CONFERENCE

Forty-fourth Session

Rome, 28 June - 4 July 2025

Report of the 38th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Georgetown, Guyana, Senior Officers Meeting 11-13 March 2024 and Ministerial Meeting 18-21 March 2024)
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**Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America and the Caribbean**

1st - Quito (Ecuador), 18-25 September 1949  
2nd - Montevideo (Uruguay), 1-12 December 1950  
3rd - Buenos Aires (Argentina), 1-10 September 1954  
4th - Santiago de Chile (Chile), 19-30 November 1956  
5th - San José (Costa Rica), 12-21 November 1958  
6th - Mexico, D.F. (Mexico), 9-20 August 1960  
7th - Río de Janeiro (Brazil), 17-27 November 1962  
8th - Viña del Mar (Chile), 13-29 March 1965  
9th - Punta del Este (Uruguay), 5-16 December 1966  
10th - Kingston (Jamaica), 2-13 December 1968  
11th - Caracas (Venezuela), 12-20 October 1970  
12th - Cali (Colombia), 21 August-2 September 1972  
13th - Panama City (Panama), 12-23 August 1974  
14th - Lima (Peru), 21-29 April 1976  
15th - Montevideo (Uruguay), 8-19 August 1978  
16th - Havana (Cuba), 26 August-6 September 1980  
17th - Managua (Nicaragua), 20 August-10 September 1982  
18th - Buenos Aires (Argentina), 6-15 August 1984  
19th - Bridgetown (Barbados), 5-13 August 1986  
20th - Recife (Brazil), 2-7 October 1988  
21st - Santiago de Chile (Chile), 9-13 July 1990  
22nd - Montevideo (Uruguay), 28 September-2 October 1992  
23rd - San Salvador (El Salvador), 29 August-2 September 1994  
24th - Asunción (Paraguay), 2-6 July 1996  
25th - Nassau (Bahamas), 16-20 June 1998  
26th - Mérida (Mexico), 10-14 April 2000  
27th - Havana (Cuba), 22-26 April 2002  
28th - Guatemala City (Guatemala), 26-30 April 2004  
29th - Caracas (Venezuela), 24-28 April 2006  
30th - Brasilia (Brazil), 14-18 April 2008  
31st - Panama City (Panama), 26-30 April 2010  
32nd - Buenos Aires (Argentina), 26-30 March 2012  
33rd - Santiago de Chile (Chile), 6-9 May 2014  
34th - Mexico City (Mexico), 29 February -3 March 2016  
35th - Montego Bay (Jamaica), 5-8 March 2018  
36th - Managua (Nicaragua), 19-21 October 2020 (virtual)  
37th - Quito (Ecuador), 28 March-1 April 2022 (hybrid)  
38th - Georgetown (Guyana), 11-13 March 2024 (virtual) and 18-21 March 2024 (hybrid)
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### SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

**MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL**

Results for FAO in the region 2022-2023 *(paragraphs 23.a-q and 24.a-f)*

Priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 *(paragraphs 25.a-i and 26.a-ib)*

Decentralization *(paragraphs 22.a-d)*

Summary of the recommendations of the Regional Commissions *(paragraph 27.a-c)*

### MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

Global and Regional Food Security and Nutrition Outlook *(paragraphs 14.a-m and 15.a-h)*

Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2) *(paragraphs 16.a-i and 17.a-l)*

How to fight against food loss and waste through technological innovation *(paragraphs 18.a-g and 19.a-d)*

Building resilience in the region through agrifood systems transformation and the use of early-warning systems *(paragraphs 20.a-f and 21.a-h)*
I. Introductory Items

Organization of the Regional Conference

1. The 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC 38) was organized in two segments: the Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) from 11 to 13 March 2024 and the Ministerial Session from 18 to 21 March 2024. The SOM was organized virtually, and the Ministerial Session was conducted in hybrid modality, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent.

2. The Senior Officers Meeting was attended by 526 participants from 33 Members; two Observer Members; one representative of United Nations (UN) organizations, ten intergovernmental organizations; 11 civil society organizations; five Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger representatives; 11 private sector organizations; and 13 scientific and academic organizations.

3. The Ministerial Session was attended by 719 participants from 33 Members, including: one Head of State; one Prime Minister; one Deputy Prime Minister; 28 Ministers; 14 Vice Ministers and five Permanent Secretaries; 15 Ambassadors; three Observer Members; Representatives of eight UN organizations; 13 intergovernmental organizations; six civil society organizations; one Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger representative; six private sector organizations; and ten scientific and academic organizations.

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

4. The Regional Conference elected as Chairperson Mr Zulfikar Mustapha, Minister of Agriculture of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, who expressed his appreciation for his appointment. Mr Mustapha welcomed delegates to the meeting and formally opened the SOM. Mr Franklin Palacios, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Ecuador and Mr Paulo Teixeira, Minister for Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture of the Federative Republic of Brazil, were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.

5. The Regional Conference appointed Mr Winston Pinnock, Ambassador of the Commonwealth of Bahamas, as Rapporteur.

6. The Regional Conference appointed delegates to replace the Chairperson and the Ecuadorian and Brazilian Vice-Chairpersons in their absence, assigning Mr Madanlall Ramraj, Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, as the acting Chairperson; Mr Esteban del Hierro, ad interim of Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Ecuador; Ms Johanna Jacome, Vice-Minister of Productive Development of Ecuador; and Mr Claudio Garon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO, as acting Vice-Chairpersons.

7. The Regional Conference approved the participation of non-members and spokespersons from civil society organizations, the private sector, and scientific and academic organizations to participate and express their views during plenary sessions.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

8. The Regional Conference examined and adopted the Provisional Agenda (Appendix B) and the Timetable. The list of documents submitted to the meeting is contained in Appendix C.
Inaugural ceremony

9. The inaugural ceremony of the Regional Conference was held on 18 March 2024 in the presence of His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; Mr Zulfikar Mustapha, Minister for Agriculture of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; and Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The authorities delivered their statements.

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

10. The Director-General delivered a statement to the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, which may be found in document LARC/24/INF/4 on the LARC 38 website.1 The Director General expressed the importance of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean as a crucial platform for policy makers to accelerate efforts towards the transformation of agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable to leave no one behind. In line with FAO's Strategic Framework, the Director General expressed the Organization's commitment in supporting Members to foster greater cooperation, investment, innovation and technology, both within and beyond the region.

Statement by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

11. His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, attended the inaugural ceremony of the Ministerial Session and invited the Regional Conference to honour all the peoples and nations that are currently experiencing the horrors of war and armed conflict, which compromises the food security and nutrition of the population across the world. In his statement, he called for a renewed commitment towards regional integration to end hunger and to achieve the right to adequate food in the region.

Statement by the President of the Republic of Honduras and President Pro Tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

12. Her Excellency Xiomara Castro, President of the Republic of Honduras and President Pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), reiterated the commitment of the region towards the effective implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030, while ensuring special attention to the role of rural women and youth, and Indigenous Peoples.

Statement by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Chairman of the Group of 20

13. His Excellency Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Chairman of the Group of 20, expressed the critical importance of supporting the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty as a Regional Priority, in order to allow the sustainable transformation of agrifood systems, where no one is left behind.

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

A. Global and Regional Food Security and Nutrition Outlook

14. The Regional Conference:

- noted the update on food security and nutrition in the region, especially the decrease in the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) rate;
- noted with concern the sharp increase in the PoU in the Caribbean subregion from 14.7 percent estimated for 2021 to 16.3 percent for 2022, and noted the improvements in South America in the

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1 https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/larc38/documents/en/
same period, where the PoU decreased from 7.0 percent to 6.1 percent, equivalent to 3.5 million fewer undernourished people, however, still 6 million above 2019 levels; further took note that the PoU in Mesoamerica remained at similar levels, increasing marginally from 5 percent in 2021 to 5.1 percent in 2022, affecting a total of 9.1 million people;

c) noted that the region registers the highest cost of a healthy diet compared to the world average;

d) stressed that in the region, food insecurity and malnutrition disproportionately affect people living in rural areas; and further stressed that the gender gap in the region is higher than in the world, and is still higher than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019;

e) noted the regional nutritional situation regarding the double burden of malnutrition, manifested in the proportion of the children affected by stunting, which has decreased since 2012, while the percentage of children with overweight has increased;

f) expressed its support for Brazil’s initiative, under its pro tempore presidency of the Group of 20 (G20), to establish a Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, as a broad international mobilization to support the implementation and expansion of actions, policies and programmes, to combat hunger and poverty at national, regional and global levels, with the aim of accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 and SDG 2;

g) recognized the unique vulnerabilities shared by the 16 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the region, which result in a complex set of food security and nutrition challenges, such as the triple burden of malnutrition, dependency on food imports, and climate change and disasters, contributing to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and to the mobilization of financial resources for Members, upon request, in accordance with the SAMOA Pathway agreement;

h) recognized the urgent need to work together to address the main drivers of undernourishment and food insecurity in the region, such as extreme and more frequent climate events and climate change, conflicts, internal and external displacement, economic slowdowns, downturns and unilateral coercive measures, restrictions and limitations on trade in food and raw materials, persistent poverty and increasing inequalities, as well as the determinants of malnutrition in all its forms;

i) acknowledged that one of the main challenges of the region, which also represents an opportunity, is the difficulty to increase food production, in a sustainable and resilient manner to overcome resource limitations, biodiversity loss, natural resources degradation, climate change, conflicts and economic shocks;

j) stressed that input use efficiency and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, including short term risk management, will be critical to maintaining and growing competitiveness in the region, as a major contributor to global agriculture;

k) acknowledged the statistical work of FAO, the leading agency producing and disseminating data on food and agriculture, as essential for monitoring food security, and urged governments to provide up-to-date and complete data and statistics to FAO to allow timely assessments and analyses to inform policy decisions;

l) recognized the role of the region as an important agrifood exporter, working towards the reduction of trade restricting measures and market uncertainties, and the elimination of distorting agricultural subsidies in international trade to ensure access and availability of food for the most vulnerable, particularly for net-food-importing developing countries; and

m) urged Members to strengthen multilateralism, solidarity and international cooperation, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leaving no one behind, in compliance with paragraph 30 of resolution A/RES/70/1, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on
25 September 2015, on sustainable development: “States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries”.

15. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:

a) continue supporting Members in strengthening national policies for food security and nutrition that ensure the human right to food, alleviation of hunger, reduction of all forms of malnutrition, promote the consumption of healthy diets for all and food safety, through instruments such as food labelling, food-systems based dietary guidelines and education on food and nutrition, among others;

b) support Members in the implementation of the four pillars of the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030, endorsed by the Heads of State and Governments of the region in March 2024, and their respective lines of action;

c) provide technical assistance for the design, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of policies and programmes to strengthen family farming in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028);

d) strengthen the capacity of governments to respond to the changing needs of trade to increase transparency and support small and medium enterprises, cooperatives and family farmers to improve their capacity to achieve and maintain their access to markets and participation in global supply chains;

e) continue mobilizing resources towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as conservation and restoration of ecosystems, biodiversity, sustainable water management and soil conservation to improve the sustainability, resilience and efficiency of agrifood systems;\(^2\)

f) support the strengthening of social protection systems in both rural and urban areas, which includes the strengthening of school feeding programmes, as well as the improvement of humanitarian and resilience measures to prevent, mitigate and respond to adverse events on agrifood systems and vulnerable populations, such as women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups;

g) expand efforts to promote science, technology and innovation in agriculture and sustainable management of natural resources along the value chain as well as technical, financial and institutional support to resilience and efficiency in agricultural production; and

h) support the High Level Event on Ocean Action “Immersed in Change” and the third United Nations Ocean Conference, recognizing the importance of aquatic foods and products, and continue providing inclusive, effective and sustainable pathways to reduce poverty, secure livelihoods, and underpin food security and nutrition.

**B. Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)**

16. The Regional Conference:

a) acknowledged the work of FAO in gathering and assessing valuable data and evidence to inform policy and investment decisions aimed at ensuring the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and to reduce hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition;

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\(^2\) Unless otherwise noted, the term “agriculture” includes forestry, fishing, aquaculture and hunting, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production.
b) expressed alarm that the region is not on track to achieving targets 2.1 and 2.2 of SDG 2, and that projections suggest that hunger is expected to remain constant in the next years if actions and investments maintain the business-as-usual pathway;

c) recognized that financing for the transformation of agrifood systems is fragmented and insufficient to eliminate hunger and all forms of malnutrition, and to achieve the human right to adequate food in the context of national food security;\(^3\)

d) requested FAO to further explore and facilitate the access to inclusive financing schemes to enhance the sustainability of regional agrifood systems, including voluntary carbon markets, environmental funding and the support to submit projects, *inter alia*, to the Green Climate Fund;

e) took note of the analysis about the cost of inaction in the region, which exceeds the estimated cost of ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition;

f) stressed the need to develop consensus on a harmonized set of indicators associated with SDG 2-related investment financing, considering the different categories of support to agriculture in the region;

g) expressed concern regarding the high and increasing level of public debt faced by Members, leading to the urgent need to evaluate, optimize and repurpose financing, as well as the importance of public sector interventions to achieve food security and nutrition targets in the region;

h) recognized the role of subnational governments in the promotion and financing of efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems under the frame of local food policies and governance, facilitating access to healthy, safe and affordable diets; and

i) stressed the importance of public funding to address emergencies in agriculture, particularly to rehabilitate productive capacities, improve food security and prevent hunger.

17. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:

a) support Members in the development of data and evidence on how to optimize and evaluate financing for food security and nutrition;

b) support Members in the improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems to determine the effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness of policies and investments for food security and nutrition, as well as their contribution, to readjust or reorient such policies;

c) support Members in mobilizing financial resources to contribute to the implementation of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty and the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030;

d) provide technical recommendations to ensure that food security and nutrition (FSN) outcomes are considered in financial mechanisms;

e) promote the exchange of experiences, South-South and Triangular Cooperation and dialogue among Members through integration and cooperation platforms, such as the CELAC; and identify practices and challenges of the region in terms of financing to end hunger and malnutrition;

f) promote the exchange of experiences and dialogue at regional, national and subnational levels to improve capacities and policymaking on investments and policies aiming at ending hunger and malnutrition;

\(^3\) In accordance with, and dependent on national contexts and capacities.
g) support Members in developing mechanisms to improve and expand the access of family farmers to rural financial services, such as microcredit and insurance;

h) observe the need to continue improving technical and financial cooperation among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to ensure the transformation of agrifood systems\(^4\) in the region;

i) support countries in mobilizing innovative funding mechanisms, such as financial incentives linked to climate change initiatives with food security and education outcomes, as well as private sector investment and scalable financial tools;

j) promote and facilitate meetings and encounters between Members, potential resource partners and international financial institutions to support the mobilization of investments to effectively increase support for the transformation of agrifood systems, as appropriate, and in the shortest possible time;

k) support Members in ensuring that resources are mobilized in accordance with their capacity to effectively address SDG targets, the four Regional Priorities and the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030, to ensure that no one is left behind; and

l) support Members in mobilizing resources in the context of the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030, in coordination with UN agencies and cooperation agencies, to generate access to resources for programmes for family farmers and fisherfolk.

