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## FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL HAS HISTORIC MEETING WITH CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE MINISTERS



United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization Director General Dr. José Graziano da Silva, seated third right, is pictured with Caribbean Ministers of Agriculture at their historic meeting at the British Colonial Hilton, Bahamas on Tuesday, February 24, 2015.

**O**n Tuesday, February 24, 2015, FAO's Director-General, in a historic move, met with several Caribbean Agriculture Ministers and Agricultural stakeholders.

The regional meeting hosted in The Bahamas were held on the basis of improving Caribbean agriculture and making the region more self-sufficient in food production.

The meetings also aimed to bring to the fore Food Security issues facing the Caribbean.

While highlighting the importance of the meeting, Bahamas' Minister of Agriculture, Marine Resources & Local Government, V. Alfred Gray noted

*"This meeting is historic because it is the first of its kind ever to be held anywhere. All Ministries of Agriculture in CARICOM will be represented, mostly by Ministers themselves, but some by their Parliamentary Secretaries or Permanent Secretaries of their Ministries".*

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While speaking at the Caribbean Agriculture Ministers Summit, FAO's Director General noted the importance of collaboration to combat hunger and malnutrition in the Caribbean.

The Director General also stressed how a vibrant agricultural sector helps to drive sustainable and inclusive development in the Caribbean, noting "Agriculture creates employment opportunities, especially important for the youth, and is critical to reduce rural poverty. Agriculture can supply the Caribbean tourism industry,"

In the same vein, the DG stressed the importance of disaster risk management,

raising preparedness levels, adapting to climate change and building resilience. Dasilva was also quick to note that The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization is aligning its global, regional, sub-regional and national work processes to cohesively assist the development strategies of Caribbean countries

"This helps ensure that our efforts are coherent, add up to more than isolated actions, and contribute to your national development plans," he said.

See additional photo highlights below and Media Highlights at right...

## MEDIA LINKS

### FAO/CARICOM AGRICULTURE MEETING

1. [Region Must do More to combat Hunger, Malnutrition](#)
2. [FAO Aligns its work to assist Caribbean National Development Plans](#)
3. [Ending Hunger and Malnutrition a Top Priority for Caribbean Region](#)
4. [FAO DG Promotes Hunger Free Region](#)
5. [FAO aligns work to assist regional Agri Plans](#)
6. [FAO Director-General speaks at CARICOM Agriculture Ministerial Meeting](#)
7. [Bahamas Minister of Agriculture's statement on FAO/Agriculture Ministers CARICOM Meetings](#)

## CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



# FAO LAUNCHES THREE MAJOR REGIONAL INITIATIVES



In recognition of the hunger and malnutrition challenges facing countries in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, the FAO has launched 3 Major Regional initiatives that will be implemented throughout 2015. The 3 Regional Initiatives are broken down as follows:

## 1. Support of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean 2025 Initiative

This initiative centres on supporting countries' food and nutrition security efforts through zero hunger and malnutrition programmes; improving food and feed systems to address the food, import bill; building resilience; and strengthening agriculture, food security and nutrition governance and policy. For more see: [Support the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative](#)

## 2. Focus on family farming and territorial development in rural areas

This initiative focuses on strengthening family farming, recognizing that in the Caribbean as in many other parts of the developing world, family farmers play a crucial role in increasing local availability of food thus reducing hunger and malnutrition. At **country level**, the Initiative will focus, at an initial stage, on **Guatemala, Bolivia and Haiti**, later expanding, in a second phase, to **Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador** in Central America and **Paraguay** in South America, with the possibility to incorporate other countries in the future .

## 3. Improve food and agricultural systems at the national and regional level.

This third regional initiative works to improve food and feed systems and is specifically designed for the Caribbean. It aims to boost and add value to local production; recover local products; reduce the dependency on food imports and; provide employment opportunities, especially for youth, in agriculture and aquaculture.

- ◆ Strengthen and add value to local production;
- ◆ Recover local products, increasing the offer of healthy, nutritious and fresh food;
- ◆ Reduce the dependency on food imports, and
- ◆ Provide employment opportunities.

## JAM, BAH, BZE REPRESENTATION NATIONAL CONTACTS



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## JAMAICA, BAHAMAS, BELIZE FAOR JOINS SUB REGIONAL MEETING ON FOOD WITH BAHAMAS' EDUCATION MINISTER

While on a recent mission to the Bahamas for the FAO/ Caribbean Agriculture Ministers' meeting in February, FAO's Representative for Jamaica, Bahamas and Belize, Dr. Jerome Thomas joined a FAO Sub-Regional team for a meeting with Bahamas' Minister of Agriculture.

The team also comprised of FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator, Dr. Deep Ford and Regional Policy Advisor, Dr. Vincent Little.

