi-Year Programme of Work for the period 2018-2021.

Subregional consultation results

26. The three subregions confirmed the results and priorities for the 2018-2019 biennium, indicating the following characteristics specific to each:
27. The Caribbean Subregion:
- i) Endorsed the three subregional programme areas. In relation to the sustainable rural development area, ministers emphasized that a focus be placed on creation of business opportunities and services that contribute to the strengthening of market and trade linkages with attention to youth entrepreneurship, investment, incentives and innovation.
 - ii) Stressed the continuing imperative of ending hunger, achieving food security and eradicating malnutrition, with specific reference to the SAMOA Pathway and the adoption of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS, and requested FAO to give increased attention to the following areas of importance to the subregion: combating obesity through production and consumption of healthy, safe and nutritious food; promoting political will and good governance, including the facilitation of development and strengthening of policies, legislation and regulations; supporting the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes and progress towards achievement of the SDGs; and achieving Zero Hunger.
 - iii) Stressed the importance of climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural systems and requested FAO to devote more attention to the following areas: promoting governance and sustainable use of natural resources; climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk mitigation; and resource mobilization from global climate and environmental financial sources, including in the reclassification of CARICOM countries in the context of the Green Climate Fund.

- iv) Reiterated the importance of continuing to recognize Haiti as a special priority which requires the development of a broader, better coordinated assistance programme and the mobilization of resources and requested FAO to focus on the following priority issues for Haiti: institutional capacity building for food and nutrition security; development of agricultural value chains; conservation and management of natural resources; building resilience to natural disasters and food crises; and promoting the Binational Programme between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

28. The Mesoamerica Subregion:

- i) Reaffirmed support for the three regional initiatives and requested FAO to promote coordination between health, education, social development, environment, agriculture and finance authorities, and to further strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
- ii) Requested the support of FAO to identify, in coordination with the governments, the territories with the highest levels of food insecurity and its causes and called upon FAO to promote nutrition education, and the consumption of healthy and nutritious diets, with particular attention to aquaculture and fisheries products.
- iii) Invited FAO to promote the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct for the reduction of food losses and waste, and to intensify support for national efforts for the promotion and progressive realization of the human right to food.
- iv) Requested increased support for family farming, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, as well as recognizing the work of women, indigenous peoples and rural youth.
- v) Urged FAO to continue strengthening the articulation of programmes of social protection and productive inclusion for the eradication of rural poverty.
- vi) Recognized that the agricultural sector is severely affected by climate change, and underlined the importance of all actors, including coastal communities and aquaculturists.
- vii) Urged FAO to take full advantage of existing instruments to access climate finance, and identified FAO as a natural ally for the formulation of projects and the mobilization of resources.

29. The South America Subregion:

- i) Called upon FAO to support countries to improve levels of nutrition, mainly through the promotion of nutrition education in a multisectoral manner and as far as possible with the private sector, while addressing conflicts of interest.
- ii) Requested FAO to acknowledge and give prominence to the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to food security, nutrition and poverty eradication.
- iii) Requested FAO to support countries in developing and implementing social protection programmes, particularly those with productive emphasis.
- iv) Requested FAO to facilitate technical assistance for countries to access mechanisms for the differentiation of agroecological and organic products in international markets, and to strengthen value chains and clusters to enhance competitiveness.
- v) Requested FAO to support countries in strengthening actions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, in enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the development of livelihoods in drylands, including efficient management of water resources.
- vi) Requested FAO to assist countries in their efforts to reduce food losses and waste.
- vii) Recognized the importance of making compatible traditional practices with the application of technological innovation in food systems.

Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions

30. The Regional Conference:

- i) Reaffirmed FAO's role in the technical secretariats of the regional commissions. It endorsed the recommendations of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC), the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLDLAC), the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC), and the Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA) which are contained in Appendix E.

IV. Other Matters

Date and place of the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

31. The Regional Conference welcomed the generous offer by the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua to host the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2020 and recommended that the offer be accepted.

Signature of a framework cooperation agreement between the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and FAO

32. A cooperation agreement was signed by Dr Lystra Fletcher-Paul, FAO Subregional Coordinator (ad interim) for the Caribbean, and Mr Daniel Best, Director of Projects of the CDB with the aim of strengthening collaboration between CDB and FAO. This instrument is expected to reduce the time frame for the conclusion of agreements between CDB and FAO and to facilitate FAO's implementation of projects financed by CDB through grants and/or loans.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) and FAO

33. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to develop, promote and strengthen joint actions and support projects for indigenous peoples, in particular in relation to the implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The agreement is part of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

Proposal for the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

34. The Regional Conference unanimously endorsed the proposal of Chile for an International Year of Fruits and Vegetables and requested FAO to support preparations towards its approval as soon as possible. The Conference requested that native and tropical fruits be promoted during its celebration.

Statement from the Consultation with Social Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean

35. The Regional Conference noted the Demarachu Declaration from the Consultation with Social Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean for the 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference, held in Panama City, Panama, from 1 to 3 February 2018, which is included as an information document (Appendix F).

Statement from spokespersons on meetings on the Conference held with the private sector

36. The Regional Conference noted the Statement from the three meetings on the 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference, held in Santiago de Chile on 7 and 8 November 2017 and on 19 and 23 January 2018, which is included as an information document (Appendix G).

