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CONCEPT NOTE

Regular meeting of

Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)

25 AUGUST 2020

(Prepared by the Chair of CIDI with the assistance of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity)

THEME: **“ADDRESSING FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL INSECURITY IN THE AMERICAS”**

A recent report entitled “Food Security and Nutrition in the World” points out that “the world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. If recent trends continue, the number of people affected by hunger would surpass 840 million by 2030. Similar to the world trend, in the Americas, food insecurity had also been on the rise, in recent years, making it the region where food insecurity is rising the fastest; from 22.9 percent in 2014 to 31.7 percent in 2019.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the Caribbean, the most severe conditions are found in Haiti, where about half of the population is still estimated to be undernourished.[[2]](#footnote-2)

One of the most widely accepted concepts of food security defines it as “the situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2006). Linked to this concept is the commitment several OAS member states have expressed to guarantee the right to adequate food and nutrition through the adoption of several international instruments such as the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (International Covenant),[[3]](#footnote-3) the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador),[[4]](#footnote-4) the Social Charter of the Americas (Social Charter)[[5]](#footnote-5) and its Action Plan,[[6]](#footnote-6) andthe United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).[[7]](#footnote-7)

Despite the region’s governments multiple efforts, and some progress made during the past 15 years reducing poverty and hunger, as pointed out in a recent report, as a result of the crisis prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the population living in extreme poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean could reach 83.4 million people in 2020, which would also entail a significant rise in hunger levels due to the difficulties these people will face in accessing food.[[8]](#footnote-8) Some estimates indicate that around 14 million are at risk of facing severe food insecurity this year, warranting urgent attention to save lives, according to the World Food Programme (WFP).[[9]](#footnote-9)

There are several reasons for the rise in hunger, among them, the economic contraction the region is experiencing, food supply disruptions, the lack of income due to the loss of livelihoods and remittances as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Many households are facing increased difficulties to access nutritious foods making it even more difficult for the poorer and vulnerable populations to have access to healthy diets.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

The pandemic has also underscored the need to strengthen the agriculture sector, in particular, small scale producers, even as malnutrition rates and food import bills continue to rise, ensuring that farmers can continue to farm safely, while making provisions for the safety and continuity of the supply chain and distribution channels. The sector, as stated by Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA),[[11]](#footnote-11) is expected to play a decisive role in post-Covid-19 economic recovery and in the pursuit of food security both during and after the coronavirus emergency.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Alicia Barcena, has alerted that one of the major tasks for the region **is to prevent the health crisis from turning into a food crisis.**[[12]](#footnote-12) Such a crisis would have devastating consequences affecting the four pillars of the OAS: democracy, security, human rights and development.

In light of the foregoing, considering that all OAS member states and development partners continue to focus on meeting the 2030 Agenda – while also addressing the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this is an appropriate time for the OAS, as the most important political forum of the region, to ensure that the issue of food security remains a high priority in the agenda and to closely collaborate with the specialized entities and organizations that already work on the matter. Multilateralism, international cooperation and solidarity are key to dealing with the current crisis.

In this context, this thematic session will aim to produce a forward-looking dialogue and will examine some of the following issues/questions:

* How would the COVID-19 pandemic impact poverty and food security in the region?
* What actions may be taken by governments to safeguard food security, particularly, for the poorest households in the region?
* What are some of the lines of action in which the OAS may support its member states to address the issue of food security?

Experts from ECLAC[[13]](#footnote-13) and SICA[[14]](#footnote-14), as well as representatives of Haiti and Guatemala will address the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on poverty and food security in the region and some of the actions taken by governments. Furthermore, the Director of the OAS Department of Social Inclusion will talk about ways in which the OAS can contribute to address the issue of food security in the region. Afterwards, the President of CIDI will open the floor to the delegates of Member States.

AGENDA:

1. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty and food security in the region, Representative from ECLAC.
2. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Central America. Dr. Patricia Palma, *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (*SICA).
3. Actions taken by governments: the case of Haiti. Harmel Cazeau, Coordonnateur National, Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA)
4. Actions taken by governments: the case of Guatemala, Representative from the Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security, SESAN.
5. How can the OAS contribute to address the issue of food security in the region? Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Director, OAS Department of Social Inclusion.
6. Open floor for comments from the delegations.

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1. . FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. *In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. Rome, FAO. p. 16: <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9699en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020*. *Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. Rome, FAO. p. 14: <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9692en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . *See* Article 11 of the International Covenant (31 OAS Member States have ratified and/or adopted this international instrument). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . *See* Article 12 of the Protocol of San Salvador (16 OAS Member States have ratified and/or adopted this international instrument). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . *See* Article 7 of the Social Charter (all OAS Member States adopted the Social Charter by acclamation). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . *See* fourth area of intervention of the Plan of Action of the Social Charter. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . All OAS member states have pledged to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of the 2030 Agenda. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . ECLAC, United Nations. Social Panorama of Latin America (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . WFP: COVID-19: Millions at risk of severe food insecurity in Latin America and Caribbean. 27 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/covid-19-millions-risk-severe-food-insecurity-latin-america-and-caribbean> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. *In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. Rome, FAO. p. 8: <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9699en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (May 2020). Associations of Agronomists, Veterinarians and Agricultural Economists of the Americas Will Work Together With IICA to Develop Post-COVID-19 Agricultural and Trade Protocols. 18 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.iica.int/en/press/news/associations-agronomists-veterinarians-and-agricultural-economists-americas-will-work> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . FAO and ECLAC: Millions of People May Slide into Extreme Poverty and Hunger in 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean due to the Pandemic’s Impact. 16 June 2020. Available at: <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/fao-and-eclac-millions-people-may-slide-extreme-poverty-and-hunger-2020-latin-america> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . ECLAC, is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. It was founded with the purpose of contributing to the economic development of Latin America, coordinating actions directed towards this end, and reinforcing economic ties among countries and with other nations of the world. The promotion of the region's social development is among its primary objectives. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . The objective of SICA is the integration of Central America, to constitute it in a region of Peace, Freedom, Democracy and Development. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)