

**SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

**CONSULTATION REPORT  
JUNE 2012**

**NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC  
ACTIONS TO ADDRESS HIGH FOOD PRICES IN NIUE**

**01-02 MAY, 2012**

**NIUE SPORTS CLUB, ALOFI, NIUE**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Prepared By**

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From left to right

Back row: Lavaligi Mokalei( Poultry Farmer), Rupina Morrisey ( Private Sector), Tutuli Heka (Alofi North Village Council), Liutose Liuvaie (Organic Farmer).

Fourth row: Natasha Toeono-Tohovaka (DAFF Snr Administration Project Manager), Aokuso Pavihi (Organic Farmer), Kimray Vaha (Government Statistician), Pitsoni Tanaki (Organic Vanilla Farmer), Lofa Rex (Private Sector), Moka Tongakilo (Organic Farmer), Liutose LIuvaie, Sarah Porter (Private Sector), Vave Fatulolo (Vanilla Manager-DAFF).

Third row: Meleamina Poiafati (Market Growers Group), Haden Talagi (PACC Coordinator, Dept of Environment), Emi Hipia (SISPPDO, External Affairs), Toe Tukutama (Admin Officer, Dept of Community Affairs), Fanuma Sioneholo (Statistics Assistant), Tom Misikea (DAFF-Snr Livestock Officer), Robin Hekau (Alofi South Village Council).

Second row: Patrick Jacobsen (DAFF- Research Farm Manager), Mele Kaulima (Organic Farmer), Itzy Tukuitonga (Principal – Niue Primary School), James Poihega (Principal- Niue High School), Pam Togiakona (DAFF- Crop Research Assistant).

Front row: Brendon Pasisi (DAFF-Director), Dr Vili Fuavao (FAO Sub-regional Representative for the Pacific), Hon. Billy Talagi (DAFF-Associate Minister), Crisbina Konelio (Project Assistant- IWRM Project), Aleki Sisifa (FAO Consultant).

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
HFP	High Food Prices
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PICTA	Pacific Islands Countries Trade Agreement

# OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION

## Introduction

The National Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices for Niue was held at the Niue Sports Club, Alofi on 1-2 April 2012. Niue was one of the four countries selected by FAO to hold further dialogue following the Sub-Regional Consultation on High Food Prices for the Pacific sub-region that was held in Nadi, Fiji in 2011. The other countries included the Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Solomon Islands. The meeting was convened by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

## Participants

The consultation was attended by participants from government agencies, international partners, private sector and civil society organizations (see Annex 2: List of Participants). Documents and presentations on policy and programmatic action to address high food prices were distributed to participants for reference and were made available in electronic form.

## OPENNING SESSION

Following dedication of the workshop by Ms Moka Tongakilo, the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Brendon Paisi made his welcoming remarks. Niue relies heavily on imported foods and does not have influence on what causes high food prices at the global level. Nevertheless, like other small island countries, Niue bears the brunt of HFP when crises occur such as what happened in 2007/2008.

The FAO Sub Regional Representative for the Pacific, Mr. Vili Fuavao, in his opening remarks informed that FAO as part of its core function of promoting food security in member states, has in recent years increasingly involved in monitoring high food prices. He said that the national consultation was one of four to be held in the Pacific following the Sub-Regional Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices which was held in Nadi, Fiji, in 2011. One of the main outcomes was identification of the need for countries to undertake national dialogues to raise awareness of the impacts of high food prices and identify potential policy and programmatic actions to address them. Mr. Fuavao reminded participants that high food prices although have adverse effects on the buying public, can also have the advantage of improved livelihoods for farmers.

The Associate Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Billy Talagi, delivered the address of the Hon Minister of Agriculture. He stated that despite being a very small country, Niue felt the effects of the Global Food Crisis which occurred in 2007- 2008. He conveyed the sincere appreciation of

the Niue Government to FAO for the agricultural inputs, from tools & seeds to livestock and feed, which were provided in 2009 under the FAO Emergency TCP to address these soaring food prices. Benefits were seen particularly during village show days which saw an increase in the variety of crops displayed and sold during these days.

He also said that Niueans have become very dependent on imported food and this is having a great impact on how families were meeting their nutritional requirements and it is affecting the overall health of the Niue people. The increase in numbers of those with Non Communicable Diseases over the years is evidence of this.

The Niue Government, through DAFF and other government departments actively promotes production and consumption of local nutritious food to strengthen food security and reduce the impacts of high imported food prices and the negative health impacts on the people of Niue (see Annex 3: Speech of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture).