Statement by the spokesperson for the Parliamentary Front against Hunger

37. The Regional Conference noted the statement from Ms Luisa Maria Calderon, Senator of Mexico and Regional President of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger, which is included as an information document (Appendix H).

Side event “Agrifood trade in Latin America and the Caribbean in the current international situation”

38. A Side Event was held with the participation of high-level authorities from Barbados, Chile, Jamaica and Mexico on agrifood trade in the region in the current international situation. The main objective of the event was to explore the extent to which the potential of agrifood export from the region may be constrained by developments in the international trade environment and, recognizing the diversity of countries’ trade status, to discuss what the region’s own agrifood trade strategies should be in this new context.

Side event “Celebrating 40 years of FAO country representations”

39. The side event was an opportunity to highlight major achievements made possible through cooperation with FAO, to promote new forms of representation as well as partnerships, and to encourage renewed commitment to collaborate. In the framework of the celebration, Ms Mirna Cunningham of Nicaragua, President of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples for Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC), provided personal testimony which addressed milestones in FAO’s country presence. The Director-General, Mr Graziano Da Silva, reaffirmed FAO’s commitment to further decentralization aimed at strengthening the Organization’s impact on the country, subregional and regional levels, thereby increasing support to countries to achieve the SDGs.

Special Declaration on the 40th Anniversary of FAO Country Representations in Latin America and the Caribbean

40. The Regional Conference adopted a Special Declaration on the Celebration of 40 years of FAO Representations in the field, which is included in Appendix D.

Side event “Green Financing: Green Climate Fund and GEF-7”

41. A Side Event on Green Financing: Green Climate Fund and GEF-7 was attended by high-level authorities from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Uruguay. The objective was to foster dialogue on opportunities to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector. The countries outlined how they are using or planning to use climate financing in the agricultural sector to promote food security and combat poverty while addressing climate change and protecting the environment.

Commemoration of International Women's Day

42. The event commemorating the International Women's Day 2018 was chaired by His Excellency Héctor Cárdenas, Executive Minister of the Secretary of Social Affairs, Paraguay, and introduced by Ms Eve Crowley, Secretary of the Conference. The event highlighted the importance of empowering rural women economically, politically and socially and of ensuring that their contributions to the economy are made visible. Her Excellency Guadalupe Valdez, Special Ambassador 'Zero Hunger' for Latin America and the Caribbean Region, emphasized the importance of revitalizing policies and alliances for the economic empowerment of women in order to achieve a region free of hunger.

Letter of Intent between the Government of the United Mexican States and FAO for an initiative on Climate Resilience and Adaptation in the food and rural systems of the Caribbean

43. A Letter of Intent was signed by Mr Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO and Mr Luis Videgaray, Minister for Foreign Affairs. On his behalf Ambassador Agustín García-López, Executive Secretary of the Mexican Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AMEXCID) explained that this initiative aimed at supporting the Small Island Developing States of CARICOM to access funding related to climate change. Mexico and FAO will provide technical support through national institutions or South-South and Triangular Cooperation for the elaboration of proposals to be submitted for environmental funds and the strengthening of institutional capacities, especially of the governmental organizations in charge of adaptation and resilience to climate change.

Declaration of the Establishment of a Committee of OECS Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture

44. The Regional Conference noted the declaration regarding the establishment of a committee of Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture from the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which is included in Appendix I.

APPENDIX A

Agenda**I. Senior Offices Meeting****5-6 March 2018****A. Introductory Items**

1. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Appointment of Rapporteur
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

B. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

10. Ending Hunger and Eradicating all Forms of Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean
11. Towards a Transformative Agenda for Sustainable Rural Development
12. Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture

C. Programme and Budget Matters

13. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region
14. Decentralized Offices Network

D. Other Items

15. Multi-Year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
16. Date and Venue of the 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
17. Any other matters

Information Notes:

- 17.1 The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2017
- 17.2 Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition
- 17.3 Report on FAO activities in the Region 2016-17
- 17.4 Regional Initiatives and Strategic Programme Focus in the Subregions of the Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America
- 17.5 Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions
- 17.6 Progress in Implementing the SAMOA Pathway: Global Action Programme
- 17.7 Notes on emerging issues

Preparation, discussion and adoption of a draft report by the Regional Conference for consideration and adoption by the Ministerial Meeting.

II. Ministerial Meeting

6-8 March 2018

3. Statement by the Director-General
4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)
6. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
7. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Consultation
8. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Private Sector Consultation
9. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger

Review and Debate on the Report of the Conference

PANEL DOCUMENTATION:

- Panel 1: Ending Hunger and Eradicating all Forms of Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Panel 2: Towards a Transformative Agenda for Sustainable Rural Development
- Panel 3: Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture

APPENDIX B

List of Documents

(<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/larc35/documents/en/>)

