

# Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in the Caribbean

D R A F T   D O C U M E N T

The voice of the people represented  
in the parliamentarians in  
compliance with the right to food





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## Summary

The role of the Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in the Caribbean has been decisive for the initiatives that are being implemented for sustainable agriculture and for the improvement of food and nutritional security. The continuity of this challenging work will greatly contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the progressive realization of the right to food.

The support of the FAO –in alliance with the Spanish Cooperation, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID)– and other donors, to the objectives of the Fronts must be maintained in terms of training, facilitation of dialogues, exchange of experiences, good practices in food and nutrition security with a gender perspective, strengthening of parliamentary alliances and communication activities, among other actions.

It is important that the members of the Parliamentary Fronts maintain their high commitment and efforts to improve the food and nutritional security situation of their countries and, in this way, contribute to facing socio-political and economic limitations during pandemic and post-pandemic periods.

The results achieved by the Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in the Caribbean are extremely valuable, which augurs solid progress in meeting the goals set.



# Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in the Caribbean

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTICES

## Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recognizes that Parliamentarians are strategic partners as they provide the legal frameworks, approve public budget allocations and ensure government accountability on international commitments.

In 2006, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)<sup>1</sup> and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) launched the “Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative 2025 (HFLACI 2025)”. This initiative corresponds to an agreement signed in 2005 by Latin American and Caribbean countries. Its objective was to enhance cooperation and strengthen political will to put the eradication of hunger and malnutrition at the top of government’s agenda and priorities. As a result of this arduous work, in 2009, the “Parliamentary Front against Hunger and Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean” was created, with the aim of involving Parliamentarians in the progressive realization of the right to food as an obligation of State.

The right to food is a legally binding obligation for the 171 States Parties (United Nations, 2021) to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 and which entered into force in 1976. In its article 11, mentions that “The States Parties to this Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to a continuous improvement of living conditions.” According to Article 2.1 of the ICESCR: “Each State Party to the ICESCR determines the legal category that it will grant to these provisions, in the context of the country’s legal system”<sup>1</sup>.

It is relevant to mention that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the first international instrument to formally recognize the human right to food within the framework of the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 25).

In addition, in the Latin American and Caribbean region, there are the following normative instruments: The American Declaration of the

<sup>1</sup> FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO webpage 2021. <https://www.fao.org/about/en/>

Rights and Duties of Man, American Convention on Human Rights, the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador), among the most relevant. The International Law framework create obligations for the State to fulfil, protect and guarantee the right to food, this being the starting point of any political commitment and action related to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

The Report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (2021) states that in 2020, 59.7 million people in the region suffered from hunger, and between 2019-20 the prevalence of hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 2 percent points (FAO et al.,2021), having the impact of COVID-19 pandemic a direct relation in reducing people's income of millions of people in the region.

In this context, FAO has put the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of action, supporting Members to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (The Global Goals, 2021); particularly, in relation to SDG 2: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The 2030 Agenda is based on a human rights approach anchored in the International Normative.

The SDG 2 defines a strategy to support the transformation towards more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agro-food systems under the slogan of “our actions, our future”, and the so-called “four best”: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind (FAO, 2021b). Objective, which, in the voice of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, is a cornerstone for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The parliamentarians of Latin America and the Caribbean have contributed decisively to the approval of normative and budgets to improve the food and nutritional security and sustainable agriculture. In this regard, technical support from FAO and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) has been crucial as an articulator of actors and facilitator of inclusive processes.

The Parliamentary Front against Hunger (PFH) is a network of legislators from different political parties, interested in promoting healthy food and sustainable agriculture in national priorities to attain the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on SDG 2. It is present in twenty-one national congresses and in four regional parliaments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region that has passed the most food security and nutrition laws and regulations in recent years, as



highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, in his publication “A revolution of rights. The application of the right to food at the national level in Latin America and the Caribbean” (De Schutter, 2011). This has been, to a large extent, the result of the joint effort of the different actors led by the PFH<sup>2</sup>.

Parliamentarians have become promoters of legislation through the creation of Fronts in national congresses and regional parliaments, such as PARLATINO, FOPREL, PARLACEN, PARLANDINO and PARLASUR (Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger, 2021a), which have approved very useful model norms as a reference for other countries.

The PFH have become integration bodies, capable of generating solid alliances, to legislate committedly for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition in the region. The FAO publication “Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean main results”, describes the greatest legislative advances and their results<sup>3</sup>. FAO Director-General Dr. QU Dongyu, reinforces the importance of the normative framework when he refers to laws in the context of COVID-19, stressing that they have become even more critical to strengthen political commitment and increase accountability.

<sup>2</sup> Since 2009, 21 national Parliamentary Fronts have been formed. Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay. Four Regional Parliamentary Fronts Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR), Andean Parliament (PARLANDINO) and Central American Parliament (PARLACEN). Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean MAIN RESULTS or more information, see: <http://parlamentarioscontraelhambre.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/FPH-BROCHURE.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The FAO publication includes a link with the complete list of laws approved in the period prior to the pandemic in the period 2009 - 2019, as well as a list of laws and projects presented and/or approved by the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in the period 2020 - 2021

The PFH have not only focused on the approval of laws and budgets related to hunger and malnutrition, but increasingly on the control of public financial resources (FAO, 2020), that strengthen transparency and accountability.

The PFH have also become forums for the exchange of knowledge and experiences at the level of countries and regions. Eight Parliamentary Forums against Hunger in the region, were organized between 2010-17 to exchange experiences on food and nutrition security from a rights based approach (Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger, 2021b)

The biggest milestone was achieved in 2018, when 160 legislators from 80 countries in Africa, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean convened in Madrid (Spain) to the First World Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition (FAO, 2018a). It was a joint initiative of the General Courts of Spain, AECID, the FAO and the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger of Latin America and Caribbean (PFH-LAC).

Since 2020, the Zero Hunger Parliamentary Sessions begun activities prior to the X Forum of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean held in 2021. The Forum objective was to seek the exchange of knowledge and agreements for the taking of action among the different parliaments of the region (FAO, 2018b). This activity was also part of the PFH-LAC commitment to the fulfilment of SDG 2 of the 2030 Agenda.

In March 2020, the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger of Latin America and the Caribbean expressed its concern about the food situation in the region, issuing an open letter on the response to COVID-19 in food and agriculture, stating that efforts by all stakeholders need to be redoubled to meet SDG 2. Above all, Parliamentarians have highlighted the need to close the existing gender gap in women's access to land and productive means in order to advance towards SDG 5 on gender equality.