### C. How to fight against food loss and waste through technological innovation

18. The Regional Conference:

a) expressed concern about the significant levels of food loss and waste (FLW) in the region, with far-reaching economic, social and environmental implications and impacts on SDGs, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production);

b) acknowledged that the causes of FLW are multifaceted, including the absence of policies and strategies or their inadequacy; lack of access to finance; lack of evidence and data; limited access to technologies; and low levels of knowledge and awareness, as well as stigmatization, weak infrastructure, logistical challenges, market access issues and natural factors;

c) noted with concern that, despite major progress in processing, refrigeration and transportation, every year millions of tonnes of food are lost or nutritionally compromised with severe economic and climatic consequences;

d) stressed that reducing FLW is crucial in the transition towards sustainable agrifood systems with increased efficiency, sustainability, resilience and inclusiveness, significantly contributing to food security and nutrition, economic development, and mitigating the climate impacts of food production and consumption in the region;

e) recognized that context-specific technological innovations play a critical role in transforming agrifood systems\(^5\) and preventing FLW, but their effectiveness in reducing FLW hinges on broader holistic interventions at national and subnational levels to provide essential infrastructure, more resilient systems, develop science based legal, policy, institutional and

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\(^4\) As appropriate.

\(^5\) As appropriate.
regulatory frameworks, raise awareness and strengthen capacities, and support partnerships and collaboration:–

f) noted with concern that several challenges to scale up technologies and support FLW reduction persist in the region, such as limited access to electricity and potable water in rural areas, lack of coordination along the value chain, logistical and cold chain weaknesses, constraints in generating and updating regional data, and the need for development of innovative digital platforms among others; and

g) noted the importance of awareness and education to stimulate sustainable consumption and actions to reduce FLW, targeting all relevant stakeholders of agrifood systems, such as policymakers, legislators, civil society, youth, academia and the private sector, among others.

19. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:

a) expand efforts to facilitate the incorporation, monitoring and evaluation of the FLW model law and the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction, through policy dialogues, exchange of experiences, and the design and implementation of policy support;

b) continue supporting countries in developing and sharing evidence, and building countries’ capabilities to collect, generate and analyse data, statistics and information on the status of FLW in agrifood systems throughout the supply chain (production, processing, marketing, consumption, disposal and reuse);

c) continue putting into place integrated programmes, with an emphasis on sustainability, through the promotion of science, technology and innovation; strengthened regulatory, institutional and policy frameworks; awareness; investment promotion; and development and monitoring of initiatives aimed at reducing FLW in agrifood systems along the supply chain; and

d) strengthen the implementation of integrated solutions for FLW prevention and reduction, including policies and regulatory frameworks, and innovative digital solutions, to achieve progress against FLW through multiple agendas, including improving nutrition and reducing the agrifood sector’s impact on the climate.

D. Building resilience in the region through agrifood systems transformation⁶ and the use of early-warning systems

20. The Regional Conference:

a) stressed that multiple and rapidly increasing risks are affecting agrifood systems, making them vulnerable to different crises and shocks;

b) expressed concern that climate-related events like droughts, floods, fires and storms, as well as non-climate related events, such as plant and animal pests and disease outbreaks, will intensify in the future, compromising the agrifood sector and affecting rural livelihoods and food security and nutrition;

c) stressed that the persistence of poverty in the region is also fuelled by disasters and shocks, affecting poorer communities which suffer higher income losses than the regional average;

d) recognized the importance of adopting a systemic resilience building approach that addresses the interconnected threats to agrifood systems, which includes the improvement of risk and impact analysis, policy dialogue, multisectoral and multi-actor collaboration, provision of science-based and good practices to address vulnerabilities to shocks, emergency agriculture to protect food

⁶ As appropriate
security and nutrition and rural livelihoods, as well as inclusive rural transformation to support resilience building capacities of vulnerable communities;

e) recognized the need for improving data and information systems for timely and effective action, including -early warning systems to monitor hazards and provide timely alerts that reach decision makers and people exposed, and enable them to prepare responses to alleviate impacts; and

f) emphasized that systemic resilience building requires putting poverty and inequality reduction and livelihoods resilience at the centre, considering synergies between social protection, agriculture, environmental sustainability and employment, as well as risk informed livelihood diversification strategies.

21. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:

a) continue supporting Members in improving risk- and impact-related data and analysis to measure and understand multiple risks and disasters impacts, and to enhance inclusive multi-hazard early-warning systems;

b) support Members in enabling efficient responses and standards for effective and inclusive anticipatory action, preparedness, response and resilience building at local, national and international levels;

c) provide technical support to mainstreaming resilience in emergency responses, development and climate strategies, and to addressing underlying vulnerabilities, such as poverty and inequality, through inclusive rural transformation;

d) support Members in the development of coherent disaster risk management, social, economic and environmental policies, including the mobilization of timely, effective and context-specific investments;

e) support Members in elaborating, mobilizing financing for and implementing resilience programmes and adaptation strategies to overcome specific national contexts and challenges related to climate change, including inter alia droughts, floods, soil degradation and desertification, through building capacities, technology transfer, utilization of satellite imagery and the application of early-warning systems, in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly within affected areas, such as the Dry Corridor, SIDS countries and vulnerable ecosystems across the region;

f) continue working with Members, United Nations and other regional and international agencies to support the active participation of all vulnerable groups, such as family farmers, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, rural youth, women, fisherfolk and forest dependant peoples, in agrifood systems transformation, at regional, subregional, country and local levels, recognizing their important role in preserving traditional knowledge and practices in building resilience and care for the environment;

g) continue mobilizing resources towards resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, including the provision of technical assistance and support to restore and enhance livelihoods and food security and nutrition in emergency contexts; and

h) support Members in their use of science, technology and innovation, and resource mobilization in increasing resilience in agrifood systems, as well as in increasing regional collaboration through mechanisms such as the Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean for Climate Action on Agriculture (PLACA) and access to financial funds such as the Loss and Damage Fund.

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7 As appropriate
E. Decentralization

22. The Regional Conference:
   a) recognized that a modern and efficient FAO Country Offices Network is key to supporting countries in reaching their targets for the SDGs, while fully observing international standards of accountability, internal control and good management; however, greater discussion is necessary and specific modalities are needed;
   b) noted the proposal to strengthen the Organization’s work at country level to better respond to countries’ needs to achieve the SDGs, addressing current challenges, prioritizing and tailoring support, and considering the evolving context of operations; and recognized the need for further discussions on the proposal before any decision is made;
   c) requested a transparent consultation process with Members on possible approaches, taking into consideration countries’ specificities, priorities and needs, recognizing the importance for FAO to foster programmatic actions, while balancing the distribution of the overall regional budgetary allocation to the FAO Country Offices Network; and
   d) supported FAO efforts to propose a decentralization model, to achieve a more efficient and modern FAO Country Office Network through open, transparent and inclusive dialogue with Latin American and Caribbean Members and requested FAO to organize formal meetings to further discuss and achieve consensus before any decision is made on the proposal of modernization to make a more efficient FAO Country Office Network.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

A. Results for FAO in the region 2022–2023

23. The Regional Conference:
   a) recognized the results achieved by the Organization in the region in 2022-2023, in response to the priorities and recommendations identified by the Regional Conference at its 37th Session;
   b) welcomed FAO’s agility in adapting its regional work to the global food crisis scenario, while reinforcing its normative work and addressing structural challenges as part of its core function, in response to Members’ demands;
   c) acknowledged with appreciation FAO’s response to the food crisis, particularly in the provision of timely and impartial market and food security information, in order to provide decision makers with key evidence to address the crisis of high food and input prices and related food security challenges, as well as to monitor policy decisions and measures to avoid or absorb the negative impact of price shocks on the cost of food, preventing disruptions in supply chains;
   d) highlighted progress in the reduction of the prevalence of food insecurity in the region, after three years of consecutive increases, while stressing subregional differences in trends;
   e) welcomed the support from the Organization in updating the CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025, approved by the 33 countries in the CELAC Heads of State Summit, to adapt it to current agrifood systems challenges through regional integration;
   f) recognized FAO’s role in the support of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives that allow the sharing and transfer of social technologies and innovations among Members;
g) recognized FAO’s contribution in improving national capacities to implement legal, regulatory and programmatic frameworks to address food security and nutrition, human right to food, reducing food loss and waste, and healthy diets, as well as increasing food supply and facilitating access, information, and food and nutrition education to ensure sufficient healthy, safe, diverse and nutritious food;

h) recognized the importance of FAO’s support in the improvement of multi-risk monitoring, early warning- systems and rapid recovery of agricultural livelihoods measures, as well as anticipatory actions to protect livelihoods against climate- and non-climate-related risks;

i) recognized FAO’s contributions regarding the promotion of technical inputs aligned with the signing of the Belém Declaration by the eight countries that constitute the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), and the relevance of strengthening regional cooperation with regard to climate action and inclusive rural transformation;

j) acknowledged with appreciation the increase in resource mobilization, reflecting confidence in FAO’s support towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

