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. Members agreed to hold the SOM virtually and the Ministerial Session in hybrid modality, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent.

In all, 526 participants from 33 Members; two Observer Members; one United Nations (UN) organization, ten intergovernmental organizations; five Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger representatives; 11 private sector organizations; and 13 scientific and academic organizations attended the SOM. In the Ministerial Session, there were 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; 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.

At the inaugural ceremony held on 18 March 2024, and in the presence of His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan 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 FAO, the President invited the Regional Conference to honour all peoples and nations currently experiencing war and armed conflict which undermine food security and nutrition globally, and called for a renewed commitment to regional integration to end hunger and achieve the right to adequate food.

In relation to Programme and Budget Matters, two items were discussed: Results for FAO in the region 2022–2023; and Priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31. The Regional Conference welcomed FAO’s agility in adapting its regional work to the global food crisis, while reinforcing its normative work and addressing structural challenges as part of its core function; and expressed alarm at the challenges in eradicating hunger and malnutrition, and setbacks in rural poverty and extreme poverty, intensified by the global food crisis. It was recommended that FAO continue to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 in support of the 2030 Agenda to achieve efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems, through four Regional Priorities, as the mechanism to reach the outcomes of the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) under Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment and Better Life.

In other matters, the Regional Conference reaffirmed FAO’s role in the technical secretariats of the Regional Commissions and endorsed their recommendations. It recognized the relevance of establishing an International Day of Fruits and Vegetables and urged Members to increase awareness of their importance to the economy, food security and nutrition. It took note of the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/210 on the International Year of the Camelids 2024 and urged Members to recognize the importance of ancestral livestock systems for food security and nutrition, of knowledge exchange based on science, technology and innovation, as well as traditional knowledge systems, and the singular role of women and Indigenous Peoples.

The Regional Conference welcomed the generous offer of 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.
The Honourable Zulfikar Mustapha
Chairperson of the 38th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
Minister for Agriculture of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana