Hosted by:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

República del Ecuador

Innovations for Better Nutrition Trinidad and Tobago:

Policies and Strategies

XXXVII FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE for Latin America and the Caribbean

Quito, Ecuador / March 28th to April 1st, 2022

Innovative Policies to Promote Nutritional Well-being

- Draft Ministry of Education, Policy Paper 2017-2022
  - Provides strategic direction with healthy lifestyles a desired outcome
- Draft Ministry of Health - Health Promoting School Policy 2020-2025
  - Aims to empower children to learn, live and lead healthy productive lives
- Draft National Childhood Obesity Prevention Policy
  - Proposes strategies for promoting healthy weights among school-aged children
- Draft National Nutrition Guidelines for Food Offered in Schools
  - 7 standards developed; The Beverage/Drinks standard approved in 2017 resulting in the ban of sugar-sweetened beverages in schools

Policies and Initiatives for Better Nutrition in Response to COVID-19

- Market Box Initiative (commenced on 30 Nov. 2020)
  - Distribution of fresh produce hampers to families of students (79,000) registered in the School Feeding Programme to bring relief to families due to COVID-19
  - Allocation of 15 million USD to strengthen the supply chains of farmers

- Expanded Refrigerated Facilities
  - Additional facilities to preserve and distribute fresh agriculture produce and training in food preparation techniques and receipes

- Food Support Programme
  - Short-term assistance and development programme targeting vulnerable persons and families. Facilitated through a Debit Card system, the programme reduces poverty and allows recepients to meet nutritional needs

- Removal of VAT on Additional Basic Food Items (effective 1 Nov. 2021)
  - Expansion of zero-rating on basic food ítems to bring immediate relief to citizens. Food ítems included canned vegetables and meats and cooking oil.

Nutritional Campaign and Public Awareness (with partners)

- Safe Food Campaign (June –August 2021)

  - Two-month Multi-stakeholder campaign launched on World Food Safety Day (7 June 2021) to educate consumers on the importance of safe food and to promote positive, practical food safety shopping habits.

  - Campaign Theme: S.A.F.E.
    - ✓ **S**ustainable farming
    - ✓ **A**ccountability of farmers to conduct safe practices
    - ✓ **F**actual Information in relation to food labels
    - ✓ **E**cofriendly practices

Nutritional Campaign and Public Awareness (with partners)

- Social marketing campaign that targets behaviour change to reduce non-communicable disease risk factors including unhealthy diets

- Salt consumption survey - July 2021 to determine the level of sodium in pre-packaged foods along with a survey on sugar-sweetened beverages and prices and taxes.

- Supported the process for Front of Package Labelling Standards (FOPL).

External Partnerships for Better Nutrition

- Resilient School Feeding Proprammes, under:

  - Mexico-CARICOM-FAO Cooperation for Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change in the Caribbean

  - To strengthen the capacities of institutions and stakeholders to implement resilient and sustainable School Feeding Programmes that incorporate the procurement of products from local small-scale farmers.

Benefits of Innovations and Initiative

1. Over 2,000 fresh produce hampers delivered daily to families of children registered in the School Feeding Programme over the period Nov. 2020 to Dec. 2021

2. 139,000 families received food support

3. Reduced cost of additional food items as result of the removal of VAT

4. Peaked interest in Agri-entrepreneurship

5. Promotion and uptake of healthier diets, nutrition and lifestyles.

Limitations/Constraints

- Difficulties farmers face in adopting new business models, technology and innovation to meet market realities
- Increase production costs (COVID-19 supply chain challenges)
- Land tenure issues
- Availability of “good data” (production levels, post-harvest loss etc.) to inform decisión making – need for integrated digitalization systems.

Required Support from the FAO

1. Strengthening capacity in mobilizing resources to implement resilient and sustainable school feeding programmes
2. Capacity building in resilient aquaculture for food security and livelihoods
3. Technical assistance with integrated digitalization systems to increase the resilience and efficiency of selected value chains
4. Technical assistance for the transformation of extension services using innovation and digitalization to increase effectiveness and impact of delivery.

Thank You