The crucial role of parliamentarians alliances has in the Caribbean region<sup>4</sup>, is the essence of our study, taking into account that their functions stem from a mandate granted by the people with their sovereign will, and that their action is key in the formulation of legislative projects, review and approval of proposals for the public budget and its monitoring (FAO, 2013).

In 2017, the Parliamentarians of 13 member states of the region and experts from the FAO of the Caribbean, met to address issues related to food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition.

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<sup>4</sup> FAO. 2019. *Caribbean. The TCP / SLC / 3701 (D) project focuses on Grenada, Haiti and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but also includes regional activities that will benefit parliamentarians in the Caribbean region as a whole.*

The countries represented were: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, the Community of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Caribbean UN, 2017a), Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. It should be noted that each delegation had the participation of a government party delegate and an opposition party delegate. During the event, the interest of the countries in establishing a Parliamentary Front against Hunger was evident, as mentioned by Dr. Lystra Fletcher-Paul, Deputy Sub regional Coordinator of FAO (Caribbean UN, 2017b).

It is also remarkable that the region has developed a framework for monitoring and evaluating the regional action plan on food and nutrition security and that the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states have discussed the benefit of having Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger as a vehicle to achieve SDG 2 (CARICOM, 2021).

*The present document aims to systematize the remarkable experiences in the following countries: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Haiti (FAO, 2021c). The case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines put emphasis on the establishment of the National Zero Hunger Trust Fund. The case of Belize analysed the continuity of Parliamentarian Front against Hunger. The case of Haiti, analyse the impact that political instability can cause in the functioning of the National Parliament Front.*

**We are using the  
Parliamentary  
Front against  
Hunger as a  
vehicle to achieve  
the **Sustainable  
Development  
Goal 2: Zero****



Joseph Cox  
CARICOM



# 1. SAINT VINCENT AND GRENADINES

*Parliamentary Front Against Hunger collaborating to promote a specific national Policy “the case of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Zero Hunger Trust Fund Act”*

## 1.1 Legislation and political system

In terms of legislation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines implicitly recognizes the right to food in its 1979 Political Constitution, within the framework of broader rights, saying that everyone has the right to life in its Art. 1 a (The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadine, 2021a).

It is a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights since 1981 by way of accession (FAO, 2021c).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, with Elizabeth II as Queen of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who is represented as Head of State in the country by the Governor-General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Control of the government rests with the elected Prime Minister and his or her cabinet. The legislative branch of government is the unicameral seating 15 elected members representing single-member constituencies and six appointed members known as Senators. The parliamentary term of office is five years, although the Prime Minister may call elections at any time (Wikipedia, 2021).

The Parliament is comprised of the House of Assembly and the Governor-General (The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2021b). At present the House of Assembly consists of a total of 23 members. These include 15 elected members (Representatives), six Senators, the Attorney-General and the Speaker of the House. The membership of the House may be also elected from outside of the House.

## 1.2 International cooperation

The FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for 2016-19, defines actions for food and nutrition security, based on the Zero Hunger Challenge. It emphasizes agricultural diversification, nutrition education, strengthening the governance in food security and nutrition (SAN) and poverty reduction programs. It also addresses strategies to reduce food losses and waste in key value chains; and improve the government’s ability to make better evidence-based decisions through the use of an efficient data management system.

The CPF also establishes the promotion of resilience to disasters and climate change, focusing on the development and implementation



of national plans for disasters and the provision of assistance for the development and strengthening of sustainable systems for the management of land resources and marine, as well as resilient agricultural and production systems. It seeks improved market systems, supporting farmers' organizations by developing public procurement policies and programs that will link farmers with national institutions such as school feeding programs. Furthermore, the sustainable management of natural resources is a concern. At the moment, a review of the CPF is in progress to prepare the one corresponding to 2022-26.

In terms of policies, the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-25) is in line with the United Nations SDGs. The core of the Plan is: to guarantee a better quality of life for all through the reengineering of economic growth; allow greater human and social development; promote good governance and increase the effectiveness of public administration; improve physical infrastructure, preserve the environment and promote resilience to climate change; and the construction of pride, identity and culture. The government is responsible for framing all policies and programs within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

The country is also member of the Economic Union under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) (FAO, 2016) and has a Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2010-20, which takes into account the country's obligations as a member state.

The country has developed dietary guidelines with a nutritious and healthy diet. This work was carried out by the Ministry of Health and

Environment, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Education, the Bureau of Standards, the Office of Consumer Affairs and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Food and Nutrition Institute of the Caribbean, FAO, the Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama and the Pan American Health Organization.

In addition, the country has made important efforts to combat illegal fishing, which limits the development of the sector. In a FAO event in Rome (2016), the Minister of Agriculture Caesar Saboto informed that they would enter into an Economic Union program under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which seeks to strengthen the implementation of international regulations and jurisprudence in this area.

Despite efforts in recent years, the situation has deteriorated, with the prevalence of malnutrition in 2019 being 6 percent (World Bank, 2021). This factor is due to the situation of vulnerability to disasters and the effects of COVID-19 that have seriously affected the food situation.

The volcanic eruptions of the La Soufrière volcano in April 2021, had serious consequences on the access and availability of food, for which the government declared a state of emergency. Damages in the agricultural sector, according to a Report of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), reached USD 150 million. The situation has resulted in the displacement of 20 000 people, according to information provided by the Minister of Agriculture. The government, with the support of the members of the United Nations Emergency

It is time to act and we have to redouble our efforts. If we are going to reduce **hunger and malnutrition to zero**, it means that we have to produce more, ensuring that there is greater equality in distribution.



César Saboto  
Coordinator of the  
Parliamentary Front Against Hunger  
of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Technical Team (UNETT), remains on alert and continues to monitor the evolution of the situation.

According to FAO data, the country has managed to comply with Goal 1C of the Millennium Development Goals, by reducing the prevalence of undernourishment from 20.7 to 6.2 percent between the 1990-92 and 2014-16 (FAO, 2015), which shows a high state commitment in the fight against hunger.

FAO, is currently helping to build capacity in agribusiness, by virtue of a Technical Assistance Agreement financed by the World Bank signed between FAO and the government of this country, called “Promoting the development of inclusive and sustainable agribusiness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines” (FAO, 2021d). The Project is part of the OECS Regional Agrarian Competitiveness World Bank Project. The Project takes into account that poverty in the country is concentrated in rural areas, and that agricultural development continues to be essential to address these challenges and support national food security.

This project was designed to strengthen the capacities of farmers, fishermen, agro-processors, as well as government personnel, to apply inclusive and sustainable agribusiness development approaches that improve market access and increase the sale of local agricultural products.

