FAO
IN LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN
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FOREWORD

Looking back, 2022 was a year of extraordinary challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean. The region not only had to face the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the impact of the war in Ukraine on food and fertilizer prices. Added to this are the effects of climate change and the large number of natural disasters that have affected our countries in recent months.

Despite this complex situation, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) proved to be up to the task, responding in an optimal manner and delivering extraordinary results based on the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and the priorities established in early 2022 by the 33 Member Nations during the 36th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Quito, Ecuador.

This document presents a detailed list of the projects and initiatives carried out in 2022, as well as the documents published during this period based on the four “betters” promoted by FAO, and which account for the progress made in our region to achieve better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

We have not done this work alone. In 2022, with a portfolio of projects in development totalling USD 879 million, FAO mobilized USD 119.5 million in additional voluntary contributions to support 78 new projects. FAO has 399 active projects and 30 global and inter-regional projects involving work in at least one country in the region. Of the total projects executed, 258 have been financed by 50 strategic partners and 141 through the Technical Cooperation Programme.

In addition, during 2022 we strengthened our work with the governments of the Member Nations, positioning the Organization as an important actor and coordinator in the efforts of the countries in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. An example was the meeting of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States CELAC Ministers of Agriculture organized by the pro tempore presidency of CELAC with FAO and other organizations, held at the end of 2022 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the ministers and representatives discussed strategies to face the economic crisis and advance together to address challenges related to food and nutritional security.

At FAO, we are convinced that no policy can provide the solution on its own. Therefore, it is necessary to design a combination of approaches that includes international cooperation, regional integration and multisectoral actions.

We know that there is still much work to be done. In 2022, our region achieved extraordinary results, and in 2023 we will continue working together with the Member Nations, partners and allies of our Organization to achieve excellent results and advance towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mario Lubetkin

FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean
1. MAIN EVENTS IN 2022

A. 37TH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN #LARC37

The FAO Regional Conference took place between 28 March and 1 April 2022 in Quito, Ecuador. Director-General of FAO, Qu Dongyu, inaugurated the event, and was attended by the President of Ecuador, Guillermo Laso, the Prime Minister of Haiti, Ariel Henry, and the Vice President of Ecuador, Alfredo Borrero. In addition, 41 ministers and 23 deputy ministers from the region attended, as well as high-level representatives of the 33 Member Nations of the region, reaching 586 participants. In addition, 34,000 viewers followed the online broadcast of the conference streamed by FAO’s social media accounts, YouTube, and its website.

After five days of discussion, the 33 Member Nations identified the key priority areas of work for FAO in the region and provided guidance on the effective implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031, in line with the specific regional characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, the three regional priorities for the 2022–2031 biennium were established: sustainable agrifood systems, prosperous and inclusive rural societies, and sustainable and resilient agriculture.

"Your regional priorities are the deep roots of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 that will grow in the fertile soil of this wonderful land. It is you who must take the lead because FAO is your Organization. We serve you and we are fully committed to working for your priorities," concluded the Director-General at the end of the event.
On 7–9 December 2022, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean hosted the Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of the United Nations Decade for Family Farming and the II Conference on Family Farming of the Expanded Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). Ten ministers and deputy ministers, representatives of 24 countries and more than 200 delegates, attended the events.

During the event, representatives of governments, multilateral entities and rural organizations in the region committed to developing and implementing public policy agendas dedicated to empowering family farmers, highlighting their key role in eradicating hunger and poverty, and in mitigating the effects of climate change.

“Collaborative work is needed that must be led by the countries through their institutions in order to advance their priorities,” said the FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mario Lubetkin, adding: “we will continue to support and work together with the governments and all the actors in the region, with civil society and academia, providing our technical capabilities to facilitate initiatives that strengthen integration and solidarity. This is your home”.
C. INTEGRATION AND EXPERIENCES EXCHANGE TO ADVANCE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CELAC

Seventeen high-level authorities from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) participated in the meeting “Integration and exchange of experiences to advance food security and nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

The meeting took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which currently holds the pro tempore presidency of CELAC. At the meeting, the countries exchanged good practices and experiences adopted to promote economic recovery and improve food security and nutrition. In addition, the participants discussed ways to strengthen regional governance spaces and strategies, within the framework of the CELAC multilateral mechanism, promoting a common political dialogue to transform food systems and guarantee food and nutrition security in the region.

D. CELEBRATION OF WORLD FOOD DAY IN THE REGION

The annual celebration of World Food Day (WFD) again took over the agenda of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The commemorative activities and the spaces for political and technical dialogue highlighted the importance of reaching the most vulnerable population and closing the gaps in access to a healthy diet, guaranteeing sustainable livelihoods for rural families and building public policies aimed at transforming agrifood systems.

WFD visibility and marketing activities in Latin America and the Caribbean were achieved through pro bono partnerships, including the commemorative lighting of 12 monuments or buildings in five countries, street billboards in 26 cities, partnerships with 13 media outlets to display promotional material, and 18 agreements to place advertisements in public spaces.

