



# Antigua and Barbuda and FAO

## *Building sustainable food and nutrition security*

The twin-island state of Antigua and Barbuda has been a member of FAO since 1983. Cooperation over the past 30 years has produced a strong partnership, both at the country and Caribbean level. FAO interventions have ranged from food security and agriculture policy formulation to direct support in a variety of areas, including food production, crop protection and fisheries development as well as natural disaster response and preparedness.

### MEETING THE ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE

#### Backyard gardening

Antigua and Barbuda has a long tradition of backyard (or “kitchen”) gardens. With most households producing enough to meet their immediate needs, the main benefits are savings on food purchases and improved nutritional status. However, a number of households do sell produce at local markets and shops. Backyard vegetable production is also a good means of food security in times of extreme weather events.

Concerted action to develop this form of food production under the Antigua and Barbuda Backyard Gardening Programme began after the introduction of FAO’s Initiative on Soaring Food Prices in 2008/09. Progress made since then has been exceptional, and the country serves as a reservoir of good lessons to share with other countries.

Similar results have been achieved by backyard gardening activities under the country’s Zero Hunger Challenge plan, where the planned target of 400 gardens being established within the two-year period has been amply surpassed. By 2015, over 450 gardens had been established and close to 700 people had registered for the programme. Six backyard garden facilitators had been trained in various aspects of agricultural production and Training Demonstration Centres had been established in vulnerable communities. Ten primary school and one private secondary school had set up gardens.

#### New CPF formulation

The Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Antigua and Barbuda was prepared following consultation and agreement with representatives of various Ministries, the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) Initiative, the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development (GARD) Centre and the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) as well as Farmers and Farmers Groups. This CPF sets out three government priority areas to guide FAO partnership and support with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda – bringing together innovative international best practices and global standards with national and regional expertise during four years, from 2016 to 2019.

- **Food and Nutrition Security**, focusing on agricultural diversification, nutrition education, strengthened governance in FNS and poverty reduction programmes, addressing strategies for reducing food loss across key value chains, and improving the capacity of government to make better evidence-based decisions using an efficient data management system for agriculture.
- **Small scale Farming/Family Farming**, supporting farmers’ organizations by developing public purchasing policy and programmes which will link farmers to national institutions, such as the school feeding programmes, developing strategies to strengthen the inclusion and productivity of small livestock farmers and emphasizing market access and value chain development.
- **Natural Resource Management and Risk Reduction**, focusing on sustainable agroforestry management, improved institutional capacity for water resource management and pest and disease management in the agricultural sector.

The priority areas identified in the new CPF continue clearly to build on the advances that have been made in the concluding CPF (2012 – 2015). They are also consistent with the CARICOM Agriculture Policy, OECS Agriculture Policy and Strategic Plan, the Caribbean Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, the plan of Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger and Poverty of the CELAC.

#### CONTACTS

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## Continued support for Zero Hunger

FAO will continue to support Antigua and Barbuda's Zero Hunger Challenge under several initiatives that are being implemented at the national and regional levels. Antigua and Barbuda and three other countries are participating in a regional TCP project, piloting legal and technical requirements for food safety. Under another regional TCP project, a national action plan has been developed to reduce post-harvest crop losses.

## Encouraging good food choices

### *Food-based dietary guidelines*

Different population groups are affected by undernutrition, including stunting and wasting, and by obesity associated with poor food choices. In addition to prevention and control of undernutrition in population groups at risk, emphasis has been given to improving access to healthy foods and promoting healthy food choices through nutrition education.



Food-Based Dietary Guidelines have been produced, including promotional materials to be used as part of educational programmes targeting teachers and school counsellors in the country.

### *Diversifying school menus*

The National School Meals Programme of Antigua and Barbuda has benefited from the recruitment of a full-time dietician as well as the purchase of new equipment and a vehicle. The menu has been modified and the nutritional content of school meals served to the students has improved. More vegetables that have been grown in backyard gardens are being used in school meals, and students have received lasting lessons in good nutrition. The establishment of a register of undernourished children, including contact information of parents and guardians to facilitate follow up, has helped the process of identifying and monitoring children at risk. A training workshop on the management of childhood malnutrition has also been organized for healthcare workers.

## Raising the profile of food and agriculture

Antigua and Barbuda's agricultural production is focused on the domestic market and constrained by a limited water supply as well as a labour shortage, given the lure of higher wages offered in the tourism and construction sectors. One recent FAO intervention to address the challenges facing the food and agriculture sector include the preparation of a strategic plan for the involvement of youth in the agricultural and rural sectors.

FAO assistance has also contributed to the successful formulation, and government approval, of the national **Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan**, which began

being implemented in 2015. Support has included the elaboration of route maps, through a regional workshop conducted in Saint Lucia, for the implementation of the Plan of Action. This has also entailed the mutual sharing of knowledge and experience through cooperation among Caribbean states. Support to the establishment of a Food and Nutrition Security Information and Early Warning System for the Caribbean has also been fruitful.

*"Zero hunger is not a dream. It is a vision that is well within our reach".*

**José Graziano da Silva,**  
FAO Director-General

## Governance and management

The Technical Management Advisory Committee comprising representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Farmers Groups and Development Agencies (FAO, IICA, and the Pan-American Health Organization), meet on a monthly basis to provide oversight for the Zero Hunger Challenge Programme, including issues related to public policy in the School Feeding Programme. A Ministerial Council has also been approved by the Government.

