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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Thirty-sixth Session

Managua, Nicaragua, (*New dates to be determined*)

Results and Priorities for FAO in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region

Executive Summary

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defines the context in which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its Members will be working towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieving country-specific targets. FAO is well positioned to assist all countries in realizing these goals, in particular SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” and SDG 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. Food and agriculture, as the most inclusive tools to end poverty and hunger, hold the key to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This document lays out the results achieved by FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) during the 2018-2019 biennium, gives an overview of current trends and challenges and identifies priorities for the next biennium, quadrennium and beyond. As part of the Governing Body process for reviewing FAO’s Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-2025, the Regional Conference’s deliberations on this document will inform the proposal submitted for consideration by the FAO Conference in July 2021.

The 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC35) underscored the relevance of the three Regional Initiatives (RIs) to focus and guide FAO’s actions on the priorities of the region. FAO addressed the recommendations of LARC35 and achieved significant results in: (i) promoting healthy diets and food security and nutrition; (ii) fostering coherent strategies for addressing poverty, rural inequalities and rural-urban gaps, integration of family farmers in global markets, access to land and natural resources, and social protection and productive inclusion; and (iii) reducing the environmental impact of agrifood systems, managing disaster risks affecting agriculture, building resilient livelihoods, and strengthening natural resource management. FAO also successfully supported countries in accessing financing to address environmental and climate change challenges in the rural sector.

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The FAO priorities in LAC in 2020-2021 are informed by FAO's Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan 2018-2021, the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), and discussions on strategic and technical areas of focus. For 2020-2021, it is proposed to fine-tune the three RIs to respond more effectively and with greater impact in the current regional context and emerging trends. FAO will focus on transforming food systems, increasing food supply, facilitating physical and economic access to healthy food and healthy consumption patterns; eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, creating new development opportunities in rural areas, promoting sustainable and resilient land and marine ecosystems; and improving farmer, community and ecosystem resilience.

The new corporate Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) constitutes a key instrument for supporting evidence-based, country-led and country-owned actions to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development for the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2).

Furthermore, to ensure progress on SDGs and food systems transformation, FAO will promote innovative approaches, including the application of modern science and technologies, digital solutions, and innovation of mindset and cooperation models.

The Regional Conference is requested to provide feedback and guidance on FAO's corporate and regional priorities, in the context of the latest regional and global trends and challenges.

Suggested action by the Regional Conference

- Recognize the work completed in the region in 2018-2019, and the achievements in responding to the main priorities and recommendations identified by the Regional Conference at its 35th session.
- Endorse the reformulation of the Regional Initiatives for the 2020-2021 biennium, based on major trends and challenges in the region, including support to achieve the SDGs and address climate change, and building on achievements from 2018-2019.
- Note the new HIHI through which FAO will support evidence-based, country-led and country-owned actions in the region to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development for the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). In doing so, these efforts will contribute to the attainment of all SDGs in the region.
- Endorse the emphasis on strengthened partnerships, including with the private sector, small holder producers, and food companies, procurers and consumers, as also highlighted in the 46th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).
- Note the renewed emphasis on leaving no one behind and organizational consolidation to accelerate support for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Note the importance of adopting innovative approaches and using modern science and technologies including digital solutions to face new situations and challenges.
- Recognize the importance of FAO's Strategic Framework in providing direction for FAO's technical work and take note of the arrangements regarding the proposed revision of the Strategic Framework.
- Note the importance of food systems transformation that embodies the dynamic links across sectors, actors and countries pertaining to the sustainable use of natural resources, agriculture, food security, nutrition and resilience.
- Note the importance of the contribution of the Members from the region to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, and welcome FAO's support in its preparation.

- Provide guidance to the development of the new strategic results framework at regional level for shaping areas of regional priority for FAO's work beyond 2020-2021.

Please send any questions about this document to:

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I. Introduction

1. The Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018-2021 (reviewed) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-2021 were approved by the FAO Conference at its 41st session in June 2019. The MTP sets out the Strategic Objectives and Outcomes for achievement by Members and the international community with support from FAO, in accordance with the reviewed Strategic Framework approved by the FAO Conference in July 2017.¹ The Conference appreciated the close alignment of FAO's Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and highlighted the importance of the full implementation of the repositioning of the United Nations (UN) Development System.²
2. Web Annex 1 provides an overview of FAO's Strategic Objectives including their alignment with the SDGs.
3. As described in the Adjustments to the PWB 2020-21,³ FAO seeks to attain zero hunger and improve the livelihoods of people through better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life.
4. The 2030 Agenda defines the context in which FAO and its Members will be working towards meeting the SDGs, and achieving country-specific targets. Food and agriculture are key to realizing the 2030 Agenda, and 78 percent of the SDG targets depend on actions undertaken in rural areas. FAO is well positioned to assist all Members in realizing the SDGs, in particular SDG 1 (eradicate poverty) and SDG 2 (end hunger and all forms of malnutrition) through food systems transformation that embodies the dynamic links across sectors, actors and countries pertaining to the sustainable use of natural resources, agriculture, food, nutrition and resilience.
5. To accelerate the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2 while contributing to all 17 SDGs, FAO has launched the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative accelerating agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). HIHI adopts a robust match-making approach, bringing together target countries with donors, the private sector, international financial institutions, academia and civil society, to mobilize implementation that supports accelerated actions, prioritizing countries and territories where poverty and hunger are most concentrated or where national capacities are most limited. It also introduces a framework for monitoring and impact analysis.⁴
6. FAO has established a new Office for Innovation,⁵ to foster innovative approaches, the use of science and technology, including digital solutions. The Office for Innovation will further consolidate and strengthen FAO's innovative spirit, including innovation of mindset, innovation of cooperation models, and innovation of application by digitalization.
7. Considering their vulnerability to unique and complex food security and nutrition challenges, FAO established the Office for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs⁶ to meet the particular needs of these vulnerable populations and countries.
8. Furthermore, following the 46th Session of the Committee on World Food Security in October 2019, FAO will strive to facilitate partnerships between smallholder producers and food companies, procurers and consumers.

