


May 2012

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-Fourth Session

Rome, 11-15 June 2012

**Report of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America
and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26-30 March 2012)**

LARC/12/REP

REPORT

**Buenos Aires,
Argentina,
26 to 30 March 2012**

Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations serviced by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Paraguay
Argentina	Ecuador	Peru
Bahamas	El Salvador	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Barbados	Grenada	Saint Lucia
Belize	Guatemala	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Bolivia	Guyana	Suriname
Brazil	Haiti	Trinidad and Tobago
Colombia	Honduras	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Venezuela
Cuba	Mexico	
Chile	Nicaragua	
Dominica	Panama	

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

First	Quito, Ecuador, 18–25 September 1949
Second	Montevideo, Uruguay, 1–12 December 1950
Third	Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1–10 September 1954
Fourth	Santiago, Chile, 19–30 November 1956
Fifth	San José, Costa Rica, 12–21 November 1958
Sixth	Mexico City, Mexico, 9–20 August 1960
Seventh	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 17–27 November 1962
Eighth	Viña del Mar, Chile, 13–29 March 1965
Ninth	Punta del Este, Uruguay, 5–16 December 1966
Tenth	Kingston, Jamaica, 2–13 December 1968
Eleventh	Caracas, Venezuela, 12–20 October 1970
Twelfth	Cali, Colombia, 21 August – 2 September 1972
Thirteenth	Panama City, Panama, 12–23 August 1974
Fourteenth	Lima, Peru, 21–29 April 1976
Fifteenth	Montevideo, Uruguay, 8–19 August 1978
Sixteenth	Havana, Cuba, 26 August – 6 September 1980
Seventeenth	Managua, Nicaragua, 30 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, México, 10–14 April 2000
Twenty-seventh	Havana, Cuba, 22–26 April 2002
Twenty-eighth	Guatemala City, Guatemala, 26–30 April 2004
Twenty-ninth	Caracas, Venezuela, 24–28 April 2006
Thirtieth	Brasilia, Brazil, 14–18 April 2008
Thirty-first	Panama City, Panama, 26–30 April 2010
Thirty-second	Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26–30 March 2012

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SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Matters for the attention of the Council

The Council is invited to review and endorse the programme and budget matters.

Programme matters

- Endorse and incorporate into the FAO Programme of Work the four regional priorities adopted by the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean: (i) food and nutritional security; (ii) climate change and environmental sustainability; (iii) family farming; and (iv) plant and animal health and food safety; also incorporate the specificities of each subregion (paragraphs 32, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47).
- Endorse and incorporate into the FAO Programme of Work the priorities for the forestry, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture subsectors adopted by the Regional Technical Commissions LACFC, CODEGALAC, COPESCAALC and WECAFC, and support their programmes for sustainable development and climate change adaptation (30, 40, 41, 42, 43).
- Maintain the priority programme of special support for Haiti (31, 32, 51).
- Ensure that FAO action addresses the cross-cutting issues of gender, rural youth and indigenous peoples (32, 39).
- Address the reaffirmation of support for the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative (56, 57).
- Address the specific recommendations for greater cooperation on fisheries and aquaculture at regional level (43).
- Concentrate technical cooperation efforts on the largest and most important projects and programmes in the adopted areas of priority action (38).
- Support the actions of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) at regional level and the multistakeholder consultations (26, 27, 28).
- Endorse and support implementation of the Multiyear Programme of Work of the Regional Conference adopted by the member countries (55).
- Promote South–South and triangular cooperation and improve the region’s resource-mobilization capacity (51, 52).

Budget matters

- Consider increasing the budget allocated to the Programme of Work 2012–2013 in line with the defined priorities (paragraphs 33, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47).
- Consider increasing the resources earmarked for supporting plant and animal health and food safety systems (33).

- Allocate the necessary resources to complete the decentralization process in 2012, including emergency programmes (48, 49, 50).
- Support the strengthening of decentralized offices, using cost savings from Functional Objectives X and Y (35).
- Allocate the necessary resources to strengthen country offices in low-income countries (51).

Matters for the attention of the Conference

The Conference is invited to review and endorse the global and regional policy and regulatory matters.

