



Our Food, Our Health, Our People
***Accelerating Healthy Food Policies to tackle NCDs Health Caribbean Coalition: A
Transformative New NCD Agenda***
Virtual Conference - July 1, 2021.

Opening Remarks

Dr Renata Clarke, Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, FAO

Updates on the Food Systems Summit and FAO's related Programming Priorities.

Our food system has been in disfunction for some time. There is a high degree of poverty and vulnerability among our small-scale farmers; our productivity is low; we import most of what we eat; we have growing problems of both undernourishment and obesity; our environment is being degraded.

Some countries keep underlining that we do need to improve our food systems but just a few tweaks might work. FAO believes that in the Caribbean, we need a much more transformative vision. The CARICOM secretariat organized a Regional dialogue on Food Systems at the end of May. Heads of State and Ministers shared their thinking about Food Systems transformation. It was a powerful meeting.

As His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, stated at the Dialogue, "The region's food system transformation is at the core of our development aspirations it will require greater attention be paid to its food systems, especially in terms of ensuring food security, combating the threats posed by climate change and being able to mobilize financing for climate resilient agriculture"

There were three main areas of focus during the dialogue:

Policy orientation and actions needed to ensure food security and healthy diets

The need to invest in building resilience to the impacts of climate change

Strategies for funding and financing that will catalyse the needed transformation.

The report of the Regional Dialogue will ensure that this strong Caribbean perspective resonates through the pre-Summit being held in Rome at the end of July and at the Global Summit in NY in September. And that support is garnered for the solutions that the Caribbean countries have carved out.

FAO is working with countries of the Caribbean countries to transform food systems and to enable sustainable and inclusive agriculture systems play a leading role in the COVID recovery.

Prime Minister Mia Mottley has frequently underlined the importance of the Region's goal to reduce food imports by 25 [%] by 2025. At the Regional Dialogue she pointed to the need to be even more ambitious and that as a region, we need to expedite the process of producing as much food as we can ...”

FAO is supporting countries to review and revise agriculture and fisheries policies and strategies; to develop sound value chain development strategies that are market driven, and that create more-than decent jobs in agriculture and agribusiness for our youth, women and men.

We are supporting countries to leverage climate financing to enable them to meet their goals for CC Adaptation in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries. We are currently putting significant emphasis in the use of integrated data systems that enable early warning and anticipatory action that reduces loss to climate related risks.

Finally we are supporting data and evidence informed nutrition policies and programmes. With support of FAO and UWI, SKN completed a individual food consumption survey. We look forward to seeing SKN leading the way in the Caribbean in developing sound policies and targeted programmes. We are also committed to School feeding programmes that instill good eating habits, provide an important social safety net and create markets for healthy local produce.

The time is now to start putting things right.