¹ C 2017/7 see <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/conference/c2017/list-of-documents/en/>.

² CL 163/4, Information Note 2, November 2019 FAO Strategy for Agenda 2030 and UN Development System repositioning, for more information. <http://www.fao.org/3/nb929en/nb929en.pdf>.

³ CL 163/3 <http://www.fao.org/3/mz825en/mz825en.pdf>.

⁴ CL 163/6, Information Note 1, November 2019 provides further detail on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative see <http://www.fao.org/3/nb922en/nb922en.pdf>.

⁵ CL 163/3, Information Note 1, <http://www.fao.org/3/nb917en/nb917en.pdf>.

⁶ CL 163/3, Information Note 1, Office for Small Island Developing States (SIDS); Least developed countries (LDCs); Land-locked developing countries (LLDCs) <http://www.fao.org/3/nb917en/nb917en.pdf>.

9. The FAO Strategic Framework is reviewed every four years.⁷ The next Strategic Framework review starts in 2020. Regional Conferences represent the first step of the schedule of Governing Body input and oversight and the final document will be presented to the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference in 2021. LARC is requested to provide guidance on areas of regional priority for 2020-2021 and beyond, regarding both ongoing regional work and in the context of developing the new Strategic Framework.

10. Areas of focus in reviewing the Strategic Framework include aligning the results framework with the 2030 Agenda, strengthening strategic synergies and partnerships through mechanisms such as HIHI, and elaborating regional and global priority areas.

11. The results framework will also need to better incorporate FAO country-level results, balancing Member-specific priorities and FAO's corporate priorities, as set by Members through the Strategic Framework. In this context and following the repositioning of the UN Development System, FAO's work at country level should fully align with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the most important instrument for planning and implementing UN development activities towards meeting the SDGs, in each country. Web Annex 3 presents details on UNSDCF and its relationship with FAO Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs).

12. The FAO Regional Initiatives (RIs) are a mechanism for greater impact and effective delivery at country level on the key priorities of each region. LARC35 considered FAO achievements in the region and identified priority areas for three Regional Initiatives during 2018-2019: (i) Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean; (ii) Family farming and inclusive food systems for sustainable rural development; and (iii) Sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.

13. It is proposed to adapt these Regional Initiatives for 2020-2021, strengthening their support towards achieving the SDGs, adjusting them to meet current trends and challenges, and fine-tuning them to build on achievements from 2018-2019:

- Regional Initiative 1 (RI 1) "Hunger-free Latin America and the Caribbean" will become "Transforming food systems for healthy diets for all", highlighting the increased focus on increasing supply and economic and physical access to healthy food for all and improving information and consumption patterns around healthy food. Work related to hunger eradication will be shifted to RI 2.
- Regional Initiative 2 (RI 2) "Family farming and inclusive food systems for sustainable rural development" will become "Hand in Hand towards prosperous and inclusive rural societies", highlighting the integrated approach to eradicating hunger and extreme poverty from lagging territories, creating new opportunities by leveraging increased productivity, competitiveness and innovation, and promoting social and productive inclusion, through the HIHI.
- Regional Initiative 3 (RI 3) "Sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management" will become "Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Agriculture" and focus on advancing the transformation of agriculture and food systems towards increasingly environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient production, scaling up technological innovations that improve natural capital and environmental services, resulting in improved climate-smart productivity.

14. The RIs constitute three interdependent pillars of FAO's programme in the region. FAO will leverage their synergies and interlinkages to support Members in implementing the 2030 Agenda in the region.

15. This document is divided into two main sections:

⁷ Basic Texts Volume II, Section F. "Implementation of the IPA regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system" para. 1.a) See: <http://www.fao.org/3/K8024E/K8024E.pdf>.

- Section II describes achievements in LAC during 2018-2019, focusing on RIs in the context of agreed priorities for FAO's work;
- Section III provides an overview of the trends and developments in the region going forward, the regional priorities for FAO's work, and RIs proposed for 2020-2021.