Global and regional policy and regulatory matters

- Endorse the policy areas adopted by the Conference in the field of food and nutritional security: (a) governance of food and nutritional security; (b) investment in and sustainable intensification of crop and livestock farming, as well as sustainable forest, fisheries and aquaculture management, with the emphasis on family farming; and (c) access to food and changes in consumption patterns (11).
- Support the initiative by the Committee on World Food Security (CSF) to develop a Global Strategic Framework (GSF) for Food Security and Nutrition and support the system for mapping food security and nutrition actions at regional level (21, 27).
- Examine the suggestion that FAO should organize a wide-ranging and dynamic debate with the participation of civil society and academia to discuss the concept of food sovereignty, whose meaning has not been agreed by FAO Member Countries or the United Nations System (25).
- Endorse the policy areas adopted by the Conference in the field of climate change adaptation in the crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries sectors, and its advice to avoid duplicating efforts or prejudging the negotiations in the competent multilateral forum on climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) (29, 30).
- Confirm that, with regard to climate change and agriculture, FAO should focus on increasing technical cooperation to build regional, national and local capacity for developing adaptation and technology-transfer actions, while considering the specific characteristics and contexts that exist in the Region (30).

I. Introductory items

Organization of the Regional Conference

1. The thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC 32) was held in Buenos Aires (Argentina), from 26 to 30 March 2012. The Regional Conference Senior Officers' Meeting began on 26 March 2012 and continued through the morning session of 28 March, while the Ministerial Meeting began with the afternoon session on 28 March and continued until 30 March. Representatives from 32 Member Countries attended, including 17 Ministers, 7 Deputy Ministers and senior officials as Heads of Delegation.

Inaugural ceremonies

2. The Senior Officers' Meeting was opened by the Official in charge of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Alan Bojanic, who thanked the Government and people of the Republic of Argentina for their hospitality, welcomed Member Country delegations and reiterated the new role of Regional Conferences in guiding FAO's work.

3. The inaugural ceremony was held on 28 March in Palacio San Martin. The Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister of the Argentine Republic, Ambassador Eduardo Zuain, welcomed the delegations and stressed the importance of the Regional Conference in seeking creative solutions from a united Region that has found its own way to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world and to make progress, especially with food security and poverty eradication.

Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur

4. The Conference unanimously elected as Conference Chairperson Mr Lorenzo Basso, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic, and as Vice-Chairpersons Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to FAO, and Ambassador Oscar Godoy, Permanent Representative of Chile to FAO. Mr Michael King, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management of Barbados, was elected Conference Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

5. The Conference adopted the Agenda and Timetable. The Conference agreed that the procedure for the 32nd Conference would be to give the floor to civil society representatives accredited as Observers in the same order as they request the floor, which was already the case in meetings of the Committee on World Food Security, without having to wait until Member Country delegates had finished speaking, as was the procedure in previous regional conferences.

Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

6. The Chairperson of the thirty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Oscar Osorio, Panama's Minister of Agricultural Development, reminded the Conference of the recommendations by the previous session and informed delegates of subsequent activities to bring these recommendations to the attention of the FAO Conference and Council.

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

7. In his statement to the Conference, FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva, highlighted the contrast between food production capacity and persistent hunger in the Region. He listed seven global challenges facing the world today for eradicating hunger.

Statement by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic

8. The Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic, Mr Norberto Yauhar, reiterated the welcome to all participants, thanked FAO and underlined the need to broaden the productive vision to include factors influencing the unequal distribution of food.

Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

9. The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, Mr Luc Guyau, reported to the Conference on the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to him, the implementation of FAO reform and the outlook for the 2012–2013 biennium.

Outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and update of the CFS reform

10. The Chair of the Committee on World Food Security, Mr Yaya Olaniran, reported on progress achieved by the reformed CFS in the past two years and its importance for the work of the FAO Regional Conference.

II. Global and regional policy and regulatory matters

Food and nutritional security: impact, implications and opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean

11. The Conference considered important policy issues for the Region to be: (a) governance of food and nutritional security; (b) investment in and sustainable intensification of crop and livestock farming, as well as sustainable forest, fisheries and aquaculture management, with the emphasis on family farming; and (c) access to food and changes in consumption patterns.

