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Food and
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones Unidas
para la
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

THIRTIETH SESSION

Tegucigalpa - Honduras, 25 -29 September 2017

Priority themes for the 35th Session of the Regional Conference (Bahamas, 2018)

Secretariat note

I. Introduction

1. The Thirty-fourth session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Mexico City (Mexico) from 29 February to 3 March 2016. Representatives from 32 Member Nations attended, including 25 ministers, 13 deputy ministers and high-level officials as heads of delegation. This note intends to summarize the discussions and provide a starting point for the Commission's consideration related to the Thirty-fifth session.

2. In his statement to the Regional Conference, the Director-General of FAO, José Graziano da Silva, stressed the challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean in working towards the targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He highlighted the new efforts required to maintain and further the progress achieved over the past two decades in fighting hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, promoting policies to support family farming and rural development, and encouraging strategies for climate change adaptation, risk management and sustainable use of natural resources.

3. The Regional Conference considered the following important policy issues for the region:

- a) Food and nutrition security: from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- b) Transformation of the rural sector: rural territorial development, family farming, social and economic inclusion and innovation.
- c) Sustainable use of natural resources, risk management and climate change adaptation in the new framework of SDGs.

II. Challenges and Perspectives for Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America and the Caribbean: from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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The Regional Conference:

4. Acknowledged that, in spite of the great progress made, efforts needed to be intensified to provide development opportunities to Latin American and Caribbean people still suffering from extreme poverty, hunger, obesity and other forms of malnutrition.
5. Stressed the importance of the new 2030 Agenda.
6. Reiterated the usefulness of the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), as well as regional undertakings, such as the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 Initiative and the 2025 Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC FNS Plan), which provided a favorable framework for achieving a region free from hunger and poverty within a generation.
7. Acknowledged the alignment between the new SDGs set out in the 2030 Agenda and the FAO strategic objectives and results framework, and urged the Organization to continue focusing the implementation of its work programme on country priorities in 2016-17.
8. Urged FAO to continue supporting the implementation of the aforesaid global and regional commitments, as well as related public policies.
9. Requested FAO to prioritize its action in countries and regions that posed the greatest challenges in terms of hunger and rural poverty, paying special attention to the targets of the new SDGs.
10. Called on FAO to support countries with capacity-building in order to develop indicators and information systems on SDGs at the regional and national levels. It also invited countries to boost their national statistical systems and provide updated information.
11. Urged FAO to highlight the role of forests, fisheries and aquaculture in tackling food and nutrition insecurity and in facilitating trade with consumers.
12. Called on FAO, in cooperation with other international organizations, to promote mechanisms for intra-regional trade in agrifood, fishery and aquaculture products and to facilitate links with consumers.

III. Challenges for Transforming the Rural Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean: Rural Territorial Development, Family Farming, Social and Economic Inclusion and Innovation

The Regional Conference:

13. Highlighted the contribution of the Regional Initiative on Family Farming and Territorial Development to technological, social and institutional innovations to achieve food and nutrition security and eradicate rural poverty in the region.
14. Called for continued support for the development of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms and governance to facilitate the interaction of policies and dialogue among sectors and between governments, civil society and the private sector to achieve social and economic transformation of the rural sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, while preserving country leadership and paying particular attention to women, youth and indigenous peoples.
15. Called for strengthening of South-South and triangular cooperation strategies to develop healthy and sustainable agrifood systems and to reduce rural poverty in the most vulnerable countries and regions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. Stressed the importance of furthering work on fisheries and aquaculture, with particular emphasis on artisanal fisheries as a differentiated policy, in view of the fact that fishery and aquaculture resources make a major contribution to food and nutrition security by helping to eradicate hunger and poverty.
17. Highlighted the value of the forest sector and of the communities whose livelihoods depend on forests, for achieving inclusive and sustainable rural development.
18. Requested FAO to reinforce work on social protection linked with sustainable development.
19. Recommended that countries strengthen family farming and rural development policies based on a territorial agro-ecology approach, placing special emphasis on the interaction of policies for sustainable production and responsible consumption, disaster risk management, agricultural insurance, technical assistance, rural extension and communication, social protection, and farm and non-farm employment in territorial development programmes, in order to help meet the SDGs.

