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FAO Regional Representative concludes tour in Latin American countries with emphasis on strengthening food security

Mario Lubetkin visited Panama, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and Cuba and held working meetings with the leading local authorities. He also participated in the IDB Annual Assembly and the XVIII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State.

March 28, 2023, Santiago de Chile - FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mario Lubetkin concluded a series of official visits to four Latin American countries. This agenda focused on strengthening technical cooperation with governments and multilateral entities on food security issues and the management of strategic alliances focused on transforming agri-food systems in the region.

Lubetkin's trip included visits to Panama, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, where he held meetings with the leading local authorities, with whom he discussed the work agenda in the respective countries, as well as possible new areas of cooperation.

The Regional Representative's tour began in Panama, where he held meetings with Vladimir Franco, Minister of Foreign Affairs (E), and Yill del Carmen Otero, Vice Minister of Multilateral Affairs and International Cooperation, with whom he discussed the problem of hunger and malnutrition at the local and regional level from different perspectives.

After this, Lubetkin participated in the Annual Assembly of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and met with the entity's president, Ilan Goldfajn. He also participated as a panelist in the seminar "Building Bridges to Promote Food Security and Sustainable Energy," where public and private actors discussed common paths and actions in this area.

"This meeting marked a substantial change in FAO and the IDB relationship, understood as a complementary working mechanism between a development bank and a technical assistance organization under the mandate to reduce and eliminate hunger and move towards food and nutritional security, but above all moving towards the transformation of agri-food systems," said Lubetkin at the end of the meeting.

During his visit to Mexico, the FAO Regional Representative had working meetings with the Secretary of Agriculture, Victor Villalobos; the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Martha Delgado; the Undersecretary of Industry and Trade, Luis Romero; and the Undersecretary of Foreign Trade, Alejandro Encinas. They discussed the current regional economic situation

and the impact that food price inflation has had on the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition, they analyzed the work of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to update the plan for Food and Nutritional Security according to the current reality of the region.

In the Dominican Republic, Mario Lubetkin signed the Country Programming Framework with the national government, whose main objective is establishing joint actions for 2023-2027 with FAO technical cooperation.

The Ministers of Economy, Planning, and Development, Pável Isa Contreras; of Agriculture, Limber Cruz; and the Vice Minister of Environmental Management, Indhira de Jesús. The document addresses the challenges in food security, rural development, and adaptation to climate change of agrifood systems in the country.

Subsequently, Lubetkin participated in the XVIII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State, where participants signed a strategic resolution to establish a working path to achieve sustainable and inclusive food security in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The next summit will be held on November 29, 2024, in Quito, under the theme "Innovation, inclusion, and Ibero-American sustainability," in which food security will continue as a priority of this regional forum.

Mario Lubetkin concluded this tour in Cuba, where he held a meeting with President Miguel Díaz Canel and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez, Foreign Trade, Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, and Agriculture, Ydael Pérez Brito, with whom they reviewed the current cooperation agenda in the country referring to the issues of hunger and malnutrition and possible advances in the future.

"We are strengthening FAO's work in Latin America and the Caribbean in line with the priorities established by our Member States and the various regional entities. We have prioritized an open and direct dialogue with governments, from their territories, which will allow us to define joint and consistent actions that will allow us to advance in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030," concluded Lubetkin on his official visits.

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