

VIII Henry A. Wallace Scientific Conference

Transforming Food Systems in Latin-American and the Caribbean

May 31 to June 3, 2023

Concept Note

Background

The Henry A. Wallace Scientific Conference Series is a periodic event organized by CATIE and its partners since 2002. The Wallace Scientific Conferences provide a forum for the high-level discussion of strategies in science and technology for tropical agriculture, natural resources, and the conservation of biodiversity in the tropics. It encourages debate among the CATIE community, its member countries and multiple partners.

The VIII Henry A. Wallace Scientific Conference

The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region is highly vulnerable to extreme weather and climate events. LAC food systems are easily disrupted by such events, resulting in food insecurity, increased vulnerability, poverty aggravation, and migration. Additionally, unsustainable food systems in the LAC are one of the main drivers of environmental degradation, including deforestation, water contamination and scarcity, and biodiversity loss, therefore compromising the delivery of ecosystems services (ES) that are critical to transform these systems towards sustainability. They are also major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

Toward the end of the 20th century, climate pattern changes, such as temperature rise and the increased frequency of extended dry spells, have become increasingly common across the LAC region, negatively impacting agricultural production, economies, and jeopardizing food security. This has resulted in an increased number of people facing hunger across the region.

To face and adapt to these environmental changes, it is necessary to promote food systems transformation. This transformation will ensure that food systems become more diversified and sustainable, inclusive (allowing access to nutritious and affordable food to everyone), healthier (promoting changes on consumption patterns) and more resilient and adaptive to climate change.

Food Systems make up the entire range of actors and their interrelated value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, including livestock, forestry, fisheries, the food industries, and the broader economic, societal, and natural environments in which they are embedded. Sustainable Food Systems are defined as the one that contributes to food security and nutrition for all in a way that the economic, social, cultural, and environmental bases to achieve food security and nutrition for future generations are not comprised (von Braun et al. 2021)¹.

¹ von Braun, J., Afsana, K., Fresco, L.O. *et al.* Food system concepts and definitions for science and political action. *Nat Food* 2, 748–750 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00361-2>

Objective

The VIII Wallace Conference will focus on analyzing food systems in LAC in the face of environmental degradation and climate change, using a systematic approach to analyze the biodiversity and ecosystem services, food production, as well as the economic, social, cultural, and political aspects that are key for the functioning of said systems. We are particularly interested in discussing and analyzing solutions aimed at transforming LAC food systems to become better adapted to the changing climate, more diversified, sustainably intensified, and profitable. Particularly, nature-based solutions to achieve the needed transformations. In addition, the Conference looks to provide solid evidence to support decision-making at various levels across the LAC region, from small-landholders and businesses to policymakers.

Thematic sessions

The topics to be addressed during the conference will branch from six thematic series that capture the current opportunities and the challenges faced by food systems in LAC:

1. Impacts of land and water degradation, climate change, and vulnerability of LAC food systems.
2. Strategies and innovation pathways for climate adaptation and mitigation actions promoting synergies and addressing trade-offs to reach sustainability across the LAC region.
3. Finance, investments, and agribusiness to promote adoption and scaling.
4. Sustainable food production and consumption patterns: required behavioral changes.
5. Uplifting women, youth, and local populations for equitable access to nutritious food.
6. Governance for transformative change in food systems.

Closing Session

While discussions will be based on the thematic areas, it is important to acknowledge their interdependence, as well as the need to build upon said interdependence through identifying synergies, which therefore identify technological, policy, and institutional innovations that can contribute to achieving sustainable food systems. An expected result from this session is a declaration on outstanding issues and commitments to support the transformation of food systems in LAC.

Format

Historically, Wallace Conferences are held at CATIE's campus, which provides participants with opportunities to experience CATIE's research firsthand. Participants will have the opportunity to share knowledge, network and build partnerships. Session formats will facilitate participants' opportunities to visit CATIE's campus and learn from ongoing research.

Dates

It is proposed that the VIII Wallace Conference take place between May 31 and June 2, 2023. June 3rd will be dedicated to field trips.

Target Audience

The target audience includes practitioners, scientists, policymakers, investors, and students who are interested in the impacts of climate change on food systems; drivers of food system vulnerability, pathways to reach food system sustainability and adaptation to climate change; finance, investments, and agribusiness to promote sustainable food systems, sustainable food production, and consumption patterns, among others.

Frontiers Special Journal Research Topic

The VIII Wallace Conference has teamed up with the Research Topic: **Transforming food system in Latin America and the Caribbean: Increasing sustainability and adaptation to climate change**, to be published in Frontiers, Sustainable Food Systems. Researchers participating in the Conference will have the opportunity to be considered for this Special Journal Research Topic. The paper selection will be carried out during the peer review process as well as at the conference presentation stage. Submitted papers must not be under consideration by any other journal or publication. The final decision for paper selection will be made based on peer review reports by the Guest Editors and the Editor-in-Chief jointly. Selected full-text papers will be published online.

Conference Partnership Opportunities

The Conference offers diverse partnership opportunities to accommodate large and small institutions alike. We have opportunities for branding, exhibition, and advertisement and we are happy to tailor a package that suits your institution's needs. Please see our partnership plan as follows.

We invite you to become a partner of the
8th Henry A. Wallace Scientific Conference

How will you benefit from your donation?

- Affiliate your organization with one of the most recognized research centers in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Strengthen your network
- Witness some of the most long-standing experimental sites/trials for natural resources and sustainable management in Costa Rica
- Commit to supporting the transformation of food systems in Latin America and the Caribbean

					
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	Mention during lunch	✓	✓	✓	
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	Booth in priority location	1 (3.0 m x 2.0 m) 	1 (2.5 m x 1.5 m) 	1 (1.5 m x 1.5 m) 	
Tickets	Number of registrations	6	4	2	1
	Banquet	6	4	2	1
	Field Trip	6	4	2	1

★ Priority position