

LARC/06/REP

*REPORT*

Caracas, Venezuela,  
24 to 28 April 2006

# **Twenty-ninth 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 (as of 28 April 2006)

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Paraguay
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Colombia	Honduras	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Venezuela
Cuba	Mexico	
Chile	Nicaragua	
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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

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-NINTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Caracas, Venezuela, 24 to 28 April 2006)

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## CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Pages
<b>SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	1 - 55	1
<b>INTRODUCTORY ITEMS</b>		
Organization of the Conference .....	56	7
Inaugural Ceremony .....	57 - 66	7
Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur .....	67	8
Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable .....	68	8
Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the Council .....	69 - 73	8
Statement of the First Lady of Paraguay .....	74	9
<b>SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS</b>		
Matters arising from the 33 <sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference FAO Reform. Part I: The Director-General's revised proposals. Part II: A vision for the twenty-first century .....	75 - 82	10
Report on FAO activities (2004-2005) with a focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and action taken on the recommendations of the 28 <sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean .....	83 - 86	11
Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025: Inputs for a framework of action .....	87 - 91	12
Strengthening regional capacity for the prevention and control of Avian Influenza in Latin America and the Caribbean .....	92 - 95	12
Reports of the regional commissions .....	96 - 101	13
Round Table "Towards a regional agricultural common market: problems and perspectives" .....	102 - 108	13
Round Table "Institutional challenges for national, subregional and regional technological innovation" .....	109 - 112	14
<b>REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE</b>		
Opening of the Technical Committee meeting .....	113	15

	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Election of the Technical Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and appointment of the Rapporteur and Drafting Committee .....	114	15
Adoption of the Technical Committee Agenda and Timetable .....	115	15
Territorial policies for the economic and social development of rural areas .....	116 - 129	15
Food safety and animal and plant health: trends and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean .....	130 - 137	17
Trends and challenges in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean .....	138 - 141	17
Report of the outcome of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development .....	142 - 150	18
Adoption of the Technical Committee report .....	151	19
Closure of the Technical Committee meeting .....	152 - 153	19
 <b>FINAL ITEMS</b>		
Date, place and agenda of the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean .....	154 - 155	20
Other matters .....	156 - 158	20
Adoption of the report .....	159	20
Closure of the Conference .....	160 - 162	20
 <b>APPENDIXES</b>		
A. Statement of the Director-General .....		21
B. Statement of the Independent Chairperson of the Council .....		26
C. Agenda of the Technical Committee and the Plenary Session .....		28
D. List of Participants .....		29
E. List of Documents .....		44
F. Proposal of Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Venezuela on the procedure for initiatives against hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean .....		45
F.1 Proposal of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela .....		47
G. “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” Initiative: Implementation strategy .....		48
G.1 Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025: Inputs for a framework of action .....		49

## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Matters arising from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference. FAO reform. Part I: The Director-General's revised proposals. Part II: A vision for the twenty-first century**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

1. Urged the countries of the Region to place food security and rural development foremost among their national and regional priorities.
2. Recalled the need for the countries of the Region to accompany and support the FAO reform process.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

3. Indicated that budgetary restrictions and the scale of existing challenges required a broad reform of working methods, administrative structures and rules governing the distribution of the Organization's tasks.
4. Reiterated the need for the process to continue being transparent, inclusive and participatory. To this end, it considered it important for the contents and time frame of the reform to be agreed by consensus.
5. Indicated that it was important to consider the Independent External Evaluation, given that the Reform and the Independent External Evaluation were two parallel processes that needed to be mutually supportive.
6. Stressed the need to strengthen the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. It also recognized the importance of creating new Subregional Offices, giving priority to the creation of the Office for Central America.

### **Report on FAO activities (2004-2005) with a focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and action taken on the recommendations of the 28<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

7. Recognized the importance of strengthening initiatives to improve productivity and to increase rural employment and income in order to contribute towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1: "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger".

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

8. Established seven priority lines of action for FAO technical cooperation in the Region in the 2006-2007 biennium: the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025" initiative; subregional multidisciplinary groups, including the Amazon Basin; expansion of the Special Programmes for Food Security in the countries of the Region; immediate actions for those suffering hunger, especially South-South cooperation and short-term attention to Haiti; transboundary diseases, especially protection against highly pathogenic avian influenza and control of foot-and-mouth disease; food safety, including the harmonization of standards, biosecurity – considering, *inter alia*, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and labelling requirements; interagency cooperation and information management.

## **Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025: Inputs for a framework of action**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

9. Decided to endorse the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative.
10. Reiterated that the initial step to implement the initiative was for all the countries to sign an undertaking that by 2025 no country would have an undernourished population of more than five percent of its total population.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

11. Recommended that FAO under the guidance and coordination of its Regional Office in Santiago promote the necessary human and financial resources, including through the contribution of third party countries and other international agencies, for the full realization of the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative.
12. Recommended that FAO through its Regional Office in Santiago provide technical support to mechanisms of implementation of the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative.
13. Indicated the need for the Regional Office in Santiago to have a Food Security Officer and an appropriate support team for technical cooperation activities relating to implementation of the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative.

## **Strengthening regional capacity for the prevention and control of avian influenza in Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

14. Recognized the nature and level of risk that highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 could affect the Region.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

15. Recommended that FAO, in coordination with PAHO, WHO and the OIE, to promote and support activities of exchange and cooperation between the countries of the Region for implementation of protection measures against the risk of avian flu.
16. Requested that FAO support cooperation between the laboratory networks of the countries of the Region.
17. Suggested that FAO provide technical cooperation so that the intellectual property of drugs and reagents did not constitute an obstacle to the treatment of a pandemic.

## **Reports of the regional commissions: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL); Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

18. Indicated the importance of policies for the management of marine and river fishery resources to ensure their sustainable use and optimize their production.



**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

19. Recommended that FAO promote and technically support the exchange of experiences between countries and the possibilities of partnerships on the subject of bioenergy as a priority focus of cooperation.

20. Requested that FAO, in cooperation with the countries of the Region, promote and technically support the conduct of studies to monitor fishery resources and, in general, to improve the quality of fishery information.

21. Recommended that FAO provide technical support for training in the trade and handling of fishery products and for education in the consumption of these products to ensure their quality and safety.

22. Called for studies on linkages between fishing and nutrition and on a strategy to improve the living conditions of artisanal fishers.

23. Requested that FAO support the exchange of experiences between countries on the subject of reforestation, in particular productive reforestation with the use of fruit trees.

**Round Table “Towards a regional agricultural common market: problems and perspectives”****For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

24. Recognized that the process of agricultural integration meant addressing the asymmetries in the levels of development of countries, the harmonization of trade and agricultural regulations; coherence in food safety and quality systems and standards; and compatibility in the multiplicity of agreements.

25. Supported the position of Haiti under the perception that solidarity was also be expressed in the search for better terms for that country’s exports.

**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

26. Requested that FAO focus its technical support on the process of integration of agricultural trade, in particular on the negotiation of sanitary aspects, and on training for customs control protection against transboundary pests and diseases.

27. Suggested that FAO support exchanges of experiences and cooperation between the countries of the Region for the more efficient and equitable incorporation of family farming into commercial networks, as a way of improving food and nutrition security and social inclusion.

**Round Table “Institutional challenges for national, subregional and regional technological innovation”****For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

28. Indicated the need to acknowledge that there was no direct, simple relationship between productivity and food and nutrition security, which was in fact a complex socio-economic process that required both greater participation of the private sector and a strong presence of the State.

29. Valued the contribution of technology research centres, beyond the adoption of technologies generated in developed countries, and recognized the efforts that the Region had made in the field of extension.

30. Indicated that analysis of the process of technological innovation needed to address biotechnology issues in consideration of environmental sustainability.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

31. Recommended revising and amending the background documented presented to better reflect the complexity of the subject and to refine analysis of the system of technological innovation in the specific conditions of the Region.

## **Territorial policies for the economic and social development of rural areas**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

32. Emphasized the need to examine the relationship between economic growth and development, and to avoid oversimplification as agricultural growth had often not translated into significant improvement in living conditions and opportunities for the rural population.

33. Recognized the important role played by the State and decentralized government bodies in defining and implementing territorial policies, and reaffirmed the need for these policies to be broadly democratic and participatory, involving the various agents of civil society, articulating the public and private sectors and with interinstitutional coordination in the specific territorial context.

34. Noted that rural development incorporated all production activities in the rural environment in a territorial-based approach; it also covered linkages with market distribution channels and the incorporation of production chains; and it should also include living conditions, security, housing and access to services.

35. Stressed the need for rural development policies to evolve from a traditional assistance-oriented approach to a structural concept that favoured a new political, social and economic dynamic in rural areas, creating opportunities of access to assets and market openings, thereby generating income combined with social inclusion.

36. Stated the need to promote mechanisms of solidarity and integration in the Region, emphasizing the particular case of the Republic of Haiti to help the efforts of the Haitian people to further their development.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

37. Recommended that FAO continue to look more deeply and broadly into this subject and requested that the studies currently being conducted with FAO support in three countries (Brazil, Chile and Mexico) be extended to other countries of the Region, including in particular the specific characteristics of the Caribbean islands.

## **Food safety and animal and plant health. Trends and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

38. Reiterated the commitment of the countries of the Region to the health of their populations and to their participation in international markets, within a trading environment that ensured the safety and quality of food.

39. Stressed the relevance of food safety and animal and plant health for the countries of the Region, given that the rapid increase in movement of people and goods broadened the possibilities of progress but also the risks of spread of pests and diseases and urged that such risks be addressed collectively through mechanisms of cooperation and shared procedures.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

40. Supported the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) that the criteria for the distribution of funds be modified and that the equitable distribution of those funds be ensured, as under current arrangements only one country of the Region could receive assistance for participation in three meetings of the Codex; the remaining would only receive funding for one meeting.

41. Indicated that FAO's training activities should be coupled with the possibility of modernizing existing administrative and control structures in individual countries, within integrated programmes funded by various institutions that support FAO cooperation.

42. Expressed its interest in having FAO coordinate training activities with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the "Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)" and the "Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)".

### **Trends and challenges in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

43. Emphasized the need for a broad approach that situated agricultural and rural development within the processes of global development and a changing international context. It also noted the importance of balancing this approach with the addition of an orientation of agricultural and rural development in the countries of the Region towards the achievement of food security from the internal perspective of the rural world, safeguarding the ways of life of its population and its relationship with the environment.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

44. Requested that analyses of agricultural trends and challenges included a baseline analysis of agricultural products that could be traded in a context of environmental sustainability and sanitary control, as the basis for greater economic growth.

45. Suggested including, in the identified challenges, the implementation of development policies that favoured social inclusion, particularly of marginalized groups such as peasant farmers, artisanal fishers and rural fish farmers.

