



State of Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)



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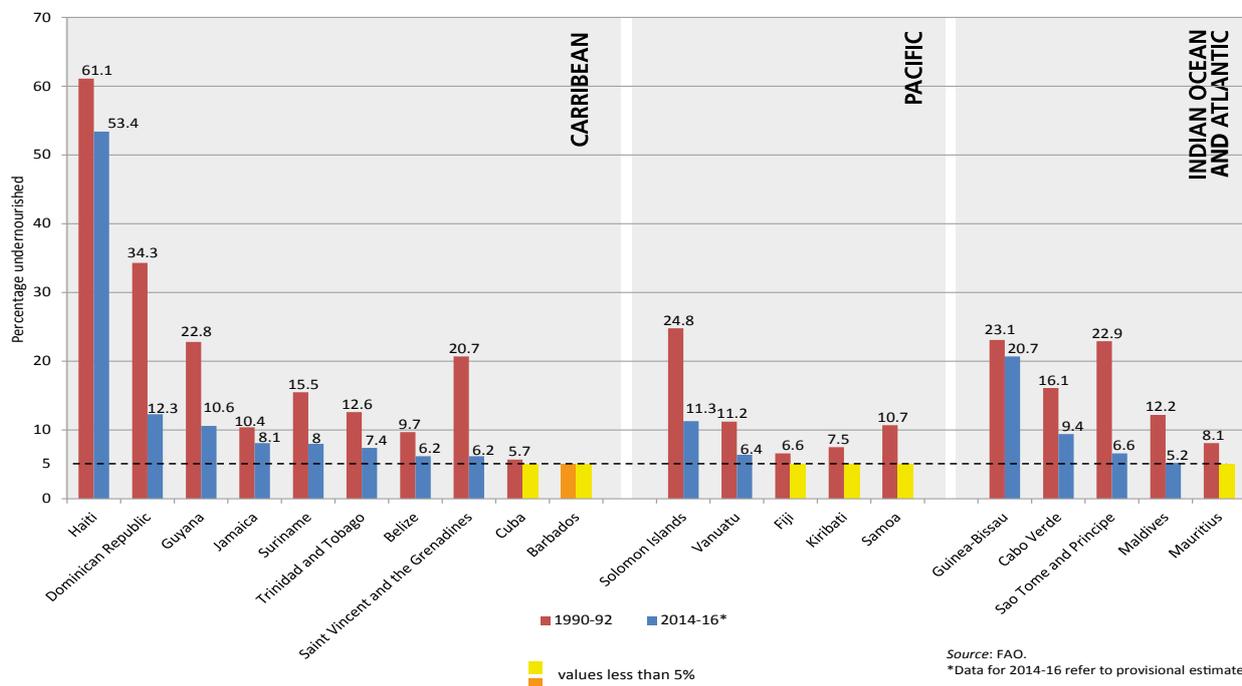
1. Undernourishment in SIDS

The most recent data of FAO indicates that many of the SIDS Islands have achieved undernourishment levels of less than 5 percent, Barbados, Cuba and Dominica in the Caribbean; Fiji, Samoa and Kiribati in the Pacific. Countries such as: Dominican Republic, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Cuba from the Caribbean; Samoa from the Pacific; and São Tomé e Príncipe from the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China

Sea (AIMS) are among the 29 nine countries in the world to achieve both the Millennium Development Goal 1 target (halving the percentage of undernourished people) and the World Food Summit Goal (halving the number of undernourished people) during the period of 1990 to 2015. Other countries such as: Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives and Salomon Islands have achieved the MDG1 target. Two countries have an undernourishment rate higher than 20 percent: Guinea-Bisseau with 20.7 percent and Haiti with 53.4 percent being special cases in SIDS.

Prevalence of Undernourishment in SIDS

Many SIDS still have a level of undernourishment above 5 percent.



Source: FAO.
*Data for 2014-16 refer to provisional estimates.

2. Access to food in SIDS

Poverty and unemployment are the main constraints of access to food in SIDS. Most SIDS countries have high levels of poverty. In the Caribbean for instance, poverty rates range from a low of 9.3 percent in the Bahamas to 41 percent in Belize and as high as 58.7 percent in Haiti. In the Pacific, with a bit more similarity between the countries than the Caribbean, it ranges from 12.7 percent in Vanuatu to a 35.2 percent in Fiji. The highest poverty rates are registered in the AIMS Islands with 66.2 percent in São Tomé e Príncipe and 69.3 percent in Guinea-Bissau.

