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At UN conference, Latin American countries reaffirm commitment to eradicate hunger



FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva addresses the 32nd Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. Photo: FAO/Juan José Tohá

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Latin American and Caribbean countries reaffirmed their commitment to eradicate hunger during a United Nations conference on food and agriculture in Buenos Aires, Argentina, over the weekend.

“This initiative belongs to the countries and should be embraced by all: governments, parliaments, civil society and the private and academic sectors, because fighting hunger can not

just be the commitment of a single government. It must be a decision made by an entire society,” [said](#) the Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), Jose Graziano da Silva, at the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, which ended on Saturday.

At the conference, States renewed their commitment to the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 Initiative, an effort that aims to ensure that no child, man or woman in the region endures hunger. Since its launch in 2005, four countries in the region have recognized the right to food in their constitutions, while seven have passed food security or food sovereignty laws.

Attendees also discussed the challenges they would face in terms of food security, climate change adaptation and smallholder agriculture, among other issues, and defined the priorities for FAO’s work in the region in the next two years.

“The challenges the world faces today are increasingly interconnected,” Mr. Graziano da Silva said. “You cannot talk about food security without talking about climate change, or about development without talking about sustainability or social inclusion – not to mention food prices. Nor can we think that we can respond to the challenges we are facing as individuals.”

The conference agreed to strengthen FAO’s presence in developing countries such as Haiti and emphasized the importance of advancing South-South cooperation. The Brazilian Government agreed to invest \$20 million in strategies for poverty reduction and sustainable rural development as well as school feeding initiatives and management of disasters and family farming.

Countries also agreed to increase their cooperation on disaster preparedness and humanitarian response, another pressing issue in the region, which is regularly affected by floods, hurricanes and earthquakes.

Meanwhile, during the Fifth Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships, held in Panama City which was hosted by the Government of Panama and supported by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) and also ended last week, representatives from 29 countries and regional organizations agreed to further enhance collaboration to effectively prepare and respond to natural disasters.

“The Latin American and Caribbean region has many ‘silent’ emergencies: recurrent minor disasters that are not covered by the international media, but which erode resilience, exacerbate social and economic inequalities, and set back hard-won development efforts,” said the head of OCHA, the UN’s Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos.

“I strongly support the regional agreement and the grouping as a model for the world. The UN is committed to supporting this process and working in close partnership on preparedness and response,” she added.

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