k) noted that the Organization provides technical assistance for the implementation of 375 field projects, with a budget of USD 824 million, projected to USD 1 098 million in the coming months;

l) noted that FAO supported the design of international financing institutions (IFIs) approved public investment projects in ten countries and provided support to 51 ongoing investment projects financing government led programmes aimed at achieving their national development goals and SDGs;

m) acknowledged FAO’s support in facilitating the development of investment plans to strengthen agricultural value chains with committed investments of USD 771.42 million in the region and the special investment plan in Central America “Dry Corridor and Arid Zones of the SICA region: building resilience”, with a committed investment of USD 268 million, under the Hand in Hand (HIH) Initiative;

n) expressed appreciation for the implementation of FAO’s corporate initiatives in the region, including the HIH Initiative, One Country One Priority Product and the 1000 Digital Village Initiative, as important means to promote digital inclusiveness and scale up investments for sustainable agrifood systems;

o) took note of the need to reinforce regional strategic agreements for FAO’s cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean to address the main concerns of food security and nutrition with regional and subregional organizations;

p) commended FAO on the celebrations and achievements of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 in Latin America and the Caribbean to focus attention on the important role of small-scale fishers, fish farmers and fish workers in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and sustainable use of natural resources, thereby increasing global understanding and action to support them; and

q) acknowledged FAO’s support on school feeding programmes in the region, enhancing governments’ capacities, expanding budgets, improving regulatory frameworks and increasing student coverage, promoting food procurement from family farmers and artisanal fisherfolk, strengthened policies and implemented educational actions.
24. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:

   a) strengthen its resource mobilization efforts, with a view to fostering public and private investments in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Country Programming Frameworks, highlighting the importance of proactively identifying and materializing new opportunities for increasing impact in the region;

   b) strengthen the integration of policies and programmes regarding family farming, school feeding and public procurement to ensure greater coherence;

   c) strengthen technical support and collaboration for the implementation of policies and programmes in favour of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and People of African descent;

   d) strengthen efforts to increase the resilience of SIDS through disaster risk reduction in the context of climate shocks and extreme weather events;

   e) support the generation of disaggregated statistical data, regarding food security and nutrition, agricultural production, and food loss and waste; and

   f) strengthen and expand territorial development policies and programmes that enhance the participation of vulnerable rural populations, particularly women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the decision-making processes.

**B. Priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31**

25. The Regional Conference:

   a) expressed alarm at the critical challenges in eradicating hunger and malnutrition, as well as the setbacks regarding rural poverty and extreme poverty, intensified by the global food crisis;

   b) emphasized the challenges posed by climate change, conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns, inequalities, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and natural disasters which threaten food security and rural livelihoods, increasing the levels of extreme poverty by 2030;

   c) stressed the fundamental role of agrifood systems in supporting economic progress, promoting access to healthy diets, generating employment, managing natural resources sustainably, and in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with special attention to all vulnerable groups within the region;

   d) recognized the urgent need to reduce inequalities and enhance resilience in the region, particularly among family farmers and small-scale producers, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and all vulnerable groups living in rural areas;

   e) noted the continued efforts by Members to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, including through the implementation of relevant international agreements, voluntary guidelines and regional mechanisms, but expressed its concern that IUU fishing is a serious issue in most areas, and called for increased cooperative action and sharing of information at national, regional and global levels;

   f) stressed the need to improve initiatives, financial support and concrete action to increase the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems within the Dry Corridor and Arid Zones of the SICA region to overcome the impacts of climate change and food insecurity;

   g) stressed the need to develop initiatives, financial and technical support, and concrete actions to increase the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems in SIDS, particularly in the most vulnerable ecosystems, to the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity;
h) stressed the need to develop initiatives, financial and technical support, and concrete actions to increase the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems in states across South America, particularly in the most vulnerable ecosystems, to the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity; and

i) endorsed the four Regional Priorities as programmatic delivery mechanisms to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31, the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022–25, and the Programme of Work and Budget 2024–25, and request FAO to provide support for resource mobilization to implement the Programme of Work 2024–25 in the region.

26. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO:

a) continue the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, through four Regional Priorities, as the mechanism to reach Programme Priority Areas (PPAs)’ outcomes under Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment and Better Life;

b) provide integrated normative, technical, policy, operational and investment planning support to Members to implement the four Regional Priorities, applying a programmatic approach for greater coherence, efficiency and impact, leaving no one behind;

c) support the effective uptake of technologies, innovations and practices to improve crop, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture systems, encouraging improvements in the enabling environment and in national policies for sustainable agricultural production, including biotechnology; genome editing; no tillage; other technical tools; bioeconomy; climate-resilient agriculture; climate -adapted planting materials; efficiency of irrigation systems; restorative, agroecological and conservation approaches, as well as voluntary guidelines that entail the responsible use of agricultural inputs;

d) support bioeconomy in promoting sustainable production of food and environmentally sound biobased products and services, through the use and transformation of biological resources, as well as its essential contribution to food security within the region;