In communication terms, around 250 publications in the media covered more than 80 community activities and events with the participation of high-level authorities, as well as numerous fairs, congresses, seminars, and political dialogues that highlighted the joint work of FAO with governments, parliamentary groups, civil society, academia, and private sector partners. In addition, 35 opinion columns were published calling for action to make societies free from hunger and malnutrition, and representatives and technical officials of the FAO Country Offices in the region gave more than 23 interviews.
The results obtained in 2022 by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean were achieved thanks to excellent work carried out based on the objectives of the four “betters” and their 20 priority areas, in addition to the cross-cutting themes and accelerators established in FAO’s Strategic Framework 2022–2031. This work was carried out under a systemic approach, simultaneously considering social development, economic and environmental dimensions.

A. BETTER PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, through efficient and inclusive food and agricultural supply chains at the local, regional, and global levels, ensuring the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems in changing climatic and environmental conditions.
In 2022, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean contributed to strengthening the database of the Regional Technical Platform for Family Farming, which has the objective of publishing technical inputs such as national laws and regulations, public policies, good practices, data, and statistics, as well as research, articles, and publications. The intended audience for this platform is broad, including government officials, farmer organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, and civil society.

FAO added census microdata from nine countries (Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay), systematized 182 innovative family farming initiatives globally, and collected information on related public policy initiatives in 18 countries of the region (Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay).

FAO designed and implemented courses to strengthen family farming. In addition, stakeholders participated in the Workshops for the Exchange of Experiences and Knowledge of Family Farming, aiming to highlight the work of the relevant organizations and institutions in this area and continue to strengthen family farming through dialogue and collaboration.

I. 1000 DIGITAL VILLAGES

The 1000 Digital Villages initiative completed one year of implementation in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The first stage of implementation involved 110 villages and 52 agrotourism ventures in 14 countries (Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Saint Kitts and Nevis).

In this first year, three major achievements can be highlighted: (i) the identification of digital priorities in each village, together with public and private partners for scaling up the initiative; (ii) the design and development of a virtual course on video production for digital marketing that...
involved 47 tourism ventures and the production of 39 videos; (iii) and the creation of a virtual network of rural youth for digital innovation.

In this context, FAO organized the virtual meeting 1000 Digital Villages in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of providing a space to share and discuss the experiences gained during the first year of implementation of the initiative in the region. In addition, the first virtual fair “+Rural +Digital: Promoting the integration of the rural world” brought together an extensive network of actors from the public, private, financial, academic and community sectors. At the meeting, participants addressed the challenges and expectations related to the digital transformation of rural areas, considering that it is a process that brings important benefits but also reveals persisting inequalities in these areas.

At the country level, an example of public-private cooperation to promote digital skills is the joint work carried out by FAO, Microsoft and EIDOS through the “Skills for the future” programme in rural areas of Ecuador. This initiative facilitated the training of 240 Ecuadorian instructors in digital skills, who in turn will pass on the knowledge obtained to more than 1,800 people in rural areas. This pilot project will also be implemented in other countries of the region.

II. SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS’ EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RESOURCES

COOPERATIVES

In terms of cooperatives and associativity, FAO supported five countries (Argentina, Chile, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay) in the process of generating laws, regulations, policy instruments and institutional frameworks to promote development, governance structures, spaces for the exchange of experiences; and marketing platforms for the cooperative sector.

FAO also partnered with Cooperatives of the Americas (ICA), developing the FAO-ICA Americas Web Platform for Intercooperative Collaboration, which is a virtual space that provides technical assistance for cooperatives and their members to strengthen their capacities related to the cooperative model and their financial and business management through the exchange of information and dialogue in various forums. In addition, this platform offers a commercial catalogue aimed at promoting a virtual community of practice to facilitate collaboration between cooperatives and coordinate multi-stakeholder efforts.
FAO proposed a Model Law on Agrifood Cooperatives for the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), presented at the VI Cooperative Summit of the Americas in Paraguay. In addition, FAO published the study “Cooperatives in Latin America and the Caribbean”, which seeks to disseminate the cooperative and associative model and its potential scope, as well as its advantages for family farming, especially on issues related to business training, access to new markets, value chains and inclusive production chains. This document also includes proposals for incentives to promote public-private sector collaboration and increase coordination between public and private actors, as well as some recommendations to improve the legal and regulatory frameworks.

DEVELOPMENT OF LIVELIHOODS

In the Caribbean, FAO continued to support the development and expansion of agribusinesses, using nutrition-sensitive, gender-sensitive and climate-resilient approaches in value chains, in line with national and regional objectives, including the “Twenty-five (25 percent) by 2025” initiative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

FAO also supported countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia in developing capacities to use innovative technologies aimed at promoting opportunities for beneficiaries and expanding access to local and external markets.

In Grenada, FAO provided business and technical support to nine productive alliances that work with agricultural, fishing, livestock, and value-added products. Business training benefited extension workers, farmers and agro processors, including 121 men and 92 women, while technical training on fruit trees, food security and small ruminants benefited 86 men and 80 women.

+COTTON

The Regional Cotton Forum took place in 2022, and business associations from eight countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Mexico) participated. This forum encouraged the participation of public and private actors in the chain to develop a work agenda aimed at...
facing the challenges of the sector. The participants discussed the outlook for the Latin American cotton sector through 2025, the action plans of the producing countries to face the fertilizer crisis, as well as strategies to take advantage of the opportunities to position sustainable cotton in the markets of the region.