II. Achievements in the region

16. LARC35 identified the three priorities for FAO's support in 2018-2019, and indicated that FAO should consider increasingly important issues such as overweight and obesity, migration, biodiversity and access to environmental and climate financing; develop a strategy for accelerating efforts to achieve SDGs in lagging territories, and concentrate on initiatives with a clear potential for generating tangible large-scale results for sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs.⁸ In response, FAO implemented three RIs, coordinating and focusing its support to Members to achieve their Strategic Objectives and towards the SDGs. The work accomplished in the region represents an average contribution of 16 percent to the outputs delivered by FAO worldwide.

17. To deliver this programme of work, in 2018-2019 FAO spent USD 75 million in net appropriations, excluding projects of the Technical Cooperation Programme. Field Programme expenditures reached USD 185 million, a 22 percent (USD 34 million) increase compared with 2016-2017.

18. Results were achieved in collaboration with a broad range of partners. FAO facilitated over 1 300 South-South Cooperation (SSC) activities, and the five initiatives of Triangular Cooperation (TrC) have become key structural elements of FAO's work in the region. Formal agreements with the private sector increased by 65 percent, reflecting the broadening of collaboration. The Organization collaborated closely with academic institutions to produce evidence and analyses for decision-making, with civil society organizations to ensure their representation in key policy dialogue mechanisms, and with UN system agencies, leveraging synergies and complementarities in full commitment to the spirit of the reform of the UN System.⁹

19. Over the course of the biennium, FAO mobilized USD 235 million in voluntary contributions in support of its work in the region. This represents an increase of 35 percent (USD 61 million) compared with 2016-2017, reflecting Members' and resource partners' growing confidence in FAO to effectively contribute to achieving their Strategic Objectives and the SDGs. By the end of 2019, an additional USD 586 million was in final pipeline stages. The Organization also participated in the design of 17 investment projects in 14 countries in the region, to be funded by international financing institutions for a total of USD 1.2 billion.

20. An overview and assessment of results in the region at the level of Outputs is provided in Web Annex 2 – Contribution of Results in the LAC Region to FAO Strategic Objectives in the 2018-2019 Biennium. Key results of the Corporate Outcome Assessment (COA) 2019 for LAC region are presented in Web Annex 4 –Corporate Outcome Assessment 2019 LAC Regional results.

A. RI 1: Hunger-free Latin America and the Caribbean

21. RI 1 maximized coordination and synergies between Strategic Programmes 1, 3 and 4, to advance the transformation of sustainable food systems, promote healthy diets, and improve the policy environment for eradicating hunger in lagging territories, as recommended by LARC35.¹⁰ FAO focused on addressing the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity, and recovering progress towards SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", with special attention to rural territories with moderate and severe food and nutritional insecurity levels, well above their national averages.

⁸ LARC/18/REP

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/LARC_35/MW677_REP/MW677_LARC_18_REP_en.pdf.

⁹ Further details are provided in LARC/20/INF/12.

¹⁰ LARC/18/REP, para 16; LARC/18/5, para 46.

22. FAO continued to support legislative and policy processes through the 25 Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger (PFH).¹¹ Seven countries approved laws in food and nutrition security, food labelling, overweight and obesity, school feeding, family farming, agroecological practices, food donation and reduction of food loss and waste. Thirteen parliaments are working for stronger regulations to secure the Right to Food (RtF), including at constitutional level, following the training provided to 271 parliamentarians and their advisers. Eight countries adopted legislation and international commitments towards SDG 2, and seven parliaments are reviewing the related budgetary allocations. FAO also facilitated an agreement among parliamentarians in 20 national, subregional and regional congresses and parliaments to prioritize legislation to impact vulnerable territories, particularly concerning migration. The PFHs in LAC also shared RtF legislation at the I Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition,¹² resulting in the establishment, with FAO support, of the Ibero-American Parliamentary Alliance for the RtF.

23. A regional network for sustainable school feeding was established in the framework of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, leading to expanded food supply, improved legal frameworks for school feeding programmes, and institutionalized public purchasing from family farmers in 13 countries and providing daily healthy meals for over 285 000 children. Additionally, four countries adopted national strategies for including fish consumption in schools as part of the Blue Growth Initiative and with the support of the Forum of Parliamentarians of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean.

24. Importantly, there is renewed interest in food and nutritional education. About 7 400 government staff have increased their skills in school feeding programmes, with 360 public officials from 24 countries participating in the newly created Diploma and knowledge exchange fora in this biennium alone. In addition, a regional strategy promoting food and nutritional education in schools was approved in Central America and joint FAO/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/ World Food Programme (WFP) analyses of school feeding programmes enabled increased harmonization and coordination among the agencies.