### 1.3 Parliamentary Front Against Hunger

Regarding the establishment of Parliamentary Fronts, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the first Caribbean country to establish a National Parliamentary Front by consensus in 2015. The PFH is an instance that shows the high political commitment and that has the technical support of FAO.

The Minister of Agriculture, Caesar Saboto, was mentor of the initiative to create the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in this country. He leads the Parliamentary motion from a joint effort and coordinated with the opposition. The parliamentarians of the government and opposition reached agreements to prioritize the fight against hunger within the framework of a State vision, overcoming all party differences, in a matter that generates full consensus among decision makers.

According to information from the PHF on the launching of the National Front of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the largest representative of the opposition in that country, the legislator Roland Patel Matthews, considered that “this fact represents a victory for democracy, a triumph for all Vincentians, and hope and commitment to the Caribbean and



the rest of the world”. The achievement was also highlighted by General Coordinator of the PFH-LAC, María Augusta Calle and Senator member, Mario Marroquín as “a triumph for regional integration that allows overcoming cultural differences, language barriers and legal systems ...” (2015) (Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger, 2021c).

The Minister of Agriculture, Coordinator of the PHF in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), participated in the open debate of the UN Security Council on Food Security in 2021 (Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger, 2021d). In the occasion, he informed that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has accelerated food security actions to ensure production and self-sufficiency. His speech also reinforced, the need for multilateral solutions to achieve the goal of ending hunger by 2030 and advancing the Sustainable Development Agenda.

#### 1.4 The Zero Hunger Trust Fund (ZHTF)

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also a pioneer country in approving a critical policy instrument denominated the Zero Hunger Trust Fund (ZHTF) (Agency for Public Information SVG, 2016; Zero Hunger Trust Fund Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2021) approved by the government (through an Act of Parliament (Act No. 2 of 2016), with the mission of providing the necessary resources to finance the country's obligations in the fight against hunger, in line with the SDG 2. It is a quasi-governmental institution, which depends on the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture.

The ZHTF has been an important outcome of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in the country.

Three deliverables stand out as part of the “success” story of the ZHTF: Structure, sustainability factor, and the political will to depoliticize the process.

- (i) The government formalised the establishment of the ZHTF, by providing the legislative framework to support the work.
- (ii) The ZHTF Act makes provision for the appointment of a Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Cabinet, but includes an appointee recommended by the Leader of the Opposition. The Board of Trustees provides policy guidelines, evaluates the performance of the Fund.
- (iii) Identifies and sources financing for the work of the Fund; and establishes guidelines for the prudential operation of the fund.

Several international donors partnered with the ZHTF in the early stages of its operations, permitting the execution of its programmes. The newly established ZHTF also adopted as one of its strategies, to intentionally target schools not only to provide food for children eat, but to stimulate an interest in agriculture.

In 2018, the ZHTF undertook strategic reforms to provide a stronger structure to its operations, allowing it to better fulfil its mandate. These reforms included the formulation of its Strategic Plan, which articulates the vision “A Saint Vincent and the Grenadines without hunger and meeting the nutritional needs of the population”, the mission statements of the ZHTF and the strategic pillars: (i) end to hunger and achieve better nutrition, (ii) achieve food security and, (iii) promote sustainable agriculture and direct support to rural farmers and contract farming to supply products to schools.

It is noteworthy that the ZHTF has also begun a more strategic fund-raising process, securing additional sources of funding to expand the programs.

Initially, in year 2016, the main source of financing was the telecommunications tax of 2 percent, paid by the two main telecommunications providers, Flow and Digicel. During the same year, the Board also initiated and successfully concluded negotiations with Dubai Cares, an international Organization, to obtain financial support for a new program –the Learning Enhancement and Nutrition Support (LENS) project–.

The following programmes which commenced in 2017 continued to be implemented:

*(i) Adopt a classroom*

During 2020, the “Adopt a Classroom Program” in which twelve classrooms from elementary schools across the country were “adopted”, continued including 330 students, now in grades 3 and 4, have progressed from kindergarten with the ZHTF support. They received all books recommended by the Ministry of Education, or specifically requested by the school, a cash donation to help with the purchase of school supplies, in addition to the cost of school meals. Additionally, an agreement was signed with the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA) to supply fresh fruits and vegetables directly to the 12 schools mentioned above with a total of more than 2 500 elementary school students benefiting from the program. The distribution is supervised by the director of each school.

*(ii) Improvement of skills training*

Provides training and learning in competencies that benefit, primarily young out-of-school youth, with vocational training opportunities and to place those who were successful in jobs in related workplaces, according to their discipline.

ZHTF is working closely with the Ministry of Education and Community College Technical Division to continue providing financial support to disadvantaged students. The ZHTF has trained 177 people in various areas since it began operations in 2016. Twenty-eight people were also placed in apprenticeships after successfully completing their courses.

*(iii) Golden Years Nutritional Support*

The programme is designed to assist the senior community, 80 years and older, with their nutritional needs.

In 2016, approximately 300 beneficiaries of the Golden Years Nutrition support program received boxes of groceries. Beneficiaries were selected based on information from the Country Poverty Assessment and a survey, which was conducted by the ZHTF. The recipients of the initial distribution list had the following characteristics: 85 years or older and did not have a secure source of income or financial support, including not being a recipient of social assistance or any other government funding.

During 2020, the program lowered the age to 78 years. The ZHTF aims to distribute to each of its 350 beneficiaries, the value of USD 300, every quarter, through a voucher program.

*(iv) Improved learning and nutritional support (LENS)*

This program provides support in all of the aforementioned activities. The main objective is to Improve access to nutritious diets. It benefits 350 people and part of the food support comes from an agreement with Supermarkets. Some components or guidelines from the FAO School Feeding Program have been taken into account.

The Fund has been in place for two years and has collected funds from the tax that applies to local and international calls on calls initiated in the country, as well as additional funds obtained from other donors.

The Program, according to information from Francine Ballantyne, has expanded the interventions to:

(i) Support for the Agricultural Science program in two secondary schools. This program is in line with target (2.3) of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2): “By 2030, double agricultural productivity and income ...”. Bishop College Kingstown and West St. George Secondary School Two schools have been included. The ZHTF has pledged to continue its support for another year.

(ii) Scholarships. In October 2020, 14 elementary school students received scholarships from the Zero Hunger Trust Fund to help them get into high school. It was funded primarily by a grant to the ZHTF from the government of the Republic of South Korea. The awardees were selected from among the successful candidates in the 2019-20 Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment, from schools that participated in the Teacher Support and Performance Improvement Program (PETS). Under PETS, 409 sixth grade students from 15 elementary schools received all prescribed texts. The program ended in June 2020, after the children completed their Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) exams.

