

**National Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions
To Address High Food Prices in Vanuatu,
Le Lagon Resort, Port Vila, Vanuatu,
16-17 April 2012**

Outcome Statement

1. The National Consultation on Policy and Programmatic Actions to Address High Food Prices in Vanuatu was held at the Le Lagoon Resort, Port Vila on 16-17 April 2012. The meeting was convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries; and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN). Participants included representatives of government agencies, international partners, private sector and civil society organizations.
2. The objective of the national consultation was to assist government in identifying various policy options and designing immediate actions in response to food price rises.
3. Participants discussed the trends, impacts and key issues of high food prices and agreed that the following would inform their actions:
 - a) Recognised the impact of high food prices on food security in Vanuatu, and its effects on people's ability to meet and fulfil other needs such as health, education, and socio-economic opportunities.
 - b) Recognised that high food prices will continue into the future and this issue could be addressed by increasing local production and productivity, access to domestic market, value addition and trade.
 - c) The most vulnerable group to high food prices include the poor, women and children who spend a large share of their resources on food.
 - d) There is a need to increase public awareness on consumption of local nutritious food and reduce dependence on imported food.
 - e) Investment to improve capacity in data collection and analysis of food prices of both imported and locally produced foods, for informed policy formulation and programme development.
 - f) Strengthen support to public and private sector partnerships, to enhance services to farmers and be more responsive to market opportunities through the following:
 - i. Enhanced information and communication management;
 - ii. Improved research and extension support; and,
 - iii. Institutional strengthening of research.
 - g) Improve availability of nutritious and safe foods through improved domestic market access, increased value added products and food preservation, and promote domestic food marketing.
 - h) Enhance collaboration and coordination between the Ministry of Lands, other relevant line ministries and other organizations to maximise use of land for food production; recognizing the changing trends in land use.

- i) Encourage engagement of youth in food production through enhancing their earning capacity from farming; improving formal and informal training; and changing public perception of agriculture as a source of livelihood.
- j) Review current tariff structure for selected food items and agricultural inputs with a view to improving access to nutritious foods and enhancing domestic food production.
- k) Establish a Consumers Affairs Board and introduce Food Price Competition Policy.
- l) Improve inter-island trading through making VCA operational; improving networking and encouraging the establishment of collection centres.
- m) Reduce domestic food prices through:
 - i. Improved awareness of cost of production;
 - ii. Assist producers organizations and cooperatives with market facilitation;
 - iii. Encourage traders/farmers to mass produce; and,
 - iv. Support and enhance agro processing.
- n) Increased investment in agriculture through improved access to credit and incentives.
- o) Recognise the importance of the traditional safety net in managing the negative impact of crises. Encourage the cultural and traditional system of sharing and caring for one another – ‘Malvatumauri’ custom law.
- p) High prices of both domestic and imported food commodities affect the people’s ability to meet needs in health, education and socio-economic opportunities. The most vulnerable groups are the poor, women, youth and children who lack access to safe, nutritious foods, economic opportunities and resources. These most vulnerable groups require secure access to land for agricultural development purposes. Women groups and other relevant stakeholders can work together collaboratively in food supplies and stock management and provide social protection, highlighting the urgency to re-establish the Price Control Unit.
- q) Increase focus on specific income generating activities for women and youth groups.
- r) The coordination, implementation and monitoring of these recommended actions will be the responsibility of the MALQFF and DSPPAC.
- s) The Government, private sector, development partners and stakeholders need to commit to implement the policies and programmatic actions recommended in this outcome statement.