IV. Challenges for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation in Latin America and the Caribbean in the New Framework of Sustainable Development Goals

The Regional Conference:

20. Requested FAO to promote fora for policy dialogue among countries in the region in order to determine concerted action for fostering better coordination between climate change adaptation activities and disaster risk reduction activities, through the exchange of experiences, practices, knowledge and technology.
21. In accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, highlighted the need to complement national support given to countries by the Organization within a regional context, for prevention, mitigation and response to extreme weather and human-induced events, placing particular emphasis on vulnerable populations such as smallholders, family farmers, foresters, artisanal fishers, women, youth and indigenous peoples.
22. Encouraged continued strengthening of national plant and animal health and food safety systems, and the development of programmes to strengthen national efforts for prevention, control and eradication of invasive species, pests and diseases.
23. Called for work to continue the preparation of guidelines to help formulate ecosystem policies to promote all three dimensions of sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – social, economic and environmental – based on countries’ practical experience, promoting the development of a regional programme aimed at exchanging experiences and lessons learned by countries in this area.
24. Called on FAO to accord greater importance to the value of forests and forest plantations with regard to risk management and climate change adaptation.
25. Took note of the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Seminar on Agro-ecology in Latin America and the Caribbean and urged FAO to continue working on the issue.

V. Remarks about forest from the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference:

26. Reaffirmed FAO's role in the technical secretariats of the various regional commissions and recommended improving communication and information mechanisms for the Commissions' conclusions and recommendations, with a view to improving their national implementation. It welcomed the recommendations of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC), the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLDLAC), the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), and highlighted the contribution of forests, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture to reducing poverty and food insecurity, as well as to sustaining livelihoods, especially those of family farmers.

27. Acknowledged that, despite the slowing rate of forest loss in the region, deforestation and forest degradation were still one of the most important environmental problems facing Latin America and the Caribbean.

28. Endorsed the LACFC recommendation to analyze the contribution of forests (including agrosilvopastoral systems) to food security, family farming, territorial development, and sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and risk management, both financially and in terms of externalities. It also requested boosting the development of cross-cutting agendas linking together agricultural, forestry and environmental issues as part of a holistic territorial approach, and recommended facilitating access to international markets for agricultural products from sustainable systems.

29. Took note of the need for further implementation of the Regional Initiatives in such areas as: fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, agro-ecology and crop diversification. It acknowledged the exceptional challenges facing Haiti and recommended continuing to develop specific actions to address them.

VI. Statement from the consultation with civil society to the 34th FAO Regional Conference

30. Representatives of 20 countries and 14 networks connected in regional and subregional social platforms including food producers, inhabitants of fields, coasts, highlands, islands, steppes, grasslands and mountains of Latin America and the Caribbean, met in Panama from 19th to 20th February 2016 at for consultation on the way to the 34th FAO Regional Conference.

31. The civil society stressed that the Paris Agreement does not represent a landmark for them in the fight against climate change. This agreement is not mandatory, it merely presents an adaptation and does not address the real causes of worsening climate change. It is presented as a success when in reality it was a backward step, as it removed the binding nature of the Kyoto Protocol which called on the most polluting countries to reduce their emissions; it was replaced by a system of compensation based on the carbon market linked to monocultures and forest plantations.

32. They considered these mechanisms as false solutions to climate change. They therefore rejected the introduction of the concept of climate-smart agriculture and FAO's definition of forests and its UN-REDD programme as the solution to the problem of climate change. The large-scale agrifood system is currently responsible for between 41 and 54% of greenhouse gases.

33. They proposed to assess the impact that the Paris Agreement on small-scale agriculture in view of its emphasis on the commoditization of the climate. The role of small-scale food producers and family farming must be recognized, not as vulnerable populations or as one more interested party, but as the holders of rights and key players in cooling the planet. If States propose mechanisms for adapting to and

mitigating climate change, they should be constructed on the basis of traditional and ancestral knowledge.

34. Finally, civil society urged States and FAO to continue moving forward to build dialogues with the participation of social platforms and movements.

VII. Points for consideration

35. The Commission may wish to:

- Discuss forest's contributions to the policy issues identified by the Regional Conference as priorities for FAO's work in the region, mainly: food security, rural territorial development and climate change.
- Identify ways to increase the awareness at political level about the contributions of forest to a rural transformational process with focus on social and economic inclusion and innovation for family farming and disasters risk reduction increasing resilience of the livelihoods.
- Dialogue about the experience on designing national and regional forestry programmes focused also in achieving food and nutrition security, rural territorial development, risk management and climate change adaptation.

36. The Commission may wish to revisit and build on these considerations when addressing Agenda item 8.2