46. Recommended more in-depth study of the trends and challenges in agriculture of Latin America and the Caribbean, within an optic of development with equity to ensure a better distribution of the benefits of economic progress.

## **Report on the outcome of the International Conference on Agrarian reform and Rural Development**

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

47. Endorsed the recommendations included in the Final Declaration of the International Conference on agrarian reform and Rural Development.
48. Welcomed the proposals to promote the holding of subregional seminars and discussions panels, organized by country groups, with the broad participation of social movements
49. Declared that institutional frameworks for land tenure and use were fundamental for agricultural and rural development.
50. Recognized that land redistribution needed to be accompanied by support measures, including technology transfer, credit and finance, systems of innovation and management, and other mechanisms to facilitate the modernization of farmers' production processes and their integration into trade channels.

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

51. Recommended that the relevant FAO bodies took the necessary actions to implement the recommendations included in the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.
52. Indicated that it was fundamental for the Region to be able to follow up on ICARRD in the Committee on World Food Security and the FAO Council, including the possible formulation of Voluntary Guidelines for the National Implementation of the Right to Land.
53. Requested that FAO, through the Technical Secretariat of ICARRD and under the coordination of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, convene and conduct seminars and panel discussions, organized by groups of countries and with broad participation of social movements, to lay the groundwork for a Plan of Action that would help resolve, on a voluntary basis, the more urgent problems identified by ICARRD.
54. Requested that the Technical Secretariat of ICARRD in FAO, under the coordination of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, prepare a document to be submitted for discussion and adoption at the 131st Session of the FAO Council in November, 2006, to support the organization of subregional seminars in order to generate inputs for the preparation and future implementation of an ICARRD Plan of Action.
55. Recommended that FAO, through its appropriate units (in particular the Field Programme Development Service – TCAP), draft a proposal, for instance a Special Programme for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, to ensure the necessary support for implementation of the follow-up activities to ICARRD.

## INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

### Organization of the Conference

56. La 29<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from 24 to 28 April 2006. The Technical Committee met on 24 and 25 April. The Conference was attended by delegations of 28 FAO Member Nations in the Region, together with observers from countries of other regions and representatives of United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations. La list of participants is given in Appendix D.

### Inaugural Ceremony

57. The Conference was inaugurated by the Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr José Vicente Rangel. Also present at the inaugural ceremony were the Minister of Agriculture and Land of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Director-General of FAO and the Independent Chairman of the Council of FAO.

58. The Independent Chairman of the Council thanked the Government and the people of Venezuela for their hospitality. He then drew the participants' attention to the flagrant contradiction of a world which made impressive levels of progress but which also had three billion people living on less than two dollars a day and 25 000 children dying each day from hunger and malnutrition. He hoped that Latin America and the Caribbean would be able to significantly improve the living conditions and food security of their combined population through the strength of their peoples and their historical roots, but also through recent policy initiatives such as Zero Hunger, South-South cooperation, agrarian reform and rural development, and the right to food.

59. In continuation, the Director-General of FAO welcomed the opportunity to exchange ideas with the leaders of the agricultural sector of Latin America and the Caribbean. He thanked President Hugo Chavez, the Government and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for hosting the Conference and expressed his concern that progress made in the ten years since the World Food Summit would prevent achievement of the objective in 2015.

60. Under current trends, Latin America and the Caribbean would be the only developing region of the world able to achieve, as an average, the objective of the Millennium Development Goals, but the number of undernourished people in Central America and the Caribbean was actually increasing, not falling.

61. The Director-General reviewed the economic and agricultural progress that had been made in the Region but which still left serious problems of rural development and food security in most countries, especially in those of Central America and the Caribbean.

62. The Director-General welcomed with interest the "Latin America and the Caribbean Without Hunger by 2025" (ALCSH 2025) initiative of Presidents Ignacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Oscar Berger of Guatemala.

63. He concluded by explaining the outcome of the Thirty-third session of the Conference of FAO and the start to decentralization activities in the framework of the FAO Reform.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the statement (LARC/06/INF/4) is given in Appendix A.

64. The Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, José Vicente Rangel, welcomed the participants and explained that his country's rural development policy was directed towards endogenous, productive, participatory and sustainable development, based on national coordination and international cooperation, and sought to achieve food security and a reduction of rural poverty.

65. In particular, the main objectives of Plan 2001-2007 included the achievement of food sovereignty and the overcoming of social exclusion, inequality and poverty.

66. He recounted the progress that had been made in eliminating the large landed estates that seriously curtailed human and agricultural development in the countryside; he also outlined the accomplishments made in production and distribution, the building of infrastructure, the financing of agriculture, food safety and quality, and in the processes of organization, institutional development and building of social capital in the rural sector. He concluded by wishing the Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean a successful outcome and declaring the Conference open.

#### **Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur**

67. The Conference unanimously elected the officers listed in Appendix D.

#### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

68. The Conference adopted the agenda and timetable, with the inclusion of three additional items proposed by GRULAC in Rome and a fourth item suggested by the Director-General:

- results and policy consequences of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development;
- the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger" (ALCSM) initiative;
- financing of the Independent External Evaluation; and
- US\$15 million funding for transition costs in the 2006-2007 budget.

#### **Statement of the Independent Chairperson of the Council**

69. The Independent Chairperson of the Council of FAO expressed his appreciation of the opportunity to participate in the Committee, highlighting the importance of direct communication within the decision-making process.

70. The Committee was informed of the need to resolve the problem of arrears in the payment of contributions, which not only reduced available funds but also constituted a disincentive to the generation of further inputs. It was also informed of the importance of the ongoing Independent External Evaluation and of the difficulties in financing the exercise. In this connection, the Independent Chairperson of the Council urged the countries of the Region to make what voluntary contributions they could to support this initiative.

71. The Committee was called upon to broadly disseminate the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, considering that adequate food was a human right.

72. The Committee underscored the significance of three concurrent processes affecting FAO activities: FAO Reform, the Independent External Evaluation and the broad involvement of civil society in gatherings such as the Special Forum that would take place under the Committee on World Food Security World and the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

73. The Committee also emphasized the importance of the recent International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and the need to incorporate its outputs in shaping FAO activity.

**Statement of the First Lady of the Republic of Paraguay and Ambassador Extraordinary of FAO, Her Excellency Maria Gloria Penayo de Duarte "Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger"**

74. The First Lady of Paraguay stated that hunger was one of the most violent aggressions against human rights; no logic based on economic reasoning could serve to justify hunger. She expressed her support to FAO's actions to help the hungry and undernourished. She also reported on FAO's cooperation activities with the First Ladies of the countries of the Region, in particular the "Solidarity Against Hunger" Programme.

**SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS****Matters arising from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference. FAO Reform. Part I: The Director-General's revised proposals. Part II: A vision for the twenty-first century**

75. The Director-General referred to the proposed reform of FAO and informed the Conference that the FAO Conference in November 2005 had decided to begin with one region (Africa) and one subregion (Central Asia). He explained the various follow-up arrangements envisaged and their main thrusts which involved concentrating on the Organization's efficiency and emphasizing capacity building and the enhanced dissemination of information.

76. The Director-General explained the decentralization process and the changes in the administrative design of the Organization, mentioning eight departments, relations between Headquarters, the regional offices and the subregional offices, and the composition of technical teams of the latter, including national experts. He detailed some of the impact of reform on savings in administrative costs and on the ability to respond more quickly and effectively to country requests for technical cooperation. He ended by stressing the importance of being able to count on the support of GRULAC for the reform.

77. The Director-General highlighted the serious reductions that had occurred in resources to the agricultural sector from international cooperation, the multilateral banking sector and individual countries. In this connection, he urged countries to place food security and rural development foremost among their national and regional priorities, both for an increase in South-South cooperation and for requests made to the international organizations.

78. The Conference acknowledged the efforts that were being made for FAO reform, in the broader context of reform of the United Nations system, and considered that this process was essential if the Organization was to be able to fulfil the objectives that had inspired its creation, in normative and operational aspects alike. It also understood that the purpose of reform was to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy in a framework of participation and consensus.

79. The Conference noted that the recent election of the Director-General for a further term of six years signified strong endorsement of his qualities of leadership and management. At the same time, the Conference indicated that budgetary restrictions and the scale of existing challenges required a broad reform of working methods, administrative structures and rules governing the distribution of the Organization's tasks. It also stated that the reform should retain and strengthen those aspects that the Conference considered fundamental, including the Technical Cooperation Programme and the Special Programme for Food Security.

80. The Conference noted that the countries of the Region had followed the developments of the reform process with interest, cooperating and supporting its progress. It also reiterated the need for the process to continue being transparent, inclusive and participatory. To this end, it considered it important for the contents and time frame of the reform to be agreed by consensus.

81. The Conference indicated that, in relation to the actions approved by the Conference of FAO in November 2005, its authorization of certain actions to initiate the Reform and the envisaged time frame, it was important to consider the Independent External Evaluation that was due to finish in July 2007, given that the Reform and the Independent External Evaluation were two parallel processes that needed to be mutually supportive.



82. The Conference stressed the need to strengthen the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. It also recognized the importance of creating new Subregional Offices, giving priority to the creation of the Office for Central America.

**Report on FAO activities (2004-2005) with a focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and action taken on the recommendations of the Twenty-eight FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean**

83. The Conference was informed by the Assistant Director-General of FAO and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean of FAO's contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He emphasized in particular the contribution made towards achievement of Goal 1 "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" through the Special Programme for Food Security, the promotion of alliances against hunger, including the FAO International Alliance Against Hunger, and initiatives to improve productivity and raise rural employment and income. With regard to the other Millennium Development Goals, he referred to the indirect contributions of the food and nutrition education programmes; the integration of a gender approach in public policies; activities to improve food safety and programmes of information on nutrition in the home, especially for mothers; the FAO programme on HIV/AIDS; the promotion of payment for environmental services; the implementation of good agricultural practices and support to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources; and cooperation for the application of trade regulatory frameworks.

84. The Conference was also informed by the Assistant Director-General of FAO and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean of actions taken in follow-up to the recommendations of the Twenty-eighth Regional Conference, relating to food security; the competitive market integration of small farmers; emerging issues, such as the territorial approach to rural development; training in biotechnology and biosecurity; studies of public expenditure in rural areas; the control of transboundary animal diseases; and interagency and interinstitutional cooperation.

85. Finally, the Conference was informed of the proposed priorities for FAO's programme of work in Latin America and the Caribbean and its seven priority lines of action: the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025" initiative; subregional multidisciplinary groups, including the Amazon Basin; expansion of the Special Programmes for Food Security in the countries of the Region; immediate actions for those suffering hunger, especially South-South cooperation and short-term attention to Haiti; transboundary diseases, especially protection against avian influenza and control of foot-and-mouth disease; food safety, including the harmonization of standards, biosecurity – considering, *inter alia*, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and labelling requirements; interagency cooperation and information management.