Number	Title
LARC/18/1 Rev.2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
LARC/18/2	Ending Hunger and Eradicating all Forms of Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/18/3	Towards a Transformative Agenda for Sustainable Rural Development
LARC/18/4	Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture
LARC/18/5	Results and Priorities for FAO in the Latin America and the Caribbean region
LARC/18/5 Web Annex 1	Overview of FAO's Strategic Objective Programmes
LARC/18/5 Web Annex 2	Contribution of Results in the Latin America and Caribbean Region to FAO Strategic Objectives in the 2016-17 Biennium
LARC/18/5 Web Annex 3	Planned Contribution of Results in the Latin America and Caribbean Region to FAO Strategic Objective Output Targets in the 2018-19 biennium
LARC/18/6	Decentralized Offices Network
LARC/18/7	Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/18/INF Series	
LARC/18/INF/1 Rev.1	Information Note
LARC/18/INF/2 Rev.2	Provisional Timetable
LARC/18/INF/3 Rev.3	Provisional List of Documents
LARC/18/INF/4	Statement by the Director-General
LARC/18/INF/5	Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
LARC/18/INF/6	Statement by the Chairperson of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)
LARC/18/INF/7	Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

LARC/18/INF/8	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2017
LARC/18/INF/9	Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition
LARC/18/INF/10	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 2016-17
LARC/18/INF/11	Summary of the Recommendations of the Regional Commissions
LARC/18/INF/12	Focus of Regional Initiatives and the Strategic Programme in the Subregions of the Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America
LARC/18/INF/13	Application of the 2030 Agenda for a Sustainable Future: leaving no one behind
LARC/18/INF/14	Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture
LARC/18/INF/15	Progress in Implementing the SAMOA Pathway: Global Action Programme
LARC/18/INF/16	Regional Progress towards Gender Equality in Food and Agriculture
LARC/18/INF/17	Integrating to Innovate: Resource Mobilization and Partnership Building for Sustainable Development

APPENDIX C

Thematic Panels

The Ministerial Meeting included four thematic panels to provide policy guidelines and enable countries to exchange views and experiences on the points raised in the respective discussion papers submitted by FAO to the Regional Conference. The main themes covered by each panel were as follows:

- a) Panel on *Ending hunger and eradicating all forms of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Mr José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General; Ms Guadalupe Valdez, Special Goodwill Ambassador for Zero Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean; Mr Carmel André Ballliard, Minister for Agriculture of Haiti; Ms Nicolette Henry, Minister for Education of Guyana; Mr Renward Wells, Minister for Agriculture and Marine Resources of Bahamas; Mr Rubén Flores, Minister for Agriculture of Ecuador; Ms Michelle Muschett, Vice Minister for Social Development of Panama; Mr José Inocente Moreno Cambara, Vice Minister for the Design and Verification of Educational Quality of Guatemala; Mr Djoemadie Kasamoesdiran, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries of Suriname. Moderator, Mr. Mario Arvelo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the Rome-based United Nations agencies, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security.

The panel considered options for addressing the recent increase in the number of hungry and the growing rates of overweight and obesity. Panelists argued that the formulation of public policy needs to be better informed by an improved understanding of the status and causes of food and nutrition insecurity across social strata. Dialogue with vulnerable groups, particularly those lacking access to key services and markets, can help to ensure that policies are culturally and socially relevant, and promote real changes not just in consumer behaviour, but also in the actions of private sector actors in food systems to improve the availability of, and access to, healthier more sustainably produced food products. It was recognized also that addressing the complex challenges of malnutrition required renewed political commitment, articulated through policies that reflect a holistic, multisectoral approach, which are established in law, and which are adequately funded. The panel provided examples of issues requiring priority action: improved access to non-financial services; enhancements to school feeding programmes to promote lifelong healthy eating habits and provide remunerative markets for family farmers; and a rebalancing of food import and domestic production, particularly in countries heavily dependent on imports of products that are predominantly calorie rich and nutrition poor.

- b) Panel on *Towards a transformative agenda for sustainable rural development*. Ms Margarita Cedeño, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic; Mr Jorge Melendez, Minister for Development and Social Inclusion of Peru; Mr Saboto Caesar, Minister for Agriculture, Industry, Forestry, Fisheries and Rural Transformation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Mr Hurben da Silva, Special Secretary for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Development of Brazil; Mr Héctor Ferreira, Vice-Minister for Agriculture of Honduras; Ms Merina Jessamy, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of Grenada; Mr Colin O'Keiffe, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs. Moderator, Mr Benjamin Davis, FAO's Strategic Programme Leader on Rural Poverty Reduction.

Panelists shared country experiences in the design and implementation of policies to reduce rural poverty. Experiences reflected both the diversity of countries' agroecological and socioeconomic contexts, with some countries implementing strategies in response to major economic or climatic shocks and others addressing the slow progress in rural poverty

reduction. Diversification strategies incorporating support to the production of multiple products provided by family farmers have facilitated inclusive processes of transition away from monocropping and in assisting countries to face climatic shocks. These strategies provide an opportunity to include vulnerable groups (cooperatives or school feeding programmes as viable markets for family farmers). Reinvigorating rural sectors requires the transformation of the agrifood sector and policies to increase productivity of family farmers. It provides an opportunity to address youth unemployment in value adding and processing activities through investment in agribusiness development. All strategies have in common the need for an integrated approach built on participatory governance mechanisms. Panelists also stressed the importance of national consultations and South-South and Triangular Cooperation in sharing experience to inform the refinement of policies that are appropriately differentiated to deal with inequalities when addressing the constraints faced by vulnerable groups.