12. The Conference recognized that the main cause of hunger was poverty and that without family farming there would be no food security.

13. The Conference indicated that the current volatility of international food prices was determined by a number of important factors, including financial speculation in international food markets. In this regard, it stressed the need for specific regulations to enhance transparency and so ensure that such speculation does not prevent millions of people from realizing their right to food.

14. The Conference emphasized that the problem of excessive food-price volatility did not stem solely from production and that it was essential to analyse the entire production–marketing–consumption chain. In particular it stated the importance of analysing the concentration of production and inputs, as well as the concentration of marketing, which affected consumers and family farming in particular, including small-scale fisheries and resource-poor aquaculture. This was reflected in the dominance of international trade in agricultural products by a few companies.

15. The Conference noted that recovering agricultural commodity prices provided the conditions for increasing investment and food production in the Latin America and Caribbean region by fostering access to knowledge, innovation, technology transfer, the development of associations and rural management, and the recovery of ancestral knowledge to improve productivity, with the emphasis on family farming, including fisheries and aquaculture.

16. The Conference recognized that actions were needed to expand access to food by using cash transfers to offset increases in the cost of the basic basket and the resulting decline in the real income of the poor.

17. The Conference considered it necessary to study in more depth the causes of excessive international food-price volatility and its various impacts on countries in the Region.

18. The Conference stressed the role of family farming in increasing food production, attaining food security and eradicating rural poverty. It also recognized the role of farming communities and fisherfolk, as well indigenous peoples and those of African descent, in the development of agriculture and the importance of recognizing and recovering their knowledge and practices. In this regard, the Conference underlined the importance of FAO cooperation in furthering human development, as well as in promoting socioproductive and environmental research, mechanisms for horizontal collaboration and integration within supply chains to strengthen local markets, reduce the transaction costs of small producers and improve their income and living and production conditions.

19. While the Conference acknowledged progress on gender and generational equity and the participation of indigenous peoples, it pointed out that there was still much to be done on these issues that cut across the thematic priority areas.

20. In order to achieve fair and equitable trade, the Conference acknowledged the need to unblock the agriculture negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in line with the agriculture mandate of the Doha Development Round to comply with the global agriculture reform process.

Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition and consultation of the Committee on World Food Security on mapping food security and nutrition actions

21. The Conference supported and welcomed the initiative by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to develop a Global Strategic Framework (GSF) for Food Security and Nutrition. The GSF should be updated constantly and would help to improve policy convergence and coordination.

22. The Conference recognized that the first GSF version should reflect the regional and global consensus on food and nutritional security, as well as identifying areas where further work would be needed to broaden convergence under the CFS. The Conference recognized the contribution of the civil society mechanism to the process of developing the Global Strategic Framework under the aegis of the Committee on World Food Security.

23. The Conference took note that civil society organizations in the Continental Alliance for Food Sovereignty (under the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty [IPC]) assume this important role in the joint process of dialogue with FAO member governments. The Continental Alliance considers that governments should recognize the role of civil society, especially social movements representing small-scale food producers, such as smallholder farmers, indigenous people, fisherfolk and others, in resolving the problems of hunger and poverty in the Region based on fostering agro-ecological policies that include the knowledge of traditional peoples and promote the right to food.

24. The Conference recognized the new format for civil society participation in its activities. It also recognized the benefit of inviting, in accordance with the Agenda, universities and public research centres, as well as representatives of traditional knowledge.

25. The Conference suggested that FAO should organize a wide-ranging and dynamic debate with the participation of civil society and academia to discuss the concept of food sovereignty, whose meaning had not been agreed by FAO Member Countries or the United Nations System.

26. The Conference urged its members to participate in the electronic consultation on the first GSF draft, to confirm that the draft text really did reflect the existing global and regional consensus and to enable improvements and suggestions to be made for future activities. It also encouraged FAO to work with appropriate counterparts to facilitate the development of systems for mapping food and nutritional security actions in order to improve coordination and alignment of the policies and programmes of governmental agencies and development actors.

27. The Conference recognized the usefulness of a system for mapping food security and nutrition actions at country level for improving the coordination and alignment of the policies and programmes of governmental agencies and other development actors. It also underlined the importance of improving the quality of information for mapping food security actions, as well as for monitoring progress on the implementation of key decisions concerning food and nutritional security and major challenges and achievements.