86. The Conference took note of the successful outcome of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and endorsed the recommendations in the Final Statement for the appropriate FAO units to take the actions needed for their implementation. It accepted the proposals concerning the realization of subregional seminars and panel discussions, organized by country groups with broad participation of the social movements. It also requested that FAO ensure the continuity of technical services relating to agrarian reform and rural development.

**Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025: Inputs for a framework of action**

87. The Secretary of Food and Nutrition Security of Guatemala pointed out that the technical outline of this initiative was already familiar to the participants at the Conference and reiterated that the initial step was for all the countries to sign an undertaking that by 2025 no country would have an undernourished population of more than five percent of its total population.

88. The Conference was informed of the five components of the initiative: institutional strengthening of national food and nutrition security systems; South-South cooperation, including peasant farmers, business operators, technicians and policy-makers, and the conclusion of other cooperation agreements; formation of a critical mass of professionals and leaders to formulate and implement food security programmes and sensitize society as a whole to this national priority; establishment of cooperative exchanges for the sharing of experiences between the countries of the Region; monitoring and applied research, including the creation of a Latin American Observatory of Hunger and Poverty.

89. The Conference noted with great interest of the proposal of Venezuela regarding cooperation on rural development and food security consisting of Integrated Rural Development Cooperation Projects and a solidarity-based Fund of Nutritional Agricultural Goods to be established as explained in Appendix F and F-1.

90. The Conference learned with great interest of the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025" proposal of Guatemala and Brazil which had the support of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered under GRULAC in Rome, with the recommendation that it be endorsed by the Conference. (See the adopted proposal in Appendix G).

91. The Conference requested FAO support in implementing this initiative and called in particular, for the participation of the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr José Graziano da Silva, in the coordination of related FAO action. It also indicated the need for the Regional Office in Santiago to have a Food Security Officer and an appropriate support team for these activities.

**Strengthening regional capacity for the prevention and control of avian influenza in Latin America and the Caribbean**

92. The Conference was informed of the nature and level of risk that highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 could affect the Region. It was briefed on protection measures in place.

93. The Conference asked FAO, in coordination with PAHO, WHO and the OIE, to promote and support activities of exchange and cooperation between the countries of the Region for implementation of protection measures against the risk of avian flu. It singled out FAO support for cooperation between the laboratory networks of the countries of the Region.

94. The Conference requested that FAO promote research into different forms of poultry production that were environmentally and socially sustainable, and into their vulnerability to avian flu and other diseases, and corresponding protection measures in each case.

95. The Conference recommended that FAO provide technical cooperation so that the intellectual property of drugs and reagents did not constitute an obstacle to the treatment of a pandemic.

**Reports of the regional commissions: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL); Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)**

96. The Conference was informed of the findings and conclusions of the meetings of the regional commissions, WECAFC, COPESCAL and LACFC, with a highlighting of their respective identified trends and an explanation of their agreed recommendations. It also took note that the next session of COPESCAL would take place in Leticia, Colombia.

97. The Conference indicated the importance of policies for the management of marine and river fishery resources to ensure their sustainable use and optimize their production.

98. The Conference asked that FAO, in cooperation with the countries of the Region, promote and technically support the conduct of studies to monitor fishery resources and, in general, to improve the quality of fishery information.

99. The Conference requested that FAO provide technical support for training in the trade and handling of fishery products and for education in the consumption of these products to ensure their quality and safety. It also called for studies on linkages between fishing and nutrition and on improving the living conditions of artisanal fishers.

100. The Conference suggested that FAO support the exchange of experiences between countries on the subject of reforestation, in particular productive reforestation with the use of fruit trees.

101. The Conference requested that FAO promote and technically support the exchange of experiences between countries and the possibilities of partnerships on the subject of bioenergy as a priority focus of cooperation.

**Round Table “Towards a regional agricultural common market: problems and perspectives**

102. The Conference was informed of the progress that had been made in various trade integration mechanisms involving the countries of the Region, through various forms of treaty and agreement. It was also informed of the challenges in taking this process forward, particularly the asymmetries in the levels of development of countries; the need to harmonize trade and agricultural regulations; coherence in food safety and quality systems and standards; and the need for compatibility between the multiplicity of agreements.

103. The Conference was informed of progress in subregional integration in CARICOM, Mercosur, the Central American Common Market and the Andean Community, with an explanation of advances in integration in each case, current priorities and the possible impact of an agricultural common market that covered the whole Region.

104. The Conference recognized the merit of the background document and indicated the need to consider the specific conditions of individual countries. In particular, it stated that the suggestion to use the Agricultural Special Safety Mechanism, that had been agreed at the Hong Kong Summit of the Doha Round of the WTO, would raise the need to negotiate a differentiated use of this mechanism for the developed countries and for the developing countries.

105. The Conference suggested that FAO focus its technical support on the process of integration of agricultural trade, in particular on the negotiation of sanitary aspects, and on training for customs control protection against transboundary pests and diseases.

106. The Conference suggested that FAO support exchanges of experiences and cooperation between the countries of the Region for the more efficient and equitable incorporation of family farming into commercial networks, as a way of improving food and nutrition security and social inclusion.

107. The Conference supported the position of Haiti under the perception that solidarity was also expressed in the search for better terms for that country's exports.

108. The Conference was informed of the position of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela whereby, while fully respecting other positions, it stressed that it was not willing to follow processes of integration based on expedited formats such as FTAs and negotiations with developed countries. The Venezuelan Delegation indicated that integration only made sense if viewed from a radically different perspective, identified as integration out of solidarity, which was already being taken forward with a number of countries under the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA).

#### **Round Table "Institutional challenges for national, subregional and regional technological innovation"**

109. The Conference was informed of the scope of the concept, advances and institutional inadequacies of the process of agricultural technological innovation in the Region, and of suggestions and orientations to better develop this topic. There was also a presentation on existing international cooperation systems for agricultural technological innovation.

110. The Conference recognized the merits of the background document but also indicated that this should be reviewed to complement and correct a number of important aspects. Among these was the need to acknowledge that there was no direct, simple relationship between productivity and food and nutrition security, which was in fact a complex socio-economic process; nor did trade depend linearly on the development of innovation because trade barriers and distortions also had a significant impact; emphasis on participation of the private sector in the process of innovation needed to be countered by a greater presence of the State; there needed to be greater appreciation of the contribution of technology research centres, beyond the adoption of technologies generated in developed countries; there also needed to be recognition of the efforts made by the Region in the field of extension; and biotechnology issues needed to be addressed in consideration of environmental sustainability.

111. The Conference recommended that FAO support technological innovation processes that were directed towards improving the production systems of small producers and family farming. It also indicated that, if the productivity of small producers was to be increased even further, it was important to concentrate on innovations in the forms of social organization of production that would permit a more efficient and equitable use of social, economic and environmental resources.

112. The Conference recognized the usefulness of the actions of the FAO-FODEPAL project to support South-South cooperation and to train those formulating and implementing policies directed towards food security, through new information and communication technologies. The Conference also recognized the merit in promoting such actions to foster sustainability and regional cohesion, and to help bridge the digital divide.

## REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### **Opening of the Technical Committee meeting**

113. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO opened the Technical Committee Meeting, welcoming delegates and observers and thanking the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for hosting the event.

### **Election of the Technical Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and appointment of the Rapporteur and Drafting Committee**

114. The Committee unanimously elected the Technical Committee officers listed in Appendix D.

### **Adoption of the Technical Committee agenda and timetable**

115. The Committee adopted the agenda and timetable, documents LARC/06/1 and LARC/06/INF/2 (see agenda in Appendix C), with the inclusion, at the request of the GRULAC delegations, of the item "Report on the results of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development", also to be discussed together with the "Latin America and the Caribbean Without Hunger 2025" Initiative at the Plenary Session.

### **Territorial policies for the economic and social development of rural areas**

116. The Committee emphasized the need to examine the relationship between economic growth and development, and to avoid oversimplification as agricultural growth had often not translated into significant improvement in living conditions and opportunities for the rural population.

117. The Committee recognized the important role played by the State and decentralized government bodies in defining and implementing territorial policies. It reaffirmed the need for these policies to be broadly democratic and participatory, involving the various agents of civil society, articulating the public and private sectors and with interinstitutional coordination in the specific territorial context.

118. Agriculture is a fundamental economic sector for social and economic development and for food security in the countries of the Region. In addition to its direct contribution to the generation of productive work and income, it is the basis for a large part of manufacturing and trade activity, and is the origin of a significant proportion of their exports. It also plays an essential role in land-use planning and in the economic dynamism of the rural environment. On the other hand, agriculture is also a way of life for the Region that is closely attached to ancestral practices, traditional knowledge and the relationship with the environment and its protection.

119. The Committee noted that rural development incorporated all production activities in the rural environment in a territorial-based approach; it included democratic land use and tenure and, as appropriate, the promotion of freely defined associative forms of production; it covered linkages with market distribution channels and the incorporation of production chains; and it should also include living conditions, security, housing and access to services. With this in mind, the Committee stressed that territorial policies should be an integral part of national development policies.

120. The Committee called greater recognition and emphasis on the importance of increasing rural incomes. The low wages and lack of opportunity in the countryside were key determinants of urban migration that often led to frustration and problems of violence.

121. The Committee stated that, in addition to using land and natural resources efficiently, it was essential to achieve greater productivity and complementarity and to support processes of medium- and long-term investment that would foster food security, equitable and fair participation in markets, and higher rural incomes.

122. The Committee indicated that a multidisciplinary, multisectoral and multidimensional approach was needed in territorial development policies.

123. The Committee explained that territorial inequalities were often accentuated by the fact that regions with greater progress were also better able to capture funds. To avoid such polarization, it was essential to gain a genuine understanding of the rural territories, beyond their technological and productive vocation, to reappraise their potential and identity.

124. The Committee stated that rural development policies needed to evolve from a traditional assistance-oriented approach to a structural concept that favoured a new political, social and economic dynamic in rural areas, creating opportunities of access to assets and market openings, thereby generating income combined with social inclusion. For this to happen, the historically excluded social groups needed to be able to propose policy and take strategic decisions for the creation of opportunities of generation, aggregation and appropriation of income from innovative projects.

125. The Committee stated that it was essential for territorial policies to be able to go beyond the definition of priorities for the allocation of government resources. If the cycle of poverty and inequality was to be broken, emphasis needed to be placed on the organized and proactive participation of the rural population, in joint action with the State authorities, to achieve real participation with government decentralized bodies.