Within the framework of Brazilian cooperation and the +Cotton project, the Lazos platform was implemented, which is a digital platform for data storage and analysis, as well as digital education in this area and works as a social network for cotton farmers in Latin America. Since 2022, the Lazos App is available on the Google Play Store.

**LAND TENURE AND GOVERNANCE**

FAO produced the policy note “Land governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: Innovation and inclusion for economic recovery and resilience”, which highlights concrete policies needed to ensure that the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of land tenure, fisheries and forests are not ignored in the post-COVID 19 pandemic reconstruction processes in the region.

FAO, together with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ABC/MRE) and the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) organized the “II Cycle of exchanges of experiences 2022: Technological solutions for land administration”. This activity was part of the implementation process of the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security. Its objective is to generate improvements in the governance of land tenure in the countries of the region, through the adoption of innovative mechanisms in land administration systems.

Also, together with Brazil’s ABC/MRE, FAO published the study “State of cadastres and rural land registries in Latin America and the Caribbean”. The document brings together primary information from 16 countries, highlighting the importance of making urban and rural cadastres a priority for Latin America and the Caribbean countries as a driver of development and the improvement of the quality of life of all people.

Currently, FAO is supporting the strengthening of the agricultural land bank initiative in Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia, as well as the creation of a new land bank in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The Organization is promoting this project through the identification of new areas to lease to farmers, implementing improvements in the databases and lease contracts, advancing in the provision of technical and legal advice to evaluate the expansion of the land bank to private land, and the generation of communication campaigns to inform potential beneficiaries and landowners.

**ONE COUNTRY, ONE PRIORITY PRODUCT**

FAO launched the global One Country One Priority (OCOP) initiative, which aims to develop green and sustainable value chains for Special Agricultural Products (SAPs) and support smallholder and family farmers to reap the full benefits of global markets. This initiative, launched at a regional level in May 2022, aims to facilitate the promotion of products such as honey, dairy products, cocoa, and coffee. Trinidad and Tobago will be part of the implementation phase in the
III. ONE HEALTH

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

FAO has promoted risk management of antimicrobial resistance, in coordination with the Tripartite Alliance (FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health and the World Health Organization), in the countries of the Andean Community, MERCOSUR and CARICOM. Thanks to this process, these countries have now implemented risk management tools in the animal production sector for human consumption.

The “Regional Workshop of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)” took place in Peru to generate coordinated and effective action to prevent and combat the introduction and spread of pests in plants and plant products. National and regional plant protection organizations and various international organizations attended this meeting.

IV. BLUE TRANSFORMATION

As part of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYFA 2022) activities, FAO and the Organization of the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) launched the Mesoamerican network of small-scale aquaculture producers to promote the cooperation and the exchange of experiences that contribute to the inclusive development of the sector. The group is made up of national associations of small-scale aquaculture producers from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua.

The South American Committee for IYFA 2022 studied small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture through surveys and interviews with national fisheries and aquaculture authorities in its ten member countries. Based on the results of this study, FAO published the “Public policy recommendations for the sustainable development of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in South America”. In the Caribbean, as part of IYFA activities, FAO highlighted the work of 24 champions of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. In addition, the “Guide for the collection, analysis and use of biological-fishery information in a context of limited data”, and the second edition of the regional course “Fisheries management with an ecosystem approach” were published.
**B. BETTER NUTRITION**

End hunger, achieve food security, and improved nutrition in all its forms, in particular by promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets.

**I. HEALTHY DIETS FOR ALL**

**REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY 2022**

The Regional Overview of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America and the Caribbean 2022 is the most important publication of FAO in the region. The document, developed together with four other United Nations agencies, presented the most recent data on hunger and food insecurity, which included the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The document reports that hunger and food insecurity have increased in the last seven years, especially between 2019 and 2021, and the cost of a
healthy diet in the region is currently the highest in the world, reaching USD 3.89 per day per person, while the world average is USD 3.54. As a result, 131 million people in the region cannot afford a healthy diet.

The publication also highlights the challenges that must be faced to improve access to healthy diets, to fight the increase in hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms.

FOOD INSECURITY EXPERIENCE SCALE

With the aim of improving the quality and quantity of data available in the region on food security, FAO trained officials in seven countries (Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) to incorporate the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology in their statistics. In Guyana, Paraguay, and Uruguay, this was a milestone since it allowed the first measurement of the state of food security in these countries. Colombia, for its part, will incorporate the FIES scale in national household surveys starting in 2023, and Chile is already in the process of analysing data collected by the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) using this methodology.

SUPPORT FOR DRAFTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The report “The role of regulations in the promotion of healthy diets from the perspective of food systems” reviews, within the legal framework of the right to adequate food, the regulations adopted to date in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay, focusing on improving the nutritional value of food to achieve healthier diets.

In terms of its work in the countries of the region, FAO supported the drafting and promotion of bills to develop front-of-package warning labelling in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Paraguay.

In Cuba, FAO supported the presentation of the Cuban Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutrition Security Bill, approved by the National Assembly of People’s Power in May 2022.

While in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Paraguay, FAO supported the drafting of laws to protect the right to adequate food. In Peru, technical assistance was provided to develop the proposal for the Food Sovereignty Law.