## **Background and objectives of the national consultation**

Mr. Aleki Sisifa briefly outlined the historical perspective of the global high food prices crises and the key causes. He then explained the approach used in the national consultation. The two day consultation would be conducted in three main parts: 1) statements on high food prices by the national government and the FAO; 2) presentations by FAO on global, regional and national policy and programmatic actions to address high food prices, followed by group discussions; and 3) plenary discussions and the drafting, verification and endorsement of an outcome statement from the consultation.

The objective was to assist government in identifying various policy options and designing immediate actions in response to food price rises. The expected impact, as a result were improved policies on food price volatility that are relevant to national realities and are designed and implemented by both national stakeholders and development partners.

Similarly, the expected outcome was for stakeholders to be sensitized and encouraged to work closely to better address high food prices through relevant policies and programmatic actions that safe guard food security of low-income consumers, while at the same time provide opportunities for producers and exporters.

The expected outputs of the consultation included (1) shared understanding of global and national food price situation and future developments, (2) shared overview on policies and programmatic actions to address volatile and high food prices, (3) agreement on strengths and weaknesses of current national policies and programmatic actions, (4) agreement on specific policy and programmatic actions, (5) required cooperation and necessary support, and (6) a workshop report that helps in following up activities.

## **PLENARY PRESENTATIONS**

### **Global and Regional Trends in Food Prices: Underlying Causes and Implications to Food Security**

Mr. Sisifa made this presentation. The policy imbalance that came about through many developing countries reducing investment in agriculture, availability of credits and protection to agriculture while developed countries were maintaining high levels of support to agriculture and to bio-fuel production, led to increased dependence of developing countries on food imports from developed and emerging countries. This has led to the creation of the global high food price crisis.

The crisis of 2008 caused major threat to political stability of many countries and a major cause of high rates of inflation, coinciding with record high petroleum and fertilizer prices. The potential impacts of climate change on production/productivity stand to make matters worse in future.

The impacts of high food prices have been particularly high on the poor who spend most income on food, forced to reduce consumption of nutritious foods and forced to sell off productive assets.

### **Guide to Policy Measures and Programmatic Action: Overview, Global Experiences**

Mr. Sisifa presented the FAO guide as a “menu” of options which countries need to consider and possibly adapt depending on local contexts. He emphasised the relevance of the “no one size fits all” concept.

He outlined the three main categories of country level actions: Trade and market related measures; measures to facilitate access to affordable food by consumers; and measures to increase food production. He indicated how each measure could mitigate high food prices and suggested some possible implications (both positive and negative and both long and short term).

Mr. Sisifa emphasised some features of good interventions such as: do little harm as possible; be clear on humanitarian versus economic scale (efficiency vs. Equity); and ownership and participation.

Finally he outlined some policy responses and lessons learnt from data collected from an FAO survey involving 81 countries. Most countries applied general consumer support measures e.g. reducing tariffs and custom fees, releasing public stocks and restricting or banning export. The next most popular category of measures is targeted subsidy consumer support, as in cash transfer, food transfer and increasing disposable income.

One of the lessons learnt so far is that country wide consumer support measures did not help much in many countries for the following reasons. Reducing tariffs had minimal impact on prices in countries that had already reduced tariffs; budgetary costs were often very high; general subsidies fail to reach the rural poor; and unplanned interventions affected traders and producers. Safety net programmes work well in situations where: they are effectively designed; foster synergies between social protection for the poor and support provided to food production; and government is centrally involved in planning and implementing long-term programmes of assistance. Furthermore, producers' response has not been high for the following reasons: high fuel prices raised cost of farm power, transport, fertilizer, pesticides etc.; increased price volatility reduced incentives; lack of or poor markets prevented transmission of high prices to producers in many cases; and well designed productive safety nets (smart subsidies) have worked.

## **Outcomes of the Sub-regional Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices in the Pacific**

Mr. Sisifa briefly talked about the Sub-regional Consultation that took place in Nadi, Fiji, 14-15 April 2011. In summarising the outcome statement of the Sub-regional consultation, he asked participants to note that the outcomes were all general in nature befitting regional contexts. In contrast, the outcome statement from the national consultation should be very specific for Niue, and where relevant to specific communities targeted. Furthermore, in identifying and considering policy and programmatic actions at national level, implications, particularly any long term ones should be seriously considered.

Mr. Sisifa emphasised that an important task for the consultation would be to identify the most group(s) within the Vanuatu society that are the most vulnerable if and when high food prices crises occur.

## **WORKING GROUPS SESSION**

Participants broke into three groups to identify and discuss potential policy measures and programmatic actions that the Government may consider developing to address high food prices. The three groups focused on the following: measures: policies and programmatic actions to increase production; policies to enhance food supplies (e.g. pricing, marketing, food stock management and foreign trade and tariff policies); and policies to provide social protection/safety nets.