126. The Committee indicated that the inclusion of the private business sector in the multisectoral perspective of territorial development policies should not jeopardize moves towards the social inclusion of the poorest segments.

127. The Committee suggested that the studies being conducted with FAO support in three countries (Brazil, Chile and Mexico) be extended to other countries of the Region, including in particular the specific characteristics of the Caribbean islands. It also recommended that FAO continue to look more deeply and broadly into this subject.

128. The Committee acknowledged FAO's cooperation in implementing projects that targeted the most vulnerable sectors of the population, including ethnic communities and populations displaced by violence, in matters relating to food and the creation of rural employment, and others.

129. The Committee stated the need to promote mechanisms of solidarity and integration in the Region, emphasizing the particular case of the Republic of Haiti to help the efforts of the Haitian people to further their development.

### **Food safety and animal and plant health. Trends and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean**

130. The Committee noted the relevance of food safety and animal and plant health for the countries of the Region, given that the rapid increase in movement of people and goods broadened the possibilities of progress but also the risks of spread of pests and diseases.

131. The Committee noted the commitment of the countries of the Region to the health of their populations and to their participation in international markets, within a trading environment that ensured the safety and quality of food.

132. The Committee expressed its concern over the high economic and social costs of outbreaks of diseases and pests and urged that related risks be addressed collectively through mechanisms of cooperation and shared procedures.

133. The Committee indicated the need for sufficient financial resources to ensure the success of mechanisms for the control and eradication of pests and diseases, and indicated the need for a compensation fund for cases of slaughter of affected animal populations.

134. The Committee indicated that the FAO/WHO Trust Fund to help developing countries had adopted distribution criteria that restricted support to participation in Codex meetings. At present, only one country of the Region could receive assistance for participation in three meetings of the Codex; the remaining would only receive funding for one meeting. The Committee supported the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) that the criteria for the distribution of funds be modified and the equitable distribution of those funds be ensured.

135. The Committee recognized the importance of FAO's food safety training activities. It indicated that such training should be coupled with the possibility of modernizing existing administration and control structures in individual countries, within integrated programmes funded by various institutions that would help FAO's training activities.

136. In order to strengthen the negotiating capacity of the representatives of countries working on Codex thematic areas, the Committee suggested that FAO could usefully coordinate training actions with the WTO on the "Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)" and the "Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)" of the WTO.

137. The Committee stressed that cooperation between countries was essential to address issues relating to food safety and animal and plant health. Such cooperation should be supported by FAO and other international agencies, including a broadening of financial support to the Scientific Committee of the Codex.

### **Trends and challenges in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean**

138. The Committee indicated the importance of having a broad approach that situated agricultural and rural development within the processes of global development and a changing international context. It also noted the importance of balancing this approach with the addition of an orientation of agricultural and rural development in the countries of the Region towards the achievement of food security from the internal perspective of the rural world, safeguarding the ways of life of its population and its relationship with the environment.

139. The Committee expressed the need for analyses of agricultural trends and challenges to include a baseline analysis of agricultural products that could be traded in a context of environmental sustainability and sanitary control, as the basis for greater economic growth.

140. The Committee indicated the need for identified challenges to include implementation of development policies that favoured social inclusion, particularly of marginalized groups such as peasant farmers, artisanal fishers and rural fish farmers.

141. The Committee recommended more in-depth study of the trends and challenges in agriculture of Latin America and the Caribbean, within an optic of development with equity to ensure a better distribution of the benefits of economic progress.

### **Report on the results of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)**

142. The Committee was informed by the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in March 2006 of its goals, development, main subjects, results, recommendations and follow-up mechanisms.

143. The Committee stated that institutional frameworks for land tenure and use were fundamental for agricultural and rural development. Although the countries of the Region presented a wide array of situations in this respect, agrarian reform tailored to the specific conditions of each country constituted an important step towards the efficient use of natural resources and their economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Committee also recognized that land redistribution needed to be accompanied by support measures, including technology transfer, credit and finance, systems of innovation and management, and other mechanisms to facilitate the modernization of farmers' production processes and their integration into trade channels. The Committee requested FAO's technical support in these activities.

144. The Committee noted the innovative nature of the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development with its inclusion of concepts such as the perception of human rights, food security, social justice, fair trade, individual, community and collective rights, social inclusion and the incorporation of landless peasant farmers.

145. The Committee highlighted the importance of the ICARRD follow-up mechanisms for both governments and civil society. As regards governments, information and experiences could be exchanged between agrarian reform institutions in the countries of the Region. Important for the involvement of civil society was the mechanism of inclusive national dialogue envisaged in paragraph 29 of the Final Declaration. The Committee indicated that FAO should play an important role in supporting this follow-up.

146. The Committee emphasized the importance of the GRULAC proposal to hold subregional seminars, with broad participation of social movements, to follow up on ICARRD and stated that sources of financing for such seminars had already been identified.

147. The Committee indicated that it was fundamental for the Region to be able to follow up on ICARRD in the Committee on World Food Security and the FAO Council, including the possible formulation of Voluntary Guidelines for the National Implementation of the Right to Land.

148. The Committee requested that FAO, through the Technical Secretariat of ICARRD and under the coordination of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, convene and conduct seminars and panel discussions, organized by groups of countries and with broad



participation of social movements, to lay the groundwork for a Plan of Action that would help resolve, on a voluntary basis, the more urgent problems identified by ICARRD.

149. The Committee requested that the Technical Secretariat of ICARRD in FAO, under the coordination of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, prepare a document to be submitted for discussion and adoption at the 131st Session of the FAO Council in November, 2006, to support the organization of subregional seminars in order to generate inputs for the preparation and future implementation of an ICARRD Plan of Action.

150. The Committee recommended that FAO, through its appropriate units (TCAP in particular), draft a proposal, for instance a Special Programme for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, to ensure the necessary support for implementation of the above activities.

#### **Adoption of the Technical Committee report**

151. The Committee unanimously adopted the present report.

#### **Closure of the Technical Committee meeting**

152. The Committee reiterated its thanks to the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their hospitality.

153. The Chairperson of the Technical Committee thanked the delegates for their participation and drew the Technical Committee meeting to a close.

## FINAL ITEMS

### **Date, place and agenda of the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean**

154. The Conference noted with satisfaction the offer of the Delegation of Brazil to host the 30<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference to be held in 2008. The offer was unanimously endorsed by the delegations present. The Conference asked that the Director-General take this endorsement into account when deciding the place and date of the next Regional Conference after consultation with the Government of Brazil.

155. The Delegation of Brazil suggested that, at the appropriate time, consideration might be given to the possibility of holding the subsequent Conference, in 2010, in Colombia.

### **Other matters**

156. The Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to FAO made an appeal at the Conference for the countries of the Region to provide voluntary contributions, within their capabilities, to support the financing of the Independent External Evaluation and thus demonstrate their political support to the initiative.

157. The Permanent Observer of the Holy See to FAO addressed a message to the Conference in which he urged the countries of the Region to redouble their efforts to combat the scourge of hunger and to improve the living conditions of the rural population.

158. The Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala reiterated the commitment to follow up with immediate concrete actions the recommendations of FAO to implement the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger - 2025”.

### **Adoption of the Report**

159. The Conference adopted the report unanimously, including its constituent Technical Committee report.

### **Closure of the Conference**

160. The Conference thanked the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for having hosted the Conference and for having provided all the facilities needed for its proceedings.

161. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean thanked the delegations for their work and the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the efficient organization of the event and renewed FAO's pledge to follow up on the recommendations of the Conference.

162. The Minister of Agriculture and Land of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela congratulated the delegations on the outcome of the Conference and expressed his conviction that the effort that had been made constituted a significant advance in the strategy to fight hunger in the Region. Speaking on behalf of the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, he thanked the delegations for the work done and brought the 29<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean to a close.

## STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

*Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Honourable Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

### **Introduction**

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to find myself in the company of the leaders of the agricultural sector of Latin America and the Caribbean gathered at this Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference. May I begin by expressing on behalf of the Organization, its staff – and equally the delegates and observers – our gratitude to President Hugo Chavez, to the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for hosting this Conference and for their generous hospitality.

### **State of food insecurity in the world and in the Latin America and Caribbean region**

Ten years ago, the leaders of the international community, gathered in Rome for the World Food Summit, decided to reduce by half the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015. At this half-way stage, it now seems that unless we redouble our efforts in the next ten years, this objective will only be achieved in 2150.

If we take stock of progress made towards achievement of this objective, we cannot but note that, despite significant breakthroughs, the rate of progress in most regions of the world remains insufficient to achieve the set objective. If current trends continue, Latin America and the Caribbean will be the only developing region likely to achieve the objective of the Millennium Declaration by the planned date. Indeed, the number of undernourished people has fallen in recent years, from 59 million in 1990-1992 to 52 million in 2001-2003. However, these overall figures conceal a deteriorating situation in Central America and the Caribbean, where the number of undernourished people rose from 12.7 million in 1990-1992 to 14.1 million in 2001-2003. Progress must therefore be four times faster than in the last ten years, which is possible, certainly, for some countries of South America and those with energy and mining resources, but is undoubtedly more difficult for the others.

The reduction of hunger is not only essential for humanitarian reasons but also for economic and social development. It will have a direct impact on the reduction of poverty, the improvement of health from better nutrition and progress in education through higher income not only from rural agriculture but also from urban and periurban agriculture.

Latin America and the Caribbean posted a 5.9 percent increase in GDP in 2004 and 3.8 percent in 2005, signalling the greatest economic gain in the region since the 1970s. The region therefore has the favourable macroeconomic conditions to suggest rapid advance towards greater justice in the distribution of the fruits of growth, particularly to the poorest populations.

## Development of agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2004-2005: the results

### Food production

Food production increased by 3.5 percent per year between 2000 and 2004, which is far higher than the 1.4 percent rate of population growth and slightly above the average of 3.4 percent for the 1990s.

- *Agricultural production*

Agricultural production increased by 3.3 percent between 1992 and 2004. The annual rate of growth for 2000 to 2004 stands at 3.5 percent, which is higher than the two previous decades (2.4 percent in the 1980s and 3.1 percent in the 1990s).

Five countries of the region did however experience food crises in 2002, mainly because of climatic disasters and falling prices of coffee.

- *Crops*

The growth of crop output was only 1.6 percent in 2004 but was 7.1 percent in 2003. The average rate of growth of this subsector since the beginning of the century is 3.3 percent per year, which is significantly higher than the world average of 2.2 percent per year and higher than other developing regions (2.8 percent in Asia and 2.7 percent in Africa).

These encouraging results were made possible by refocusing the macroeconomic framework of the region, which had been most unfavourable to agriculture, but also by participating more in trade because of strong international demand for several primary commodities.

