

Latin America and Caribbean can be at the forefront of global food and agriculture

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Latin America and the Caribbean can and must step up to address increasing hunger and inequality rates in the region, a role that would move them to the forefront of global food and agriculture – this was the message conveyed by QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), to regional political leaders. –

Qu’s speech to the 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC), presided over this year by Argentina, was delivered by Maximo Torero FAO Chief Economist. –

CELAC is an intergovernmental mechanism for dialogue and political agreement designed to support regional integration programs and is comprised of 33 countries that are home to around 600 million people.

Its role is important today as recent years have seen a weakening of collective efforts towards regional and global integration. –

Multilateral institutions need to innovate to respond to current unprecedented and overlapping crises, said Qu, who will sign several letters of intent to pursue projects in the region during the meeting.

–“We live in the most unequal continent in the world and once and for all we must undertake a process leading to

equality,â?• said President Alberto Fern  ndez of Argentina in his opening remarks. â??It is much easier to achieve such results working together.â?•

Qu pointed to key priority areas that integration through CELAC would facilitate, highlighting the need to expand food supply in the Caribbean, where healthy diets are expensive, investing in water infrastructure and food production initiatives in Central America, where droughts and outmigration are persistent trends, improving food exchange between countries in the Andean region, and fostering a large regional programme of infrastructure for production, storage and transportation of food to facilitate intra-regional trade and exports.

FAO can efficiently provide support for the implementation of CELAC initiatives and goals of all Members if their concerns are made clear and the tangible and sustainable solutions are agreed upon, he noted.