25. FAO facilitated dialogue between governments and stakeholders on the need to transform food systems to address obesity and overweight. The region developed a common position on the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, and six countries have work plans for implementing the public policies discussed at the Forum for the Transformation of Food Systems and the Reduction of Overweight and Obesity in LAC convened by FAO and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

26. Seven countries developed legal frameworks for preventing and reducing food loss and waste (FLW) and six drafted laws, two of which were approved. Statistics divisions from 24 countries received training on monitoring SDG indicator 12.3.1 on food losses, and national baselines on FLW were produced in six countries. Public institutions and small-scale agricultural workers in ten countries increased their capacity for implementing FLW prevention policies and practices. Through the #SinDesperdicio platform coordinated by the Inter-American Development Bank with FAO's technical advice, the Organization collaborated with global and regional private sector foundations, companies and networks such as the Consumers Good Forum to develop innovative approaches for preventing FLW, formulating public policies on inclusive food systems, and increasing supply chain efficiency. The alliances consolidated through this platform led to the organization of the I Regional Summit on FLW, with the participation of governments and private sector stakeholders from 18 countries.

27. Eight countries strengthened the agricultural dimension of their Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) National Action Plans. FAO developed innovative methodologies within the

¹¹ 21 national PFH (Argentina, Belize, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay) and 4 regional and/or subregional PFHs (PARLATINO, PARLANDINO, PARLASUR, PARLACEN).

¹² <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/global-parliamentary-summit/en/>.

region, for assessing the risks of AMR related to national food production systems. One of these methodologies will be adopted by African countries in 2020 and continue to be applied in LAC.

28. FAO continued to support Members' statistical capacity and to provide high-quality statistics on food and nutrition security. Fourteen countries strengthened their capacity for implementing agricultural censuses and surveys. Thirteen built capacity for calculating the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES, SDG 2.1.2) and will have collected or reported data by the end of 2020. In addition, FAO and national statistics institutions in two Central American countries piloted a new approach for measuring FIES, respectful of cultural conceptions, traditional norms and specificities of social and productive organization ensuring their free and informed consent.

29. The 10th and 11th issues of the annual Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean¹³ were the first to result from an FAO collaboration with the World Health Organization /Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP. They provide an integrated view of problems and solutions for achieving SDG 2 and 3 targets related to food and nutrition, including analysis of the uptake of policy measures, focusing on the strong links between food and nutrition insecurity, social and income inequality and the transformation of food systems.

30. FAO worked intensively for an open, fair and transparent international agricultural trading system by leveraging regional trade agreements and cross-border zones. The Organization mapped trade barriers and opportunities, supported the empowerment of value chain actors, developed strategies for establishing possible trade zones, negotiated trade agreements with small-scale producers, innovated monitoring mechanisms, and promoted the improvement of business environments by reducing legal barriers to achieve inclusive trade. At the SIDS Regional Fish Trade workshop convened by the Organization, 12 Caribbean countries, five intergovernmental organizations and private sector stakeholders jointly defined paths for attaining SDG target 14.7 on the economic benefits to SIDS from marine resources.

31. FAO enhanced physical and economic access to healthy foods through farmers' markets and fairs. Thirteen countries received support for improving their supply policies, to bring producers closer to consumers, diversify diets, and provide vulnerable populations with access to food through fixed and mobile stores. The analysis of 40 wholesale markets catering to 153 million people across 14 countries conducted with the Latin American Federation of Supply Markets identified actions to facilitate consumer access to fresh food. Six countries strengthened the resilience of their supply systems, promoting the formulation of interinstitutional agendas, spaces for dialogue, and information management for increasing regional coordination for the benefit of the producer and the consumer. FAO trained technical and managerial staff from supplier institutions in three countries on improving distribution chains through the regional network of public food supply and trading systems, and public institution managers in 11 countries on monitoring food prices through IT systems such as the livestock and agricultural market information and monitoring system (SIMMAGRO), which presents data on 40 strategic products for family farming.

B. RI 2: Family Farming and Inclusive Food Systems for Sustainable Rural Development

32. RI 2 maximized coordination and synergies between Strategic Programmes 2 and 3, to reduce rural poverty and revitalize lagging rural territories. FAO addressed rural inequalities and rural-urban gaps, integration of family farmers to global markets, access to land and natural resources and strategies for social protection and productive inclusion with a focus on rural youth, women, indigenous peoples and afro-descendants.

33. FAO proposed strategies for addressing rural poverty, including the issue of migration. The first Overview of Rural Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁴ analyses past regional achievements in reducing poverty and identifies strategies and policy recommendations for economic

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/panorama/2019/en/>; <http://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/panorama/2018/en/>.

¹⁴ <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/es/c/CA2275EN/>.

growth. The Atlas of Migration in Northern Central American Countries, co-published with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), demonstrated the deep ties between rural areas and migration. FAO developed guidelines for technical cooperation on international migration of rural origin and analysed migratory processes in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, generating policy recommendations applicable to the region.

34. The “100 territories free from hunger and poverty” (100-T) strategy, launched by FAO provides a toolkit for developing tailored policies and interventions in support of lagging rural territories. The Organization collaborated with ECLAC to identify 14 countries containing territories with the highest levels of rural poverty and hunger in the region. Six countries were selected for an initial phase, covering 4 million people in 22 territories. Through existing participatory processes, key local stakeholders defined strategies for addressing the migration crisis and climate change impacts. Investment gaps and opportunities were identified from the perspective of local populations. 100-T will be one of the partnership mechanisms for implementing the HIHI, already underway in Haiti.