However, a number of worrying factors require the Conference's attention. It is especially the Southern Cone countries that have seized the openings of international commodity trade, thanks to the adjustment of their institutional framework and their greater natural resource potential. These countries have amplified their cropland area, notably for soybean and other field crops, which has accelerated growth of production but is causing numerous problems of equilibrium of ecosystem. If agriculture is to be revived in the other countries, which have often lost their preferential terms of trade, measures will be needed to intensify agricultural production, by investing in rural infrastructure and raising added value through agroindustrial activity.

- *Livestock*

Livestock accounts for 43 percent of agricultural production, which is comparable to North America and Europe and much higher than the 30 percent of the other developing regions.

Between 2000 and 2004, animal production increased in the region by an annual 2.9 percent, compared to 3.6 percent in the previous decade. Development of the dynamic livestock sectors (poultry, pig, cattle and dairy production), where the outlook for demand is favourable, should help sustain growth in the medium term. It is vital, however, to resolve the problems of food safety and their impact on production and international trade.

### Fishery products

The most important fishery resources are fully exploited, if not overexploited. Because of climatic phenomena, landings have trended downwards by 2.1 percent per year. If we wish to avoid depleting stocks, we need to strengthen management and introduce new institutional arrangements that are more in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

## **Forestry sector**

Latin America and the Caribbean have 924 million hectares of natural forest, which is 23 percent of the world's forest cover. But its annual net loss of 4.7 million hectares 64 percent of the world's loss of forest cover.

Forestry development in the region is not satisfactory and is not getting better, except in two or three countries. A rapid change in institutional approach is needed together with new mechanisms to steer operators towards the sustainable use of forest resources.

## **Agricultural commodity trade**

In 2004, agricultural exports from Latin America and the Caribbean amounted to US\$75 billion, which was 18.2 percent higher than the previous year.

Agricultural imports totalled US\$35 billion, which was 10.5 percent up from 2003.

The agricultural balance of trade for 2004 would appear to be in surplus by US\$40 billion, which is an extremely positive result for the region.

## **Constraints**

### **Water**

The long-term viability of agriculture in the region requires the sustainable management of natural resources and greater efficiency in their use and conservation. While the region as a whole is relatively privileged and receives 30 percent of the world's precipitation, land and water resources in several areas are being affected by serious man-made degradation. And only 13 percent of cropland is irrigated. The region should assure its population greater access to quality water in a framework of institutional modernization, greater investment and measures to protect the environment.

FAO is encouraging the involvement of waters users in decision-making and the design of effective management and conservation systems geared towards microcatchment basins.

### **Rural infrastructure**

In vast parts of the region, progress in agricultural productivity has not been matched by improved infrastructure for transport, communication and access to services in the rural sector. The transaction costs of small producers must be reduced if their incomes and food security are to be enhanced.

### **Financing**

The rural population accounts for 23 percent of the national total and agriculture provides 18 percent of employment, but public expenditure allocated to the rural sector averages only 6.5 percent of the total. In addition, rural expenditure per inhabitant fell during the last ten years, from US\$205 to US\$141.

The Member Nations of FAO meeting at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in March 2006, proposed that agrarian reform be directed more towards the poor and their organizations, that it have a social orientation and that it

be participatory. It should contribute to food security and the eradication of poverty. It should also be founded on secured individual, community and collective property rights and on equity in access to this important and culturally significant production factor, especially for landless peasants. It should promote productivity, the strengthening of local and national markets, employment, the generation of income and social inclusion. It should also foster the conservation of the environmental resources of rural areas, in the respect of the rights and aspirations of the rural populations.

### **Institutional framework**

The institutional structures that govern rural and labour markets should guarantee an efficient and sustainable use of resources and be accompanied by systems of evaluation and control.

### **Transboundary diseases**

The countries of the region are still untouched by the H5N1 subtype of avian influenza. In the past, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico suffered outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian flu of other strains (H5N2 and H7N3) but these were quickly detected and eliminated, thus preventing their widespread dissemination in the region. These outbreaks of avian flu incurred high costs: in Chile alone, the economic impact of the 2002 outbreak was evaluated at US\$31 million.

Other diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, swine fever, screwworm and rabies also lead to losses in production and trading restrictions. FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health have recently launched the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD). In this connection, FAO is funding four technical cooperation projects for Central America, the Andean countries, South America and the Caribbean aimed specifically at strengthening veterinary services.

### **Other initiatives**

At the beginning of this year, Latin American food security experts launched the *Latin America without Hunger by 2025 (ALSH-2025)* initiative which has five objectives: reinforcement of the institutional organization of food security in the countries of the region; South-South cooperation between the countries of the region and other continents; development of human capital through technical training; support to governments to link national initiatives aimed at reducing hunger and poverty; and research applied to food security.

FAO welcomes this initiative which will strengthen mechanisms to eliminate hunger in the region, and is ready to provide its full support.

### **Issues on the agenda of the Regional Conference**

After examining the key technical issues on the agenda and analysing the main trends of agriculture, rural development and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean, the participants at the Conference will put forward recommendations on measures to be taken by countries and technical cooperation expected of FAO. The Regional Conference will examine progress made by the countries of the region towards achieving the objectives of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Summit. It will also be examining the follow-up given to the main recommendations of the Regional Conference of 2004.

Finally, two round tables will be held to discuss the problems and prospects of a regional agricultural common market and the institutional challenges that exist in the region.

### **Outcome of the Thirty-third Conference of FAO**

The Thirty-third session of the Conference of FAO, which was held in Rome in November 2005, adopted a budget of US\$765.7 million for the 2006-2007 biennium, which represents zero nominal growth plus security expenditures and US\$6 million for priority programmes. The FAO Conference also examined my proposals for reform of the Organization. It approved, among other matters, a number of changes to the organizational structure at Headquarters, which have already been carried out, and implementation of the decentralization proposals in one region and the opening of another subregional office. I have decided, in this regard, to begin with the Africa region and the Central Asia subregion, and I intend to propose to the Council in November 2006 the extension of decentralization to the other regions of the world and the restructuring of Headquarters within the limit of the eight departments indicated by the Conference. As part of this exercise, the proposal is to establish new subregional offices for Central America, the Andean countries and MERCOSUR. I hope that these proposals will receive your support.

The Programme of Work and Budget 2006-2007, which will be submitted for approval to the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee this May, in accordance with the guidelines of the Conference of November 2005, accommodates these initial changes in the organizational structure of Headquarters and the decentralized offices, and places special emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge and the building of capacities in developing countries.

FAO will also have to raise some US\$15 million in voluntary contributions to cover the transition costs of reform.

### **Conclusions**

*Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The majority of people suffering from hunger live in the countryside. The rural population remains seriously marginalized, especially in education, health and access to services. Agriculture is the principal source of employment in rural areas. It is dynamically interwoven with the other economic activities. Agricultural development thus plays a crucial role in enhancing rural income, indicators of wellbeing and food security in the countryside. But it is also poor farmers who migrate to cities and heighten the proletarianization of the suburbs of national and regional capitals.

The fight to eliminate hunger and achieve the Millennium Development Goals will be won or lost through rural, urban and periurban agriculture. I am sure that this Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean will provide suggestions and offer guidelines to promote agricultural and rural development and achieve the objective of food security.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**STATEMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE FAO COUNCIL**

Mr. Vice-President  
Mr. Director-General of FAO  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure and indeed an honour to express on my own behalf and on behalf of all member states of FAO, our most sincere thanks and gratitude to you, Mr. Vice-President, and through you to the President, to the Government and to the great people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for the unforgettable hospitality and generosity extended to all participants in the 29<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The sense of history and civilization which prevails all over the place has filled my heart with a feeling of respect, pride, confidence and hope for the future development and prosperity of the whole region. This hope has its roots not only in the ancient civilizations of Mayas, Incas and Aztecs, but also in the more recent history of independence which is embodied in the name of Simon Bolivar.

Mr. Chairman, this optimism and hope is not only based in history but in the very contemporary facts. As an economist, I feel duty bound to emphasize the profound effects and deep influence of the school of thought of the dependency theory associated with the name of Raul Prebisch, on the effective economic strategies and policies of scores of countries all over the world, especially on the issues related to trade, food security and self-reliance. Furthermore, prevailing policies of zero hunger, South-South cooperation, agrarian reform and rural development and the right to food in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, are vivid examples for my optimism about the future of this region.

Mr. Chairman, we are living in a world endowed with such a global prosperity and material wealth that no one could realistically have predicted even half a century ago. The world GDP is exceeding 40,000 billion dollars; some countries enjoy per capita income of more than US\$40,000 per year, but unfortunately, in the very same world and at the very same time, 3 billion people are living on an income of less than \$2 per day. Every day, 25,000 children die of hunger and malnutrition; in other words, during the 5 days of our Conference here in Venezuela, 125,000 children will never again wake up from their sleep. In spite of the profound material wealth, the availability of needed technology and inputs, the world is doing very little to save these lives and to create some hope for them. Although the reason for this reluctance has been said to be lack of political will, I think we should seek solutions beyond this reason.

Mr. Chairman, the liberal economy and the so-called invisible hands of classical economists have proven unable to manage our troubled world, which is rapidly shrinking to a global village faced with unprecedented inequalities and injustice.

The humanistic and peaceful management of our world is in dire need of some very visible hearts to beat in all corners of the globe. In simple words, while freedom and competition are the seeds of efficiency and progress, respect and care for the poor and the vulnerable are the foundations of peace, development and justice. We have to transform the culture of greed to the culture of care. FAO, with its mandate of "Fiat Panis", that is Food for All, is a good example of such a culture. FAO, with its sacred goals and its invaluable sources of knowledge and expertise, is, or better said, can be a visible heart for the world on issues related to food in security, poverty and hunger. If we did not have an FAO, it would be high time to create it.



Honourable Ministers, distinguished participants,

Now in the dawn of the third millennium, FAO is facing a very important and delicate turning point. The Organization, which during its past 60 years of service to the poor has been in the forefront of combating food insecurity and has had a great impact on the world's agricultural development, is in need of a refurbish. In line with the whole UN System, this need has simultaneously been expressed both by its visionary Director-General and by its entire member states. The first part of the reform package of the Director-General has already commenced and the second part titled "*A vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*" will be presented to you shortly. I am confident that you will provide your support and valuable comments to this very important document. Parallel to this, and Independent External Evaluation was proposed by the member states. The Council and Conference in 2005 have emphasized the importance of an early start to the IEE and that its report should be completed in adequate time for full consideration by the Governing bodies by November 2007. The Conference in particular stressed the mutually-supportive role of the IEE and the reform proposals of the Director-General. They "welcomed in this context, the establishment of an IEE Multilateral Trust Fund by FAO and urged all member states to contribute in making this evaluation a true product of the membership as a whole".