The three groups reported back to plenary. Participants then in plenary discussed the proposed measures and actions in detail. From these discussions, participants reached agreement on what to include in the Outcome Statement of the consultation.

## CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The following are the conclusions and next steps to which the participants agreed to. These constitute the Outcome Statement of the Niue national consultation on policy and programmatic actions to address high food prices.

The consultation recognised the following:

- a. The contribution from FAO in 2009 was timely and contributed positively to mitigating the negative impact of high food prices.
- b. High food prices in Niue will not likely return to pre 2007 price levels and will continue to follow global trends.
- c. Prices of inputs for food production since 2007 have remained consistently high and continue to increase.
- d. The most vulnerable groups affected by high food prices are low income families, pensioners<sup>1</sup>, non permanent residents, widows, children and unemployed youth.
- e. Labour shortages will continue to be a major constraint to increasing production and productivity and needs to be addressed through labor mobility under PICTA.

Participants discussed the trends, impacts and key issues of high food prices and agreed that the following guidelines can inform their actions:

- a) All interventions addressing issues relating to food insecurity and high food prices should prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable groups.
- b) Strengthen partnership, coordination and management of support between DAFF and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure adequate targeting of most vulnerable groups, effective implementation, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.
- c) The Government of Niue should assist by reducing the cost of inputs for primary food production including but not limited to:
  - i. Seeds, fertilizers, agricultural chemical and materials etc.;
  - ii. FADs for canoe fishing; and,
  - iii. Effective and affordable fishing canoes and methods.
- d) Develop targeted programmes including TVET to increase youth involvement in primary food production, including the provision of incentives and mentoring programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons qualify for disability, elderly, and hardship support

- e) Strengthen and improve production of local bred chickens, pigs, small ruminants and other livestock.
- f) Incentivise and provide support, including mentoring for agribusinesses and value adding programmes, and undertake the following:
  - i. Update and change mindsets towards creating mid-life businesses;
  - ii. Establish contracts with farming/fishing businesses;
  - iii. Glide time to enable growth of the private sector, agribusiness and labour force; and,
  - iv. Promote organic farming methods.
- g) Government should protect the right of consumers by enforcing the Price Control Act and by having a board of representatives of key stakeholders, to enforce the Act.
- h) Government should assist private sector with better sourcing and buying of affordable, good quality and nutritious food items from New Zealand and other countries.
- i) Recognising that staple food items will continue to be imported, the government should consider assisting the private sector with the cost of transportation and storage.
- j) Government should continue to actively engage and support development of the PACER Plus agreement to establish better trade relations with Forum members.
- k) Government should review the tariff schedule to promote healthier food choices.
- l) Government, partners and other stakeholders should research, promote and implement effective traditional food preservation methods and conservation of traditional food sources using sustainable methods.
- m) Government (DAFF) should improve the communication, documentation and management of information on agriculture and fisheries technologies.
- n) Government should review and adjust COLA with a view to ensure that the most vulnerable groups have adequate sustainable access to healthy and nutritious foods.
- o) Government should support the development and the delivery of the following:
  - i. Food vouchers for the most vulnerable groups;
  - ii. Maternity/parental allowances;
  - iii. Credit system for land preparation should be re-established;
  - iv. Pensioners should receive payment on the same day as public servants;
  - v. Establish a savings programme; and,
  - vi. Superannuation scheme for the private sector.

- p) The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) is tasked with the responsibility of submitting the outcome statement to cabinet and ensure follow-up of implementation in conjunction with key stakeholders represented at this consultation.
- q) The meeting recommends that the Government of Niue endorses, and call upon development partners to support the implementation of, the outcome statement.

In closing, the FAO Sub regional representative, Mr. Vili Fuavao thanked DAFF and the Government of Niue for their hospitality in hosting an excellent meeting. He also reaffirmed FAO's commitment to ensuring food security in the region and will work closely with the government to advance the meeting outcomes. Mr. Vili Fuavao also thanked the participants for their valuable contributions to the discussions and the meeting outcomes.

On behalf of the participants, Mr. Aukuso, representing the participants, expressed sincere gratitude to FAO for organising the meeting and for sharing their experiences and knowledge. The meeting outcomes reflected the views of participants and they look forward to the implementation of these outcomes in the future.

Mr. Brendon Pasisi, Director of DAFF, on behalf of the Government of Niue, thanked the participants for their valuable contribution in making the meeting a successful one and the FAO for their assistance in supporting efforts towards addressing high food prices.

