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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 Chairperson of the Committee on World Food  
Security (CFS)**

*His Excellency Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Head of State of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana,  
FAO Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu,  
Honourable Ministers, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,*

1. As Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), I am honoured to speak to you today on this important occasion, the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the host country, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and all the organizers for their meticulous efforts in hosting this significant gathering.
3. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director-General of FAO, Dr QU Dongyu, for this invitation, and the privilege of engaging with you on the multidimensional nature of food insecurity and malnutrition.
4. The Committee on World Food Security was established 50 years ago as a platform for intergovernmental coordination and as a standing committee of the FAO Council. CFS currently comprises 141 members and, following reforms in 2009, also includes a wider range of participants, such as the civil society and Indigenous Peoples, the private sector and international financial institutions, among others. It facilitates multistakeholder collaboration and global policy convergence in support of the progressive realization of the right to food in the context of national food security.
5. In the face of multiple challenges, the CFS plays three strategic roles. First, as a provider of policy guidance for countries and regions: CFS consolidates scientific evidence provided by its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) to develop and facilitate multilateral agreement on policy recommendations and guidelines. Second, as a collaborative platform: CFS facilitates strategic coordination among the three Rome-based UN agencies (FAO, the World Food Programme [WFP] and the International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD]) and beyond, promoting synergies, resource optimization and multistakeholder participation in the area of food security and nutrition. Third, as a dynamic knowledge exchange platform: CFS fosters dialogue on regional and country-level efforts, enabling member countries to benefit from adapted policy guidance products and best practices.

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

6. In line with these roles, important activities have been carried out across the region to implement the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, which provide recommendations on the policies and institutional mechanisms required to address malnutrition in all its forms.
7. One of the guidelines recommends that governments promote the use of evidence-based front-of-food labelling systems for the benefit of consumers. The application of the guidelines through these regulatory schemes has proved to be an effective tool in reducing the consumption of highly processed foods with critical nutrients.
8. In this context, I am pleased that ten countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region have approved front labelling laws or regulations. By 2022, six countries had implemented laws or regulations (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay) and four were in the process of implementation (the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). These initiatives show that octagon-type front labelling in the region has had positive results in relation to its understanding, knowledge, valuation, use, reformulation and decrease in the purchase intention of products with critical nutrients, without jeopardizing the economy and incomes of the food sector.
9. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment shown by the Latin America and the Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) towards the implementation of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI). Their declaration on enhancing responsible investment in agriculture and food systems in response to the COVID-19 crisis, adopted in 2020, has paved the way for the organization of national capacity development workshops for Parliamentarians across the region and for the preparation of a practical handbook for Parliamentarians. These can play a key role in the creation of reliable, coherent and transparent “enabling environments” in the range of areas related to investment in agriculture and food systems.
10. Another example illustrates the contribution of academia. The Polytechnic University of Madrid has set up an international network on the implementation of the CFS-RAI Principles. The network builds capacities to create business environments, which ensure that food security and nutrition concerns are put at the forefront of public and private investments. The network includes more than 35 universities and 34 related companies from Latin America and the Caribbean. Through this network, two learning programmes on CFS-RAI for academia and the private sector have been conducted with over 130 participants from 12 countries in the region, and a third edition will be organized in 2024. The number of professors in the region who are being trained on CFS-RAI, and the number of universities inserting CFS-RAI in their curricula is increasing every day.
11. Beyond these concrete examples, CFS provides a wide range of guidelines and policy recommendations aimed at being useful and applicable to policymakers, while addressing the needs of implementers. These policy agreements cover a wide range of food security and nutrition issues, such as governance of tenure, gender equality and women’s empowerment, youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, linking smallholder farmers to markets, and ensuring food security in protracted crises, to name only a few.
12. As I have emphasized from the beginning of this speech, CFS is a resource and a strong ally of member countries in the effective implementation of food security and nutrition policies. The Committee remains firmly committed to supporting you as policymakers and working with regional and national stakeholders to develop comprehensive food security and nutrition policies and strategies. The collaboration of the Rome-based Agencies extends to the dissemination of CFS policy tools at the regional and country levels, with significant support from FAO, WFP and IFAD, which have committed substantial financial, technical and policy support to the CFS work programme.
13. In the spirit of cooperation, I urge all Members to actively participate in the implementation of the recommendations made by this Committee into national strategies – together we can move forward to achieve our common goals.
14. To those countries that are not yet members of the Committee, I extend a warm invitation to join the CFS family. Your active participation and contributions are critical to shaping the global

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dialogue on food security and nutrition. As we strive for further progress, I encourage ministers to actively participate in the high-level segment of the upcoming CFS 52 Plenary in October. In this forum, we will have the opportunity to collectively advance discussions, share lessons learned and shape policy priorities that will contribute to the global effort to achieve sustainable food security.

15. In closing, I would like to thank all the participants, speakers and organizers for their invaluable insights. Let us foster continued collaboration and strengthen our commitment to achieving our regional and global goals to end hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

16. Thank you for your commitment and support.