- c) Panel on *Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture*. Mr Hugo Martínez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador; Mr Johnson Drigo, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Dominica; Mr Clarence Rambharat, Minister for Agriculture, Land and Fisheries of Trinidad and Tobago; Mr Jose Alpuche, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment and Sustainable Development of Belize; Ms Ivannia Quesada, Vice-Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica; Ms Luisa Gutiérrez, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Jamaica. Moderator, Mr Ezechiele Joseph, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Cooperatives of St. Lucia.

The panel focused attention on how the agriculture sector can continue to increase productivity in response to the rising global demand for food while reducing environmental degradation, promoting the conservation of natural resources, adapting to climate change and reducing emissions. The panelist discussed how the degradation of natural resources affects the capacity of agricultural production, which is exacerbated by climate change that has resulted in a higher frequency and intensity of hydro-meteorological events. The transition towards climate-resilient sustainable agriculture faces important challenges related to disaster risk management, reducing the environmental impact of agro-productive systems, increasing climate/environmental financing in the agricultural sector, and developing institutional capacities and strong regulatory frameworks. The panelists provided some examples of programmes and strategies of agriculture production with low carbon emissions. It was highlighted that small farmers are particularly affected by climate change, despite the fact that they play a very minor role in contributing to it. Consequently, the panel recognized the importance of implementing public policies to support them in developing a more sustainable agriculture. To this end, it is necessary to address the problem with an integral approach and intersectoral coordination, the integration of policies and actions at different levels, and the incorporation of appropriate practices and technologies, as well as providing sufficient funding to reach farmers, and establishing alliances with different public and private actors. The panel emphasized that food production should not be affected by initiatives to mitigate climate change in developing countries.

APPENDIX D

Special Declaration on the 40th Anniversary of FAO Country Representations in Latin America and the Caribbean

In recognition of the process of decentralization in FAO that began in 1977 with the opening of Country Representations in Latin America and the Caribbean, this process has given foundation to the permanent commitment of the Organization to our region and each one of our countries.

Also considering that diversity of countries in the region and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs that are directly related to the mission of the FAO such as SDGs 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

Recognizing the regrettable increase in the figures on hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty, and the need to engage in urgent measures to revert the conditions that currently plague millions of our fellow citizens.

We, the Representatives of the Member Countries of FAO and the high authorities present at the 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean:

1. In the framework of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of FAO National Offices, we especially value the process of decentralization of the Organization, which has allowed our region to define and direct an agenda that is both relevant and appropriate to our diverse backgrounds, thereby improving the efficiency of its work;
2. We highlight that the initiative of the Director-General of FAO, José Graziano Da Silva, to organize the programmes of work through five Strategic Objectives has helped the Organization improve the quality of political and technical dialogue with the countries in our region and implement an agenda better aligned with national priorities across sectors;
3. We urge FAO to direct the efforts of cooperation towards the initiatives that support the countries to achieve important results, with large-scale effects and impacts that are directly related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
4. We assume the commitment to strengthen the mechanisms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation along with FAO to mobilize important and existing capacities of our region to significantly reduce hunger, malnutrition, and rural poverty;
5. We recognize that the regional priorities established in the framework of the 34th and the 35th Sessions of the Regional Conference of FAO respond to the main challenges and needs identified by the countries;
6. We outline the importance of continuing to work with regional and subregional instruments, such as the FSN CELAC Plan by 2025, to guarantee the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, urging us to redouble efforts through action focused on the most vulnerable and left behind territories of our region;
7. We commit to strengthening our national action to achieve the goal of Zero Hunger;
8. We appreciate the vision and leadership demonstrated by Professor Graziano da Silva during his tenure as Director-General in implementing a transformational change of FAO to achieve its mandate of a world without hunger.
9. Lastly, we thank the Government of Jamaica for the hospitality and the organization of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference of FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Representatives of the Member Countries and high authorities

APPENDIX E

Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions***From the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)***

The Regional Conference:

- i) Supported the need to facilitate spaces for cross-sectoral coordination, particularly of the forest, agriculture and environment sectors, regarding its importance as a dialogue mechanism for performing its role as an implementing agency of the Green Climate Fund.
- ii) Promoted the inclusion of trees in family estates as mechanisms for the generation of economic income, soil conservation and protection of water resources and their contribution to increasing resilience to climate change in rural areas.
- iii) Highlighted that achieving the global challenge of zero net deforestation requires the efforts and cooperation of all production and environment sectors, as well as the commitment of countries.
- iv) Acknowledged that, despite the slowing rate of forest loss in the region, deforestation and forest degradation were still among the most important environmental problems facing Latin America and the Caribbean, and recognized that these problems are for instance the result of a series of agendas and needs of various sectors, and that cross-sectoral dialogue and joint, coordinated public policy action are therefore necessary to resolve them.
- v) Recommended that the report made by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (GANESAN) “Sustainable forest activity in support of food security and nutrition” be distributed to emphasize the contribution of forests to food and nutritional security.