## Annex 1: Agenda

### National Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions To Address High Food Prices in Niue Niue Sports Club, Alofi, 1 - 2 April, 2012

#### A g e n d a

##### Day 1: 1 April 2012

**Purpose: To provide an overview of policy and programmatic actions to address high food prices**

Time	Session
9.00-9.30	Opening Session: Welcome remarks by Director of Agriculture, Mr. Brendon Pasisi; Remarks by the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific, Dr Vili Fuavaao; and Keynote address and official opening by Assistant Minister of Agriculture Hon Billy Talagi
<b>Session 1: Global and Regional Food Price Situation, Trends and Implications</b>	
9.30-10.30	1. Background and objectives on national consultations: <i>Aleki Sisifa, FAO Consultant</i> 2. Presentation: Overview of the Global and Regional Trends in Food Prices, Underlying Causes and Implications to Food Security: <i>Aleki Sisifa, FAO Consultant</i> Discussion
10.30-10.45	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>
10.45-11.30	3. Presentation: Guide to Policy Measures and Programmatic Action: Overview. Global Experiences <sup>2</sup> : <i>Aleki Sisifa, FAO Consultant</i> Discussion
<b>Session 2: Sub-Regional Food Consultation</b>	
11.30-12.30	4. Presentation: Outcomes of the Sub-Regional Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices in the Pacific: <i>Aleki Sisifa, FAO Consultant</i> Discussion
<b>Session 3: National Consultation</b>	
12.30-1.30	5. Presentation: Price situation and trends of major food commodities in Niue, their implications on food security and the government's policy and programmatic response: Kimray Vaha, Government Statistician
1.30-1.45	6. Introduction to working group session: <i>Natasha Tohovaka</i>
1.45-2.00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
2.00-3.00	7. Working group session 1 - What are the policy and programme measures undertaken to address HFP?

<sup>2</sup> Reference: *Guide for Policy and Programmatic Actions at Country Level to Address High Food Prices*, FAO, 2011.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the results of and problems/constraints in the implementation of the policies/programme actions identified above?</li> </ul>
<b>3.00-3.15</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>
<b>3.15-4.00</b>	8. Presentation and discussion of results of working groups: <i>Lafaele Enoka, FAO Consultant</i>

## Day 2: 2 April 2012

**Purpose: What are the gaps in policies and programmatic actions to address high food prices?**

Time	Session
<b>Session 3: Policies and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices</b>	
<b>9.00-9.30</b>	1. Formation of briefing to the working groups for parallel break-out sessions on: <i>Aleki Sisifa/Lafaele Enoka, FAO Consultant</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and programmatic actions to increase production,</li> <li>• Policies to enhance food supplies (e.g. pricing, marketing, food stock management and foreign trade and tariff policies), and</li> <li>• Policies to provide social protection/safety nets</li> </ul>
<b>9.30-10.30</b>	2. Parallel working group session 2
<b>10.30-11.00</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>
<b>11:00-12.30</b>	3. Presentation of results and discussions <sup>3</sup> : <i>Aleki Sisifa/Lafaele Enoka, FAO Consultant</i>
<b>12.30-1.00</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>Session 4: Key Messages and Guidelines for Action</b>	
<b>1.00-2.30</b>	4. Preparation of outcome statement: <i>Aleki Sisifa/Lafaele Enoka, FAO Consultant</i>
<b>2.30-3.30</b>	5. Presentation, discussion and adoption of the Outcome Statement: <i>Aleki Sisifa, FAO Consultant</i>
<b>3.30-4.00</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>
<b>4.00-4.30</b>	6. Closing remarks and workshop evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant representative:</li> <li>• MAF Government representative</li> <li>• FAO Sub-regional Representative</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Each working will have 15 minutes for presentation followed by 15 minutes for a question-answer session.

## Annex 2: List of Participants

### National Consultations on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices in Niue Niue Sports Club, Alofi, 1 to 2 April 2012