NUTRITIONAL LABELLING

Together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), FAO published the guidance note “Front-of-package nutritional labelling in Latin America and the Caribbean.” The note cited 45 studies or reports in Latin America and the Caribbean on front-of-package nutritional labelling systems, which is a measure that facilitates the correct identification of products with excess critical nutrients and the reduction of purchases of these products, without affecting employment or wages in the food production sector and other sectors of the economy.
STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES FOR THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC POLICIES

FAO, together with the Spanish and Mexican international development cooperation agencies, trained more than 60 advisers of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, through an Ibero-American course on Sustainable Development Objective 2 of zero hunger and the gender approach in parliamentary alliances. This course sought to promote the inclusion of the gender approach in national regulations related to better nutrition.

In addition, with the Brazil-FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, FAO trained more than 2 000 professionals from four countries (Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Peru) through the third edition of the international course on school feeding. As a result, the school administrators and teachers who participated in this course will be able to ensure better learning and health conditions in their schools through access to fresh and healthy food.

Between 2021 and 2022, FAO trained 2 162 people, mostly from academic and public institutions, on the right to adequate food and its main aspects.

Also, through the FAO Public Policy Training Centre, 16 free courses were developed with a total 14 616 registered participants, including 8 241 women. Among the most popular courses were “Adequate food: a right for all”, with 4 438 participants, including 2 915 women; “Introduction to investment and financing for development” with 1 720 participants (773 women), and “Healthier and more sustainable food environments” with 881 participants (557 women).

FAO continues its strategic alliance with the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean (PFH-LAC), achieving a presence in 21 national parliaments and five regional and/or subregional parliaments. This joint effort aims to position the fight against all forms of malnutrition at the top of legislative agendas in the region.

II. NUTRITION FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

SCHOOL FEEDING

FAO, together with the Sustainable School Feeding Network (RAES), promoted by the government of Brazil and executed by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), as well as the National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE) and school administrators from member countries –carried out the RAES Regional Dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Representatives of ten countries (Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru) participated in the meeting, along with authorities and international experts from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the University of the West Indies. The dialogue facilitated the exchange of experiences related to strengthening school feeding policies, as well as improving school menus; access to adequate and healthy menus; food delivery infrastructure; the coordination and participation of the school community; food and nutrition education; school gardens as part of school feeding programmes, and the design of national policies.

In addition, FAO formed the regional technical committee of the Sustainable School Feeding Network (RAES), promoting a regional commitment to improve school feeding programmes with the participation of 11 countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru), 18 institutions and the virtual participation of more than 300 people.

In the Caribbean, with the support of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the FAO-Brazil technical cooperation programme, nine countries (the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) have strengthened their capacities to implement resilient and sustainable national school feeding programmes that provide healthy diets and incorporate the procurement of food products from small-scale farmers.

III. SAFE FOOD FOR ALL

FOOD SECURITY

FAO, together with the Ecuadorian Phytosanitary Control and Regulation Agency (AGROCALIDAD) and the Codex Coordination Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), formed a committee to support the countries of the region in the application of Codex Alimentarius standards to strengthen the food security system through training related to the functioning of the coordination and technical committees.

IV. REDUCTION OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

FAO, with the support of the Spanish international cooperation agency and the parliaments of the region, is promoting the implementation of legislation to prevent and reduce food loss and
waste (FLW). In 2022, the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament approved the Model Law on the Prevention and Reduction of Food Losses and Waste, which aims to encourage national legislators to reduce FLW to face hunger in the region. The legislative proposals were sent to each of the national congresses and assemblies of the 23 member countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament to be used as a reference. In Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, FAO also supported the development of other legal frameworks for the reduction of food loss and waste.

Regarding the private sector, in Peru, FAO promoted the creation of a FLW advisory committee made up of three large supermarket operators (Intercorp, Supermercados Peruanos, and Cencosud), thus facilitating the implementation of investment strategies in the local retail sector. In Argentina, thanks to the support of FAO, the Panel on Food and Beverage Losses was created to generate data and information that improves decision-making regarding food loss and waste. In addition, within the framework of the Industries and Retail Working Group, FAO contributed to the study “Food waste in supermarkets and convenience stores in Argentina”, which quantified the monetary impact of food losses and waste in these establishments.

In terms of support for academic institutions, FAO offered a training course on the reduction of FLW in the educational sector and presented the “Guide for universities: experiences of approaches and action models for the reduction of food losses and waste”, aimed at training workers in the food services industry.

Regarding local governments, 11 municipalities in Argentina, state and municipal governments of Brazil, and the municipality of Lima implemented strategic plans and campaigns to promote the recovery and rescue of fresh food in wholesale and supply markets. In Colombia, the Society of Farmers of Colombia (SAC), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and FAO developed the virtual training course “Finding solutions to combat food loss and waste” to address this problem while responding to needs at the local level.

**STATISTICS AND MONITORING OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE**

Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, and Uruguay also strengthened their capacities to measure food losses and waste at different points in the value chain of prioritized products. In Colombia, FAO and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute designed the food waste measurement and prevention allowing direct measurement of waste in food and nutrition operations and the quantification and quality control of food planning processes.