35. The Organization improved methodologies for measuring rural poverty. A multidimensional rural poverty index developed in collaboration with the Alliance for the Elimination of Rural Poverty allows comparisons across countries. The links between rural poverty and environmental management were analysed in joint publications with the Institute of Peruvian Studies. Country-specific rural poverty indicators formulated in three countries enabled more detailed national analyses.

36. Broad regional dialogue facilitated by FAO led to a regional agenda on family farming. At the Regional Launch of the Decade of Family Farming, Members renewed their commitments in the Declaration of Bávaro,¹⁵ laying out concrete actions aimed at developing a regional and ten national action plans for family farming. FAO and Mercosur’s Specialized Meeting on Family Farming addressed issues related to social organizations, market access, rural services and strengthening of youth organizations, while the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) approved the first regional Policy on Peasant, Indigenous and Afro-Descendant Family Farming, with the first national plan launched in early 2020. National family farming committees were strengthened in 13 countries and registries and market mechanisms established in eight. In five countries, a sustainable model of diversified production with cotton as the main crop, benefitting 18 000 families covering 40 000 hectares, was implemented applying technological innovations piloted by FAO with indigenous communities, rural women and rural youth.

37. FAO led regional efforts to strengthen synergies between policies for social protection and productive inclusion. The Central American Integration System (SICA) approved and implemented the Intersectoral Regional Agenda for Social Protection and Productive Inclusion with Equity 2018-2030. Six countries received direct technical assistance for developing or implementing intersectoral policies such as social assistance programmes, sectoral social registries, national poverty reduction plans and guidelines for productive inclusion. The Social Protection in Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture in LAC¹⁶ report, shared at the V Forum of Parliamentarians of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean provides an overview of policy recommendations and social protection programmes for artisanal fishers and fish farmers. FAO also contributed to the development of the Central American Integral Social Policy 2020-2024, to support high-level regional strategies for the rural poor.

38. FAO actively promoted decent rural work and employment opportunities in LAC. The Commission for Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPEAALC) endorsed a toolkit to improve the working conditions of fishers and fish farmers, and the Forum of Parliamentarians of Fisheries and Aquaculture endorsed FAO’s reference guidelines for regulating safe diving in small-scale fishing. Over 700 rural youth across six Caribbean countries accessed seed capital and technical assistance for business plans, and entrepreneurial opportunities, thanks to integrated strategies for Rural Youth Socioeconomic Inclusion promoted by

¹⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5896en/ca5896en.pdf>.

¹⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca3177en/ca3177en.pdf>.

FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), addressing the priorities emerging from dialogues among rural youth and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

39. Agricultural land bank mechanisms established in three Caribbean countries enabled targeted vulnerable populations to access land and contributed to improving and modernizing land administration systems, supporting implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and constituting a potential driver for increased youth and women's participation in agriculture and rural development. FAO also supported a review of institutional frameworks and types of leases, facilitated land bank management software and is currently upscaling the initiative at national level while seeking replication in other Caribbean countries.

40. Government and civil society stakeholders participated in trainings, consultations, and exchanges of experience with a focus on gender and on monitoring progress against SDG 5. Five countries received technical assistance for mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches across policies on market access, decent work, and access to productive resources. In Mesoamerica and South America, over 60 indigenous women leaders from 16 countries, mostly young, strengthened leadership skills and knowledge on human rights, food security and food sovereignty, and nutrition at the leadership schools established by FAO and the International Forum for Indigenous Women. Furthermore, FAO launched its 2019-2023 Regional Gender Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean, providing guidelines for addressing gender gaps.

41. Two regional Fora on Innovation provided an opportunity for policy-makers, private sector representatives and academia from seven countries to share experiences and technical proposals. Issues addressed include family farming, access to investment funds, sustainable food systems, rural connectivity, e-agriculture, e-commerce, digital technologies for rural economic inclusion and the role of regulation in technological development.

C. RI 3: Sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management

42. RI 3 maximized coordination and synergies between Strategic Objectives 2 and 5, to reduce the environmental impact of agrifood systems, manage disaster risks to agriculture, build resilient livelihoods and strengthen natural resource management. FAO also supported countries in securing financing to address environmental and climate change challenges in the rural sector, especially from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

43. A regional strategy on biodiversity emerged from two processes facilitated by FAO: the High-Level Regional Dialogue on the Integration of Biodiversity in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DRANIBA), and the multistakeholder process for measuring progress in integrating food production practices that promote biodiversity. In addition, through the network coordinated by FAO and supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on National Parks, other Protected Areas and Wild Flora and Fauna (REDPARQUES) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Amazonian governments agreed on criteria, institutional arrangements and financial sustainability for identifying, creating and managing Protected Areas in the bioma. This initiative safeguards livelihoods and biodiversity and contributes to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity targets. Five countries submitted proposals for recognizing and supporting the agrobiodiversity of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), in synergy with the World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves managed by UNESCO.

