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## NEWS RELEASE

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**Water-Energy-Food-Environment Nexus Tools for enhanced climate resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the priority items during World Water Week**

**Bridgetown, Barbados - 30 August, 2022** - The importance of shifting from water-centric resource management to holistic planning and integrated decision-making in the Water, Energy, Food, and Environment (WEFE) sectors using innovative nexus tools was a key message of the World Water Week session that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) co-convened on 30 August 2022 with five other organizations from the region.

Around the Caribbean and Latin America, the need to focus on the full value of water to society is becoming increasingly important, like in the rest of the world, as the resource continues to face supply and demand challenges. Raising awareness on this was a central goal of the “Focus on the Americas” sessions at the Stockholm International Water Institute’s World Water Week held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 24 August to 1 September 2022, in a hybrid online/in-person format.

In this context, the FAO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean (FAOSLC) joined forces with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Inter-American

Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), RTI International and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to showcase regional examples of promising WEF nexus tools for better decision-making across the board. Bringing to light water's full value for Latin American and Caribbean societies requires finding innovative ways to address competing sectoral interests and ensure equitable resource allocation.

Jacinto Buenfil, Policy Officer for Environment and Climate Change at FAOSLC and Coordinator of the Mexico-CARICOM-FAO Initiative "Cooperation for Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change in the Caribbean", participated in a panel discussion on the efficient use of water and climate data to inform cross-sectorial decision-making, and shared related lessons from the ongoing Water-Energy-Food (WEF) nexus project in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, and St. Kitts and Nevis. Agri-food systems within these small island developing states are highly challenged with the dwindling availability of renewable freshwater resources and the strong dependency on imported fossil fuels to meet the rising energy demand.

Buenfil explained that the South-South cooperation project, funded by Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), supports beneficiary countries to implement climate-resilient solutions and practices, including water and energy efficient irrigation systems for small-scale agriculture, as well as data collection tools and decision support systems for policy makers to enhance water and food security in the Caribbean.

In her opening remarks for the session, Gloria Sandoval, General Director for the Execution of Projects Abroad at AMEXCID, reinforced Mexico's commitment to help improve living conditions in the insular Caribbean and increase resilience of the most vulnerable populations, stressing that "Mexico is and will continue to be deeply supportive of the sister countries that make up our region."

During his presentation, Buenfil introduced the audience to the *AGRI* (AGua para Riego – Water for Irrigation) *World Sources* tool, a web-based decision-support platform. *AGRI* was developed by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), now part of the Alliance of Bio diversity International, with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and technical collaboration with FAO's Investment Centre (CFI) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The platform, designed for technicians and institutional decision-makers, facilitates the planning and design of reservoirs and irrigation systems for small farms. It helps to identify suitable sites for rainwater harvesting or river intakes based on biophysical selection criteria and water needs for crops. Under the WEF nexus project, officers at

the Ministries of Agriculture in the four countries are being trained to use the platform effectively.

Buenfil is convinced that the *AGRI World Sources* tool has the potential to be up scaled across the region and stated, "FAO aims to support Caribbean small island developing states to increase the availability and reach of these climate-resilient interventions. For this we work closely with Governments and stakeholders to present funding proposals to international climate and environmental financing mechanisms such as the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility or the Green Climate Fund."

World Water Week is the leading annual global event for the water and sanitation sector, which explores the value of water for people, the economy, development, nature and the climate. Guided by this year's theme "Seeing the unseen: the value of water", the IDB coordinated 13 region-specific "Focus on the Americas" sessions and seminars, featuring high-profile water and sanitation experts from government agencies, utilities, international organizations, universities, the private sector and donor agencies, amongst others. The goal was to foster cross-regional and cross-sectorial dialogue on innovative financing mechanisms, novel water security experiences, nature-based solutions and other relevant information.

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