



## Rapporteur Note

**Session:** Latin America and the Caribbean

**Kenda Cunningham**

**Rapporteur** Doctorate of Public Health Candidate, Department of Epidemiology  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK

**Chair:** **Daniel S. Balaban**, President  
National Education Development Fund (FNDE), Brazil

**Panelists:**

**Graciela Noemi Albo**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences,  
La Plata National University, Argentina

**Jaime Miranda**, Associate Professor, Faculty of medicine, and Director, CRONICAS Center of  
Excellence to Combat Chronic Diseases, Universidad Peruana, Cayetano Heredia, Peru

**Eduardo A.F. Nilson**, Substitute-Coordinator of Food and Nutrition,  
Ministry of Health, Brazil

**Ana Victoria Roman**, General Coordinator, Nutrition and Food and Nutrition Security Division,  
Institute of Nutrition in Central America and Panama (INCAP), Guatemala

**Adelaida Trujillo**, Director and Co-Founder, Citurna Film and Video Productions and the  
Imaginario Foundation, Colombia

### Daniel Balaban, Brazil (Chair)

- Brazil is responsible for one of the largest school feeding programs in the world, an example of an area where agriculture, health, and nutrition naturally complement one another. There are 47,000,000 students fed through Brazil's public schools.
- As a region, there are 53,000,000 hungry today. We need new solutions in the fight against hunger.
- The FAO has an initiative "LAC without hunger" promoting "virtuous cycles" linking agricultural production, food security, school feedings, and nutrition.

### Graciela Noemi Albo, Argentina

*Title: "How has Argentina advanced in regards to the goals set by the WHO in the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity, and Health?"*

- Through the Program on Prevention of Infarction in Argentina, strategies are evolving to reduce disease transmission through by pushing the food sector to replace saturated fats and high salt concentrations.

- Argentina has both overweight and underweight and the skinny are concentrated in rich areas with the fat in poorer areas.
- Saturated fats/sugar/salt in manufactured foods must be reduced to help lower rates of non-communicable disease and industries are realizing this as a new market opportunity.
- Agricultural production businesses should be given financial incentives such as tax relief and subsidies to encourage a transition to healthier production.

### Jaime Miranda

*Title: “Identifying potential levers for agriculture from the public health perspective”*

- This conference should not merely be highlighting the problems and the need to work across sectors, but should be generating discussions among agriculturalists, nutritionists, and public health experts. However, few public health officials and doctors are even represented at the event.
- Few opportunities have been given for actual sharing of information between professional fields has happened. There remains no common language. For example, how does a doctor fit into a dialogue regarding the agricultural value chain? If players can’t talk to each other, we can’t move forward.
- Within public health, the whole discipline is being rethought; practitioners are now looking at broader issues (nutrition/infrastructural design/etc.) so it is a prime opportunity for more players to join in and talk more.
- We need to change the way we think and start focusing on future problems and devising strategies for how we will work together; once one problem is tackled we’ll have to tackle the next without turning our back on the one that we were already working on.
- There is a need to combine all three fields and think of one HUMAN language: for example if we want to think in for the 21<sup>st</sup> century within agriculture, health, and nutrition, we have the urban, overworked, underpaid woman with poor access to healthy foods and greater access to process foods. We must stop thinking of the bloated kid because we have a new problem. So, what is the image of the future problem we want to address?
- On a positive note, we have a new generation of professionals with new ideas, who are used to working together. Younger professionals are breaking old models and communicating informally, being less territorial regarding data, etc.

### Eduardo Nilson

*Title: “Perspectives from Brazil: rethinking how we each do business”*

- It is unfortunate that we have a smaller audience in this session because a lot of dialogue should happen across regions. African and Asian specialists should hear our stories and share their lessons.
- The Brazilian approach has been unique in how it thinks about and reacts to hunger. As Brazil has faced local and national changes—politically, economically, demographically, epidemiologically, nutritionally, etc., programs, such as *Bolsa Familia*, have been adapted to help achieve goals for reduction of poverty and malnutrition.
- Brazil still has some problems, especially in some socially excluded areas and with certain groups, such as Indigenous populations. Averages only tell part of the story, as social policies don’t reach all.
- Brazil is now experiencing population growth and people are living longer lives and adopting unhealthy diets. Currently about half of the adult population in Brazil is overweight and increasingly one finds both overweight and undernourished people in the same family.
- Bolsa Familia simultaneously focuses on education, health care, food security, sanitation, etc. and is an example of a successful integrated approach of inter-sectoral policies as it is responsible for a 2/3 reduction in stunting.
- Monitoring is vital. We need food and nutrition surveillance; evaluation of one initiative followed by modifications based on the results; and national food and security councils to bring the sectors together to gather important information for mobilizing inter-sectoral cooperation.

Ana Victoria Roman

*Title: “Building capacity on food and nutrition security: the experiences of Central America and the Dominican Republic”*

- In 2007, the Council of Ministers of Health, Agriculture, and Environment, responding to a presidential summit came up with a regional strategy, which was approved, so linkages between the sectors are present in Central America. All eight countries then prepared their national multi-sectoral approaches (and gathered commissions for implementation) to address nutritional deficiencies and chronic diseases.
- Now there is a national authority for food and nutritional security to coordinate the participation of the different sectors, involving economics (Ministries of Economics/Finance) and policymaking (Ministries of Planning) and not just Ministries of health, agriculture, and nutrition is very important.
- Think about gender: sometimes it is best for example to target men in an initiative because women may be needed for other work and girls may need to be in school etc.
- Main challenges include: governance and continued political commitment; lack of a communication strategy—stakeholders have to hear the key messages and carry them onward; impact assessment indicators—key for scaling up; and adaptation of experiences to other countries in the region.

Adelaida Trujillo

- The Communications Initiative, currently a joint program of nearly 30 organizations, connects over 100,000 people through a platform advocating for a strategic approach to all fields of communication.
- There has been not just a lack of communication for development issues but a lack of monitoring and evaluation of communication campaigns/platforms/etc. We need data to show the effect of communications/campaigns.
- Some suggestions include: (a) there is no way that the field can move forward if there is not a platform for moving forward; (b) there is a need to facilitate information sharing across continents to promote learning from experiences; and (c) there is an urgency to learn and develop measurements of communications.
- Vertical communication is out. Now, communication must be a participatory process. For example, with multi-media a new approach is needed and youth need to be included, meaning new ways to target these populations is a priority.

Questions and Answers by the panel as well as Irvin Widders, Ricardo Uauy, Diane ?, and Corinna Hawkes

- The conference has largely ignored urban reality—urban poverty and the consequences of migration on diet, health, and chronic disease are important realities for these sectors to address. Does urbanization cut the link between agriculture and nutrition or is there still a connection?
- How can we help improve interactions and coordination? Given that we know the importance of coordination, how does a government or agency go about doing this?
- Throughout the conference we’ve heard what has happened in Brazil; seeing leaders succeed inspires other leaders to take the risks. We need to know what kind of governance mechanisms existed that created the change in Brazil. How was political will generated?
- Regional perspectives should be discussed with Africa because we have regional groups on that continent as well. This type of communication has to happen
- Do scholars and policymakers talk much together as a region? Are there strong enough mechanisms within the region for discussion?