44. Under the umbrella of the Agroecology Initiative, FAO and regional and global partners formulated a global framework for assessing agroecology efficiency in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Validation by five Latin American countries will generate evidence on more sustainable agricultural practices and policies.

45. Countries increased capacities for data collection, monitoring and reporting. Through the Latin American Soil Partnership, FAO provided training and digital modelling systems to soil

laboratories in ten South American countries. The resulting Soil Organic Carbon maps enable Members to monitor SDG indicator 5.3.1, provide data for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management and contribute to international databases such as the Soil Information System of Latin America and the Caribbean (SISLAC) and the Global Soil Information System (GLOSIS). In Central America, an oceanographic research campaign allows assessment of potential fishery resources and a satellite-based Agricultural Drought Surveillance System detects drought probability based on FAO's Agricultural Stress Index System (ASIS). Following its regional application, ASIS was calibrated at country level as stand-alone systems in five countries, for monitoring and surveilling drought in support of early action to protect vulnerable rural livelihoods.

46. To combat the negative impacts of climate change, at the UN Climate Change Conference COP25, nine countries committed to the Climate Action Platform for Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLACA), fostered by FAO and ECLAC to strengthen coordination and enhanced climate action, and leveraging synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

47. FAO also promoted Climate-Smart Livestock practices, technologies and policies, technology transfer farms, greenhouse gas (GHG) monitoring systems, and national strategies for sustainable livestock management in three countries. Key livestock stakeholders increasingly incorporated adaptation and mitigation in their practices, strategies and investment projects, attracting private credit and additional investment. FAO also fostered a regional agreement for adopting the Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model (GLEAM) to monitor carbon emissions.

48. Seven Caribbean countries received support for adapting fisheries to climate change, in the context of the Blue Growth Initiative. FAO collaborated with local governments to mainstream multilevel climate change adaptation into fisheries policies, plans and associated processes. Actions include sensitization of fishers, incorporation of early warning systems via mobile technology, training to increase income through productive diversification and access to insurance following storms or hurricanes. Inland and coastal communities strengthened their uptake of climate-resilient technologies, including VHF radio and repeater systems.

49. FAO supported legal frameworks and operational procedures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including the implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) in 16 countries. Two additional countries ratified the Agreement in 2018-2019, for a total of 16 parties and one signatory in LAC. Eleven of them endorsed the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission's Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Prevent, Deter and Combat IUU fishing.

50. Six countries have strengthened the fight against illegal logging, developing national traceability systems, instrumental for law enforcement, and strengthening regulations for timber utilization. In addition, there is increased capacity among indigenous peoples for monitoring and controlling forest resources, and within the private sector for meeting the requirements of the Legality Assurance System. Forest governance and land tenure rights were also strengthened. Eight countries in Central and South America implemented their REDD+ Strategies involving local communities and indigenous peoples, and, with FAO support, submitted their international reports on efforts to meet the mitigation targets of the forestry sector.

51. In support of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States' (CELAC) 2018-30 Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Agriculture and food security and nutrition sectors, FAO facilitated the identification of priority DRM initiatives and the establishment of a regional governance mechanism. As a result, FAO assisted 18 countries across the region improving agriculture and disaster data management systems for evaluating damages and losses caused by disasters, generating key data for reporting on progress towards the SDGs; five in conducting cost-benefit analyses that demonstrate the multiple benefits of farm-level investment in Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly the economic gains from easy-to-implement "disaster-resilient" farming practices; and four South American countries in scaling up participatory integrated climate services. Three Caribbean countries designed financial risk

management strategies and assessed the feasibility of developing agriculture insurance products, within an integrated disaster risk management strategy.

52. FAO provided technical assistance for impact assessments, resource mobilization and implementation of rapid livelihood rehabilitation programmes through approaches sensitive to resilience, gender and indigenous peoples. Interventions addressed plant pests and animal diseases, socioeconomic crises, migrant flows, peace-building processes, and natural hazards across the region.

53. With FAO support, Members designed large-scale transformations towards sustainable and resilient agriculture to be financed by the GEF and the GCF for a total of USD 195 million. Innovative interventions applied landscape approaches and addressed the interlinkages between poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation and community resilience. Additionally, FAO, GCF Designated National Authorities and national GEF focal points promoted capacity building and inter-sectoral dialogue to enhance the role of agriculture in national priorities, including the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The Organization also made innovative pre-investment instruments for supporting countries in accessing climate finance available to Caribbean countries and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

D. Supporting the 2030 Agenda

54. FAO has promoted regional and national dialogues to raise awareness and increase capacity on the importance and relevance of food systems and agriculture in the context of the 2030 Agenda. At the Week of Food and Agriculture: Future Challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO and 34 collaborating partners convened 850 delegates from governmental, multilateral, academic, civil society and private sectors from 34 countries.

55. FAO support included SDG analyses, information management tools, training and governance and coordination strengthening for collecting and monitoring data. National institutions received support for monitoring SDG indicators 2.1.1 on the prevalence of undernourishment, 2.1.2 on food insecurity experience, 5.a.2 on women's rights to land, 12.3.1 on global food loss, 15.3.1 on the proportion of degraded land, as well as the Sendai Framework indicators measuring the balance of damages and losses in the agricultural sector.