(iii) LENS program. This officially concluded in 2019; however, several remaining activities carried over to 2020, when they were successfully completed. These include the retention of 12 reading coaches who continued to work with students in grades two and three to encourage and improve reading. In addition, 29 kitchen assistants from 12 ZHTF-supported schools and three additional schools were trained in a sustainable school feeding pilot program





during a three-day workshop. The workshops were supported by the Ministry of Education and facilitated by personnel from the Nutrition Unit of the Ministry of Health. The objectives of the workshops were:

- a. Improve the general food preparation and handling skills of kitchen assistants.
- b. Demonstrate the preparation of items on the recently revised standardized four week cycle menu.
- c. Test menu components with a sample of students from selected schools for feedback. The recipe test with school-age children was one of the main results of the workshop.

The Minister of Finance, Camilo Gonsalves, has stated in an introductory note to the Plan that the COVID-19 Pandemic, "has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the poor, and this has highlighted the urgency of the work of the ZHTF" (FAO, 2021e).

Francine Ballantyne, in charge of the ZHTF, has stressed that despite the efforts, the biggest challenge is to obtain more funding. At the moment, the fundraising strategy includes, seeking more allies among international organizations and the cooperation with donor countries, in order to expand the programs. It was mentioned that the Ministry of Tourism, which is in charge of the Fund implementation,

has the commitment and leadership in this matter, as the Act (2016) prescribes. The Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture collaborate with the School Feeding Program, and Dubai Cares and ROC Taiwan are also partners in the Fund.

The PHF can play an important role in strengthening the ZHTF and advocate to generate more funds, both at the state budget level and with donors and international cooperation. In this effort –taking into account that the pillars of the ZHTF coincide with the “four betters” of FAO and the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda (particularly SDG 1 and SDG 2)– FAO, other United Nations Agencies and development partners can have an important role to play.

### *Good practices*

(i) The approval of the ZTFH, was preceded by an analysis to identify the people most vulnerable to hunger, finding a high percentage of young people with secondary education in this situation. In consequence, the interventions were designed to provide a specific response, equipping vulnerable populations with the needed skills to feed themselves. Regarding to this area, an important challenge is to have disaggregated data on the hunger and nutrition situation in the country.

(ii) Another beneficial aspect is that the ZTFH has inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination. The Fund’s Board of Directors has professional members in different disciplines, and it is noteworthy that it has a representative of the religious community and a representative of the private sector.

(iii) The legal instrument with which the ZHTF was created provides for the appointment of a Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Cabinet, but includes a designated person recommended by the Leader of the Opposition. The Board of Directors provides policy guidelines, evaluates the performance of the Fund; identifies and obtains funding for the work of the Fund; and establishes guidelines for the prudential operation of the fund, which has strict accountability.

(iv) It is relevant to note that the Director of the Fund is the Director of Planning, a public service official who is generally responsible for advising the Prime Minister on economic development issues. Therefore, this official has a general appreciation of all development issues.



(v) The ZHTF has achieved a successful mobilization of resources and innovative financing mechanisms.

### *Learned lessons*

(i) The approval of the Zero Hunger Trust Fund (ZHTF) and the establishment of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger (PHF) became successful processes because they were inclusive. In the first case, there was the possibility of consultation and representative participation of all the key actors, including the beneficiaries. As for the formation of the PFH, the opposition had the opportunity to participate and there was permanent dialogue.

(ii) The search for allies and innovative funds raising have been successful mechanisms for the implementation of the Fund's programmes.

In conclusion, some aspects will be essential for the strengthening and sustainability of the PFH and the ZHTF in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

- (i) Search for more bilateral allies to cooperate with the implementation of the ZHTF.
- (ii) Advocacy to strengthen Parliament's budget for the operation of the PFH.
- (iii) Continuous support from FAO and other development partners to ensure continuity and improvement in the work of the Front.
- (iv) Support policy instruments and regulatory frameworks on key issues of importance to the country and the Front. These include among others school feeding, family farming, fisheries, and others.



## 2. BELIZE

*Parliamentary Front Against Hunger facing the change in governments*

### 2.1 Legislation and political system

In terms of legislation, the Constitution of Belize does not explicitly guarantee the right to adequate food.

Article 3 of the Constitution of Belize Law (revised edition of 2017) recognizes the right to life and other fundamental rights and freedoms of the person, without distinction based on race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, and limited only by respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of others and the public interest (WIPOLEX, 2021).

The country is a State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) through ratification (2015).

Belize is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary, its democracy is based on the Westminster model. Queen Elizabeth II is head of state and is represented in the country by Governor General. The primary executive organ of government is the Cabinet led by a Prime Minister. Cabinet ministers are members of the majority political party in Parliament and usually hold elected seats in the National Assembly concurrently with

their Cabinet positions. Cabinet members can also be drawn from the Senate (Wikipedia, 2021b).

The National Assembly of Belize (National Assembly of Belize, 2021) is the Legislature or Parliament of Belize. It consists of two Houses: The Senate (Upper House) and the House of Representatives (Lower House). The 31 Members of the House of Representatives are elected in general election under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act. Meanwhile, the 13 Members of the Senate are nominated and appointed by the Governor General of Belize based on proposals from the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and various religious, economic and social institutions. However, in accordance with the provisions of section 90 of the Belize Constitution, the National Assembly may by law increase the number of Members of the House of Representatives.

## 2.2 International cooperation

FAO's assistance to Belize is framed in the FAO Country Programming Framework (MAP) for 2016-19 (FAO, 2016b), which is in the formulation process for the 2022-26 period.

Among the main mechanisms to improve food security are: (i) strengthening the schooleducation program, taking advantage of South-South cooperation with Brazil and Mexico, (ii) developing agriculture and food policy, in order to support the good governance of institutional structures, promoting sustainability. (iii) the development of the country's food-based dietary guidelines, published by the government

**In Belize, we have made significant strides. In July 2019, we witnessed Belize become the 20th country in the region to join the Parliamentary Front against Hunger.**

**Crispim Moreira**  
FAO Representative for Jamaica,  
The Bahamas and Belize

in 2012. These guidelines were formulated by an interdisciplinary group led by the Ministry of Health with the participation of the Ministries of Education and Youth, and Agriculture, along with the Bureau of Standards and the University of Belize.

In addition to these matters, there is the promotion of resilient and sustainable food and fishing systems, and the work for a regulation that strengthens consumer's protection.

