



Sistema Económico
Latinoamericano y del Caribe

Latin American and Caribbean
Economic System

Sistema Econômico
Latino-Americano e do Caribe

Système Economique
Latinoaméricain et Caribéen



Conclusions and recommendations

Economic and Technical Cooperation

*XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Regional Cooperation in the area of Food Security
Belize City, Belize
1 and 2 October 2012
SP/XXIII-RDCIALC/CR*

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**XXIII MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DIRECTORS
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF FOOD SECURITY
Belize City, Belize, 1 and 2 October 2012**

The “XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Cooperation in the area of Food Security,” organized by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, in conjunction with the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77, took place on 1 and 2 October 2012 in Belize City, Belize.

The participants took note of the base document “Latin American and Caribbean cooperation in the area of food security (SP/XXXIII-RDCIALC/DT No. 2-12), submitted by the Permanent Secretariat.

In addition, they welcomed the “Directory of Cooperation Sources for Financing South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation in Latin American and Caribbean countries” (SP/Di N° 16-12) and the portal enabled by the Permanent Secretariat, in compliance with its Work Programme for 2012 and as a regional focal point for the exchange of information on technical cooperation in developing countries. This portal was also put at the disposal of the international cooperation directors in Latin America and the Caribbean with the purpose of facilitating the systematization and the exchange of experiences on regional cooperation.

The participants appreciated the presentations and speeches delivered by representatives from subregional, regional and international organizations specializing in the area, as well as those of international cooperation directors focused on national efforts and cooperation initiatives to promote food security in the region.

The exchange of information and perspectives on the issue led to the following conclusions and recommendations, to be submitted for consideration of the respective authorities:

Conclusions

- 1) Food prices continue to generate concern in the international community. In the past four years, they have been consistently above pre-2008 levels. In particular, they have remained at high levels in the first six months of 2012. In addition, FAO and OECD have projected higher actual food prices for the next decade with respect to the 2001-2010 average, and therefore difficulties to ensure food security are expected to persist in the long term.
- 2) The final impact of the increase and volatility of food prices in Latin America and the Caribbean has been moderated by the GDP growth and the current situation of high prices for exports of agricultural products from most countries. All this has a positive long-term effect due to increased uptake of private investment in the agricultural sector, thus favouring the productivity of the sector. However, it is necessary to recognize that, in the case of other countries, in particular those that are net importers or highly sensitive to climate change, mitigation factors have not necessarily had the same effect.

- 3) There is a general consensus about the need to strengthen regional cooperation to promote food security, and it has been confirmed that the current situation represents an opportunity to increase such cooperation in order to counter the possible effects of a slowdown of the economic growth and the potential decline in the international prices of commodities in the coming years.
- 4) The main challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean is to ensure the population's access to food, taking into account that prices will continue to rise and that production in the region will step up, but in a context of increasing scarcity and global crisis of natural resources due to, among other factors, the prospects for substantial increase in the world population in the coming decades.
- 5) Latin American and Caribbean countries have been very active in the technical diagnosis and the political recognition of the situation in the field of food security. The most recent initiatives in this direction have been the 2012 Caracas Action Plan and Declaration of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC); the Regional Conference of FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires, March 2012); the Declaration of Cochabamba on Food Security with Sovereignty in the Americas (the OAS General Assembly, June 2012); and the follow-up actions of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (Guyana, 2012).
- 6) In this context, the cooperation and the coordination of policies in the productive and food areas among the countries in the region have been considered key factors to promote regional food security. Moreover, stress has been made on the importance of avoiding protectionist measures at regional and global levels and, in this connection, of facilitating market access to meet national demands.
- 7) At present, not enough relevant information is available at the regional level to facilitate an efficiently documented decision-making and the adoption of appropriate measures to counteract future food emergencies.
- 8) Although the factors linked to the international situation are important, it was found that food security problems in the region are also related to domestic factors, such as individual access to food, which is determined by multiple factors, including the purchasing power of people to ensure adequate intake of food and nutrition, among others.
- 9) The availability of food in the region is threatened by climate variability in the short term and climate change and natural disasters in the medium and long terms. This situation affects particularly, although not exclusively, the Caribbean and Central America.