No.	Name	Position	Organization
1	Manila Nosa	Acting Director for Health	Niue Health Department
2	Grizelda Mokoia	Public Health Officer	Niue Health Department
3	Diamond Tauevihi	Acting Director for Community Affairs	Dept of Community Affairs
4	Charlene Tukiuhu	Youth & Womens Affairs Officer	Dept of Community Affairs
5	Kimray Vaha	Chief Statistician	EPDSU
6	Fanuma Sioneholo	Statistics Officer	EPDSU
7	Sione pokau Sionetama	Head of Customs	Niue Customs Office
8	Chamberlin Pita	Customs Officer	Niue Customs Office
9	Sauni Tongatule	Director	Dept of Environment
10	Hon Dalton Tagelagi	Chairperson	Price Control Board
11	Frank Sioneholo	Head of Economic and Planning	EDPSU
12	Brendon Pasisi	Director	DAFF
13	Alana Tukuniu	Crop Research Officer	DAFF
14	New Aue	PPQS Manager	DAFF
15	Moira Enetama	Director	Taoga Niue
16	Poi Okesene	Senior Project Manager	DAFF
17	Janet Tasmania	Director	Education
18	Itzy Tukuitonga	Principal Niue Primary School	Education
19	James Poihega	Principal Niue High School	Education
20	Tutuli Heka	Chairperson	Alofi North Village Council
21	Maryanne Talagi	VC member	Makefu Village Council
22	Herman Tagaloailuga	VC member	Hikutavake Village Council
23	Logopasi Seumanu	Chairperson	Liku Village Council
24	Alofi Tonga	Chairperson	Alofi South Village Council
25	Mona Ainuu	President	Women in Business
26	Taufakavalu Tukiuhu	President	NIOFA
27	Falani Mokoia	Agent	Reef Shipping
28	Sarah Porter	Manager	Swansons Supermarket
29	Graham Marsh	President	Niue Fishermens Association
30	Avi Rubin	President	Niue Chamber of

			Commerce
31	Fakahula Funaki	President	National Council of Women
32	Shield Utalo	President	Niue Youth Council
33	Andre Siohane	Water Division	Public Works Department
34	Chrisbina Konelio	Project Assistant	IWRM/PWD
35	Lofa Rex	Telefood Recipient	Alofi
36	Gaylene Tasmania	Director	Community Affairs
37	Haden Talagi	Project Coordinator	Niue PACC Project
38	Noga Bray	Agriculture Farmer	Farmer
39	Falepoe Misileki	Young Farmer	Tuapa
40	Elliot Kurtin	Business Development Manager	NCOC
41	Tani Fakaotimanava-Lui	Member	Niue EPWL
42	Mele Kaulima	Farmer	Farmer
	Vili Fuavao	FAO Sub-regional Representative for the Pacific	<a href="mailto:Vili.Fuavao@fao.org">Vili.Fuavao@fao.org</a>
	Lafaele Enele	FAO Consultant	<a href="mailto:Enoka.lafaele@fao.org">Enoka.lafaele@fao.org</a>
	Aleki Sisifa	FAO Consultant	<a href="mailto:Alekit6210@gmail.com">Alekit6210@gmail.com</a>

### **Annex 3: Speech of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture**

The Sub-Regional Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices was held in Nadi, Fiji in April 2011. This was facilitated by FAO and attended by a representative from the DAFF, Mr Tom Misikea.

The National Consultation on High Food Prices for Niue which is taking place over the next 2 days is an outcome of this meeting. I am happy that the FAO team Vili Fuavao, Aleki Sisifa & Lafaele Enoka are here on the island to help facilitate this consultation together with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries.

Even though Niue is a very small country it felt the effects of the Global Food Crisis which occurred in 2007- 2008. I would like to take this opportunity to convey the sincere appreciation of the Niue Government to FAO for the agricultural inputs, from tools & seeds to livestock and feed, which were provided in 2009 under the FAO Emergency TCP to address these soaring food prices. Benefits were seen particularly during village show days which saw an increase in the variety of crops displayed and sold during these days.

Niueans have become very dependent on imported food and this is having a great impact on how families are meeting their nutritional requirements and it is affecting the overall health of our people. The increase in numbers of those with Non Communicable Diseases over the years is evidence of this

The Niue Government, through DAFF and other government departments are doing its best in trying to increase the production and consumption of local nutritious food to promote food security and reduce the impacts of high imported food prices and the negative health impacts on our people.

Processing of local food for more convenient use is also helpful and I am glad that the FAO TCP Food Processing and Value Adding of Agricultural Product is now under implementation.

This is one of the 14 projects developed in 2007 for consideration under the FAO Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme. This was based on the consultations with the various stakeholders at the time and up until now they are still relevant and consistent with the national food security status and governments strategic direction.

I hope that the discussions over the next two days will enable Niue to identify the way forward and processes to design, coordinate and implement appropriate policy and programmatic actions to address high food prices.

Again I take this opportunity on behalf of the Niue Government and its people to thank the FAO Representative for Niue, Dr Vili Fuavao and your staff in Samoa and FAO for all the assistance it has continuously provided to Niue over the years. We are very grateful.

I wish to officially declare this consultation open and wish FAO, DAFF and the participants here today all the very best in your discussions over the next two days.

Fakaue Lahi