28. The Conference would continue to explore possibilities for establishing linkages and synergies between the work of the CFS, including the GSF, and the various regional and national mechanisms and initiatives for food and nutritional security, including the Regional Conference itself, the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 (ALCSH 2025) initiative, and regional and subregional integration and cooperation mechanisms and systems.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation to reduce the vulnerability of communities and the crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors

29. The Conference recognized the importance of climate change adaptation to the Region's crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries sectors, recalling the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. However, it indicated that this should not duplicate efforts, nor prejudice the negotiations in the competent multilateral forum (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). However, it emphasized the role that FAO could play in the sphere of agriculture, in terms of technical cooperation and assistance, in accordance with the priorities identified by each country.

30. The Conference considered that, with regard to climate change and agriculture, FAO should focus on increasing technical cooperation to build regional, national and local capacity for developing adaptation and technology-transfer actions, while considering the specific characteristics and contexts that exist in the Region.

III. Programme and budget matters

FAO activities in the Region (2010–2011) and Programme of Work and Budget 2012–2013

31. The Conference welcomed the report on actions conducted during the previous two years (2010–2011) in the four thematic priority areas identified at the 31st Regional Conference: food and nutritional security; climate change and environmental sustainability; family farming; and plant and animal health and food safety. It also expressed satisfaction with the support provided to Haiti, as decided by the 31st Regional Conference.

32. The Conference endorsed the proposed priorities for the 2012–2013 biennium, recognizing that the four thematic areas identified in the previous biennium (2010–2011), as well as priority support to Haiti and the cross-cutting issues of gender, youth and indigenous peoples, were still applicable. To these four priorities and cross-cutting issues, it added the need to complete FAO reform in the Region, especially the decentralization process in 2012, including emergency programmes.

33. The Conference expressed concern at the estimated resources of USD 190.8 million for the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the 2012–2013 biennium, as it considered them insufficient to meet the challenges facing the Region's agriculture, and urged Member Countries and FAO to intensify efforts to increase available resources. It also drew attention to the small proportion of the budget allocated to health and food safety issues, despite the importance that the Conference attached to these issues.

34. The Conference welcomed the Medium-Term Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Family Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean.

35. The Conference stressed that, to achieve the decentralization objectives in full, the decentralized offices network needed to be provided with adequate resources. In this regard, it emphasized that special consideration should be given to the budgetary needs of these offices when examining further adjustments to the FAO Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2012–2013, including cost savings from Functional Objectives X (effective collaboration with member states and stakeholders) and Y (efficient and effective administration).

Global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization

36. The Conference endorsed the broad and inclusive strategic thinking process initiated by the Director-General in January 2012 to determine the Organization's future priorities and strategies. It recognized the need to improve strategic planning, define clear priorities, align objectives and programmes and establish an interactive planning process based on regional and national needs.

37. The Conference agreed on the need to continue discussing on a broad and participatory basis, in the relevant bodies, the main global challenges identified by the Secretariat in the areas of agriculture, fisheries and forestry: (a) sustainable intensification of production; (b) eradicating food insecurity, nutrient deficiencies and unsafe food; (c) promoting balanced food consumption and reducing losses and waste; (d) improving the livelihoods of the rural population, including women, youth and indigenous peoples; (e) developing fairer food and agricultural systems; (f) increasing resilience to threats and crises; (g) strengthening governance mechanisms at national, regional and global levels.

Areas of priority action for Latin America and the Caribbean for the following biennium (2014–2015)

38. The Conference confirmed its support for the consultation process to identify priorities and take these priorities into consideration in preparing the biennial programmes of work and budget in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as for further consultations on the formulation of FAO's strategic objectives and Medium Term Plan 2014–2017. It also emphasized the importance of targeting FAO cooperation at the crucial challenges faced by countries in achieving measurable progress, by making effective and efficient use of available resources to conduct a small set of activities designed to leverage FAO's comparative advantages, taking into account each subregion's specificities and differences in emphasis.