From the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLDLAC)

The Regional Conference:

- i) Adopted and included the CLDLAC recommendations in terms of technical cooperation for the livestock sector in its biannual programme of work.
- ii) Encouraged a network to develop public policies for sustainable livestock as well as an Analysis Laboratory (LAPP) to be set up in subregional integration authorities such as the Central American Integration System (SICA), linking the LAPP to the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC).
- iii) Stressed the need for promoting South-South Cooperation among LAC countries to strengthen capacities and share experiences, especially from those countries that have made progress on hunger and poverty reduction goals, particularly on issues addressed in CLDLAC: policies and innovations for the sustainable development of the sector, health risk management, family livestock production and cooperation and mobilization of resources, where the private sector with its investment can also encourage South-South exchange between countries.
- iv) Strengthened the participation and inclusion of Caribbean countries in CLDLAC.

From the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

The Regional Conference:

- i) Supported WECAFC’s decision to start the process to establish a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO).

- ii) Recognized the improvements in functioning and performance of WECAFC and its increased collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism (CRFM) and the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA) and recommended WECAFC member countries to allocate proper resources to support the continuation of the process to transform WECAFC into an RFMO.

From the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (COPECAALC)

The Regional Conference:

- i) Recognized the importance of assisting member countries to improve their fisheries and aquaculture statistics and research systems, as well as their monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms as these are the foundations of the sustainable management of fisheries resources and the protection of livelihoods that depend on them.
- ii) Supported an integrated strategy to prevent, discourage and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the region, within the framework of the Agreement on Port State Measures and other supplementary international instruments.
- iii) Urged actions leading to the sustainable development of aquaculture to increase the availability of food and as an instrument to help eliminate rural poverty.
- iv) Supported the inclusion of voluntary guidelines for achieving the sustainability of small-scale fisheries within the framework of FAO Regional Initiatives.
- v) Promoted the inclusion in its member countries of the fishery and aquaculture sectors in the multisectoral processes of their national development agendas.
- vi) Stressed the need to promote and facilitate South-South Cooperation between Members to strengthen capacities in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
- vii) Supported the activities proposed in the High Level International Meeting on the Global Blue Growth Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico in November 2017.
- viii) Supported the proposed statutory amendment by the Commission to include small-scale and artisanal marine fishing in its terms of reference and objectives.
- ix) Recognized the socioeconomic, environmental and food contribution of inland fisheries, and the importance of promoting the inclusion of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in cross-sectoral dialogue and in the processes and programmes aimed at territorial rural development.
- x) Requested FAO to continue assistance in formulating national and regional strategies to increase fish consumption, with emphasis on the inclusion of these products in feeding programmes for schools and other vulnerable groups.

From the Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO/OEA-CIE/IICA).

The Regional Conference:

- i) Supported the change of name of this Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean to “Regional Commission on Agricultural Statistics and Food Security”.
- ii) Endorsed the decision to set up an organizing committee for each Working Group session consisting of a host country representative, a representative of the previous session’s host country, an FAO headquarters representative and the FAO Regional Statistician for LAC.

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- iii) Urged member countries to direct resources towards strengthening agricultural statistics and food security systems, based on cooperation, technical assistance and financial support to address the challenge of monitoring SDGs.

APPENDIX F

**Statement from the Consultation with Civil Society to the 35th Session of the FAO
Regional Conference:
*Demarachu Declaration***

The Consultation was held in the Guna Yala district of Panama, from January 31 to February 3, 2018, with representatives of regional and subregional movements and social organizations of Indigenous Peoples, peasants, family farmers, artisanal fishermen, women, afro-descendants, young people, rural workers, consumers, environmentalists and human rights activists. Regional officers of the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO) were also invited to participate.

The Consultation allowed us to study the political and social context in Latin America and the Caribbean, and reflect on the progress and setbacks of the last decade in the fight against all forms of hunger and poverty. It also allowed us to analyse the documents from the Regional Initiatives and get organized to participate actively in other topics on the agenda of the 35th FAO Regional Conference.

We recognize the steps taken by the region in the past decade to protect the Human Right to Adequate Food and fight hunger, as well as to reduce poverty and malnutrition. As shown by the economic, social, organizational and institutional indicators, the region has advanced, although with important differences between countries.

However, we are extremely concerned that the recent political, social and economic changes in several countries are reversing the social achievements of the past decade, as shown by the results published by FAO in its 2017 reports "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World" and "Panorama of Food and Nutritional Security in Latin America and the Caribbean".

We understand that the main challenges facing the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to develop a region with social, environmental and gender justice are: the concentration of wealth and political, economic and communicational power in the hands of a few; the hegemonic system of the production, commercialization and consumption of food; the violation of Human Rights; the unsustainable and destructive use of Water, Land and Territories with their severe environmental and social impacts, as well as the threat these pose to the biocultural heritage of our peoples; the rising rates of criminalization and violence as instruments to contain social protest; the high rates of overweight and obesity that affect the health of our peoples and increase public spending on health; the absence of relevant participation of social organizations and movements throughout the public policy cycle; and the lack of public policies that promote and ensure sustainable production and access to healthy foods.

The above has an especially significant impact on the most vulnerable sectors of the population such as women, young people, indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, artisanal fishermen and impoverished rural and urban communities.

We believe in the importance of the State and public policies and investment for the development of just and sustainable societies. Therefore, we call on States in the region to respect, protect and promote our rights in an inter-sectoral and coordinated manner.

This 35th Regional Conference is an opportunity to reverse the setbacks mentioned above, and it is essential that actions taken in these areas be based on existing agreements, both in the region and globally.