In Guatemala, FAO, together with the Sustainable Economic Observatory (OES) of the University of Valle de Guatemala (UVG), carried out a study on the calculation of the Food Loss Index in the country, which details, in general terms, the food loss percentage.

**V. TRANSPARENT MARKETS AND TRADE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES**

FAO continued its support for diversifying of business opportunities in the agricultural sector to improve food security, employment, and the inclusion of small and medium-scale farmers, through virtual agrifood business roundtables. In 2022, the fifth and sixth editions of these roundtables took place.

The fifth business roundtable was attended by 685 companies from 19 countries (Argentina, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru,
the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay) with investment commitments totalling USD 53 million. In the sixth edition, 470 companies from 19 countries participated (Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay) with investment commitments reaching a total of USD 25.8 million.

These events were the result of FAO’s joint work with the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), IICA and the Executive Secretariat of the Agricultural Council (SECAC).

**INITIATIVES TO FACE THE CURRENT CRISIS**

FAO, in collaboration with the IICA, SIECA and SECAC, strengthened the capacities of 750 public officials in international agrifood trade through three virtual courses: “International trade and agriculture”; “Trade, food security and nutrition”; and the second edition of the “International agricultural trade policy” course.

FAO, together with the Regional Network of Public Food Supply and Marketing Systems (SPAA), promoted family farmers’ markets and inclusive marketing in four countries (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Panama) with more than 900 farmers’ markets. These initiatives also help to promote the consumption of fresh and healthy food.

Colombia and Guatemala adopted programmes to modernize food markets with the inclusion of family farming, public procurement management, market transparency, and food supply. In addition, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru have designed electronic marketing platforms that allow the integration of direct purchases from local producers and family farmers, thereby improving access to food at more affordable prices, especially for the most vulnerable.

For their part, Chile and Mexico generated information that allowed the design of circularity strategies in public food markets. In Mexico City, the strategy considers more than 130 markets in more than ten municipalities, while in Chile, together with the National Association of Farmers Market Organizations (ASOF), more than 201 farmers markets in 13 regions are included.

At the regional level, the study “Social and economic impacts of farmers’ markets on urban food systems” was carried out, with the participation of 107 wholesale food markets from 16 countries in the region, which identified the social and economic impacts of markets on urban food systems.

Family farming has also been prioritized in public and private food markets in Ecuador and Mexico through the implementation of economic subsidy programmes, public procurement, the calculation of production costs, and support for the design of reference pricing methodologies for family farm products.
C. BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and fight against climate change (reduction, reuse, recycling, waste management) through more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

I. AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS THAT MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PLACA

Within the framework of the 27TH Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, two new countries (Ecuador and Paraguay) joined the Platform of Climate Action for Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLACA), a regional mechanism for cooperation on climate action for the agricultural sector.
PLACA continued its work to support the co-creation of knowledge and capacity building. For example, more than 80 low-cost technological solutions were identified and promoted that contribute to improving the sustainability of agrifood systems through mitigation and adaptation actions.

Together with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), FAO published the regional study “Policy frameworks, success stories and lessons learned to generate relevant knowledge for climate action in agriculture in the PLACA countries”, which aims to generate relevant knowledge for climate action in the agriculture sector in member countries based on a review of regulations, policies and institutions, and the analysis of successful cases.

In El Salvador, the execution of the climate resilience project in the agroecosystems of the Dry Corridor of El Salvador (RECLIMA) continues with financing from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This year, nearly 22,000 producers have benefited, distributed across 46 municipalities, of whom 40 percent are women, and 9 percent belong to indigenous peoples. In addition, nearly 8,000 ha of critical areas have been restored with the support of the NGO Environmental Investment Fund of El Salvador (FIAES).

To achieve the reduction of emissions derived from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), FAO has improved capacities and supported the design and implementation of instruments and strategies in 11 countries of the region (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru).

The members of the Latin American Network for Technical Cooperation in National Parks, other Protected Areas, Wild Flora and Fauna (RedParques) strengthened their capacities on issues related to land governance, which involved creating a working group in Mesoamerica and a baseline on land governance in protected areas.

**CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCING**

In 2022, FAO supported Brazil, Chile, Guyana, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname to access USD 21.6 million in financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and Chile, Ecuador, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago to obtain funding for USD 5.5 million from the GCF.

During 2022, FAO provided technical assistance to nine countries (Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia) in the project preparation phase. Eleven of these 18 projects have completed their design and will soon start the execution phase, thereby enabling access to USD 49.8 million from the GEF to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture.

In addition, the document “Advances of the FAO-Global Environment Facility (GEF) portfolio” was published, which systematizes the information to analyse the progress of project results, in order to measure the global environmental benefits and obtain indicators related to the social and economic co-benefits.
SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK FARMING

FAO advised the countries of the Livestock Development Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC) in the implementation of a communications strategy to highlight the positive impact and benefits of sustainable livestock farming. The actions include the regional synthesis of national studies in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay on practices and technologies for low-emission livestock farming, and the study “Nationally appropriate mitigation actions: livestock in LAC”. The course “Mitigation actions for climate-smart livestock (NAMA)” was also offered.

II. BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

AGROECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Argentina, Belize, Dominica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru implemented the Tool for the Evaluation of Agroecological Performance (TAPE) of productive units of different scales with FAO’s support. FAO also implemented a course to use this tool, with 2 566 participants (including 1,168 women) in the region. To promote sustainable soil management, FAO and the Latin American Soil Alliance, with the support of the Argentine Association of No-till Producers and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), have promoted the Soils Community of Practice. This initiative has 672 members from more than 30 countries in the region. Within the framework of this community, in 2022 four virtual meetings took place, with 4 000 participants. FAO also supported the soils and agroecology communities of practice by organizing a cycle of talks that attracted 2 352 participants, to share their experiences.

In addition, the policy note “Alternatives for the sustainable management of soil fertilization and plant nutrition” was published, as well as a collaborative map that is in on-going development and that compiles experiences of Member Nations related to soil management. In addition, FAO held a meeting on “Biofertilizers and other technologies available to face the fertilizer crisis in the Latin American and Caribbean region”, which had 1,700 participants, and prepared the policy note “Alternatives for sustainable management of soil fertilization and plant nutrition”.

POLLINATORS

Together with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), FAO generated an action plan in Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru, aimed at protecting pollinating insects such as bees, butterflies and moths, as well as their pollination services.

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D. A BETTER LIFE

Promote inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities (between urban and rural areas, rich and poor countries, men and women).

I. HAND-IN-HAND INITIATIVE

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative has prioritized 11 countries in the region: Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Paraguay, and, more recently, the Dominican Republic.

Currently, there is a micro-region typology map for seven countries (Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Peru). FAO and the Central American Integration System implemented an investment plan for the Central American Dry corridor. Seven national investment plans were also implemented in Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Peru, prioritizing nine forestry and agricultural chains in 12 lines of investment and a regional investment plan for the Dry Corridor.

FAO’s support has facilitated the mobilization of USD 26.5 million in Guatemala, as well as USD 90 million for avocado production in Ecuador and USD 133.5 million for cocoa production.

II. GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

The sixth edition of the Rural Women, Women with Rights campaign was launched, which included 30 government institutions and United Nations agencies. In addition, within the framework of the commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women, the event “Access to land tenure by rural women: Keys to economic recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean” was held to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and experiences regarding legal frameworks and public policies.

FAO presented the report on compliance with the SDG indicator 5.a.2 on the proportion of countries with legal systems (including customary law) that guarantee women’s equal rights to ownership or control of land. The report highlighted the progress of the following countries that have received support from FAO: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, and Uruguay. In addition, FAO developed studies on the gender approach in rural extension programmes in Chile and Guatemala.
III. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD EMERGENCIES

In fragile contexts, situations of conflict and internal displacement, FAO, in partnership with other agencies of the UN system and civil society, participated in the implementation of multisectoral humanitarian response strategies of food security, conflict prevention, protection, education and human rights in 58 communities in four countries (Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras). Thereby contributing to conflict reduction, social cohesion and the generation of protective environments for 43,449 people.

In Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador and Colombia, FAO has supported the generation of information to monitor the impact of shocks and crises on food security and agricultural livelihoods, conducting a total of 19,634 surveys of homes. This has also contributed to supporting national initiatives to measure acute food insecurity (Integrated Phase Classification, or IPC) in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras. In Dominica and Saint Lucia, FAO helped develop capacities and institutionalize participatory geographic information systems (GIS), which integrate conventional community assessment techniques with modern geospatial tools. This will facilitate access to more inclusive, user-friendly and robust information for risk assessment, disaster preparedness and emergency response, while helping to address data challenges that are unique to SIDS in the Caribbean.

IV. SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS

To improve the response to phyto-zoosanitary diseases, Guatemala and Peru implemented the platform of the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), aimed at supporting the development of capacities for prevention, early detection, and response to public and animal health threats, such as emerging, re-emerging and endemic zoonoses, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). In addition, FAO trained veterinarians and specialized personnel from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay to deal with animal health emergencies through three courses with more than 10,000 participants (of whom almost 50 percent were women). To face the consequences of Fusarium, the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Preparation, Prevention, Detection, Response, and Recovery of Latin America and the Caribbean to Fusarium Wilt of Musaceae – Race 4 Tropical was published. A training course and locust surveillance and monitoring was offered to promote technical exchange, with 300 participants from eight countries.

FAO and the Municipality of Canelones in Uruguay created the Network of Intermediate Cities and Agrifood Systems, with the participation of more than 50 cities in nine countries in the region. In addition, thanks to FAO’s support, in partnership with the Network of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and Rikolto International, people in more than 40 cities in six countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru) received training and exchanged experiences in governance of urban food systems, urban markets, and circular development.
3. EMERGENCY RESPONSE
ECLAC, FAO and the WFP presented the special report “Towards food security and sustainable nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean”, in response to the world food crisis. The document includes an analysis of the impact of the war in Ukraine on agrifood systems, trade and food and fertilizer prices, as well as its effects on the figures for hunger, poverty and food insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition, FAO held a meeting on “Biofertilizers and other technologies available to face the fertilizer crisis in the Latin American and Caribbean region”, with 1 700 participants. The panellists exposed good practices and lessons learned on the use and management of biofertilizers and other technological alternatives for the agricultural sector and that are currently available as inputs to face the crisis of high fertilizer prices.