39. While the Conference endorsed the priorities (food and nutritional security; climate change and environmental sustainability; family farming; and plant and animal health and food safety), as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender, rural youth and indigenous peoples, it expressed concern over funding for the associated technical cooperation, given the risk that future budgetary sources may be even more limited than at present. The Conference suggested exploring options for increasing resources to strengthen FAO's work in the Region, as well as making reallocations from projected cost savings under the Programme of Work and Budget 2012–2013.

Summary of recommendations of Regional Technical Commissions

40. The Conference reaffirmed the central role of FAO in the technical secretariats of the various regional commissions and recommended that governments should strengthen their support for the commissions' programmes of work and encourage the participation of senior officers in their meetings.

41. The Conference supported the recommendation by the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) that greater visibility should be given to the forestry sector in regard to climate change, as well as to food security and the economic development of family farming. Special emphasis should be given to the forestry sector's role in the sustainability of rural production systems and its relationship with soil and biodiversity conservation, as well as with sustainable water management and use. In particular the Conference recommended seeking better positioning for forests at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

42. The Conference supported the recommendation by the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC) that sustainable livestock development, in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental), should be considered as an important factor of progress in the four regional priorities. In this regard, it recommended encouraging the formulation of policies for long-term livestock development, in accordance with priorities defined at country level, including family-based livestock production systems. Special emphasis should be placed on the aspects of animal health and transboundary disease control.

43. The Conference supported the recommendation by the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) that fisheries and aquaculture, including small-scale fisheries and resource-poor aquaculture, as well as micro- and small enterprises, should be considered in a visible manner in the Programme of Work 2013–2014. It also supported the allocation of funds for stock assessment to allow the sustainable management of inland fishery resources. Finally, it stressed the importance of interaction and cooperation with intergovernmental organizations in the region, including the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA), Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA), Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPESCA), and Aquaculture Network for the Americas (RAA).

Outcome of subregional consultations

44. The three subregions confirmed the applicability of the regional priorities to their development goals. In addition, they each expressed their views and comments on the seven global challenges identified by FAO, as follows.

45. The Caribbean Subregion emphasized in particular the priority of disaster risk management associated with climate change and the need to develop new instruments for managing such risk. It also stressed the crucial importance of transboundary diseases and the need to develop an information platform that would reflect the situation in the Subregion and assist in making more informed policy decisions. In addition it requested that, alongside the predefined regional priorities, priority should be given to the forestry sector and to fisheries and aquaculture.

46. The Mesoamerican Subregion (Central America and Mexico) expressed its preference for merging global challenges two and three, integrating the eradication of food insecurity, nutrient deficiencies and unhealthy habits with the improvement of consumption patterns in a context of higher and more volatile food prices, by promoting a multisector approach. It also suggested adjustments to the phrasing of the other challenges. With regard to the regional priorities, the Subregion stressed the desirability of specifying the place of livestock and crop farming in each of the priorities. Like the Subregion of the Caribbean, it requested that priority should be given to the forestry, fisheries and aquaculture sectors. It also defined a further two cross-cutting issues – statistics and investment – and recommended incorporating participatory mechanisms and emphasizing training and inclusive knowledge management.

47. The South American Subregion made a preliminary review of the proposed seven global challenges and found that, in general, they reflected situations that the subregion would need to face in the coming years. Notwithstanding, it agreed to explore the scope and content of the challenges that had been identified and to deepen their relationship with the four priority areas. From this perspective, the Subregion made the following points concerning the global challenges.

- The first challenge needs to include explicitly the development of family farming, small-scale fisheries, aquaculture and forestry.
- Actions in the area of health and food safety and quality should be strengthened.
- The marketing chain should be made transparent.
- Priority should be given to adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change, rather than to mitigation.
- Producers should be ensured a fair income.
- Access to food should remain a priority.

As the term “rationalization” in relation to food consumption and nutrition was considered to lack precision, it was proposed to integrate challenges two and three to promote good eating habits in order to eradicate food insecurity.

Decentralization issues

48. The Conference endorsed the process of FAO decentralization and emphasized the importance of endowing the decentralized offices network with sufficient material and human resources to link this process properly with Member Countries. It valued the role of decentralization in improving communication and coordination with other international cooperation agencies in order to work as part of a country focus in support of a national development strategy rather than conducting ad hoc welfare actions.