Your Excellencies, the Chairman of the Council Committee for the IEE has requested me to bring this Conference recommendation to your kind attention and to request your financial contribution, even in small amounts, which symbolically demonstrates your support for this practice and its ownership by us all.

Dear sisters and brothers, let me finalize my statement by adding another touch of history to it. In the dawn of the second millennium, that is more than 1,000 years ago, the house of a Persian SUFI (Abolhassan Kharaghani) was open to the public as a guest house and at its entrance was written: "Whoever enters this house, give him/her food, do not ask his/her faith because the one who is entitled to life by the Almighty is definitely entitled to food by Abolhassan". This is the kind of conviction which is needed to uproot hunger and misery from our world.

Thank you.

**AGENDA OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
(24 and 25 April 2006)

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Opening of the Technical Committee Meeting
2. Election of the Technical Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Technical Committee Agenda and Timetable

**II. TECHNICAL ITEMS**

4. Territorial policies for the economic and social development of rural areas
5. Food safety and animal and plant health: trends and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean
6. Trends and challenges in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean
7. Adoption of the Technical Committee Report
8. Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

**AGENDA OF THE PLENARY SESSION**  
(26 to 28 April 2006)

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Opening Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

**II. STATEMENTS**

4. Statement of the Director-General
5. Matters arising from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference. FAO Reform. Part I: The Director-General's revised proposals. Part II: A vision for the twenty-first century
6. Report on FAO activities (2004-2005) with a focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and action taken on the recommendations of the 28<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Particulars on the Special Forum on Follow-up to the World Food Summit Plan of Action – Committee on World Food Security 2006
7. Strengthening regional capacity for the prevention and control of Avian Influenza in Latin America and the Caribbean
8. Reports of the regional commissions: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL); and Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)
9. Round Table “Towards a Regional Agricultural Common Market: Problems and Perspectives”
10. Round Table “Institutional Challenges for National, Subregional and Regional Technological Innovation”
11. Date, place and agenda items of the 30<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
12. Other matters
13. Adoption of the Report (including the Technical Committee Report)
14. Closure of the Regional Conference

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<b>Chairperson</b>	Elías JAUA	VENEZUELA
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<b>Rapporteur</b>	Luis Camilo OSORIO	COLOMBIA

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<b>Rapporteur</b>	Milton RONDÓ Filho	BRAZIL

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## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>
LARC/06/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
LARC/06/2	Territorial policies for the economic and social development of rural areas
LARC/06/3	Food safety and animal and plant health: trends and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/06/4	Matters arising from the 33 <sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference
LARC/06/INF/1	Information Note
LARC/06/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
LARC/06/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
LARC/06/INF/4	Statement of the Director-General
LARC/06/INF/5	Report on FAO activities (2004-2005) with a focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and action taken on the main recommendations of the 28 <sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/06/INF/5 Sup.1	Particulars on the Special Forum on Follow-up to the World Food Summit Plan of Action – Committee on World Food Security 2006
LARC/06/INF/6	Trends and challenges in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/06/INF/7	Strengthening regional capacity for the prevention and control of Avian Influenza in Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/06/INF/8	Report of the Twelfth Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)
LARC/06/INF/9	Report of the Tenth Session of the Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL)
LARC/06/INF/10	Report of the Twenty-third Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC)
LARC/06/INF/11	Round Table: Towards a regional agricultural common market: problems and perspectives
LARC/06/INF/12	Round Table: Institutional challenges for national, subregional and regional technological innovation
RC/2006/1	FAO Reform. Part I: The Director-General's revised proposals. Part II: A vision for the twenty-first century

**PROPOSAL OF BOLIVIA, BRAZIL, GUATEMALA AND VENEZUELA ON THE  
PROCEDURE FOR INITIATIVES AGAINST HUNGER IN LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

The Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean has listened to and reflected with great interest upon the interventions and proposals made under Item 6 of the Agenda, proposals to intensify the fight against hunger, social exclusion, poverty in the world and especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

Considering that a general consensus currently exists in Latin America and the Caribbean on the need to broaden to a national scale initiatives to fight hunger, if the countries are to achieve MDG 1. This will require further insight into upscaling methodologies, a strengthening of national institutions, the promotion of exchange of successful experiences and lessons learned between countries and the retention of the fight against hunger as a priority on the policy agenda of the countries and of the Region as a whole.

In this context there is clearly a need to study coordinated projects of integrated rural development that are interdisciplinary, participatory, inclusive and sustainable and that include innovative financing mechanisms. The Conference has considered it important to develop the following components, among others: production systems, territorial areas, local economies, including local, regional and national markets, associative mechanisms of community participation and organization, the mapping and identification of particularly affected geographical areas, priority populations from a socio-economic perspective, identification of government institutions, civil society, social organizations, the private sector, etc.

Considering in particular the attached proposal presented by Venezuela to this Conference and the need for governments to promote internal consultations on their terms (Appendix F-1).

Considering that the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025" initiative is at an advanced stage of formulation and preparation for its implementation, that it is supported by the Director-General of FAO and that there is interest on the part of third party countries in providing the initial resources for its financing;

Considering the interest and benefits of examining, aligning or integrating other initiatives existing at local, national and regional level and international cooperation, the Conference has asked that FAO, through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, provide technical support to the establishment and functioning of two complementary and coordinated working bodies:

- a) A Technical Committee to analyse initiatives against hunger and facilitate their convergence, open to the Member Nations of FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will meet in July 2006 in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
- b) A Working Group which will initially meet in Guatemala, composed in principle of two (2) representatives of the Caribbean countries, two (2) of

Central America and four (4) of South America, chosen from among the members of the Technical Committee, to undertake the possible convergence and integration of the projects previously identified by the Committee.

In the exercise of its support to the work of the Technical Committee and the Working Group, the FAO Regional Office in Santiago will periodically report on progress made to the Permanent Representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean accredited to FAO (GRULAC) and to the Committee on World Food Security.

The Conference recommends that the Committee on World Food Security include the follow-up of this proposal as a standing item on its agenda.

## PROPOSAL OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in the search for concrete agreements that will consolidate the important conceptual definitions of our declarations and in the face of the present situation of exclusion, poverty and hunger that affects the world and especially our region, proposes:

- a) To promote the incorporation within our models of exchange, mechanisms that will ensure the creation of new relations of production and integration that are socially-oriented and human. These will help lay the ground for the construction of a food security system for Latin America and the Caribbean which, in its initial stage, could comprise two phases. The first would involve the raising of solidarity-based cooperation through assistance in the form of goods and services to our countries in which there is greater exclusion and poverty, these being preferably acquired from family farming in order to promote development. The second would involve the establishment of interlocking Integrated Rural Development projects and their coordination through a conjugation of networks between State agencies and social movements, always within the framework of respect of unity within diversity and the laws of each country.
- b) To study the adoption of coordinated Integrated Rural Development projects that are interdisciplinary, participatory, inclusive and sustainable, and that include innovative, socially-oriented and liberating financial mechanisms. These would develop the following components, among others: systems of production, improvement of local economies and associative mechanisms of community participation and organization, all directed towards the concrete realization of **Territorial Areas of Local Integrated Development**.
- c) To examine and integrate potentially compatible existing initiatives to address the problems of hunger in the region, such as "*Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025*" and other contributions from multilateral organizations, in order to ensure the interlinkage, complementarity, solidarity and self-determination of our peoples, avoiding the overlapping of programmes for Integrated Rural Development and Food Security; hence the importance of integrating this initiative in perfect symbiosis as a rapid means of addressing the challenges that we always evoked at international meetings, the latest being the Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference.
- d) To establish a Technical Committee made up of a representative of each country participating at this Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, and a Working Group responsible for presenting a detailed proposal for the functioning of the Committee and for a socially-oriented voluntary *Fund of Nutritional Agricultural Goods* that will be gradually built up to deal with emerging situations. To achieve this objective, the delegations will enter into consultations with their respective governments over this initiative. To this end, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela proposes to hold the First Meeting of the Technical Committee in July 2006.
- e) To employ as the basis of this initiative in the Technical Committee the document that will be presented by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela entitled "Proposal for Cooperation on Rural Development and Food Security".

**"LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITHOUT HUNGER 2025"  
INITIATIVE: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

The Conference, after having examined with attention and interest the informal working document on the "Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025" initiative, presented by Guatemala and Brazil, with the support of selected countries (Appendix G-1);

Considering that the proposal had already been the subject of previous examination and positive appreciation in principle, in Rome, by the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and presented by this Group in Plenary with a recommendation for its approval;

Taking into account the general consensus at various levels, both national and international, over the need to upscale ongoing initiatives against hunger and poverty;

Recalling furthermore the First Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) of halving hunger in the world by 2015 and that, according to FAO studies, current conditions in the Region permit an intensification of efforts to obtain more rapid and ambitious results;

Considering in addition that this will require more in-depth study of upscaling methodologies, a strengthening of national institutions, the promotion of exchange and cooperation to this end, greater awareness of successful experiences among countries and the retention of the fight against hunger as a priority on the policy agenda of the countries and of the Region as a whole;

The Conference decided to endorse the "Latin America and Caribbean without Hunger 2025" initiative and to recommend that FAO promote the necessary human and financial resources, including with contributions from third party countries and other international organizations, for its full realization, under the guidance and coordination of its Regional Office in Santiago.

The Conference also decided, in view of its decision on the benefit of studying, coordinating, aligning and, as appropriate, integrating programmes with similar or complementary objectives, to associate the Working Group referred to in Appendix F to charge it with promoting and monitoring the measures needed for the most complete and urgent implementation of this initiative.

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITHOUT HUNGER 2025: INPUTS FOR A FRAMEWORK OF ACTION**

### **I. Introduction**

According to the latest FAO data<sup>2</sup>, there are 53 million undernourished people in Latin America, equivalent to 10 % of the population. In addition, some 20 % of children show moderate, severe or chronic undernutrition. These average figures conceal huge disparities between countries. In 2002, the proportion of undernourished fluctuated above 21% of the total population in seven countries but stood at less than 9% in six others.

The principal cause of undernourishment in Latin America is not a lack of capacity to produce enough food. The region as a whole has a surplus in international food trade, as do most of the countries taken individually. The main problem lies in having access to food. Sizeable segments of the population that do not have the necessary income to purchase food or the resources to produce it themselves.

However, in three countries with high levels of undernutrition the problem of access is compounded by a problem of food production: Haiti, Dominican Republic and Panama. Several countries have also been affected on different occasions by emergency situations caused by natural disasters, economic crises and recessions, which have produced food insecurity and aggravated the incidence of undernutrition.

