



Joint declaration of commitment to advances in school feeding policy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Considering that:

Hunger affected between 713 million and 757 million people in 2023, an increase of 152 million compared to 2019, before the pandemic¹;

The prevalence of undernourishment is estimated at 9.1%, with approximately 41 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean²;

Around 133.4 million Latin Americans and Caribbeans, roughly 22.7% of the population, do not have access to a healthy diet. This region also faces the highest costs for acquiring healthy food³;

Approximately 2 billion⁴ people worldwide are overweight or obese, due to poor diets and sedentary lifestyle. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 27.3% of adults are obese;

Climate change has been gradually and significantly impacting on the production and cost of food, further reducing the possibilities of access to sufficient and healthy food;

The rise in the price of food, especially *fresh* and non-perishable items, encourages the consumption of cheaper and low-nutritional-quality diets⁵;

Structural problems such as inequality, informality, and poverty in the region have been exacerbated by the pandemic. One of the main consequences was the closure of schools during this period, affecting about 167 million⁶ students in LAC, consequently impacting on the provision of school feeding to these students, which was often their main source of daily nutrition;

Malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight, and obesity, not only affects health and well-being, but also leads to devastating educational, social and economic consequences for families, communities and people in all countries.

And recognizing that:

The current situation demands debates, reflection, and, most importantly, concrete actions to address the challenges of the region;

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 – Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en>

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³ FAO, FIDA, OPS, PMA y UNICEF. 2023. América Latina y el Caribe - Panorama regional de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición 2023: Estadísticas y tendencias. Santiago. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8514es>

⁴ FAO and WHO. 2019. Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles. Rome

⁵ FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. 2023. Latin America and the Caribbean - Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends. Santiago. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8514es>

⁶ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: the prolonged crisis as an opportunity for restructuring. First regional seminar on social development. October 2021.



The School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) are recognized as protagonist programmes in ensuring the food security and nutrition of students. They significantly contribute to the cognitive and social development of children, adolescents, and young people, particularly those in vulnerable social situations;

School feeding provision at school is a social strategy that helps address various crises - social, economic, environmental and health - by being an effective tool in achieving the human right to adequate and healthy food.

The SFPs work to achieve global impact goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 17 (partnerships for the goals);

At the same time, it is of great importance and imminent necessity to promote policies that support small-scale agricultural production and that use short circuits of food production, distribution and consumption;

Public procurement of products from family farming, in addition to promoting the supply of healthy food to students and the consumption of balanced diets rich in nutrients, is an effective strategy in facing the effects caused by climate change;

The Sustainable School Feeding Network (RAES), proposed and maintained by the Government of Brazil, through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE), having the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as secretariat, was created in 2018, as a response to the United Nations Decade on Nutrition (2016-2025) and as a follow-up to the international cooperation actions promoted by the Brazilian Government in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2009;

RAES aims, jointly and broadly, to create solutions to the challenges of school feeding programmes under the principle of the human right to adequate food;

RAES has been a strategy for bringing together school feeding managers from 26 LAC countries to promote dialogues, professional development, and the exchange of experiences and information on school feeding programmes in the region;

The School Meals Coalition First Global Summit, held in Paris on 18 and 19 October 2023, recognized the RAES for its ongoing work in Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by Brazil and FAO;

The Plan for Food Security and Nutrition of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger 2030 - Time is Action) proposes to strengthen the RAES in its line of action 10.

We express our commitment to:

1. Jointly participate along with other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the activities promoted by the RAES to address and mitigate the current problems and challenges in promoting the development and improvement of school feeding policies and programmes;
2. Contribute to the dialogues and exchanges promoted by RAES for the development of national school feeding policies;



3. Collaboratively define and build a regional school feeding agenda that contributes to the development of the priority themes of the SFPs at the national level, especially regarding to:
 - Financing national programmes;
 - Expanding student coverage;
 - Ensuring participatory governance;
 - Promoting healthy diets;
 - Implementing food and nutrition education (FNE);
 - Providing adequate environments for food storage, preparation, and provision;
 - Implementing and strengthening of local public procurement from family farming;
 - Enhancing SFPs' role in building more inclusive and resilient agrifood systems to tackle climate change challenges;
 - Addressing other themes defined by RAES member countries.
4. Promote RAES as a space for dialogue among LAC countries in the search for strengthening their school feeding policies and programmes, serving as a voice for regional needs and proposals related to this theme;
5. Participate in the joint construction of the guidelines and regulations of the RAES to meet the demand of member countries.

Understanding that the strengthening of school feeding at the regional level favors the governance of national school feeding programmes and in accordance with what is set out in this *Joint declaration of commitment to advances in school feeding policy in Latin America and the Caribbean*,

I sign the present declaration.

City and date

Legal Representative

Signature of the country's authority attached to the ministry/secretariat/ department responsible for school feeding

Stamp of the responsible organization



ANNEX I - ADHESION FORM FOR MEMBER COUNTRY OF THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FEEDING NETWORK (RAES)

Hereby, _____ [institution], responsible for the implementation of the School Feeding Programme of _____ [country], represented by _____ [name], holding the position of _____ [position], declares that is aware of and in agreement with the *Joint declaration of commitment to advances in school feeding policy in Latin America and the Caribbean*, and expresses interest in formally joining the SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FEEDING NETWORK (RAES) as a member country.

Being aware that,

- a) The commitments of the RAES are aligned with the achievement of the global targets and impacts established by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the achievement of the human right to adequate food for all students in the Latin American and Caribbean region.
- b) The membership in the RAES, as proposed in this document, does not require any financial contribution from the participating countries.
- c) The RAES regulations will be discussed and approved by the member countries.

I sign the present form,

_____ City and date

_____ Legal Representative

Signature of the country's authority attached to the ministry/secretariat/department responsible for school feeding programme

Stamp of the corresponding organization



**ANNEX II - DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION TO THE
SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FEEDING NETWORK (RAES)**

Hereby, I, _____ [name], that hold the position of _____ [ministry, deputy minister or secretary] of the _____ [institution], of _____ [country], designate as representatives to the RAES the following members of the government:

NOMINEE

Name:

Position:

Contact (e-mail and telephone):

ALTERNATE 1

Name:

Position:

Contact (e-mail and telephone):

ALTERNATE 2

Name:

Position:

Contact (e-mail and telephone):

The above mentioned will assume the role of spokespersons/ focal points of this country for the activities, actions and decisions taken in the RAES, within the scope of their attributions.

_____ City and date

_____ Legal Representative

Signature of the country's authority attached to the ministry/secretariat/department responsible for school feeding programme

Stamp of the corresponding organization