During the meeting with the Minister of Education, the FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator provided a brief background on the new FAO advising of a focus on food as opposed to just agriculture. He advised that FAO has become very involved in the school feeding programme and sees it as much more than just a hot meal but a transformative programme that develops lifelong food choices.

The FAO team also led a discussion on how school feeding can affect food imports as students would be encouraged to make healthy eating choices and suggested the following opportunities in moving towards implementation:



*FAO's Sub Regional Coordinator, Dr. Deep Ford (2nd right) and FAOR for Jamaica, Bahamas and Belize, Dr. Jerome Thomas (right) joins Bahamas Minister of Education, Hon. Jerome Fitzgerald (3rd right) and other Agriculture Stakeholders at a meeting. Also pictured L-R are: FAO's Dr. Vincent Little, Dr. Godfrey Eneas, Ambassador to FAO for the Bahamas and Delreese Grant, FAO's National Coordinator in the Bahamas.*

- ◆ Utilization of domestic agricultural products;
- ◆ Public policy and education;
- ◆ Education and nutrition;
- ◆ Food based dietary guidelines; and
- ◆ Ministry of Education developing linkages with farmers.

The Sub-Regional Coordinator then highlighted FAO's work in the region regarding school feeding, highlighting at least three CARICOM countries that are currently benefiting from FAO's involvement in the school feeding programme.

He identified three critical components namely:

- ◆ Formation of a multi-sectorial committee involving health, education, agriculture and other relevant agencies talking to each other;
- ◆ Development of menus for school feeding; and
- ◆ Linkages with the private sector.



# JAMAICA, BAHAMAS, BELIZE 1st QUARTER UPDATE



*FAO Representative to Jamaica, The Bahamas and Belize, Dr. Jerome Thomas*

In keeping with the FAO's Strategic Objectives, the FAO Jamaica, Bahamas and Belize representation continues to implement projects that contribute to reducing hunger and malnutrition in the countries of the representation.

For 2014 into 2015, the representation made major strides in launching an Inter-Ministerial National **School Feeding Programme in Jamaica** with the input of Brazilian School Feeding Experts. This project will continue in 2015 with the submission of the MOU among other engagements.

2015 also saw the approval of a **Mango Value Chain Analysis & Market Access Strategy for Jamaica**. The project's first field mission has been completed and the first draft of the strategy submitted to the government for consideration.

In collaboration with the sub-regional office, Jamaica will also benefit under a project geared at the **Processing & Market Development of Cassava**.

In **Bahamas**, several successes were recorded via the **Forest Management Pilot and Training project in Abaco**. Some of the project's final outputs included a ministerial/Press Day and a 3 day GIS Workshop for project participants.

The Project to **Strengthen Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance** in the **Bahamas** also continues in 2015 with a recent mission to assess fisheries statistics management systems in the country.

For **Belize**, the **Citrus Greening Programme** finally came to a close with results including improved yields

Belize's **BELRIV Production and Marketing of Eggs** and Poultry for Domestic Market as well as the **Agro-processing and preservation** of local fruits and vegetables projects were also closed within the first quarter of 2015.

For 2015, FAO will also be embarking on a project around **Economic Diversification of MSME** – Enterprises in Northern **Belize** with emphasis on onion production, Bee-keeping and sheep production. To date, the project team is being finalized with a view to roll out the on the ground elements in short order.

**See the Representation's Project Summaries below**

## OTHER FAO ONGOING PROJECTS

### JAMAICA

Project Title
Strengthening a national Beet Armyworm Management Programme
Mango Value Chain Analysis & Market Access Strategy in Jamaica
Processing & Market Development of Cassava
School Feeding Programme

### BELIZE

Project Title
Formulation of a National Agriculture and Food Policy
Promoting Agribusiness Development in Northern Belize
Economic Diversification of MSME – Enterprises in Northern Belize
Cultivation of Organically Grown Vegetables and Reforestation of Farms

### BAHAMAS

Project Title
Strengthening Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in the Bahamas

# JAMAICA LAUNCHES INTL YEAR OF SOILS CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FAO's Communication Consultant, Shanoy Coombs (2nd left) brings remarks during Jamaica's International Year of Soils Launch. Looking on from L-R are: Chairman of the Soil Health Steering Committee and owner of Richmond Farms Limited, Mark Brooks; State Minister in the Ministry, Hon. Luther Buchanan and Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Derrick Kellier, M.P.

With the United Nations' designation of 2015 as International Year of Soils, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Jamaica in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Land Management Division launched the local IYS calendar of events on March 25, 2015 in Kingston Jamaica.