In addition, the policy note “Alternatives for the sustainable management of soil fertilization and plant nutrition” was prepared, which briefly summarizes the alternatives compiled to date by the Community of Soil Practices (CoP-Soils) for Latin America and the Caribbean, and other additional measures implemented in the region to deal with this situation.

FAO and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation joined a Declaration of PARLATINO, which called for urgent action to respond to the historic rise in food prices. In addition, the declaration includes a call to strengthen the work of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, promote access to national and international markets, and support family farming.

FAO released a declaration with the Regional Network of Public Food Supply and Marketing Systems (SPAA), and together with 12 countries in the region (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) promoting innovative actions that respond to food shortages and encourage local production and marketing. This, while maximizing the food supply to maintain price stability and facilitating regional spaces for dialogue and institutional integration.

In addition, FAO secured USD 4.7 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to combat African Swine Fever (ASF) in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This agreement will provide support to more than 30 000 small-scale pig farmers in both countries and help to protect their livelihoods. The programme also considers activities to promote prevention, preparation, and early warning and response to this emergency for all countries in the region, even if they have not yet been affected by ASF.

In 2022, FAO helped 173 655 vulnerable people (34 731 households) in the region to recover their agricultural livelihoods and access to food. Beneficiary countries include Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela due to the current socio-economic situation; Cuba and Nicaragua after Hurricane Ian; Guatemala, Honduras, and Paraguay as a response to the drought; Guyana following the floods, and Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake. This was carried out through the implementation of anticipatory response and rehabilitation actions to emergencies that affected agriculture, livelihoods and food security. The actions included training and technical assistance, establishment of grain and seed banks, delivery of inputs for emergency agricultural production, animal husbandry and fishing, implementation of animal health brigades, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems and storage spaces.
4. OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION
Currently, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has a project portfolio of USD 879 million. In 2022, FAO mobilized USD 119.5 million in extra voluntary contributions to finance 78 new projects.

Thus, in 2022, FAO executed 399 projects in the region, as well as 30 global and inter-regional projects that incorporate work in at least one country in the region. Of the total projects executed, 258 have been financed by 50 strategic partners and 141 through the Technical Cooperation Programme.

At the end of the year, the region registered 99 projects in the final stages of design and negotiation (stages II and III) with strategic resource partners, for a total amount of USD 475 million.

FAO, through its Investment Centre, participated in the design of eight new investment operations in seven countries in the region, financed by international financial institutions (IFIs) and government counterpart funds, which totalled USD 956 million. The Centre also supported the supervision of a portfolio of more than 40 IFI-financed investment projects in 21 countries in the region, with a total investment of more than USD 4 billion. These projects are mostly implemented through a national execution modality and finance programmes implemented by governments to achieve their national development goals and the SDGs.
FAO’s communications in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022 highlighted the Organization’s work with its strategic allies in the region in a context marked by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which negatively impacted food and nutritional security, causing hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean to reach record levels.

In 2022, 4,657 international and regional media publications mentioned FAO, which represented an increase of 8 percent compared to 2021.

The total number of mentions included 658 interviews and opinion pieces, both from regional spokespersons and representations of the 33 Member Nations of FAO in the region, representing an increase of 26 percent compared to 2021.

More than 870,000 people visited the Regional Office website, clicking on 2.1 million pages with FAO content. In addition, the communications office created five websites, including the Regional Overview on Food of Food Security 2022, the Decade of Family Farming, and the Technical Platform for Family Farming.

In 2022, more than 39 new albums were created on the Flickr online image repository with more than 3,100 images of official events of the Regional Office, including missions and official visits of the Director-General and the Regional Representative, which received over 12,000 visits.

After two years of remote communications, in 2022 officials from the Regional Office and the FAO headquarters resumed their visits to the FAO representations in different countries. The Director-General, Qu Dongyu, visited Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Panama, where he met with high-level authorities, including Heads of State, while the FAO Regional Representative visited Argentina, Colombia, Guyana, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The meetings and activities held in those countries were widely covered by the region’s media.

Thirty-one conferences and seminars were streamed via 95 online transmissions on the Youtube video platform, FAO Americas website and Twitter. In addition, through paid campaigns on Facebook and Instagram in Spanish, total enrolments grew 83 percent compared to 2021.

Another communications achievement in 2022 was the media impact of the launch by FAO, ECLAC and the WFP of the report “Towards sustainable food and nutrition security in Latin America and the Caribbean”. More than 100 publications in the media mentioned the report, highlighting both its content and the opinion column written by the FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mario Lubetkin.
C. PUBLICATIONS

FAO published 46 books and brochures in the region during 2022. In addition, 14 documents were translated into English, French and Portuguese, thus contributing to multilingualism in the generation and dissemination of specialized knowledge on topics related to the Organization’s mandate. The publications site ranked fourth among the most viewed web pages of FAO Americas, with 3,800 visits.
To achieve the objectives of FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean, political commitment and the development of major strategic alliances with governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, research centres and cooperatives in the region are crucial. The results achieved in 2022 were obtained thanks to the planning carried out at the beginning of the biennium during the week-long coordination meeting of the Regional Office.

**PRIVATE SECTOR**

In early 2022, FAO consulted the private sector to elaborate the Declaration of the Private Sector, which was used as input to the 37th Regional Conference. In addition, the Organization prepared 12 national strategies or action plans to promote collaboration with the private sector based on the Country Programming Frameworks.