The current FAO Representative in Belize, Crispim Moreira, announced (FAO, 2021f) that the Organization is increasing cooperation with two projects which have the support of Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID). One of them, is the Mesoamerica without Hunger Project –Belize has joined in 2015– coordinated from Panama, which strengthens alliances to reinforce the political and institutional framework to achieve food and nutritional security, school feeding and family farming.

Another, is the CARICOM-Belize Project, of triangular South-South cooperation, with which FAO supports the new government and its school feeding project linked to family farming. Learning from a previous experience implemented in the District of Toledo, activities associated with the different component of the of sustainable school feeding approach are being supported in three other districts of the country. Likewise, the government will be assisted its quest to develop a National Healthy Start Feeding Policy (Government of Belize, 2021).

The “Sustainable Schools” model includes valuable components: analysis of the nutritional study of the students, the participation of the school's community, the implementation of pedagogical school gardens and the direct purchase of products from family farming. In this context, two documents reflect the experiences and challenges of pilot projects (FAO, 2021g): (i) “Systematization of the Sustainable School Feeding Model and Proposition of Recommendations as Way Forward to the Government of Belize”, and, (ii) “Local Procurement from Family Farming for the School Feeding Program: The Experience of Belize”. The last, addresses experiences in four pilot Sustainable Schools located in the Toledo district, in the communities of Pueblo Viejo, Santa Elena, Santa Cruz and San Antonio.

With regard to the country's situation, in Food security Report under the COVID-19 pandemic, elaborated by FAO and CELAC (FAO & CELAC, 2020), Belize is cited among the countries where the manifestation of hunger and different forms of malnutrition can be particularly severe in some territories in the interior of the country. The report also mentions that there are territories where child malnutrition is more than double

the national average. And in rural areas, stunting figures are considerably higher than in urban areas, reaching differences greater than 50 percent.

## 2.3 Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition

The political will of Belizean parliamentarians to fighting hunger and malnutrition generated the launch of the Belize Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (PAAHM) on July 29, 2019 (National Assembly of Belize, 2019).

The Declaration was signed by the following Honourable Members of Parliament: Laura Tucker-Longworth; Patrick Faber; Pablo Marín; Hugo Patt; Tracy Taegar-Panton; Omar Figueroa; Beverly Williams; Jose Mai; Orlando Habet; Carla Barnett; Darrell Bradley; Godwin Hulse; Valerie Woods; and Osmany Salas, was considered a milestone in the country. The process benefited from the leadership of Tucker-Longworth who was the Speaker of the House, the support of the National School Feeding Committee and the FAO technical assistance via the “Mesoamerica without hunger project”.

During the first working session of the Front, parliamentarian Francis Fonseca emphasized that it is essential to include the Ministries of education, agriculture and health in this alliance, highlighting that school meals should be expanded for the districts to contribute to a healthy diet as condition to ensure the fulfilment of the human right to adequate food.

Tucker-Longworth was the Coordinator of the PAAHM and Parliamentary Speaker until December 2020. After the general elections in 2020 that resulted in a change in the government and most members of the parliament of Belize, the leadership was substituted by Valerie Woods, who is the current Speaker of the House. Among the first activities of the Hon. Valerie Woods was an evaluation with those who preceded in this job and returned to office, in order to ensure continuity and commitment.

However, not much work could be undertaken by the new team because a few months after the installation, the world was affected by the limitations of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which had repercussions on the work at the parliamentary level and consequently on the PAAHM. Subsequently, there was general election in 2020 leading to the change in the government mentioned to above.

Woods referred to the period of her experience in the leadership of the Front as “successful and fertile”. It was a moment to follow-up on the



Declaration made by the Parliamentary Champions, placing emphasis on activities involving school students and the general public to achieve general awareness. With this objective, they have planned competitions that promote knowledge on healthy diets based on available food at local level. Some of which are related to school's gardens to sensitize the youngest.

In relation to a work plan, it is necessary to highlight that it has been discussed between the Champions, what will be pursued on these issues. The work of the new leadership, since the beginning, has been precisely to meet with those who are returning to parliamentary work, in order to evaluate the interest and commitment of the different groups to decide about actions that can be taken during this current year.

In order to overcome the challenges of transiting from one government to another, a technical commitment has been assured to analyse ideas and advance in actions that can be carried out, despite the context of COVID-19; particularly, to raise awareness about the importance of these matters. Among them, Valerie Woods, has referred to activities in projects related to school's gardens, school meals, and others that allow the PAAHM to be in the lead.

Among the primary interests of the PAAHM include a detailed assessment of the National School Feeding Program. For this reason, it has been proposed to carry out an evaluation of the existing challenges so that when the schools restart work, the Champions of the Alliance have addressed the main concerns in order to make the program to be successful.

**We, the parliamentarians are the that can advocate that the national budget ensures that there is always some allocation for school feeding, and that it is not reduced.**



Valerie Woods  
Speaker of the House of Belize

The Speaker of the House referred that “In terms of continuity of the PAAHM, there is a need for the Champions who belong to the different Chambers, the government, the opposition and the independents to be deeply aware of the alliance objectives, its importance to improve food security and nutrition strategies, and in line with this to be more informed on statistics about the situation of hunger and malnutrition, with an emphasis on children and young people”. The Champions will also require to be actively involved in legislative processes related to food security, food sovereignty, school gardens, and the promotion of healthy eating.

At the end of 2021, the Champions will receive seeds and a variety of healthy food to be distributed in their respective communities. The effort will promote a healthy consumption of what is produced and grown locally. In line with food sovereignty, they are also planning visits to observe local agriculture processing to better understand the food variety available in the country. The initiative came after a quick survey from the Agro-processing Unit that reflected little activity in this area; for this reason, the aim is to educate the Champions, in order to better fulfil their role on the basis of practical knowledge.

It has also been mentioned the importance to follow up the manual on school gardens, which has been included in the school curriculum and was produced in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture. Using the manual, the students learn, and become involved, contributing to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

The usefulness of urban gardens has also considered to make food accessible locally, which is crucial to lessen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to support the School Feeding Program, the PAAHM plan to identify the most appropriate and diverse crops according to each region, to be included in the school menu. Food must be nutritious, healthy and culturally appropriate.

Cultural and artistic initiatives with the support of the National Institute of Culture and History of Belize have been also identified as a way to sensitise the youngest.

By promoting these initiatives, the objectives of the Alliance Against Hunger are being implemented with impact.

The PAAHM is embarked in the preparation of the first symposium on food and nutritional security and food sovereignty expected to be held in September or October of 2022. They members considered that a



baseline on the impact of COVID-19, will be essential to generate new policies or laws. The symposium will also be an opportunity to discuss mechanisms for the sustainability of the projects. The members will discuss the possibility for the National State Budget to include a percentage of the budget for the food security programs, especially in the field of school feeding.