56. FAO produced and disseminated evidence through flagship publications such as the Series 2030,¹⁷ a set of 33 technical documents aimed at accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs. The Series results from a process of reflection on the future of agriculture, food systems and rural areas by 90 international experts.

E. Lessons learned

57. Ensuring that healthy and environmentally sustainable diets are available and accessible to consumers is key for reducing malnutrition and promoting healthy diets. In 2020-2021, FAO's support to Members will be articulated within RI 1, leveraging synergies around healthy diets, malnutrition and transforming food systems. Issues to be addressed include, *inter alia*, growing urbanization, changes in diets, and new ways of producing, processing, marketing and accessing food, which determine the quantity, quality and diversity of available food and have driven overweight and obesity in the region. Enhanced linkages with RI 2 and RI 3, will aim towards inclusive food systems with sustainable production practices, supportive of sustainable diets and a healthy planet.

58. There is a strong correlation between economic slowdowns, downturns and shocks and the rise and prevalence of hunger, undernourishment, and acute food insecurity. The effects of hunger, undernourishment and food insecurity are disproportionately larger in lower-income populations, predominantly based in rural areas and highly reliant on natural resource-based livelihoods. In 2020-2021, work on hunger eradication will be coordinated within RI 2, in line with its integrated multisectoral territorial approach and leveraging synergies with efforts towards reducing poverty, social and economic exclusion, inequality and vulnerability to climate-related risks, particularly

¹⁷ <http://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/serie2030/es/>.

among agricultural livelihoods. Support to Members will combine governance processes, development practices, and participatory approaches towards sustainable, inclusive territories. This work will cut across all three Regional Initiatives, coordinated within the HIHI and RI 2.

59. In a changing landscape for development finance, no longer solely reliant on public investment, and with incremental resources necessary for eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030 estimated at up to USD 265 billion a year, a mix of public and private investments will be required. In 2020-2021, FAO will continue to help to mobilize private investment and implement innovative approaches for catalysing private capital in support of the SDGs. The Organization will encourage blended financing mechanisms to invest in innovations for greater impact, and work with development finance institutions to scale up innovations.

III. Priority areas of work 2020-21 and beyond

A. Overview of trends and developments in the region going forward

60. LAC has enormous potential for growth and adaptation to generate economic, social and environmental sustainability. The agricultural sector produces enough food to meet the needs of 821 million people. It is one of the world's leading food suppliers, and long-term projections confirm its continued leading global role in the production and trade of agricultural and food goods. Large-scale incorporation of information and communication technology (ICT) and biotechnology makes rural populations less isolated from critical services, including distance from markets.

61. LAC has the world's largest available surface-area with potential for aquaculture development, and is one of the most biodiverse regions, providing a significant opportunity for producing food, feeds and aquatic protein. The increase and diversification of the global demand for food, the knowledge economy, technological innovations across food systems and the bioeconomy provide opportunities for addressing the challenges of climate change, rural poverty and the nutritional transition.

62. Nevertheless, following two decades of progress, hunger and poverty have been increasing in the region since 2014, while obesity, overweight and associated non-communicable diseases have accelerated, largely due to changes in consumption habits. The agrifood system's impact on soil quality, water availability, biodiversity, GHG emissions, fish stocks and forest coverage is increasing. Meanwhile, agriculture, in turn, has been affected by increased frequency and intensity of climatic events, as seen by the progressive modification of agroecological crop patterns, the spread of pests and diseases, the rise of sea levels and ecosystem deterioration.

B. Regional priorities for FAO's work

63. Food systems embody the dynamic links across sectors, actors and countries pertaining to the sustainable use of natural resources, agriculture, food, nutrition and resilience. In 2020-2021, FAO will support Members in transforming their food systems to a more sustainable foundation, by leveraging the potential of the HIHI for eradicating poverty (SDG1) and ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2). Emphasis will be placed on enhancing agricultural productivity sustainably to improve nutrition, raising rural living standards and contributing to global economic growth, in accordance with FAO's mandate.

64. In particular, FAO will focus on supporting Members in (i) transforming food systems to provide healthy diets for all; (ii) promoting prosperous and inclusive rural societies through HIHI and other approaches; and (iii) promoting sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

65. Special focus will be placed on empowering SIDS communities to reshape their food systems, boosting nutrition and strengthening resilience to climate change, generating opportunities for youth employment in agriculture and promoting healthy and sustainable diets. Considering their vulnerability to unique and complex food security and nutrition challenges, FAO will implement a

coherent approach to supporting them within the framework of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States.

66. Strengthened partnerships will be key, including with smallholder producers, development banks and other potential investors, research consortia and consumers, to catalyse the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems for improved food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, to achieve the SDGs, as highlighted at the 46th Session of the CFS.¹⁸ Adopting innovative approaches and using science and technology, including digital solutions, will enable countries to face new challenges.