e) encourage the effective and sustainable management of all fisheries, and promote sustainable aquaculture intensification and expansion, under the Blue Transformation as a PPA, with emphasis on Caribbean countries;

f) highlighted the potential of FAO’s Blue Transformation as a PPA, in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean region, to increase the contribution of fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic foods value chains to provide a more significant proportion of nutritious foods and resilient livelihoods, and the effective management of all fisheries in the region;

g) support Members in the development of policy and technical measures towards sustainable, productive and resilient livestock systems, addressing the national capacities of surveillance, detection and early response to disease outbreaks to tackle the interdependency of the health of people, animals, plants and the environment, within the One Health approach, including by strengthening capacities for biosafety management and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) management;

h) support Members in enhancing sustainable livestock systems within the region, including -small-scale animal farming schemes and camelid producers, to contribute to food security, nutrition, livelihoods and inclusive economic growth, while strengthening the management of risk of animal diseases and emerging zoonosis;
i) support access to credit, insurance, extension services and the adoption of digital innovations and relevant technologies, such as artificial intelligence services, to bridge the technology gap for family farmers and vulnerable rural communities, addressing new and emergent agricultural innovations for the region, including by favoring technology transfer from developed countries;

j) support Members in the implementation of the four pillars and their lines of action, as well as the mobilization of resources for the CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030, continuing to support the implementation, monitoring and reporting of national policies to reduce hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, promote food safety, food and nutrition education, and address the access, affordability and consumption of healthy diets for all, while taking into account Members’ capacities, necessities and priorities;

k) provide technical assistance and support Members in mobilizing financial resources to strengthen their statistical and analytical capacity to produce information on agrifood systems and nutrition for better decision-making;

l) continue supporting the improvement and expansion of social protection mechanisms, strengthening the linkages between education, health and agriculture, including school feeding programmes, considering the potential benefits of linking public procurement systems to family farmers and fisherfolk;

m) continue supporting Members in modernizing national food supply and marketing systems, boosting the local economy, promoting inclusive markets for family farming in both urban and rural areas, and transforming agrifood systems, as appropriate;

n) support Members in developing their food supply chains and trade with the aim of promoting the inclusion of family farming and small- and medium-size enterprises in markets and international trade to contribute to food security and nutrition; facilitate climate, environmental and food security financing mechanisms to Members to support the fulfilment of international environmental commitments, considering the negative impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;

o) support the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and the restoration of ecosystems services, such as soil and water, and promote an inclusive approach to ensure the delivery of services and the enhancement of livelihoods;

p) support Members in the transformation and resilience of agrifood systems through the establishment and implementation of agricultural practices, policies and programmes, in support of climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation;

q) support Members in the improvement of water management, through the development of policies, capacity development, knowledge exchange, and technological and social innovation;

r) assist in the development of comprehensive early-warning systems for multiple hazards and sectors, to prevent, prepare, restore and recover rural livelihoods, food security and nutrition, and agriculture assets and production in disasters, socioeconomic crises and conflicts;

s) provide technical assistance for the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and the International Year of Camelids 2024;

t) provide technical assistance and support policy dialogue to promote the social, economic and productive inclusion of family farmers and small-scale producers, rural women and youth,

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8 As appropriate
Indigenous Peoples, and people of African descent, through improved access to productive resources and services, capacity development, decent employment and economic opportunities;

u) continue providing technical support for the implementation of investment plans through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, in coherence with local contexts and priorities;

v) continue promoting regional technical exchanges, sharing of best practices, capacity development and knowledge management, through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and through coordinated work between Members and their regional and subregional organizations;

w) assist Members in the production, use and conservation of biological resources, including related knowledge, science, technology and innovation to provide information, products, processes and services to all economic sectors, with the aim of moving towards a sustainable economy, in line with the concept of bioeconomy;

x) provide technical assistance to Members for the development and implementation of legal, policy and institutional frameworks on food loss and waste, including the generation of statistical data for better decision-making;

y) strengthen governments’ capacities to support market access for agrifood products and enhance transparency in agricultural markets in the context of dynamic commercial conditions, through the collection and dissemination of relevant information on trade in food, agricultural commodities and raw material in support of national, regional and global polices;

z) support Members in the facilitation of access and equitable participation of rural communities in poverty and vulnerability, such as family farmers, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, rural women and youth, in initiatives and investments related to climate and environmental financing, and other biodiversity and conservation efforts related to the sustainability of agrifood systems;

aa) strengthen governments’ capacities to ensure the protection and promotion of traditional knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and other traditional rural communities to ensure the fulfillment of their collective and individual rights, the sustainable management of their lands and natural resources, and the diversification of agrifood systems in the region; and

bb) continue supporting Members in the adoption of an integrated approach to fire management that protects forests as a source of food and avoids the damaging effects of uncontrolled fires to both the environment and agrifood systems, while reducing the risks to both human and animal life.