Between 1990-92 and 2000-02, the number of undernourishment people in the region fell from 59.5 million to 52.9 million, that is from 13% to 10% of the total population. Such progress has not been sufficient and the downward trend appears to have levelled off, to the point of possibly preventing many countries from achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) of halving hunger and poverty by 2015.

In early 2004, an estimated 222 million people or 42.9% of the total population were living in poverty, including 96 million or 18.6% living in extreme poverty, with 52 million of these in urban areas and almost 45 million in rural areas.

In absolute terms, the number of poor in the region fell during the course of 2004 (216 million against 226 million in 2003) and again in 2005 (213 million). This represents a change in trend as the total number of poor had risen steadily between 1970 and 2003. In percentage terms, the region as a whole has made some progress in the last decade, but interspersed with setbacks generally linked to fluctuations in the regional economy. In the ten years up to 2004, the proportion of poor oscillated between 43% and 46%, then dropped to 42% in 2004 and to an estimated 41% in 2005. However, such progress barely raises the situation to that of the early 1980s, before the external debt crisis.

At country level, progress until 2004 indicates that it is precisely those countries with the highest levels of extreme poverty and the lowest per capita income that face the greatest obstacles and that are unlikely to achieve MDG 1, should trends remain unchanged.

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<sup>2</sup> FAO (2005). The State of Food and Agriculture. FAO Rome.

## **II. The “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative (ALCSH 2025)**

A review of progress in reducing hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean and of the likelihood of countries achieving the objective of the World Food Summit (WFS) 1996 and MDG 1 of halving hunger by 2015 suggests that only some countries will succeed. The review also tells us that, regardless of expectations of achieving MDG 1, some 31 million people will still be undernourished in 2015.

In view of this perspective of an unacceptably high level of undernutrition in a region that has the economic, technical and production capacity and the natural resources to eliminate the problem, the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative was launched by the Governments of Guatemala and Brazil in September 2005 during the Latin American Conference on Chronic Hunger that was held in Guatemala.

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage the countries of the region to implement public policies that will promote the eradication of hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2025. This vital and ambitious – but feasible – goal will require the firm political commitment not only of governments but also of national societies in each and every country of the region; and that commitment will have to translate into public policies and programmes that target the main identified problems.

FAO will support actions from such commitment in five key areas: fortifying the food and nutrition security institutional structure in each country; South-South Cooperation between countries of the region and between these and countries of other continents; food security training and awareness raising and communication relating to hunger; Ibero-American networks and a regional policy framework; and monitoring and applied research to track the food security situation.

According to preliminary FAO estimates, the continuation of current trends would produce 40.9 million and 31.5 million undernourished people in Latin America in 2015 and 2025 respectively, equivalent to 7% and 5% of the total population. The highest incidence of undernutrition in 2015 and 2025 would be in Central America (13% and 9% respectively) and in the Caribbean (15% and 11%), albeit with huge variations between countries. The incidence in South America would be 6% and 4%, with less variation between countries.

It is important to note in this connection that undernutrition has already been eliminated in Argentina (incidence equal to or lower than 2.5% of the population) and, according to projections for 2025, will also be eradicated in five other countries (Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay), even without additional measures.

FAO estimates based on progress in hunger reduction since baseline period 1990-92 and the efforts needed to eradicate hunger by 2025 classify the countries into four groups. First, countries that do not require additional efforts or resources to achieve the objective of eliminating hunger by 2025: Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay. Second, countries requiring modest additional efforts: Mexico, El Salvador, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Guyana and Suriname. The third group requires a fair degree of investment: Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. Finally the fourth group of countries requires large-scale effort and investment: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

The following sections present a policy framework of action and the activities that are needed to get the initiative under way, taking into account the current state of hunger in the region, the objective of ALCSH 2025 and the effort that this represents.



### III. Towards a policy framework of action

As stated above, the principal cause of undernutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean and its slow pace of reduction is not a lack of capacity to produce sufficient food but a problem of access to food. There are population groups that do not have sufficient income to access the food that is available on the market or the resources to produce it themselves. In addition, rapid urbanization is fuelling a greater incidence of hunger in urban areas than in rural areas. Natural disasters, social conflict, economic crises and recessions have also exacerbated food insecurity in several countries of the region. However, there is also a small group of countries whose undernutrition can be largely put down to low food production and productivity.

With this in mind, the objective of the “Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025” initiative could be pursued by adopting a policy framework of action that included the following mutually reinforcing thrusts: increased access to food consumption, higher production and productivity of family farms and small or medium rural economic units, and policies for urban food security.

#### a) Increased access to food consumption

Given the overwhelming importance of ‘access’ in eliminating hunger in the region, this thrust proposes actions in the following areas:

**Reduced disparity of income.** The concentration of income in Latin America is more extreme than in other developing regions and the industrialized countries. And the polarization of income distribution has not lessened in recent decades; if anything, it has increased. Latin America’s development model therefore needs elements that are coherent with the international context and foster a market economy, and that can thereby reduce exclusion and promote equality of opportunity. This is essential if there is to be growth with equity and a more equitable distribution of income.

Wages and salaries account for more than 80% of total income. Consequently, while public transfer policies can be important for the alleviation of poverty and the reduction of hunger, any realistic possibilities of enhancing income distribution are linked to the generation of employment and the improvement of productivity.

Education and training of the workforce and conditions for greater productive investment are essential for improving the level of equity.

The labour market has important characteristics and strong asymmetries. It is important that the economic model fosters growth accompanied by higher demand for labour. In addition, labour markets need to be flexible to avoid the resistances that impede employment growth, but this should not simply signify an absence of job security and should be buttressed by policies of unemployment protection and benefit.

**Strengthening the food distribution system and decentralizing storage capacity.** The rapid expansion of supermarkets in the region, the exclusion of vulnerable groups (small farmers) from this process and the worsening state of food insecurity in some countries have recently fuelled renewed interest in certain countries in upscaling the role of the State in food systems, especially in the distribution. A number of related public programmes have been set up, such as the Food Procurement Programme in Brazil, the Rural Food Entitlement Programme in Mexico and the Agricultural Supplies and Services Corporation, Misión Mercal and Misión Mercalito in Venezuela.

A degree of consensus now exists over the complementary roles of the market and the State, as well as the role of civil society. Thus, any consolidation of food distribution systems and development and future capacity of storage will involve the market, the State and civil society. The development of competitive food markets and storage technology, together with access to financing, are key aspects for facilitating food consumption in the event of external disruptions and for maintaining purchasing power and/or ensuring food supply. The State's action should focus on identifying and resolving the inadequacies of food markets, and on providing an appropriate physical infrastructure (roads, communications, etc.) and institutional infrastructure (property rights, food quality and safety standards, biosecurity, etc.) for those markets to function properly. The involvement of civil society will ensure observance of consumer and citizen rights.

**Ensuring the access of the neediest groups to food through social protection systems and other programmes of direct assistance.** Policies directed towards the achievement of these priority objectives should start from an approach based on human rights. One fundamental policy requisite in this regard is the existence of information to accurately identify and locate the hungry. FAO and WFP can help steer governments towards beneficiaries through the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit.

Social safety net policies specifically targeted at hunger reduction should recognize the special vulnerability of women and children to malnutrition at critical times in their lives and should support the creation and implementation of programmes on, for example, mother and child feeding, health and nutrition education and school feeding.

National commitment and relevant policies towards gender equality and women's rights are essential to enhancing access to food. At household level, the improved status of women has proven to be the single most important variable in reducing malnutrition.

Finally, policy commitment by governments and non-State actors is essential for international humanitarian assistance to ensure access to food in times of natural disaster and economic crisis.

**b) Higher production and productivity of family farms and small or medium rural economic units**

There is a need to increase agricultural productivity and enhance living conditions and food security in poor rural areas. Improving the performance of small farms and periurban agricultural units in resource-poor areas is one of the most productive and sustainable ways of reducing hunger and prepares the ground for more equitable economic development. International experience inside and outside the region indicates that agriculture-driven economic growth has a greater impact on reducing poverty and hunger than does growth driven by any other sector. The increase in employment and agricultural income raises demand for non-agricultural goods and services and acts as a stimulus to off-farm sources of rural income. The corollary is that the additional demand for agricultural products should come from outside the rural sector, which should also be in a position to meet demand pull from domestic and external markets.

Better agricultural performance increases food availability (or income to purchase food) and therefore enhances the nutritional status of rural households, raising their ability to lead full lives, to study and work more effectively, and to contribute to the general welfare of society. But it also increases and diversifies the supply of agricultural products on local

markets, creates the basis for expansion and diversification of tradable goods, opens up employment opportunities and curbs rural-urban migration.

Agricultural development at small-farm level requires policy frameworks that are favourable to sectoral growth, together with research and extension institutions that respond to real farmer needs. Small-farmer associations and agricultural communities, acting in collaboration with NGOs and other civil society organizations, can play an important role in removing some of the difficulties or restrictions that their members and other rural poor are up against. The function of these institutions and alliances is all the more important at a time when the State has almost completely withdrawn from the provision of services such as marketing and agricultural credit.

**Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.** While Latin America has relatively plentiful natural resources, a large proportion of increased agricultural production should come from a more intensive and efficient use of its land, water and genetic resources. At the same time, the destruction and degradation of its natural resource base will have to be halted. All this will require significant investment to manage resources, improve technology and develop practices to intensify agricultural production in a sustainable manner. Additional investment will therefore be needed to: 1) improve irrigation schemes and land and water conservation practices; 2) conserve, appraise and enhance the use of plant and animal genetic resources; and 3) harvest fishery and forest resources sustainably.

With regard to water, a major problem is growing competition between agriculture and other uses (domestic, industrial, etc.). As agriculture is the main user of water, more efficient use on its part will increase availability to other users. Policies affecting water use should promote enhanced efficiency and ensure that user behaviour reflects water scarcity. Transparent, stable and transferable rights of use are powerful instruments for promoting efficiency and equitable distribution.

As for land, the main policy issues are access and tenure (private or collective ownership, leasing or long-term rights of use), better management practices and investment in soil fertility. Security of land access contributes significantly to its sustainable use. Strengthening the rights of indigenous populations and of women to possess and inherit land is therefore of primary importance.

Ensuring present and future access to an adequate diversity of genetic resources requires national and international policies. An appropriate regulatory framework is needed for the authorization of varieties and the distribution of seeds that can facilitate synergies between the public, private and informal seed sectors. With regard to animal genetic resources, national and international regulatory frameworks still need to be developed to guide actions at country level.

The key policy issue for fisheries is limiting access to natural resource stocks whose capture, especially in the case of marine stocks, has already reached or exceeded the limits of sustainability. Governments and stakeholder groups need to share responsibility and authority for ensuring the limits on access to these resources are respected.