In remarks at the event, the FAO Jamaica Representation highlighted the importance of the IYS designation noting "At the local level, the FAO continues to applaud Jamaica's thrust to grow what we Eat and Eat what we grow. Thus, the FAO is delighted that Jamaica, through its Agricultural Land Management Division will be leading several engaging activities throughout 2015 in Celebration of the year as International Year Of Soils. We trust that the reach will be far and wide and will impact a wide cross section of our targets ranging from the youth, women and farmers across all areas" **Read more about Jamaica's IYS Launch:**

- <http://jis.gov.jm/agriculture-ministry-embarks-yearlong-soil-health-programme/>
- [http://www.moa.gov.jm/International%20Year%20of%20Soils/News\\_feature\\_healthy\\_soil.php](http://www.moa.gov.jm/International%20Year%20of%20Soils/News_feature_healthy_soil.php)
- [http://news.ncu.edu.jm/news\\_item.aspx?NewsID=6752](http://news.ncu.edu.jm/news_item.aspx?NewsID=6752)
- <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20150328/health-coming-nations-soil>



2015  
International  
Year of Soils

healthy soils for a healthy life

## PROTECT OUR SOILS

Our soils are in danger because of expanding cities, deforestation, unsustainable land use and management practices, pollution, overgrazing and climate change.

The current rate of soil degradation threatens the capacity to meet the needs of future generations.



The promotion of sustainable soil and land management is central to ensuring a productive food system, improved rural livelihoods and a healthy environment

## WE DEPEND ON SOILS



Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food production



Soils are the foundation for vegetation which is cultivated or managed for feed, fibre, fuel and medicinal products



Soils support our planet's biodiversity and they host a quarter of the total



Soils help to combat and adapt to climate change by playing a key role in the carbon cycle



Soils store and filter water improving our resilience to floods and droughts



Soil is a non-renewable resource, its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE YEAR



Raise awareness among civil society and decision makers



Educate the public



Support effective policies and actions for the protection of soil resources



Promote investment in sustainable soil management activities



Strengthen initiatives in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process and Post-2015 agenda



Advocate for rapid capacity enhancement for soil information collection and monitoring at all levels



## BAHAMAS HOSTS FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE POLICY CONSULTATIONS



Under the Government of The Bahamas and FAO collaborative project, “Strengthening Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in the Bahamas”, the first of many consultative forums was hosted.

The first consultation in New Providence was held February 2-3 at the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) attended by 25 fisheries and aquaculture sector stakeholders, including various fisheries, aquaculturists, environmentalists, fish processors and exporters, as well as government officials from different departments.

Ms. Rena Ginton, Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Marine Resources and Local Government authorized the beginning of a consultative process to prepare the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategic Plan of the Bahamas.

Speaking at the consultation session, Ms. Ginton referred to the high priority the Ministry gives to fisheries management and that it is urgently needed to have a national policy and strategic plan to guide the sector towards greater sustainability and profitability. She also indicated that the new policy should be based on the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and should have the support of all stakeholders. She added that with such a policy the country would be better equipped to assist in achieving the overarching goal of sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

Mr. Michael Braynen, Director of the Department of Marine Resources, added that the policy planning documents under development are in line with the draft fisheries act and when both the act and policy have been approved, then the country will have made a major step forward.

The consultations are organized within the framework of the project to “Strengthening Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in the Bahamas”.



The planning process will also include fisherfolk consultations in Abaco, Andros, Eleuthera and Grand Bahama in February and March. A final national level consultation in June 2015 in Nassau will complete the planning process.

Fishers and other stakeholders are invited to participate in the planning process, give their comments and suggestions on the draft documents and decide, together with the Ministry and other stakeholders, on the future of fisheries management and development in the country.

More information on the dates of the consultations can be obtained from the DMR.

## SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME STAKEHOLDERS TRAINED



Since launching Jamaica's School Feeding Programme last September, In excess of 45 stakeholders from several ministries and state agencies completed relevant School Feeding Training.

The training which began on September 8 saw Brazilian school feeding experts conducting a two-day face to face workshop in Kingston followed by a 12 week online training which ran until December 16, 2014.

The training sessions ended in January with primary stakeholders being presented with a copy of participant generated recommendations and findings document. Stakeholders included representatives from: the ministries of Education, Agriculture, Health, Labour and Social Security; Local Government and community Development and the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

See Highlights below...





# FAO PICTORIAL



**Top Row:** FAO Representative Dr. Jerome Thomas joins agricultural stakeholders during the CARICOM/FAO Meeting in Bahamas in March; Dr. Thomas looks on during a meeting with Bahamas' Minister of Education; **Second row:** Highlights from Jamaica's World Water Day National Ceremony in March **Third row:** Highlights from the National School Feeding closing workshop in Jamaica.



## FAO Vision

A world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contributes to improving the living standards of all especially the poor in an economical, social and environmentally sustainable manner.

## Strategic Objectives

*To meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations, FAO has identified key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene:*

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters



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**FAO Connect** is the quarterly newsletter for FAO Representation in Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize. For questions, comments, queries, please contact: [fao-Jm@fao.org](mailto:fao-Jm@fao.org)