49. The Conference strongly recommended integrating emergency programmes within the broad perspective of development in order to reduce vulnerability and disaster risk. It also endorsed the corresponding proposals, to:

- transfer responsibility for emergency operations at country level to FAO Representatives and, where appropriate, to the Regional Representative or Subregional Coordinator;
- transfer to the Regional Representative overall authority for the emergency programme in the Region;
- grant further delegations of authority to decentralized offices, accompanied by appropriate training and supervision.

50. The Conference strongly supported the general proposal on the decentralized offices network, while recognizing the need to continue building the capacity of decentralized offices, and it encouraged the Organization to set deadlines for completing the decentralization process.

51. The Conference agreed with the specific proposals for Latin America and the Caribbean, including to:

- retain the current decentralized offices network;
- strengthen country offices, while prioritizing those located in low-income countries and giving preferential treatment to those with special needs, as in Haiti;
- establish additional offices, where appropriate, in countries with strong economies and strong support from their governments;
- seek ways to guide the efforts of offices in high- and middle-income countries, with the necessary government agreement, to promote South–South and triangular cooperation;
- boost the efficiency of regional and subregional offices by taking advantage of technical expertise across all FAO offices in the Region, beyond subregional borders;
- promote greater collaboration with civil society and the private sector;
- expand resource mobilization and project development in the Region, mainly through Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) programmes;
- position the Organization’s human resources on the basis of their individual expertise and the needs of countries;
- give due consideration to the use of national capabilities.

52. Within the decentralization process and the planned administrative flexibility, the Conference recommended strengthening South–South cooperation and triangular cooperation as central tenets of FAO’s actions.

53. The Conference recommended that any changes in the status of national offices should be made in agreement with host governments, considering the contributions that countries have made and as part of a continuum to avoid disrupting ongoing activities.

54. Mexico confirmed its membership of and identification with the Mesoamerican Region, as well as its commitment to strengthening cooperation at the subregional level as part of the FAO decentralization process, in support of the call by the Director-General. The Conference suggested that, in FAO’s cooperation relations with Mexico, its link with the Regional Office should be retained, without prejudice to establishing the necessary links with FAO headquarters and the Subregional Office in Panama.

IV. Other matters

Multiyear Programme of Work 2012–2015 for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

55. The Conference approved the draft Multiyear Programme of Work for the Regional Conference, while pointing to the need for countries to be allowed to participate in the Technical Commissions and in setting the Agenda. In particular it emphasized the importance of participation by the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) in all activities taking place between conferences.

Latin America and the Caribbean without hunger: an ongoing commitment

56. The Conference stressed the value of the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative and welcomed the willingness of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger to share the Region’s experience with governments, parliamentarians, academia and civil society in other regions of the world.

57. The Conference reiterated its support for the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative and reaffirmed the role that it should play in supporting the Region’s communication with the Committee on World Food Security during intersessional periods. The international cooperation agencies of Spain and Brazil signed a new agreement with FAO to fund specific projects and activities during the following biennium.

Date and place of the 33rd FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

58. The Conference welcomed the generous offer by the Republic of Chile to host the 33rd FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2014 and recommended accepting the offer.

Signature of agreements

Letter of Understanding between FAO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

59. The Letter of Understanding was signed in response to calls from the Ministers of Agriculture of Latin America and the Caribbean for mechanisms to improve coordination between FAO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) that would avoid duplication of efforts and respond to demands from countries in the Region more efficiently and speedily.

Cooperation Agreement between FAO and the Latin American Integration Association

60. The General Secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI/LAIA) and FAO, through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, will carry out joint specific cooperation projects in fields of mutual interest and in support of activities to foster the Latin American integration process.

Letter of Intent between the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of El Salvador and FAO

61. The aim of this Letter of Intent for Triangular Cooperation is to express the Parties' will to conduct a tripartite cooperation programme under the coordination of the two ministries, with the assistance of FAO.

Civil Society Declaration

62. The Conference agreed to include, as an information document, the civil society declaration made at the third Special Conference for Food Sovereignty, Rights and Life, held in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 22 to 25 March, 2012.

The Conference documents are available at: <http://www.fao.org/bodies/rc2012/larc32/en/>.