The PAAHM will meet in January 2022, to define the future agenda to address the situation of food and nutritional security and school feeding.

In terms of technical and financial assistance, Woods affirmed that FAO has been instrumental in establishing the Alliance and that its continued support is necessary.

In turn, the FAO Representative explained that there are new forces working in the Parliament, which implies a challenge. The “good news”, he added, is that there are South-South cooperation agreements with the new government, in which the Parliamentary Front is a priority.

The FAO Representative also underlined, that the School Feeding Law is relevant and high on the Executive's agenda, and that the Coordinator for the National Food and Nutrition Security Commission, Emilio Montero, is in charge of this fundamental task. The FAO Representative concluded the interview highlighting that “this Law is an engine of union between the PAAHM and the Executive's strategy” as the Alliance will continue working to complement the advanced work.

*Good practices:*

- (i) Despite the limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the transition from one government to another, the Parliamentary Alliance is being strengthened and has assumed its commitment to the ideals that created it.
- (ii) The political will to fight hunger and malnutrition has been manifested in the motivation and technical dedication the PAAHM has shown during this period, which has led to the definition of several initiatives presently underway and others planned for 2022.
- (iii) The PAAHM, in its efforts, strives to achieve quality and impact that improves the food and nutrition security of targeted groups.

*Learned lessons:*

- (i) The actions planned by the PAAHM, which becomes the engine for this fight within Parliament, involve many challenges, especially budgetary ones.
- (ii) PAAHM should contribute so that State allocates larger budgets in the area of food and nutrition security.
- (iii) It is necessary to continue promoting regulations, taking into account that the country does not explicitly guarantee the right to food, which would provide greater legal protection and more sustainability in effective implementation.

In conclusion, some aspects will be essential for the strengthening and sustainability of the Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger in Belize:

- (i) Continue valuing the role that the Champions have according to the vision and mission that were proposed with the establishment of the Alliance.
- (ii) Reinforce the resources for its operation within the Parliament in order to implement the proposed agenda.
- (iii) Maintain the support of FAO technical cooperation, particularly regarding the strengthening of the legislative frameworks. There seem to be resources available for activities in this area, which is also high in FAO's agenda.



## HAITI

*PFH navigating political and social instabilities*

### 3.1 Legislation and political system

The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of Haiti explicitly guarantees the right to adequate food, as an independent right, applicable to all citizens. It states out that decent housing, education, food and social security are fundamental rights.

Article 22 (Constitute Project, 2019) prescribes that: "The State recognizes the right of every citizen to decent housing, education, food and social security". Another relevant provision for the realization of the right to adequate food, is stated in article 19: "The State has the absolute obligation to guarantee the right to life, health and respect for the human person to all citizens without distinction, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The guarantee of the right at the constitutional level implies that all the country's regulations must be in accordance with the constitutional provisions, and in case of conflict, the norms approved in the Constitution always prevail, which results in the country's advancement at the normative level.

The Republic of Haiti has also become a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 2013 through accession.

Regarding the national status of international obligations, Article 276.2 states that: “Once international treaties or conventions are approved and ratified in the manner established by the Constitution, they become part of the country’s legislation and repeal the laws in conflict with them”.

The government of Haiti (Wikipedia, 2021c) is a semi-presidential republic, a multiparty system wherein the President of Haiti is head of state elected directly by popular elections. The Prime Minister acts as head of government and is appointed by the President, chosen from the majority party in the National Assembly. Executive power is exercised by the President and Prime Minister who together constitute the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of the National Assembly of Haiti.

The Parliament (Wikipedia, 2021d) is the bicameral legislature of the Republic of Haiti, consisting of the upper house as the Senate (Sénat) and the lower house as the Chamber of Deputies (Chambre des Députés). The Parliament has 30 senators and 119 deputies). Both assemblies conduct legislative sessions.

### 3.2 International cooperation

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis, 4.4 million people in Haiti are in high acute food insecurity (March-June 2021), of whom over 1.1 million are in emergency, representing 46 percent of the population analysed. It is crucial to restore the productive assets of affected households and diversify their sources of food and income to strengthen livelihoods resilience (FAO, 2021h).

The Haiti Country Program Framework (CPP-Haiti, 2017-20) (FAO, 2021i) is in line with national priorities and policy documents including: (i) the Haiti Strategic Development Plan (PSDH); (ii) the United Nations Development Framework Plan (PCAD); (iii) the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA); (iv) the Three-year Agricultural Recovery Plan (PTRA); (v) the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (PAN-LCD); (vi) the National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PANA).

The CPP-Haiti has as main objective: “to improve the Food and Nutritional Security (SAN) of communities in a sustainable manner while

protecting their socio-economic situation and the environment and by promoting sustainable management of natural resources.”

It contains four priority areas:

(i) Institutional capacity building on Food and Nutrition Security will focus on improving the food and nutritional security of populations, strengthening the Institutions for effective FSN coordination.

(ii) Development of agricultural sectors to reinforce the competitiveness of agricultural sectors at national and regional level through the involvement of all stakeholders in a “value chain” approach that improves productivity, sustainability, quality and profitability. agricultural, pastoral and fishery systems.

(iii) Conservation and management of natural resources to support the government’s efforts in the conservation of natural resources through an integrated approach to ecosystem management (soil, water, plants, biodiversity).

(i) Building resilience to natural disasters and food crises to support the government efforts and to strengthen the resilience of communities in the face of natural disasters.

Haiti faces several challenges simultaneously. The country’s vulnerability to natural disasters and the social crisis, particularly since 2019, have

It is not enough to finance and build infrastructure to ensure sustainability.

**Political commitment** and full government involvement are also essential.



José Luis Fernandez  
FAO Representative in Haiti

a serious impact on the nutritional situation of the population. Additionally, the COVID-19 Pandemic limits people's economic access to food, and has greatly affected production. In this sense, in line with the country's Humanitarian Response Plan, FAO prioritizes activities that improve the availability and access to food of the most vulnerable through different mechanisms and also contributes to actions that reduce the impact of disasters and the effects of COVID-19.

Haiti has recently joined an FAO initiative called *Mano a Mano* (FAO, 2021j), with the aim of working with other partners to prioritize the situation of the most vulnerable communities. The initiative has established an Alliance for Food and Nutritional Security for the southern region of the country in coordination with the AECID.

Taking into account that the country is exposed to recurring natural disasters due to climate change, FAO reinforced support with an emergency and resilience program that addresses the food crisis and the impact of COVID-19 that covers 1.2 billion people (2020). The current FAO Representative, José Luis Fernández (2021) considers that the appropriation, involvement and commitment of all the actors is relevant in the process.

