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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Water and Agriculture for Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean

3 March 2023, 12:30-13:45 (EST), UN

HQ, New York Organized by: Costa Rica,

PLACA, FAO, UNESCO

Background on the event

Water resources are vital for sustainable agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean, where 74% of water withdrawal supports agriculture. With increasing water scarcity due to population growth, urbanization, and climate change, efficient and sustainable water management practices are crucial. Enhanced research, capacity-building, and policy frameworks are needed for understanding water sources and to create effective public policies. Collaboration among governments, private sectors, academia, and civil society organizations is essential to enhance gender-sensitive water access. The PLACA initiative, involving 16 LAC countries and partners, promotes knowledge, technology and practices sharing to build climate-adapted agriculture. This high-level session fosters dialogue on water governance and sustainable agriculture practices.

Water Action Agenda **No water action commitment was taken at this event.**

Key Issues discussed

- **Regional Collaboration and Partnership for Water and Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Role of PLACA**: Collaboration and partnerships are crucial in promoting regional climate action and agriculture coordination, as demonstrated by the Climate Action Platform for Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLACA), which supports collective actions, inter-country collaboration, and the inclusion of diverse interest groups to address water challenges and advance integrated water management.
- **Intersectoral Collaboration and Capacity Building in Water Management for Latin America and the Caribbean**: Emphasizing the importance of intersectoral collaboration, Latin American and Caribbean countries should work together to advance and promote integrated water management, and sustainable agriculture, recognizing the need for research to support sustainable water management practices. While also recognizing the region's role as a global food supplier.
- **Challenges for Sustainable Water Management in Agriculture**: The growing demand for production systems and recovery of ecological functionality exacerbates water governance and tenure challenges in the agricultural sector, necessitating sustainable groundwater use,

strategic plans for alternative water sources, and a holistic approach to addressing soil, water, and climate challenges in line with the Sustainable Development Goals for water resource management.

- **Strategies for Sustainable water resources management in agriculture:** the projected demand for increase in food production highlights the need for integrated and sustainable approaches to water management in agriculture. It is important to promote water-saving technologies, encouraging conservation and protection practices for water sources (ground and surface) and soil. In water management a water-energy-food nexus needs to be considered, incorporating traditional knowledge and culture of water, while also considering gender equity, ancestral traditions, and governance models.
- **Water Governance and Tenure Challenges in the Agricultural Sector:** Water governance and tenure present significant challenges for the agricultural sector, considering climate change, difficulties in resolving community conflicts, and ensuring future water availability for agriculture, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Key recommendations for action

- **Strengthen regional cooperation through platforms** like PLACA, focusing on capacity building, knowledge exchange, and the development of joint initiatives to address water scarcity, climate change, and food security challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Encourage the use of water-saving technologies, precision agriculture, and nature-based solutions**, and promote the efficient use of water resources across all sectors to tackle water scarcity and support sustainable development goals.
- **Align investment and governance strategies** to support harmonious agricultural development and address water governance and tenure challenges in the agricultural sector.
- **Incorporate traditional knowledge, culture, gender equity, and nature-based solutions (NbS)** in water management policies, governance models, and decision-making processes, prioritizing intersectoral collaboration to address current challenges effectively.
- **Develop and implement integrated water management strategies that consider groundwater, the water-energy-food nexus**, and the use of nature-based solutions and cultural knowledge, while ensuring good governance and the inclusion of diverse interest groups, such as women, indigenous populations, and vulnerable populations, in decision-making processes.
- **Promote a harmonious balance between agricultural development and environmental impacts through investment, governance**, and the implementation of low-cost solutions, and raising awareness of conservation practices to ensure sustainable agricultural development, considering the needs of local communities and ecosystems.