



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

FAO's Regional Initiatives for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, is working on three Regional Initiatives to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and poverty in all countries of the region.

These initiatives were agreed upon by governments, and are coordinated and multi-sector response to the main challenges that the region faces in its fight to eradicate hunger in the next decade while strengthening family farming, food systems and rural territorial development, and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, the adaptation to climate change and disaster risk management.

1 REGIONAL INITIATIVE



Supporting the Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative

Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to undertake the commitment of fully eradicating hunger through the Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. The deadline to free all its inhabitants from hunger was set for the year 2025.

This is a feasible target, since the total amount and prevalence of undernourishment has already been reduced to less than half from the levels of 1990, allowing the region to reach the hunger reduction goals of the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC - the region's key integration body - has also undertaken the goal of ending hunger and incorporated it to its Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication.

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY

The Regional Initiative 1 works with countries by improving the creation and implementation of multisectoral public policies and programmes for food security and nutrition, strengthening their institutions, legal frameworks, information systems and resource allocation.

The Initiative improves coordination amongst various sectors in order to facilitate the incorporation of different actors, such as civil society, academia, indigenous people, producer and consumer organizations and the private sector.

Likewise, this Initiative promotes the exchange of successful experiences, programmes and laws developed by countries, showcasing the most relevant results in their fight against hunger and malnutrition, facilitating dialogue and the dissemination of best practices through south-south cooperation.

Since 2014 this initiative supports countries that still face high levels of food insecurity, helping them to create the political, social and institutional conditions that will contribute to eradicate hunger.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The initiative 1 supported the elaboration of CELAC's Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Hunger Eradication; a landmark political agreement addressing all aspects of food security which is being implemented by all countries in the region.

FAO worked towards the consolidation of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger (FPH) both at national and regional level. These entities are key to guarantee the right to food through laws. The initiative worked with the Latin American Parliament to create a regional legal framework law which became the Statement on Family Farming adopted by the above mentioned Parliament in 2015.



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At the national level, this initiative supported the creation of a School Feeding Law and the Law to Promote Healthy Food in Bolivia. Likewise, it has strengthened different instances for inter-institutional coordination in El Salvador, Granada, Haiti, Honduras and Dominican Republic, in order to ensure a comprehensive participation of different sectors.

In Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Dominican Republic, the Initiative is supporting the design and implementation of multisectoral gender-focused laws and policies for food security.

Through the Initiative 1, FAO is working on food security projects in 10 countries in the Caribbean and Central America, as part of the Hugo Chavez Frias Plan for the Hunger Eradication in the ALBA-Petrocaribe zone.

Together with the academic sector, this initiative has developed several investigations about the current situation of food security with the Right to Food Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean, which serve as foundations to improve countries actions.

PRIORITY COUNTRIES

The Regional Initiative is focused on eight priority countries which have a higher prevalence of food insecurity: Bolivia, El Salvador, Granada, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.



In recent decades, Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant progress in poverty reduction. However, it is estimated that almost half of the rural population (47.9%) continues to live in poverty. In fact, the rate is four times higher in rural areas than in urban ones, and nearly 30% of people live in extreme poverty in rural areas.

Despite the diversity of situations throughout the region, most of the rural population in the region continues depending on small-scale family farming for their livelihoods.

Whereas the essential role of family farming* for food security and hunger and poverty eradication is well acknowledged in the region, this sector faces significant constraints in terms of their access to resources, basic facilities, public services, finances and extension.

Such constraints undoubtedly hinder their access to markets, technology and innovation, affecting their productive capacity and impairing them from achieving sustainable increases in productivity, limiting their integration into dynamic markets.

FAO's Regional Initiative 2 is focused on boosting territorial economies and promoting sustainable rural development with a special emphasis on strengthening efficient and inclusive food systems which are sensible to nutrition and the needs of family farmers.

EMPOWERING THE RURAL SECTOR

The Initiative 2 works with governments in the region to facilitate access of producers to different assets (such as land, water, energy, and infrastructure) and rural financial services (loans, savings, insurances) as well as non-financial services (technical assistance, innovation and knowledge).

