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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## Thirty-eighth Session

**Georgetown, Guyana, 11–13 March 2024 and 18–21 March 2024**

### **Statement by the Spokesperson of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger**

1. The Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, attending the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in Georgetown, Guyana, appreciates the invitation to participate in this event for the third time. We particularly thank Mr Mario Lubetkin, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, for his unwavering support of the Front's work and to the Government of Guyana for hosting this conference.
2. After an internal consultation process involving 21 national chapters and five regional chapters, the Parliamentary Front declares the following:
  - a. The Parliamentary Front against Hunger celebrates 15 years of uninterrupted work. Our movement dates back to 2009, promoted by the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) and Spanish Cooperation through the "Support Project for the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative", implemented by FAO with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. For many years, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation has also assisted and supported our Fronts through the "Mesoamerica Hunger-Free AMEXCID-FAO" Programme, its joint initiative with FAO.
  - b. Today, with the contribution of these partners and the daily assistance of the Technical Secretariat of the Fronts hosted at the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, we have grown to over 400 lawmakers across 26 national and regional parliaments. Together, we have promoted over 100 laws to combat hunger and malnutrition in all its manifestations.
  - c. Over the past two years, among other achievements, we have witnessed the approval and dissemination of the Model Law for the Prevention and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste and the committee approval of a Model Law for the Strengthening of Agrifood Cooperatives, both within the Latin American Parliament; the development of a Model Law on Family Farming with a gender focus in the Mercosur Parliament; the presentation and progress of draft laws on the Right to Food in Chile, Mexico, and Paraguay; the School Feeding and Nutrition Bill in the Dominican Republic; and regional declarations on relevant issues such as rising food prices and the blue transformation of aquatic food systems.

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

- d. According to figures from the 2023 edition of the *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean*, despite facing a critical situation with 43 million people experiencing hunger and 248 million suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity, these indicators improved at the regional level between 2021 and 2022. This improvement was due, in part, to the social protection policies implemented, particularly in South America. We take pride in the fact that the legislation promoted by the Front, especially those measures targeting the most vulnerable groups and enhancing governance for food security and nutrition, contributed to these results.
- e. However, the inequalities that characterize our region also manifest in this area. Although the region as a whole is making progress, the Caribbean subregion has seen a nearly 2 percentage point increase in hunger to 16 percent of its population. The Executive Coordinating Committee of the Fronts is strengthening efforts to establish more Parliamentary Fronts within the Caribbean subregion.
- f. Food insecurity also continues to disproportionately affect women, with a regional gap of 9.1 percentage points. This unacceptable situation motivates our efforts to reverse it, based on the deep conviction that food security and nutrition for all cannot be achieved without gender equality.
- g. At the 2020 Regional Conference, the Front Declaration recommended that FAO explicitly recognize parliaments within its Strategic Framework as critical stakeholders in the battle against hunger and malnutrition. The following year, the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 identified parliaments as part of the “key new partnerships”, underlining the considerable influence that parliamentary alliances for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 exert on national legislative agendas and calling for their replication and expansion.
- h. We appreciate this recognition and renew our commitment to work hand in hand with FAO, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation to strengthen the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, and extend this successful model to other regions around the globe. That is why we actively participated in the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, held in June 2023 in Chile, promoting and ratifying a Global Parliamentary Pact that commits parliaments to advance more and better legislation to ensure sufficient food for everyone. Ahead of the Summit, we met at our 10th Regional Forum, where the new coordination body of the Fronts was elected, and a declaration was adopted pledging to continue our efforts in this struggle.
- i. Along the same lines, we have been proactive in fostering the creation of an Ibero-American Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security for All. This initiative, undertaken alongside the parliamentary alliances of Spain and Portugal, is slated for launch this year. It aims to unify our efforts to tackle shared challenges such as malnutrition by excess, gender inequalities, and resilience to climate change. Additionally, it supports the effort to attract new allies to enhance international cooperation and bolster the capabilities of parliaments in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- j. Parliamentary alliances must work in coordination with civil society, academia, and governments, as well as, of course, with international cooperation, to achieve the goal of reversing hunger and malnutrition. The Front emphasizes its ongoing collaboration with the Right to Food Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean. This network, comprising over 100 universities and supported by FAO alongside the international development cooperation agencies of Mexico and Spain, has provided evidence and research that have informed many of our legislative initiatives. This coordination will be seen again during the First Ibero-American Political-Academic Dialogue “Food First” in April in Guatemala.
- k. Echoing FAO’s call to participate actively in this process, we have committed to partnering with governments in implementing the updated Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger of Latin American and Caribbean States (SAN-CELAC Plan). To this

end, an ad-hoc Working Group has been established, tasked with drafting a roadmap to aid in supporting and disseminating the Plan.

1. Alongside this, the other Working Groups we have prioritized are: Resource Mobilization, to support the ongoing task of involving new donors in this effort; Gender, to reduce the gaps between men and women and implement a Guide for Gender-Sensitive Legislation around SDG 2; and Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples, seeking to incorporate the climate dimension into agriculture and food legislation, with particular emphasis on the contribution of Indigenous Peoples to these challenges.
3. To sustain and amplify these efforts, at this FAO Regional Conference, the Parliamentary Front against Hunger pledges to:
  - m. Adopt the four Regional Priorities proposed to the Conference as our own. These include Efficient, inclusive, and sustainable production; Ending hunger and achieving food security and nutrition; Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change; and Reducing inequalities and poverty and enhancing resilience;
  - n. Work in coordination with FAO to disseminate and implement the SAN-CELAC Plan;
  - o. Continue legislating to strengthen food security and nutrition governance in Latin America and the Caribbean through laws that commit institutions and State resources to prioritize the fight against hunger and malnutrition;
  - p. Work collaboratively with executive authorities as pluralistic allies in parliaments to advance these agendas;
  - q. Promote the strengthening of oversight mechanisms and the securing of the budgets necessary to implement the laws and policies we approve;
  - r. Enhance the visibility of the challenges of the food agenda within each of our countries;
  - s. Foster the creation of new parliamentary alliances at the Ibero-American and global levels, enabling the inclusion of strategic partners in the battle against hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, with a particular emphasis on gender and climate action;
  - t. Emphasize the role of Indigenous Peoples in combating climate change and transforming agrifood systems towards sustainability
  - u. Enhance the explicit incorporation of a gender perspective in all laws and policies advanced by the Fronts, aiming to address the acute disparities between men and women regarding access to food and the resources needed for its production; this especially includes championing legislation that supports the empowerment of rural women.
4. We take this opportunity to respectfully request that FAO continue and enhance its technical support to the Fronts, a cornerstone of our 15 years of joint construction. This support is vital for fostering the development of new legislation and capabilities within the parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean, aiding in the enactment of the Global Parliamentary Pact against Hunger and Malnutrition, assisting in the formation of the new Ibero-American Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security for All, and mobilizing additional resources to address the challenges faced by the Parliamentary Front against Hunger over the next two years.
5. In so doing, with the vital support of FAO and Mexican and Spanish cooperation, we can continue to put the fight against hunger and malnutrition at the top of our countries' political agendas, hand in hand with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to achieve the transformation towards more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems that allow for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*, through better state policies and leaving no one behind.