In this regard, we believe the key agreements are: Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Convention 169;

the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the FAO Policy on Indigenous Peoples; the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the framework of national food security and nutrition; and, the resolution of the 32nd FAO Regional Conference, which called on FAO to deepen the debate on Food Sovereignty.

Other ongoing processes are also helping to strengthen existing agreements, such as those carried out by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations to: draft the declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas; develop an international instrument to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and other companies in international human rights law; and, hold the High Level Forum "Empowerment of Indigenous Women for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean".

We consider the above processes essential to building successful and sustainable regional initiatives over time. In this regard, we, the participants in the Consultation, make the following declaration:

We reject the use of violence and the criminalization of social protest, and demand an end to the murders of social activists, as well as of persecutions of social movements and organizations. In this regard, we demand that States urgently implement effective policies to protect the women and men working to protect human and land rights.

We defend and promote the central role of family farming and artisanal fishing to end hunger and eradicate all forms of malnutrition, as well as sustainable rural development and climate resilience that will help to achieve Food Sovereignty and Security for our region and protect the biocultural heritage of our peoples. For this reason, we highlight the importance of the region's active and coordinated involvement in the implementation of the Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028), approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

We defend the right of indigenous peoples to Free Prior Informed Consent, and we promote the extension of this right to other traditional actors of the territories.

We affirm, based on our experience and traditional knowledge and research already endorsed by the United Nations, that agroecology is the most suitable and practical model for food production and proper nutrition. The States that are truly committed to ensuring the right to food must support and promote agroecology to drive the necessary changes in the food production, marketing and consumption model.

We demand that States prioritize public policies that recognize the role of women in both creating and caring for life, in order to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty that affects many women.

We believe in the importance of inter-sectoral policies that facilitate the basic rights of historically and systematically vulnerable groups such as peasants, family farmers, indigenous peoples and other traditional groups, afro-descendants and impoverished rural and urban communities, guaranteeing their participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of these policies.

We promote the implementation of adequate and relevant public policies to rescue and preserve biodiversity and protect the right of our peoples to enjoy its benefits.

We value and emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, given their role in the struggle for the protection of the Right to Adequate Food. We remain committed to continue strengthening our dialogue with these initiatives.

We reaffirm that communication and training continue to be important components in our fight for Food Sovereignty, especially given their role in driving change and building consensus, as well as in creating meanings and values that represent our political objectives and give visibility to the processes of resistance, while promoting the development of collaborative and complementary proposals.

Finally, we acknowledge and recognize the leadership of FAO Director-General, Dr José Graziano da Silva, in promoting greater participation of social movements and organizations within the FAO agenda such as the Regional Conferences among others, as well as the support in the reform of the Committee on World Food Security and the Civil Society mechanism. That permitted recognizing that currently the CFS is the most participatory and inclusive space of the United Nations.

Therefore:

It is important to effectively preserve this level of participation and ensure that there are no qualitative or quantitative setbacks.

We will continue to defend the realization of the Human Right to Adequate and Healthy Food while resisting privatization, commodification and the financialization of life. Water and food are not goods.

We hope that States and their governments are up to the challenges of the current regional and global context for the protection of Food Sovereignty and Security in Latin America and the Caribbean, and continue to keep their commitments assumed in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Demarachu, Guna Yala district, Panama, February 3, 2018

APPENDIX G

Statement from Spokespersons on Meetings on the Conference held with the Private Sector

The private sector represented here thanks FAO for the opportunity to relaunch a dialogue that will help us deal with the enormous challenges facing our society today in terms of food, health and the environment. By working together, we believe that we can be more effective in responding to the call by the United Nations to all sectors in terms of helping countries meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are living in a time of economic, cultural, productive, educational, labour and environmental change, while changes in transport, urban organization and mobility, among many others, have transformed the way in which individuals, families, communities and food supply systems are organized. Our way of life has changed and with it all the factors that determine our dietary behaviours and physical activity. This challenge involves the entire food system, from small-scale agriculture to mass production, in order to meet our current and future food needs.

All the actors in the food system face the challenge of understanding the changes in consumer behaviour, since these have led to problems that have multiple causes and whose approach requires multisectoral policies with broad inter-ministerial and inter-institutional coordination. For this reason, we believe that isolated actions are not as effective as coordinated actions guided by a well-directed State policy, which are capable of considering the scope of the problem.

From the perspective of the private sector, we have worked together in the past with great success; we have vast experience with good results, and today's challenge is no exception, for example:

For decades, governments, multilateral organizations and the private sector have agreed on norms and standards for the promotion of health and the environment, including key issues such as food quality and safety, food hygiene, nutritional labelling, food additives, technical barriers to trade, and best practices for sustainability, through platforms such as CODEX ALIMENTARIUS and the International Organization for Standardization, which have helped to reach a balance between production, health, the environment, science and commerce.

Through public-private cooperation, we have significantly reduced micronutrient deficiencies in most countries and decreased the prevalence of many diseases. We have also been pioneers in the inter-institutional partnership for the reduction of sodium content in some food groups. At the same time, we have modernized agriculture and agro-industry, which has increased the availability and variety of foods through productivity and trade, with an eye to the 2030 objectives.