As concerns forestation, the institutions and policies that govern the use and conservation of Latin America's wealth of resources need to be strengthened so that these are used to best effect and for the good of all social groups. Policies should promote the participation of stakeholders in forest planning and harvesting.

**Expanding rural infrastructure and increasing market access.** Although many countries have invested heavily in infrastructure, most still have serious inadequacies in their rural areas, especially areas with a predominance of subsistence farmers and/or small producers. This translates into low competitiveness and higher transaction costs for national agricultural products in expanding domestic and external markets. The highest priority should be given to maintaining, upgrading and extending rural roads and other basic infrastructure needed to stimulate private investment in the production, marketing and processing of agricultural products.

Investment in rural infrastructure aimed at improving market access will also produce more general and widespread socio-economic benefits, especially in the poor rural areas. While private sector involvement in the building of infrastructure and associated services can increase efficiency and better respond to overall needs, it does not necessarily encompass the less developed agricultural regions. The public sector must therefore continue to play an active role in such investment. Policies should encourage decentralization and the participation of small farmers and their associations or communities in the programming, application, maintenance and financing of infrastructural investments, in order to ensure that service provision responds to effective demand, is sustainable and incorporates various forms of public and private collaboration.

Enhancing market access also means implementing coordinated policies and putting in place legal and regulatory frameworks that comply with internationally contracted obligations on food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary standards. Public and private collaboration in the provision and certification of services and flexible approaches for the gradual attainment of standards are effective ways of ensuring access to external markets.

**Strengthening capacity to generate and disseminate knowledge.** The access of small and medium farmers to modern agricultural technology requires the existence of effective national systems of knowledge generation and dissemination. The development of agricultural research and technology is becoming increasingly dominated by private companies that also supply inputs and market products. However, there continue to be many areas of agricultural research and extension that offer little benefit to the private sector but that are vital to agricultural development and the sustainable management of natural resources; for example, most technologies used by small farmers, especially those that do not depend on purchased inputs, such as integrated pest control and practices to increase soil organic content, to enhance the effectiveness of fertilizer use or to conserve genetic resources.

Policies need to ensure that small farmers benefit from technological advance (in agriculture, information technology, communications etc.). This is particularly true for areas with limited agro-ecological potential that are normally sidelined by corporate research. Public financing should cover the development and adjustment of technological options to such areas. Technologies should also address the objectives of environmental sustainability. Farmers' organizations, women's associations and other civil society groups can conjure the necessary collaboration between farmers and specialists to ensure that innovations are relevant and needed.

### **c) Policies for urban food security**

Accelerating urbanization in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century highlighted the problems of urban food insecurity in Latin American. Outmigration from rural to urban areas has increased considerably in the last 30 years due to market

liberalization and structural adjustment, lack of opportunity in rural areas and the changing face of agriculture. This accelerated urbanization and the absence of policy to deal with it have created poverty belts around Latin American cities during the last 20 years, and thus an increase in urban poverty and undernutrition.

The formulation of policies and programmes on urban food security is facilitated by the fact that they: *a*) have to reach a much more concentrated population, *b*) can rely on a network of public services (education, health) that are usually more advanced and extensive than in rural areas, and *c*) can be based on a more effective civil society and on a network of NGOs that can act as a bridge between public and private actions. At the same time, the large number of activities that the poor resort to limits the scope of sector-specific policies for improving livelihoods. In general, urban food security policies can be grouped into two categories: *i*) those that improve and protect livelihoods of the poor, and *ii*) those that focus directly on improving food and nutrition security.

**Policies to improve and protect urban livelihoods.** The activities of the urban hungry need to receive support if they are to improve their livelihood base, especially activities that are labour intensive (public works, construction, small trade and services). Boosting the functioning of urban markets by improving the infrastructure and strengthening market institutions will reduce transaction costs and make it easier to incorporate the urban poor.

Effective social safety net programmes, for example food subsidies and health care, cash transfers and help for the unemployed can be crucial in protecting the livelihoods of the urban poor, given their heavy dependence on the informal economy. It is important therefore to ensure that such benefits are not restricted to the formal economy.

The region has invested considerably in income transfer programmes, mostly direct transfers to the most vulnerable population groups or communities. However, most of these programmes have the same failing: they offer no “way out” for beneficiary families. On the contrary, they tend to instil a degree of dependence.

Besides specific food security policies, significant investment in at least three areas is required if families are to have the opportunity and income to leave their nutritional vulnerability permanently behind: (i) education, including an improvement in basic schooling; (ii) technical training for the industrial and service sectors; and (iii) specific employment and income generation policies for different sectors and social groups.

Millions of urban dwellers in Latin America and the Caribbean are involved in urban and periurban agriculture, producing a large proportion of the food consumed in urban areas. Vegetable growing can be a significant urban livelihood, as it uses small plots of land and waste water, and the sale of vegetables can enable the poor to purchase other foods. Vegetables are also a good source of vitamins and micronutrients. Periurban agriculture is also an important source of meat, milk and eggs. FAO is currently applying its wealth of experience in this domain to a vast programme in Venezuela, which is proving to be highly successful and socially useful.

Any expansion of urban agriculture will have to deal with growing competition for land for housing, infrastructure and other public services. Urban agriculture policies will also have to reconcile the potential benefits with the costs to the environment and public health.

**Direct support to urban food and nutrition security.** Policies and programmes to reduce urban food insecurity need to look at its nature and main causes. One important aspect is the quality and wholesomeness of the food. Urban homes, especially poor urban homes, depend to some extent on precooked food sold in public. The high fat and sugar content of such food can induce obesity and increase non-communicable disease.

Policies need to address the causes of unhealthy eating rather than seek directly to dissuade consumption (through regulation or taxation). For example, policies should focus on improving the quality and safety of purchased food, given that this is generally prepared and served in less hygienic conditions than food prepared at home. This can be achieved through instruction and training on hygienic food handling, public awareness raising and programmes of food fortification and supplementation.

It is essential to improve access to clean water to reduce the incidence of water-borne disease. Better access to water needs to be combined with practical measures to improve hygiene. Children's vaccination and immunization programmes are a vital part of public health and are essential for improving the benefits of food. Regrettably, these are often neglected in the cities of developing countries.

#### d) **Estimated additional annual public investment**

FAO's Anti-Hunger Programme has estimated the average annual public expenditure required to implement a comprehensive programme aimed at achieving the World Food Summit target of halving hunger by 2015. The estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean break down as follows:

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean – Additional annual public investment needed to achieve the World Food Summit target (thousand million dollars)**

Improving the productivity of small-scale agriculture	0.15
Developing and conserving natural resources	1.33
Boosting rural infrastructure and access to markets	0.37
Strengthening capacity for technological innovation	0.42
<i>Subtotal agricultural and rural development</i>	2.27
Ensuring access of the neediest to food	0.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.62</b>

The pursuit of a more ambitious goal such as the elimination of hunger by 2025 would probably more than double the expenditure. The additional cost of reducing hunger to zero would increase more than proportionately when seeking to eradicate the last pockets of hunger.

#### **IV. Implementation of the ALCSH 2025 initiative**

Besides the above investment requirements, a number of institutional dispositions are urgently needed to facilitate action and open the way for new investments. Taking into account the state of hunger in the region, the policy framework outlined above and the stated objectives of the Guatemala Declaration, implementation of the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative could begin with FAO support and activities centred around the five thrusts of the initiative. Initial actions could include the following:

a) **Institutional strengthening** to promote and reinforce National Food Security Systems, understood as an assembly of *institutions* governed by a *legislative and regulatory*

*framework* and equipped with a *budget allocation* to carry out actions set out in *policy, strategy and action plan documents*, with clear objectives and indicators to monitor the process.

Each National Food Security System should be supported by the respective government and consist of a National Food Security Programme (NFSP) that extends good practices<sup>3</sup> to millions of undernourished people within a concrete time frame and with low investment costs per household.

Technical support will be needed to formulate **National Food and Nutrition Security Plans** for achievement of the objective of the ALCSH 2025 initiative.

**b) South-South Cooperation** for exchange between peers, involving national technicians, peasant farmer entrepreneurs, business operators, government officials, and policymakers to facilitate the exchange of experiences at various levels, through both short and extended visits. Related actions could benefit from the South-South Cooperation programme that FAO has been promoting to foster reciprocal support among developing countries. The format of South-South Cooperation should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the different modalities requested by countries.

Exchange visits between policymakers and government officials of the region would serve to examine the best practices of each country and to exchange experiences in aspects such as national strategies and legislation on food and nutrition security, coordination between the public and private sector and civil society, child nutrition, conditional cash transfers, rural financing, land access, non-agricultural rural activities and extension services.

Other elements of cooperation between countries of the region are extended field assignments of technicians and support consultancies to prepare documents and plans of action. Most of the support technicians should come from within the region. The technical cooperation agencies, international financial institutions and other entities would collaborate through technical support and financial assistance to facilitate the exchanges.

**c) Training and awareness raising** to produce a critical mass of professionals and leaders with the tools and skills needed to plan, manage and coordinate food and nutrition security policies and programmes at national and subnational level. Two areas of intervention are envisaged: technical training in food security for government officials, technicians, academics and local managers; and awareness raising and communication relating to the problem of hunger at different levels (ministers, policymakers and deputies; technicians, business operators, opinion formers; churches, NGOs and civil society in general).

Technical training would be through distance or in-person training activities existing in countries or organized by international cooperation institutions.

Awareness raising could initially be carried out by a regional group of policymakers and researchers who would make top-level country visits to present the initiative and muster national support and commitment to carry it forward. Awareness raising plans could then be developed at other national levels, targeting policymakers, deputies, journalists, entrepreneurs, academics and NGOs.

**d) Ibero-American networks and a regional policy framework** to support governments in coordinating, promoting and networking food security initiatives and linking them to other ongoing initiatives in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> Proven activities or processes that can be replicated on a large scale.

The development of a network of national and subregional activities should draw upon the process and commitments of the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government, with the collaboration and support of the Ibero-American General Secretariat.

For institutional anchorage, the ALCSH initiative should connect with other regional initiatives, actions, groups or periodic events, such as the Ibero-American Summits and the Summits of the Americas, and with the International Alliance Against Hunger.

e) **Monitoring and applied research** to track changes in food security in the region, through the Latin America Observatory of Hunger and Poverty, a multi-institutional body with several branches that will promote and coordinate joint applied research initiatives on different aspects of hunger in the region. The Observatory could also evaluate the results of national programmes and the ALCSH 2025 initiative in general, with the help of FAO's experience and its mechanisms to monitor the food security situation, including the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS), the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit and the annual publication "The State of Food Insecurity in the World" (SOFI).