Jamaica to adopt Brazilian Model to Strengthen National School Feeding Programme

FAO collaborates with Government of Jamaica on Inter-Ministerial Approach

In an effort to strengthen Jamaica’s School Feeding Programme, the Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health, in collaboration with the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), will roll out an integrated school feeding project model that has had several successes in Brazil.

The project: “Strengthening of School Feeding Programmes in the Framework of Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 Initiative” comes as a part of Brazil’s commitment to south-south cooperation and will see similar versions of the project being rolled out in St. Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda.

Brazil boasts one of the most successful school feeding programmes in the world. Managed by the FNDE (National Fund for Education Development) and the Ministry of Education, the Programme was created more than 50 years ago and currently provides nutritious food to more than 45 million children all over the country, managing to integrate public policies with other sectors within the government.

Starting on September 8, Brazilian school feeding experts will conduct a two-day workshop in Kingston for more than 45 stakeholders from several ministries and state agencies. These include the ministries of Education, Agriculture, Health, Labour and Social Security; Local Government and Community Development as well as the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). Following the workshop participants will also receive virtual training until December 16.

Acknowledging the importance of these efforts to strengthen Jamaica’s existing programme, Minister of Education, Ronald Thwaites noted that the training project by Brazil was timely as the Ministry was seeking to involve the national and local farming network into supplying the school feeding programme.
It is critical, he added, for the state to provide nutritional support especially for children in the Early Childhood age cohort.

For their part the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations welcomed the Government of Jamaica’s appeal for assistance and reached out to their FAO Brazil counterparts for support.

According to FAO Representative in Jamaica, Dr. Jerome Thomas “Embedded in the FAO’s support for Jamaica’s school feeding programme is the impact this will have on helping Jamaica towards achieving its “Right to Food” goals. FAO’s work in Latin America has shown that School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) have strategic relevance for promoting food and nutrition security through their broad impact in social protection across diverse sectors.” He noted.

“Well organised School Feeding Programmes can also promote education, improve students’ performance in school and serve as a deterrent to school drop-outs and absenteeism particularly for families who are financially challenged. We are confident then that the School Feeding Programme (SFP) model promoted under Brazilian cooperation is a source of healthy and nutritious food for children – especially those living and going to school in vulnerable and rural communities and will also provide small farmers with markets for their produce” he continued.

To signal their commitment to an inter-ministerial approach towards strengthening the National School Feeding Programme, the Ministers of Health, Education and Agriculture will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding. Planning and coordination support for collaboration among the Ministries will be provided by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

According to the Brazilian experience, institutional strengthening relies on developing a cohesive mechanism in the shape of a council, a committee or collaborative working groups, capable of coordinating intersectorial actions, addressing the different dimensions of school feeding challenge. The Brazilian model school feeding programme has had several impressive results in the region and currently, 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean receive technical advice and participate in exchanges of experiences regarding school feeding programs.

-END-

For More information, contact: Shanoy Coombs, Communication Consultant Food and Agriculture Organization Of the United Nations (876) 927-9162