But, so far, the scope has mainly been local. Fortunately, FAO is offering us the opportunity to design and implement a policy agenda that we can raise to a regional level, and in which the private sector can share its many success stories.

Nowadays, we can no longer speak only of production, but we must have a holistic view in terms of food and address issues that impact food and nutritional security. We must also address environmental sustainability, with a vision that extends from the field to the table. In other words, if we do not look at food issues in a systemic way from the perspective of sustainability, healthy nutrition and inclusive production, we will not see significant changes in the availability of food.

For this reason, the private sector has identified a series of challenges, which we ask FAO to consider as part of the discussion for the next biennium.

1. **There is a single food system.** All the links of the agri-food chain are equally important and must be addressed in an integrated manner, since they are complementary. The objective of producing a sufficient quantity of nutritious and healthy food requires a robust and competitive agricultural sector, and a highly innovative food industry. The synergy between family farming and industrial production is essential, and both must go hand-in-hand to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **We must invest in the competitiveness of small-scale agricultural producers,** with smart and well-defined policies for family farming that are able to generate improvements in food and nutritional security. The private sector proposes the promotion of associativity and the implementation of successful business models in these production systems, as mechanisms to reduce costs, achieve economies of scale, obtain and exploit technological connectivity, and create the conditions of long-term prosperity that will ensure the intergenerational continuity of family farming.
3. While 800 million people globally are undernourished and suffer from hunger, a third of the food produced is lost or wasted. That means 1.3 billion tons of food per year is lost with a global cost of more than USD 400 billion. This reality obliges us to promote efficient and sustainable food systems, not only with a focus on production, but also on the causes and effects of food loss and waste, in order to produce more and better.
4. The incorporation of best environmental protection practices within the entire food chain should help to guarantee the long-term availability of food. We have the enormous challenge of balancing the equation between production and the environment, as well as facing the challenges of climate change. We also recommend that countries consider non-traditional financing alternatives, be they fiscal incentives for companies that reduce their carbon and water footprints, or the implementation of a green bond for companies that achieve their goals to reduce these impacts or make productive investments to improve environmental management. In addition, at the public policy level there is an opportunity to improve systemic analysis, since the lack of information makes it difficult to quantify the environmental impacts of mitigation measures, such as new agricultural and manufacturing practices, the development of renewable energy sources, and actions to reduce food loss and waste, among others. In this regard, we propose expanding the objective of FAO's proposed regional platform for the conservation of biodiversity, not only focusing on the adoption of good practices, but also to integrate early warning systems, knowledge transfer and measurement systems, and monitoring and supervision of initiatives at the regional level.
5. It is important to move towards a different approach, which does not punish but rather encourages private sector activities for the promotion of healthy diets. In this regard, we are committed to promoting the development and innovation of the food supply system, considering technological feasibility, the realities of food production, and implications for trade.
6. In addition to the efforts already being made by the private sector, we consider that a key element for the promotion of public health is education, since education, among other things, is necessary to acquire healthy eating habits.
7. It is also necessary for public policies to be more aligned with scientific studies related to nutritional epidemiology. Inaccuracies in the analysis of this aspect can lead to wasted time and public resources. In this regard, both the public and private sectors have an opportunity to approach academic institutions, research and food science institutes, and civil society organizations, to develop policies whose impacts are measurable and verifiable.

Facing these challenges requires coordinated action rather than isolated initiatives, which is why the private sector has identified a number of aspects that are important for achieving this objective:

FIRST: As Dr. Julio Berdegué has stated, **we must strengthen multi-sectoral partnerships** and promote respectful, transparent and inclusive dialogue among regional representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia and food science, and with international and government agencies related to the promotion of health, nutrition, sustainability, rural development and trade.

SECOND: We must rebuild trust and credibility. This means restarting the dialogue between private companies and health institutions. We call for avoiding mechanisms that limit transparency and for measures that facilitate the inclusive participation of the private sector. Considering different points of view allows us to develop balanced and politically feasible proposals. Differences of criteria, or the entrepreneurial spirit, should not be a reason to exclude the contribution of the productive, academic or scientific research sectors.

THIRD: Allow CODEX ALIMENTARIUS to play the role it was developed over decades to perform. It is essential that organizations such as FAO and WHO/PAHO maintain their focus on promoting processes within institutions that shape regulatory frameworks. CODEX offers an institutional framework that balances the mandate of health protection with science. When we depart from this equilibrium, disharmonized regulation in countries flourishes, which represents a setback in the growth of productive activity. That is why we believe that it is important to strengthen the international harmonization of regulations, and their adherence to standards of scientific clarity and transparency.

FOURTH: FAO is the entity responsible for promoting dialogue and transparency in the food system. We call for the creation of an inter-institutional space that combines the objectives, interests and contributions of all the actors in the food system, but which for different reasons are currently uncoordinated.

We, as the private sector of Latin America and the Caribbean, today have the honour of participating in this conference, in order to face together the great challenges of modern society regarding food and nutritional security. Finally, we invite you all to continue working together with the private sector, since the effectiveness of this approach is more than proven and is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

APPENDIX H

Statement by the Spokesperson for the Parliamentary Front against Hunger**In the zero hunger challenge, the executive and legislative are allies**

Over recent decades, FAO and other international organizations have focused more on working with executive authorities to improve public welfare policies.

