

170th Session of the Council

Sub-Item 9.4: Report of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, Ecuador, 28 March – 1 April 2022)

The 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held from 28 March - 1 April 2022. Members agreed to hold the Conference in hybrid modality in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns.

The Regional Conference was attended by 586 participants from 33 Members, including: 1 Head of State; 1 Prime Minister; 1 Vice-President; 64 Ministers, Vice-Ministers and Permanent Secretaries; 18 Ambassadors; 3 Observer Members; Representatives of 8 United Nations organizations; 4 intergovernmental organizations; 14 civil society organizations; 1 Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger representative; 13 private sector organizations; and 13 scientific and academic organizations.

The inaugural ceremony of the Regional Conference was held on 30 March in the presence of Mr Guillermo Lasso Mendoza, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, Mr Ariel Henry, Prime Minister of Haiti, Mr Alfredo Borrero, Vice-President of the Republic of Ecuador, Mr Juan Carlos Holguín, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of the Republic of Ecuador and Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Mr Lasso Mendoza welcomed the delegates and underscored the importance of the Regional Conference as a forum for debate on current challenges and opportunities. He emphasized the importance of reducing malnutrition, particularly chronic child malnutrition, and of generating rural employment and fostering agrifood trade to enhance rural economic opportunities.

On Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters, the Regional Conference recognized FAO's contribution to the transformation of agrifood systems, particularly through support and recommendations for the development of public policies and regulations. Acknowledging with appreciation the 78 percent increase in resources mobilized compared to the previous biennium, recommended that FAO continues and strengthens its resource mobilization efforts with a view to fostering public and private investments to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 in direct support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Regional Conference highlighted the importance of proactively identifying and materializing new opportunities for increasing the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness in the region.

The Regional Conference, on Programme and Budget Matters, noted with concern the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences in the region; the fragile, slow and uneven economic recovery; the substantial increase in poverty, hunger and food and nutritional insecurity; and the widening inequality between and within countries. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO continues supporting Members in ensuring that agrifood systems and value chains recover by implementing the Programme Priority Areas of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 in the region through three regional initiatives on: *Sustainable agrifood systems to provide healthy diets for all*, *Prosperous and inclusive rural societies*, and *Sustainable and resilient agriculture*. Regarding the food and agricultural input prices, the Regional Conference recommended that FAO analyse the repercussions of the excessive increase in prices and excessive market volatility, and the need for maintaining supply and logistics chains linked to food and nutrition security.

The Regional Conference took note of the consultative process that was ongoing for the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and FAO Strategy on Climate Change, and recommended respectively that FAO adopts an approach that would ensure access to and affordability of innovations in an inclusive, non-discriminatory manner; and would mainstream the principles established in the Paris Agreement, including equity in the implementation of the Strategy, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Regional Conference welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Guyana to host the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2024, and recommended that the offer be accepted.

His Excellency Pedro Álava González, Chairperson of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC 37)