



Defeating Hunger in Latin America: The Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative

Interview with Mr. Jose Graziano da Silva, FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean

1) How did the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative started and which country/countries did most inspire this initiative and how?

The *Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative* is a regional commitment to eradicate hunger and guarantee food and nutrition security for all, in line with the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). It was first launched by the governments of Brazil and Guatemala during the Latin-American Chronic Hunger Summit in 2005, and later endorsed by all countries in the Region during the 29th FAO Regional Conference, and confirmed in the 30th Regional Conference.

2) What results did you manage to achieve in terms of policy changes and right to food recognition which represent the core of your Action Plan?

There are three elements:

First, the construction of adequate institutional framework that promote Food security Laws and the creation of a institutional arrangement to helps different government bodies work together to achieve food security and right to the food. Second, the development of strong social awareness and support to some objectives, such as the eradication, on a medium term, of chronic malnutrition among children under 5 years of age.

Third, the creation of an ample agreement for monitoring the regional, national and sub-national levels of undernourishment.

3) What practical actions did you take in order to achieve these objectives?

The Initiative has developed a series of alliances, advocacy activities and direct actions to place hunger issue in the public and politic agenda of the countries, and to stimulate awareness in Governments, Parliaments, media, NGOs as well as private sector representatives. A *Parliamentary Front against Hunger* is the

Initiative's tool to work in the institutional area. Other more social efforts such as *Chefs against Hunger* have proven highly useful as a promotion and educational tool.

The Initiative has a training program with the FAO Regional Office to improve the understanding of officials, government technicians and journalists on Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) issues. Besides it provides technical assistance for specific projects that have an impact in priority countries and promotes horizontal cooperation, encouraging the experiences exchange among countries. Finally, the Initiative is supporting the implementation of a regional and national "Hunger Observatories".

4) There are currently six active National Alliances in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras) other seven countries in the region expressed interest to form a National Alliance. How have active National Alliances participated and contributed to the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative? Do you expect further expansion of National Alliances in the region?

The Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative encourages the exchange of knowledge, know-how, experience and resources that National Alliances achieve. The Initiative assists the development of documents on policy, strategy, territorial planning and laws of Food Security, along with plans for action. This backstopping will be carried out by FAO officials, as well as by south-south cooperation and through alliances.

5) The International Alliance against Hunger aims at offering a global forum to the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. What would be the best ways of achieving this goal? Do you envisage a tighter link between the two initiatives as a valuable mean to strengthen each others' effectiveness?

The International Alliance against Hunger and the Initiative have a common path, since all actions aimed to reduce percentage and number of hungry people are part of hunger eradication in the Region. Therefore there is a wide potential of synergies between this Initiative and the Alliance, both efforts should continue to deepen their exchange of information and coordination of actions for a wider impact.

Finally, it is important to remember that *The Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative* is an effort of committed countries with the urging need to defeat hunger; of organisms that understand the enormous price of extreme poverty and its consequences; of companies that assume its social responsibility, of people that believe in the possibility of solving this problem definitely.