While this has led to considerable progress in many countries in the region in terms of public policy assessment and improvement, it is fortunate that increasingly the executive has counterbalances established in democratic systems based on a real separation of powers.

As the executive is only one of three branches of government, if efforts focus on this space alone, alternation of political parties and changes of government can actually culminate in good public policy.

However, if public policy becomes law, it does not matter which executive is in government, as the law must be enforced.

That is why it is so important for the executive and legislative branches to work together, because when the right to food is enshrined in the constitutional and legal spheres as a right, this right can be asserted and the judiciary can force the executive to realize it.

This is the only way to respond to the new Sustainable Development Agenda and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 2, to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”.

In this regard, the Members of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger are your allies.

Parliamentary Front against Hunger

The Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean (FPH for its acronym in Spanish) was formed in 2009, with the support of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), as part of an intergovernmental commitment: the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative. The FPH was established as a pluralistic and participatory space of which the main driving force is dialogue, rule-making and political will.

Currently the FPH network numbers more than 400 legislators, organized into 22 parliamentary fronts against hunger (19 in national parliaments and 3 in regional parliaments), membership of which is characterized chiefly by gender parity and legislators with differing political cultures and views.

Over recent years, the FPH has been strengthening its institutional framework, making progress with concrete achievements, such as the adoption of legislation and budgets in support of the right to food in different countries in the region. Two such countries are Guatemala, which has high rates of child malnutrition and last year tripled the budget for its school feeding programme, and Ecuador, which adopted amendments to its laws in a logical chain of taking care of the food production process from field to the final consumer, where land, soil nutrients, seeds, water and other resources have to be cared for in order to ensure the right to food.

The FPH therefore seeks to position the right to food at the top of the political agenda by promoting legal frameworks, public policy oversight and adequate budgets.

In addition, this innovative legislative entity has succeeded in building strong multi-level (local, regional and international) partnerships and multi-stakeholder partnerships (including parliaments, executives, international and regional integration organizations, cooperation agencies, private sector, civil society organizations, universities, the media and journalists) in order to accelerate and implement the paths towards consensus that will lead to solutions to food insecurity issues.

These efforts and the technical support provided to the fronts through FAO's partnership with the Spanish cooperation agency, and, in recent years, also with the Mexican and Brazilian cooperation agencies, have contributed to the adoption of more than 20 laws relating to food security, nutrition and the right to food, and work continues on bills concerning a broad range of issues, including: school feeding; family farming; climate change; food labelling; food loss and waste reduction; and overweight and obesity.

Next steps of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger: 100 hunger-free territories – Global Parliamentary Summit against Malnutrition (Madrid 2018)

In Latin America and the Caribbean

In recent years, the FPH has sought to promote not only its own institutional strengthening but also to focus on achieving concrete results (legislation, oversight and budgets in support of the right to food). Therefore, as a region, the FPH has conducted a self-diagnosis and is using it to develop a more targeted strategy to overcome national and regional problems.

The focus of the eighth forum of the FPH, held in Montevideo (Uruguay) in October 2017, was to build on the lessons learned from countries that have been the most successful in reducing hunger (and to learn how they managed to adopt strategic legislation).

The FPH also sought to learn from countries facing the biggest challenges, in order to discover their constraints and to see how they could be overcome. Based on these lessons, the FPH national chapters are currently developing their work plans in light of the conclusions of presentations from countries that have managed to adopt legislation and strategic budgets in support of the right to food.

The FPH has made progress in a partnership of cooperation and linkages with the Right to Food Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (RFO-LAC), to enable its member universities and academic partners to supervise, guide and help to evaluate the work of the fronts and to research how to eradicate hunger and malnutrition from this region.

Based on these linkages with academia and on the need to sustain (and to continue making more) gains, coupled with the results of *The state of food nutrition and security in the world 2017* (FAO), which show that the problem is worsening, the eighth FPH forum in Uruguay pledged to promote a **100 hunger-free territories** strategy (Point 20 of the Forum declaration). The aim of the strategy is to determine the local causes of the prevalence of hunger and undernutrition indicators and to develop acceptable legislation, adequate budgets and targeted public policies emanating from inclusive governance, through collaborative work among local and national actors and bodies.

Globally

Currently the FPH is working with the Spanish cooperation agency, FAO and the Spanish Parliament to hold a **Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition** in Madrid (Spain) on 29 and 30 October 2018.

The plan leading up to and following the summit is to form a **Global Parliamentary Alliance** to enable all partners to work together resolutely to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

This event will make it possible to share the lessons that the FPH has learned over the years and, on that basis, to motivate other regions to join forces to enable them to overcome their own scourges.

FPH Members believe that the work of the FPH and the 100 hunger-free territories strategy it is promoting in Latin America and the Caribbean can serve as replicable models in other geographical areas committed to Sustainable Development Goal 2.

We could be the zero hunger generation. All it takes is political will and teamwork between the different actors. FPH Members are their allies in achieving this.

APPENDIX I**Declaration of the Establishment of a Committee of Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture from the Countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)**

On 7 March 2018, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in the context of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, a meeting was convened involving the Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and St Kitts and Nevis. The parties decided to establish with immediate effect a committee of the Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to foster closer working relationships, South-South and Triangular Cooperation and joint agricultural initiatives within the OECS.