IV. Other matters

A. Summary of the recommendations of the Regional Commissions

27. The Regional Conference:

a) reaffirmed FAO’s role in the technical secretariats of the Regional Commissions and endorsed the recommendations of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission, the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, the Commission for Small-scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean, which are contained in document LARC/24/INF/12;
b) supported the FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean recommendation to formally adopt9 the name “Latin American and the Caribbean Commission for Agricultural Statistics (LACCAS)”; and

c) called for continuing to ensure that meetings of the Regional Commissions be held no later than the first semester of the second year of the biennium, so that the recommendations and technical decisions can be timely and adequately addressed by the Regional Conference.

B. International Day of Fruit and Vegetables

28. The Regional Conference recognized the relevance of establishing an International Day of Fruits and Vegetables and urged Members to increase awareness of their importance to both the economy and food security and nutrition of all the people in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

C. International Year of Camelids 2024

29. The Regional Conference took note of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/210 on the International Year of the Camelids 2024, and urged Members to support actions on the importance of these ancestral livestock systems for food security and nutrition, and to promote knowledge exchanges based on science, technology and innovation, while highlighting the importance of traditional knowledge systems, and the singular role of women and Indigenous Peoples.

D. Date and place of the 39th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

30. The Regional Conference welcomed the generous offer by the Government of Brazil to host the 39th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2026, and recommended that the offer be accepted.

V. Concluding items

Ministerial Declaration

31. The Regional Conference reviewed and endorsed the Ministerial Declaration, as reproduced in Appendix A, presented to the Ministers at the Ministerial Session, held from 18 to 21 March 2024, in Georgetown, Guyana.

Closure of the Regional Conference

32. The Chairperson, Mr Zulfikar Mustapha, Minister for Agriculture of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, thanked the participants for their positive contributions, leading to the conduct of a successful 38th Session of LARC. The Chairperson subsequently declared the Regional Conference closed.

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9 The Working Group, during its 31st Session held from 28 to 30 March 2023, recognized, inter alia, that the name of this current body does not reflect its character” because “the term ‘working group’ does not correspond to the nature of a technical commission of FAO and implies a less formal and less important mechanism. In addition, it implies a defined operational timeline and specific technical products”. The recommendation of the Working Group at its 31st Session, that “from the next session in 2025, the group will be known as the Latin American and the Caribbean Commission for Agricultural Statistics (LACCAS). To achieve this objective, the group request that FAO begin the appropriate procedure to change the name”. 
38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

Ministerial Declaration

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of Latin America and the Caribbean, assembled at the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the city of Georgetown, Co-operative Republic of Guyana from 18 to 21 March 2024:

Signalled our commitment and full support to eradicate hunger, poverty and structural inequalities in order to ensure the right to adequate food, to leave no one behind.

Expressed solidarity with the Republic of Haiti for the deteriorating humanitarian situation that compromises the food security and nutrition, as well as the livelihoods of its population.

Recognized the unique conditions and specific vulnerabilities faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to climate change and weather shocks, as well as increased food import dependency that compromises their food security and nutrition.

Highlighted the importance of enhancing efforts, bolstering financial assistance through resource mobilization, and taking tangible steps to boost resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems in the Dry Corridor and Arid Zones of the SICA region to address the challenges posed by climate change and food insecurity.

Emphasized the need for the promotion of financial and technical support to increase the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems in South America, especially in most vulnerable ecosystems, addressing the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity.
Senior Officers Meeting
11-13 March 2024 (virtual)

Introductory Items
1) Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, and appointment of Rapporteur
2) Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters
3) Global and Regional Food Security and Nutrition Outlook
4) Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)
5) How to fight against food loss and waste through technological innovation
6) Decentralization.
7) Building resilience in the region through agrifood systems transformation and the use of early-warning systems

Programme and Budget Matters
8) Results for FAO in the region 2022-2023

Other Matters
10) Summary of the recommendations of the Regional Commissions
11) Date and place of the 39th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
12) Any other matters
13) Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting
Ministerial Session  
18-21 March 2024 (hybrid)

Introductory Items

14) Statement by the Head of State
15) Statement by the Director-General
16) Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
17) Statement by the Chairperson of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
18) Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
19) Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Organizations
20) Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector
21) Statement by the Spokesperson of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger
22) Statement by the Spokesperson of the Scientific and Academic Committee

Ministerial Roundtables

23) Advancing fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability under the Blue Transformation approach
24) Reducing hunger and malnutrition through trade as strategic driver of food security in the region
25) Addressing the challenges of the water-forest-biodiversity-soil nexus in a climate change context

High-level Special Events

26) Science and digital innovation in family farming
27) Agrifood systems transformation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Latin America and the Caribbean
28) Targeted investment for resilient, sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative
29) Foresight drivers and triggers relevant for Latin America and the Caribbean

Closure of the Regional Conference

30) Adoption of the Report of the Regional Conference
## APPENDIX C

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