In terms of policies, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP, has a Strategic Plan 2019-23 (WFP, 2019), which supports the updating of the national policy and strategy on food sovereignty, food security and nutrition, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17.

### 3.3 Parliamentary Front Against Hunger

In 2017, the Chamber of Deputies, with 69 signatory deputies, approved the Resolution that officially created the Parliamentary Front against Hunger (PHF), Haiti thus became, the first French-speaking country in the world to do so and the second country from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), after Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

It is remarkable that the official launching ceremony of the PFH had the presence of the Former President of the Republic, Jovenel Moïse (†)<sup>5</sup>. Also present were the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, the Deputy Cholzer Chancy; the Minister of Agriculture, Carmel André Belaird and Members of Parliament.

The PHF seeks to create better legal and policy tools to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, develop programs that facilitate the population's

<sup>5</sup> Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, regrettably passed away on July 7, 2021.



access to healthy and adequate food and to allocate resources for the implementation of activities to guarantee the right to adequate food.

According to a FAO press release (FAO, 2017b), Tanis Tertius<sup>6</sup> (†), Former President of the Commission of the Chamber of Deputies for Agriculture and Food Security and Coordinator of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger, in his opening speech highlighted the fact that “it is the first time that different political blocks within the Parliament have decided to put aside their group interests, to combine their efforts, through a firm and unwavering commitment, in the fight to free Haiti from hunger and malnutrition”. Tanis Tertius also mentioned (Caribbean UN, 2021) that this mechanism would ensure the implementation and regulation of the laws in coordination with the Executive.

It was also reported that Jovenel Moïse, in turn, emphasized the need to sign a “governance pact that allows activities to be carried out for the benefit of the group”, inviting all political forces for this purpose.

The FAO Representative in Haiti, Nathanaël Hishamunda (2016-19) considered that the PFH contributes to discussing the reinforcement of resources for the formulation and implementation of policies and programs aimed at eradicating hunger and malnutrition in the country and guaranteeing the right to adequate food. The PFH becomes a strategic tool in this field of action.

In article 6 Statutes of the PFH states that: “The Parliamentary Front is composed of Honourable Parliamentarians who later signed or adhered to the resolution.” In its article 7., it mentions that “The future parliamentarians of the next legislatures adhered by simple procedure to this institutional mechanism incorporated in the Permanent Commission ‘Agriculture and Food Security’ of the Chamber of Deputies. The President of this Commission informs his peers of the existence of the PFH and formally receives their request for membership in the minutes”.

In its article 5, it states that “the duration of the association is unlimited, except in the cases of dissolution provided for in the aforementioned regulations”, which are related to any act harmful to the welfare of the population, and is pronounced by Parliament in the National Assembly. These regulations allow the PFH to remain in force, as long as parliamentarians are appointed and that they intend to join the Front. According to article 26, the Front has a budget allocation included into the Parliament’s budget, and receive donations.

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<sup>6</sup> Honorable Tanis Tertius, regrettably passed away on May 28, 2021.



In 2018, two legislative initiatives have been proposed: The School Feeding Law Project (SFLP) and the Food Security and Sovereignty Law Project (FSSLP). Regarding the first, the PHF recommended to improve the bill on school feeding<sup>7</sup> for which it organized a workshop with the support of FAO.

The event provided an opportunity to shared information about the departmental consultations –Southeast, North, Northeast, Artibonito and Center Departments– regarding the bill on school feeding (initially called the bill on school canteens), in order to contribute to reduce child malnutrition. “It was considered an important milestone in the process of creating legal instruments in particular, among school children”, as stated by Jobert C. Angrand, Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development in the occasion (2018).

Another reason for success attributed to this effort has been the guarantee of an inclusive process with representatives of various sectors and some United Nations Agencies such as FAO, UNICEF and WFP. Some measures contemplated are the purchase of local products and nutritional education.

The political situation in the country has been aggravated in 2019 , with the protests that aimed at the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse. This went together with the suspension of the work of the Chamber of Deputies, leaving the country without a functioning Parliament

<sup>7</sup> With the support of Parliamentarians of the Network of the United Nations SUN , Network SUN countries , Scaling up nutrition. Global movement that integrates 69 countries to end malnutrition in all its forms.

in January 2020. All this caused the country to sombre in a political and social upheaval up to a point where President Jovenel Moise was assassinated in July 2021.

The members of the Chamber of Senators, on the other hand, continue in their mandate until 2022.

The lack of agreement on a framework law to organize the polls has not allowed an electoral process in the country. Subsequently, with the appointment of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, preparations were ongoing for the organization of elections that were scheduled for September of 2021. However, this has been delayed without having an established new date at the moment (Telam Digital, 2021).

The absence of institutional continuity in the country's political and administrative system during the last two years has had an impact on the functioning of the Parliament, and on the process of institutional strengthening of the PFH. Despite of the impossibility to meet in person and not being able to organize a national evaluation (planned during that period), some actions were carried out in 2019 by the PFH.

Most noteworthy, the Haiti PFH participated in the VII Planning Meeting of Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean (July 2019), and in the Meeting of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN), in Nepal (November 2019). The last meeting here referred, achieved the commitment of the participants, mainly to encourage their governments to allocate the necessary budget to reach the nutritional objectives of their respective countries and to promote and institute political, legislative and regulatory measures aimed at combating malnutrition in all its forms.

Roudy Dévil, who represented the Parliamentary Front at the SUN meeting, said that it was a very enriching experience for him and the PFH, adding that he had conversations with Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Fasso and Gabon, about the Haitian experience in the formulation of the school feeding bill (FAO, 2021k).

Additionally, the achievements of the Department of Nutrition of the Ministry of Health were documented in 2019 (FAO, 2019), after the use of the allocation of 30 million gourdes entered into the National Budget (fiscal exercise 2017-18), as a result of the advocacy actions of the Parliamentary Front, to strengthen the line budget for food and nutrition security. This action made it possible to serve children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in 10 departments of the country, which are



not covered by the international funding for nutrition available in Haiti through non-governmental organizations.

Children with MAM are included only in emergency situations, as was the case in Grande-Anse after Cyclone Mateo. At the same time, this collaboration made it possible to strengthen the governance of the sector, apply the National Protocol to Support Global Acute Malnutrition in Haiti (NPSGAM) and influence the malnutrition figures in children under 5 years of age in Haiti (FAO, 2021I).

The PFH also prepared a preliminary work plan, subject to review.

In order to strengthen the governance of food and nutrition security in Haiti, the country will require a solid institutional framework in both the Executive and the Legislative. The deputies have a four-year term, but the country does not offer institutional continuity, which complicates follow-up, being a critical problem for sustaining long-term initiatives.

