



## Agriculture and Food Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

**Establishment:** 16 October 1945, in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada.

**Leader(s):** Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, assumed his functions on 1 January 2012 for a term which expires on 31 July 2015.

**Member States:** 191 Member Nations, 2 associate members and 1 member organization, the European Union.

**Areas of Work:** Agriculture and Consumer Protection; Economic and Social Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Forestry; Corporate Services, Human Resources and Finance; Natural Resources Management and Environment; and Technical Cooperation.

**Strategic Priorities:** Food security, disease eradication, sustainable agriculture

**Headquarters:** Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Rome, Italy200

**Website:** [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

### BACKGROUND

The idea of an international organization for food and agriculture emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century. In May–June 1905, an international conference was held in Rome, Italy, which led to the creation of the International Institute of Agriculture.

Later in 1943, United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt called a United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture. The representatives from forty four governments gathered at The Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Virginia from 18 May to 3 June and committed themselves to founding a permanent organization for food and agriculture, which happened in Quebec City, Canada on October 16, 1945.

The First Session of the FAO Conference was held Quebec, Canada, from 16 October to 1 November 1945. The Second World War effectively ended the International Agricultural Institute, though it was only officially dissolved by resolution of its Permanent Committee on February 27, 1948. Its functions were then transferred to the recently established FAO.

### OBJECTIVES

- To raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy.
- To make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

### COOPERATION WITH OAS

**Development of land tenure databases:** on May 2004, the General Secretariat of the OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and FAO signed a letter of agreement in support of a study on the development of land tenure databases in Latin America.

**Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN):** The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS/GS), the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative collaborate to use the tools of the IASPN to promote cooperation on social protection policies and programs that are adequate for food security.

The IASPN provides a forum to articulate and facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge about social protection among national ministries and agencies in charge of social and productive development, in collaboration with international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and the academic community. In this framework, OAS/GS and FAO are promoting intersectorial coordination and institutional capacity building to consolidate food security in the Americas.

**Voluntary Guidelines of Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries:** On November 14, 2012, FAO and OAS officials met to discuss how the OAS could support FAO's efforts to disseminate the Voluntary Guidelines within the region, particularly among civil society. The OAS in turn sent out communications to all its civil society contacts attaching informative materials on the Voluntary Guidelines supplied by FAO.

## LEADERSHIP



**Director-General José Graziano da Silva** of Brazil was elected by the Organization's Conference of Member nations on 26 June 2011. Prior to his election, he headed the Organization's regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean between 2006 and 2011, actively supporting the "Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative", which made the region the first in the world to commit to totally eradicating hunger by 2025, supporting

South-South cooperation, and opening up the Regional Office to civil society.

In 2001 he led the team that designed Brazil's "Zero Hunger" program and was charged with its implementation by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva who named him Special Minister of Food Security and the Fight against Hunger. An academic by training, Graziano da Silva has taught at Brazil's State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), where he chaired the Master's and Doctoral Program in Economic Development and Environment.

Graziano da Silva holds a Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy and a Master's Degree in Rural Economics and Sociology from the University of São Paulo (USP) and a Ph.D. in Economic Sciences from the State University of Campinas, as well as two post-Doctorate degrees in Latin American Studies (University College London) and Environmental Studies (University of California - Santa Cruz).

## BUDGET AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

FAO's Regular Program budget is funded by its members, through contributions set at the FAO Conference. This budget covers core technical work, cooperation and partnerships including the Technical Cooperation Program, knowledge exchange, policy and advocacy, direction and administration, governance and security.

The FAO regular budget for the 2012 - 2013 biennium is US\$1,005.6 million. In addition, FAO expects some \$1.4 billion of voluntary contributions from members and partners over the next biennium.

## GOVERNANCE

Representatives of members meet at the biennial FAO Conference to review global governance policy issues and international frameworks, as well as to evaluate work carried out and to approve the budget for the next biennium.

The **Conference** elects Council Members, to serve three-year rotating terms to carry out executive oversight of program and budgetary activities, as well as a Director-General to a four year term of office, renewable once.

The **Council** acts as the Conference's executive organ between sessions, exercising functions dealing with the world food and agriculture situation and related matters, current and prospective activities of the Organization, including its Work Program and Budget, administrative matters and financial management of the Organization. The Council may establish Commissions, Committees and Working Groups.

The **Regional Conferences** report to the Council, and provide a forum for consultation on all matters pertaining to the mandate of the Organization within the region, and:

- Formulate regional positions on global policy and regulatory issues, including with a view to promoting regional coherence on global policy and regulatory matters;
- Advise on and identify the special problems of their respective regions and priority areas of work which should be taken into account in the preparation of the planning, program and budgetary documents of the Organization and suggest adjustments to these documents;
- Review and advise on the plans, programs or projects carried out by the Organization which impact upon the region;
- Review and advise on the performance of the Organization in the region in contributing to the achievement of results against relevant performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluations.

Sources:

FAO Official website <http://www.fao.org>

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