In addition, FAO published two guides: one for self-assessment of risks and another for mapping potential partners. The Organization also signed three agreements with the private sector, of which two were financial contributions (the first in the region) and one was a Memorandum of Understanding.

The first two financial contribution agreements with private parties in the region were signed and FAO played an important role in the VI Summit of Cooperatives of the Americas, with a presence in the local media.

**CIVIL SOCIETY**

As part of the preparation for the 37th Regional Conference, FAO consulted civil society to prepare the Declaration of Civil Society for the event.

To strengthen the role of stakeholders in the Country Programming Frameworks and FAO’s priority programmes and projects, FAO implemented four pilot civil society mapping projects (Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, and Peru).

**ACADEMIA**

In early 2022, FAO consulted the academia to elaborate the Declaration of the Scientific and Academic Sector, which was used as input for the 37th Regional Conference.

In addition, FAO published and disseminated the new corporate science and innovation strategy with regional academic partners. The process of seeking potential partners began with organizations specialized in innovation and technology in national representations as well as within the units of the Regional Office.

Also, FAO coordinated the joint work with the Observatory on the Right to Food in Latin America and the Caribbean (ODA-ALC) and the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO).
HUMAN RESOURCES, BUDGET, FINANCING AND COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

STRENGTHENING OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES SECTOR

To achieve greater efficiency and an integrated response to internal and external requirements, the Regional Office began the process of strengthening the support services, bringing together all the different services in the area under a single objective: to provide a concrete, timely, and value-added solution to the different internal and external administrative needs. This process started in 2022 and will continue through 2023.

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Regional Office has focused on using new digital tools to streamline processes and improve regional efficiency. The first example is a tool developed in Sharepoint to schedule, plan and manage face-to-face and hybrid meetings in the office. Another case is the Power BI app developed for travel planning after the reinstatement of corporate policy on the subject. A third example is an application to monitor the pending actions of the Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ), which other regions have also adopted. This application allowed the Country Offices to closely monitor their commitments under the ICQ 2021 to improve them during 2022.

The development of participation tools has played a key role in the systematization of processes in the region. The Regional Office created a catalogue of applications shared among the Country Offices. These applications facilitated data collection for several regional projects across the region.

On the financial side, in 2022, there was a significant increase in electronic funds transfers (EFT) in the Latin American and Caribbean region, with seven new countries and two additional countries that also implemented automatic bank reconciliation processes (ABR), reducing financial risk and manual labour.

The Regional Office successfully underwent an external audit in November 2022. It continued to support Decentralized Offices in the region to ensure proper follow-up, implementation, and closure of outstanding audit recommendations.

In addition, the Regional Office established a risk management strategy, ensuring the active participation of the Country Offices and the Regional Leadership Team in the different corporate exercises, including the use of the ICQ as a baseline of a work plan of continuous improvement and recognizing the links and integration between the Fraud Prevention Plan, the ICQ, and the risk registers.

During 2022, as part of the integrated work in the region, budget management continued to reflect a unified regional vision aligned with the new support services structure. New monthly execution monitoring reports were created to anticipate deviations and opportunities. The 2022 external audit exercise went smoothly for the area.
**HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Regional Office supported the global migration to ServiceNow, actively collaborated with Country Offices to prepare affiliated workforce recruitment plans, and designed a new recruitment dashboard to track hiring processes. In 2022, the first annual service recognition ceremony was held in July, recognizing colleagues with more than 15 years of service. The Regional Office also coordinated a human resources integration mission to the Subregional Office for Mesoamerica.

Regarding capacity development, the first online survey on staff development needs was launched; a new regional learning calendar in Sharepoint was introduced, which combines external training requests with real-time enrollment tracking; TalentNet was launched, which is a Sharepoint database designed to consolidate all national consultant rosters and easily search and share the skills inventory among Decentralized Offices. FAO also provided training and guidance on monitoring the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) and compliance.

In terms of wellness, a new monthly newsletter was launched, and two mandatory information sessions on sexual harassment prevention were organized. In addition, the network of well-being focal points was strengthened, with bi-monthly meetings to share best practices among the Country Offices, highlighting initiatives such as the global health challenge, yoga and sports classes, new gardens and well-being spaces in some Country Offices, and the creation of new English, French and Italian conversation clubs in the Regional Office.

**SAFE WORK PRACTICES DURING COVID-19**

The region also prepared for the return to office phase, guiding the Country Offices in line with guidelines from FAO headquarters. The Regional Office created an office return application to provide a global vision of each country office’s return status. The return-to-office plans were approved at the regional level and their progress was approved or rejected depending on the evolution of COVID-19 at the national level. International missions were slowly reactivated under careful supervision. At the Regional Office level, a health services unit was formalized, comprised of a doctor and a nurse, who, together with the Regional Security Committee and the building maintenance team, implemented preventive measures for a safe return to the office.

Also, the Regional Office provided weekly prevention measures to all new staff who participated in the return-to-office plan. Informative material was prepared and distributed to all staff to ensure adequate knowledge of preventive measures. In addition, a close contact tracing application was developed and launched, making it possible to identify cases of COVID-19, if necessary, quickly.