The PFH depends entirely on the functioning of Parliament, and particularly, on the Committee on Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, from where it was created.

In this line, it will be necessary to revitalize the legal mechanisms for the creation of the Front and also recommend that the designated members belong to both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in order to give continuity to the work. The motivation of the members of the Front

must be strengthened in their goal of fighting hunger and malnutrition. For this purpose, it is important to continue with the sensitization and advocacy of parliamentarians so that the due mandate is fulfilled.

Once the elections are held, and parliamentarians take office, it is possible to create synergies through FAO and other development partners for the Front to be re-established.

### *Good practices*

Despite all the limitations, the regular exchanges of PFH members among themselves and with the FAO Program have been extremely beneficial. The use of new information and communication technologies has supported the activities during these last years.

### *Learned lessons*

- (i) FSN matters imperatively requires concerted efforts and initiatives between the Executive and the Legislature for the development of laws and urgent public policies for the country.
- (ii) Political commitment and the effective participation of parliamentarians are essential for the appropriate functioning of the PFH and the achievement of the objectives set.
- (iii) The institutional strengthening of the Front requires a constant process in terms of time and resource allocation, following the mechanisms provided in its Statutes.

In conclusion, some aspects will be essential for the strengthening and sustainability of the PFH (FAO, 2021m) in Haiti:

- (i) The political and social stability of the country is fundamental for the functioning of the Parliament and the PFH.
- (ii) The existence or implementation of legal mechanisms that revitalize the PFH within Parliament.
- (iii) PFH integration with representatives of the Chambers of Deputies and Senators.
- (iv) The facilitator role of FAO and other development partners is instrumental for the reestablishment and continuity of the PFH in Haiti.
- (v) The need to strengthen advocacy and awareness strategies for parliamentarians to reinforce the institutional mandate they have in the fight against hunger.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- i. The systematization underlines the important role that Parliament and the PHF have in the approval of regulations and budgets that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs to the eradication of hunger (SDG 2) and related. In an introductory way it reports on the achievements at the level of Latin America and, particularly, highlights the processes, challenges, and advances that have been possible in the three Caribbean countries: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, and Haiti.
- ii. The obligation of parliamentarians in this matter originates from existing international and national regulations that guarantee the right to food. The political commitment and conviction on the need to fight hunger and malnutrition is undoubtedly the fundamental motor force to implement and advance the agendas in the countries. It has become clear that there is political will and concrete actions to achieve the results. It should be noted that the will and commitment to the goal is not partisan, and the processes have been inclusive.
- iii. Political commitment will always be intermittent, for this reason, it is crucial to create normative and political tools that strengthen the programs it over time.
- iv. In the last two years, the COVID-19 Pandemic has negatively influenced the efforts that were being undertaken, which has prevented the achievement of a large part of the Agenda of the Parliamentary Fronts. The virtual meetings have become a new dynamic to continue the political dialogues and the exchange of experiences in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, necessary to achieve significant legislative progress in the area of SDG 2. The participation of the Caribbean PFH must continue to be strengthened in parliamentary forums at regional and world levels.
- v. The pandemic COVID-19 has evidenced the importance of regional and global collaboration to face complex problems, for this reason the collaboration networking to fight hunger and malnutrition as PFH is essential. FAO is supporting all countries in the Caribbean in their fight to reach SDG 2 (2030 Agenda), helping capabilities in the countries on food and nutrition security strengthening the agriculture and farming systems through a more holistic and sustainable approach.
- vi. The functioning and sustainability of the PFH in the countries is restricted, as a result of changing governments, which however



does not seem to have diminished the political commitment of the members who return to parliamentary work further support and follow-up from FAO in the inter-legislature transition process is needed. In the case of Haiti, political stability and the exercise of democracy are crucial to the continuity of the PFH.

vii. In terms of resources necessary to achieve the goals proposed in the legal instruments that have created these platforms, all of them face the challenge of financing. Legal mechanism and ability to create alliances are crucial elements to be reinforced within Parliament.

viii. In the case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the ZHTF has proved to be successful and inspiring, however the need for funds for expansion has also been mentioned as a key factor.

ix. There are pending law processes. These require time, continuity and resources to assure new capacities, give new evidences and create political spaces for dialogue. The normative agenda and the allocation of larger budgets, the essence of the parliamentary role, must be promoted, being the only way to reinforce the policies and programs in progress.

x. Working with the PFH requires exchanges between countries, especially in the initial phase, taking into account that this helps to generate knowledge. The experiences shared at the Latin American level have contributed significantly to the work in other countries. The COVID-19, unfortunately, affected the process of consolidating the efforts of the Caribbean countries. However, this pandemic

could be an opportunity to find new allies and strengthen the collaborative networking with other Fronts and Alliances.

**xi.** The work of the PFH can only be developed on the basis of continuous contact, and a fluent conversation at the highest political level so that it is sustainable. Otherwise, schedules are postponed and results are not achieved in processes that by their nature require time. The work implies full-time dedication, so as not to affect the support to the PFH.

**xii.** With regard to FAO technical assistance, it is crucial to continue supporting the Parliamentary Fronts that are generators of policies and regulations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. The stakeholders interviewed in each country have highlighted FAO's role as strategic. For the first time in its history, FAO recognizes the special role of the parliamentary alliances, installing a special mandate to promote and strengthen them in its new Strategy Framework 2022-31 (FAO, 2021n). The mandate has been also integrated in the last two FAO Regional Conferences.

It is recommended that FAO integrates PFH as a cross-cutting axis in its projects to advance political, normative and budgetary mechanisms in a sustainable and strategic way.

**xiii.** The projections in terms of continuity are positive, despite the challenges in each country. The political will and effort of the Champions will allow to strengthen the PHF and FAO intends to continue its technical support, playing a strategic role in facilitating the processes. Each country has its political moments, it will be necessary to follow the processes and be alert to the opportunities that may arise to support the PFH.

**xiv.** It is important that the members of the PFH do their own advocacy, making their role more visible and presenting their actions on the websites of the Parliaments, and taking advantage of its virtual tools such as the [parlamentarioscontraelhambre.org](http://parlamentarioscontraelhambre.org) website and its twitter accounts.

**xv.** Finally, interaction and exchange of experiences between the PFH of the Caribbean countries is recommended for greater mutual support and with the rest of the PFH of Latin America.

**xvi.** The present Systematization of experiences and good practices in the three countries Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Haiti brings together valuable information about processes and experiences that can be inspiring for other countries. It also provides a summary update on the main milestones achieved.



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