

Food and Agriculture Organization Says Family Farming is Solution for Reducing Rural Poverty



Santiago de Chile, June 12 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Family farming must be an engine for the eradication of hunger, poverty reduction and sustainable development in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, said FAO's Regional Representative Raul Benitez in Santiago de Chile, during a sidelines event at the Food and Agriculture Organization's Conference on Wednesday.

"We do not view family farming as a problem of rural poverty, but as a central part of the region's development agenda", said Saboto Cesar, minister of Agriculture and Rural Transformation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Cesar's made the statement during the event that analyzed the progress of FAO's Regional Initiative on Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development.

According to FAO statistics, over 60 million family farmers in the region generate between 57 to 77 percent of employment within the agricultural sector. In recent years, the role of workers at small-scale

farms have been increasingly re-evaluated by world leaders, especially in Latin America where the election of left-wing governments was often supported by farm movements.

World organizations as the FAO have followed the trend, implementing various programs aimed at strengthening access of family farmers to productive resources, rural technical assistance services, funding and insurance, markets and value chains.

So far, eight Latin American countries have been prioritized by the organization including: Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay. “FAO has moved toward a vision of political advocacy. The Organization has served as a crucial ally in the construction of public policy in our country”, said Adrian Zapata, executive secretary of Guatemala’s Rural Development Cabinet.

However, experts recently said this family farming trend remains at a symbolic level. “Under the name of familial agriculture, it was given the same treatment to subsistence farmers, agroecological producers, medium-sized producers and capitalist farmers that produce commodities (soy for instance),” said Gonzalo Colque from the Land Foundation in Bolivia.

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