Recommendations

- 1) Cooperation and coordination should be promoted among the countries in the region and between them and subregional, regional and international organizations to achieve greater food and nutrition security. The ultimate goal is to prevent the risk of a food crisis in the event of adverse changes in the international context and/or conditions of national economies.
- 2) A rapprochement between public and private sectors should be promoted and strengthened to increase the public-private investment for better infrastructure

and market conditions in the agricultural sector and to boost the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information with a view to incorporating improvements and innovations in agriculture, as well as in research, education, investment and infrastructure, among other aspects.

- 3) It is recommended to promote the systematic use of the various mechanisms for financing and supporting available regional projects and programmes launched by multilateral organizations.
- 4) Indicators for measuring regional food security should be optimized and monitored, with a particular focus on the situation in each country.
- 5) The concept and scope of nutrition security should be analyzed as a complementary but specific factor to be considered in a strategy for the promotion of food security.
- 6) A boost should be given to actions aimed at ensuring free market access and facilitating food trade through existing integration agreements or a specific agreement covering the entire region.
- 7) A recommendation is made to improve coordination among legal frameworks related to the right to food in each country, including the regulation of food markets.
- 8) The creation of national information and monitoring systems in the area of food and nutrition should be promoted to facilitate timely and efficient access to relevant quantitative and qualitative information and support decision-making on this topic in the region.
- 9) Emphasis should be made on the systematization of efforts aimed at the exchange of experiences and information in many aspects, such as: improvement of productivity; design and implementation of social, welfare, research and innovation programmes; and knowledge transfer, among others.
- 10) It is recommended to take advantage of the productive capacity of Latin American and Caribbean countries through the establishment of mechanisms for the cooperation and coordination of economic, productive, food and nutrition policies at the regional level.
- 11) National efforts in the area of food security should be strengthened through the implementation of public policies on prices, wages, education, health, infrastructure and transportation, among others, incorporating monitoring and evaluation systems to assess progress towards the achievement of expected results and to determine the state of progress.
- 12) Specific public policies to overcome poverty should be promoted, helping turn into concrete actions the will expressed by the Heads of State of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to boost a regional food and nutrition policy.
- 13) Family farming and small and medium-scale farming should be involved in the efforts to achieve food security in the region, and local capacities should be

strengthened to stimulate the production of small entrepreneurs and food production.

- 14) It is recommended to strengthen regional capacities in the implementation of programmes to ensure both the availability and quality of food.
- 15) The adoption of strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and natural disasters should be promoted, and agricultural programmes and food production should be protected.
- 16) The formation of social protection networks to reduce food insecurity should be stimulated.
- 17) A food culture approach to nutrition should be promoted.
- 18) A greater boost should be given to intra-regional cooperation, with special emphasis on South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation.
- 19) The Permanent Secretariat of SELA is asked to submit for consideration of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC the recommendations arising from this XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, as a contribution to the analysis of the issue of food security and in compliance with decisions on social development and hunger and poverty eradication contained in the 2012 Caracas Action Plan.

Finally, delegations warmly welcomed the offer made by the Government of El Salvador, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to be the venue and co-sponsor of the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, to take place in 2013. In addition, they took note of the offer of the Government of Guatemala, through the Ministry of the Economy, to be the venue and co-sponsor of the XXV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2014.

Delegations expressed their deep appreciation for the role played by the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF) of the Group of 77 in providing financial support to the meeting and also acknowledged the generous contribution of the PGTF to the forum of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, and invited the Fund to continue providing this support for future regional meetings.

The International Cooperation Directors of SELA Member States, representatives from regional and international organizations and other participants thanked the Government of Belize, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the organization of this regional meeting and for the hospitality received during the event. They also thanked the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) for organizing the XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean and providing the technical and financial support for its successful conduction.