One key aspect of its work is to strengthen producers' organizations and involve rural communities in sustainable rural development, with particular attention to the development of social protection policies (cash transfers, employment training, etc.) and their links with productive policies and programmes in rural areas.

To promote sustainable rural development, the Initiative 2 is focused on strengthening inclusive food systems -centered in nutrition- through mechanisms such as public procurement programs for family farming, school feeding programs, the improvement of public supply systems and the strengthening of value chains.

Likewise, the initiative fosters inclusive food systems as a way to fight malnutrition, focused on increasing the availability of fresh and healthy foods, improving diversity in diets to fight obesity, and decreasing dependency on imports and vulnerability to economic and natural shocks.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improve government capacity to design policies, programmes and legal frameworks to strengthen family farming, create inclusive food systems and promote rural development.
- Sustainably increase production, productivity and quality of products of family farming through better access to productive resources, rural services and greater associativity.
- Create and/or strengthen inclusive markets to foster links between family farming and agri-food value chains, promoting the sustainable growth of the sector and a greater use of regional and national quality products for better food security and nutrition.
- Strengthen social protection systems and their alignment with agricultural and rural development policies and employment programmes, promoting initiatives for the development of women, youth and indigenous peoples.

PRIORITY COUNTRIES

Nationwide, the Initiative will work primarily in Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Belize, Granada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

* Family farming involves all family-based agricultural activities, and it is related to several areas of rural development. Family farming is a way of classifying agriculture, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquacultural production managed by a family and depending mainly on family labor, including both women and men.





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Latin America and the Caribbean accounts for 12% of the world's farmable land, one third of freshwater reserves and one fifth of forest areas. It has large aquaculture/ fisheries resources, and the highest global biodiversity, which contribute significantly to the foods security of its population.

Unfortunately, these resources are being degraded by over-exploitation and inappropriate use, while suffering the effects of climate change and increasingly frequent natural and antropic crises and disasters.

In order to address these challenges – which are key for food security- FAO has created a new Regional Initiative on sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.

WHAT THE INITIATIVE DOES

Through the Regional Initiative 3, FAO will promote actions to support the agricultural sector's transition to sustainable development from an economic and environmental perspective, strengthening food and nutrition security in light of the new Sustainable Development Goals.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Strengthen institutions to implement policies for sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, focused on food security and nutrition.
- Reduce the degradation of natural resources for food production.
- Strengthen food security and nutrition by reducing the impact of climate change and develop more resilient agricultural production systems.
- Increase cooperation among countries to deal with the risks of disasters affecting their food security and nutrition.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Primary actions under this initiative will be the strengthening of national plans for risk management, adaptation of family farmers to climate change and the strengthening of agro-climatic information systems and price monitoring systems. In addition, the initiative will enhance institutional capacities to promote resilience, supporting the recovery of degraded areas.

In the Caribbean, the initiative 3 will support the implementation of the FAO's Blue Growth Initiative to promote sustainable fisheries, and the SAMOA Pathway to foster integrated management of coastal areas, sustainable use of natural resources, climate-smart agriculture, early warning management systems, and the design of financial mechanisms for transferring risks to small farmers.

In Central America it will promote the strengthening of resilience in the Dry Corridor of Central America, promoting the exchange of experiences, establishing an early warning system for drought and improving the integrated and sustainable management of soil and water. It will also work on financial risk transfer mechanisms for family farmers, such as contingency insurance and mutual funds, among others.

In South America the initiative will promote the sustainable management of natural resources, disaster risk management in agriculture and will strengthen rural extension systems for the adjustment of family farmers to climate change through south-south cooperation between countries.

At the regional level, the initiative will work on the design and promotion of agro-environmental and agro-ecological policies, on the establishment of a regional food supplies programme to answer to disasters, as well as strengthening control systems for pests and diseases.

PRIORITY COUNTRIES

The Initiative will focus its work in Bolivia, El Salvador, Granada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.