67. FAO will continue to organize its support to Members for achieving their Strategic Objectives in LAC around three RIs. This section provides an overview of each RI. Additional details are presented in the dedicated documents submitted for Members' consideration.¹⁹

RI 1: Transforming food systems for healthy diets for all

68. FAO will support action and investment towards more sustainable food systems, central to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and particularly SDGs 2, 5, 9 and 12. This includes ensuring food systems deliver diverse, nutritious and sufficient food for all, promoting open data sharing platforms for modelling and analysis, and participating in the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, an important milestone for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. In addition, members will receive support to participate in the CFS and develop Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. In the Caribbean SIDS, FAO will promote evidence-based nutrition policies and programmes to tackle obesity and other forms of malnutrition.

69. Within RI 1, FAO's support to Members will focus on:

- (a) Increasing food supply and physical access to healthy diets for all. FAO will support institutional and policy measures to foster sustainable, nutrition-driven food systems, as well as set standards and create an environment that encourages the private sector to increase accessibility to nutrient-rich, safe and affordable foods. This will be achieved through: (i) efficient and sustainable increase in food production that contributes to nutritious and diversified diets; (ii) inclusive food distribution systems promoting healthy diets for all; (iii) international food trade agreements that contribute to healthier diets; and (iv) food safety and quality.
- (b) Facilitating economic access, information, and consumption patterns for healthy diets. This will be achieved through: (i) fiscal and social policies that facilitate economic access to food that contributes to healthy diets; (ii) regulations for food marketing, advertising and information; and (iii) stimulation of healthy and responsible food consumption patterns.

RI 2: Hand in Hand towards prosperous and inclusive rural societies

70. FAO will support members in reducing hunger and poverty through a broad approach to rural development, promoting economic growth accompanied by social policies sensitive to territorial and population diversity, including social protection. This is essential for sustainable development and the achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 14. Actions will aim to support more inclusive and robust policies to encourage private sector investment, as a driver of economic development, including helping producers overcome barriers to accessing finance and business support.

71. HHHI will be the key instrument for supporting Members. It also offers a framework for strengthening support to SIDS especially regarding strategies for employment, emphasizing women and youth. Solid chain analyses and market principles will be applied to inclusive models for value chain development.

72. Within RI2, FAO's support to Members will focus on:

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/plenary/cfs46/en/>.

¹⁹ LARC/20/2, LARC/20/3, LARC/20/4.

- (c) Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty in the region's lagging territories, through:
 - (i) tailored interventions depending on national and local context; (ii) food and nutrition security; (iii) productive inclusion in the framework of social protection programmes; (iv) sustainable and resilient livelihoods; and (v) crisis risk management to combat epidemics and transboundary animal and plant diseases.
- (d) Creating new opportunities in rural territories, through: (i) increased productivity and market access; (ii) economic growth and creation of decent jobs; (iii) scientific innovation and technological development; (iv) economic and social inclusion of family farming and artisanal fisheries; (v) rural development policies that address migratory movements; and (vi) land and natural resource tenure, governance and management.

RI 3: Sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture

73. FAO will support countries in increasing the sustainability and climate resilience of agriculture and food systems, towards attaining SDGs 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15. This includes technological and institutional innovation for efficient use of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity, and adoption of sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices, including agroecological innovations. Special attention will be paid to addressing climate change and implementing HIHI.

74. New challenges will be addressed through innovation and the use of science and technologies. FAO will facilitate sharing ICT infrastructure and skills among countries within the framework of HIHI, and support the development of a regional innovation hub for digital agriculture (e-agriculture), in liaison with the FAO International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture. FAO will support the creation of data standards and operation procedures for data collection, verification, synchronization and interoperability, helping member countries integrate isolated digital agriculture systems and develop cross-sectoral digital solutions while increasing returns on investment in digital agriculture. Policy-level interventions will be strengthened to leverage private sector investment and innovations in digital agriculture through broad partnerships, extending the benefits of digital technologies to small-holder and family farmers.

75. Within RI3, FAO's support to Members will focus on:

- (a) Sustainable land and marine ecosystems. FAO will support members in maintaining ecosystem services as a means for increasing production, preserving livelihoods, diversifying opportunities for sustainable development, improving the inclusion and well-being of rural populations, and reducing socio-environmental conflicts. This will be achieved through: (i) healthy soils and restored land; (ii) conservation, efficient use and management of water scarcity; (iii) integrating biodiversity to agricultural production and protecting ecosystems; (iv) sustainable forest management; (v) reduced GHG emissions; and (vi) Blue Growth.
- (b) Increased farmer, community and ecosystem resilience to climate change. FAO will enhance the ability of all actors to anticipate climate risks and threats with gender-sensitive and multi-cultural approaches, reducing the impact of adverse events, and adapting and transforming long-term development pathways. This will be achieved through: (i) investment in disaster prevention to reduce cost in agriculture; (ii) risk monitoring, early warning and early action systems; (iii) upscaling resilient productive practices for improved climate change adaptation; (iv) strengthened capacity for effective disaster response and promoting recovery and resilience.