The youth unemployment rate in most SIDS is higher than the average of the world. This is particularly due to the limited opportunities that exist for productive and decent employment for young people in the agricultural and in non-farm rural sector. As a result, many young

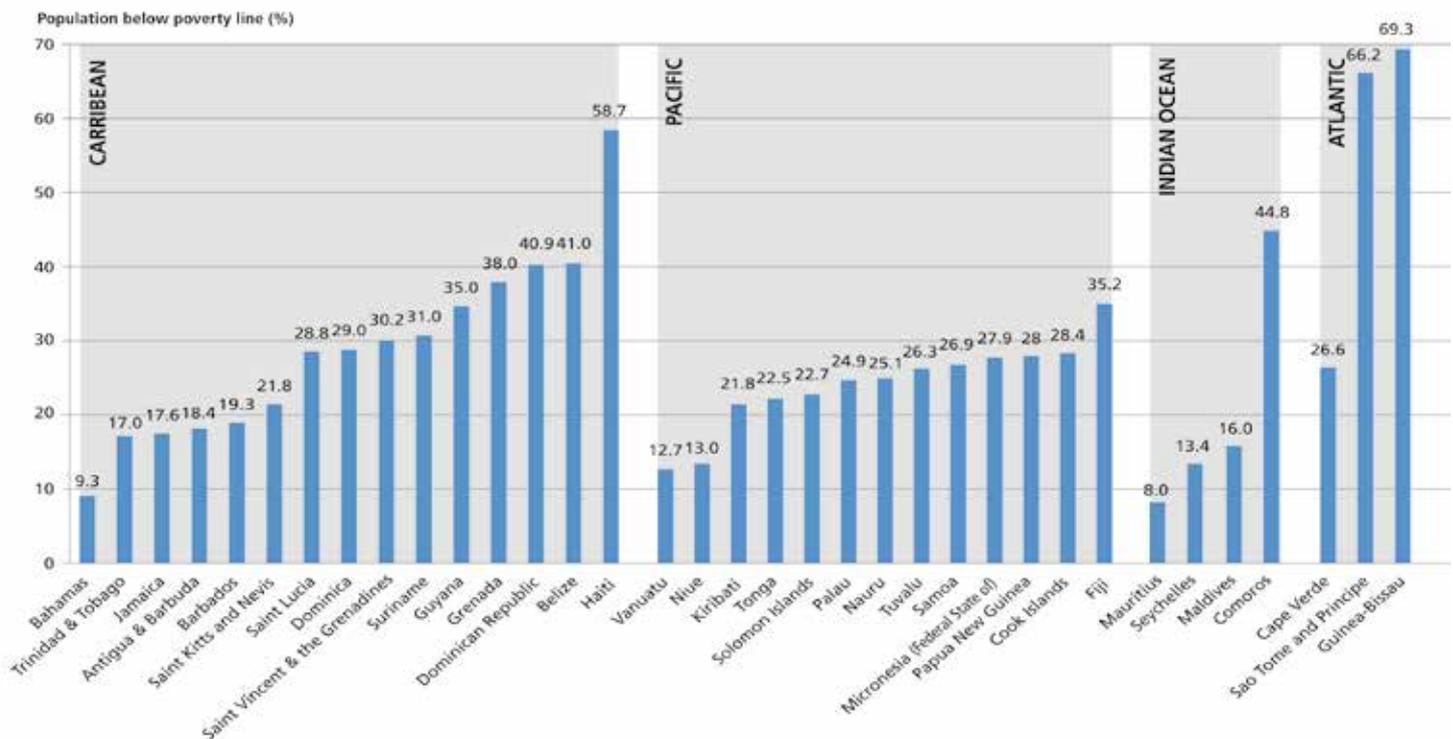
rural residents migrate to urban centers, either within the country or abroad.

In Caribbean countries, 30-77 percent of the poor are estimated to be actually employed; a phenomenon that the Country Poverty Assessments in these countries referred to as “the working poor”. These are persons whose wages are too low to enable them to escape poverty. They typically work part-time or suffer regular periodic layoffs from work and have low take-home pay.

The high food price crisis from 2006 to 2009, and the economic recession that followed increased food access problems in SIDS. Income earning opportunities decreased and the cost of living increased. This situation imposed severe hardship on many SIDS households and increased their food insecurity.

Population below poverty line

High levels of poverty exist in most SIDS, decreasing employment opportunities due to challenges in the global economy and markets.



Source: FAOSTAT



3. Food import dependence in SIDS

In SIDS countries, food imports, as opposed to national food production, are by far the largest source of food. In at least seven countries in the Caribbean, 80 percent or more of available food is from imports. There are no large food storage silos in these countries and anecdotal evidence suggests that supermarkets and food distributors may have about four weeks' supply of food on their shelves and in warehouses. Countries such as

St. Kitts and Nevis import 95 percent of available food. In the Pacific, the Cook Islands import approximately 92 percent of available food.

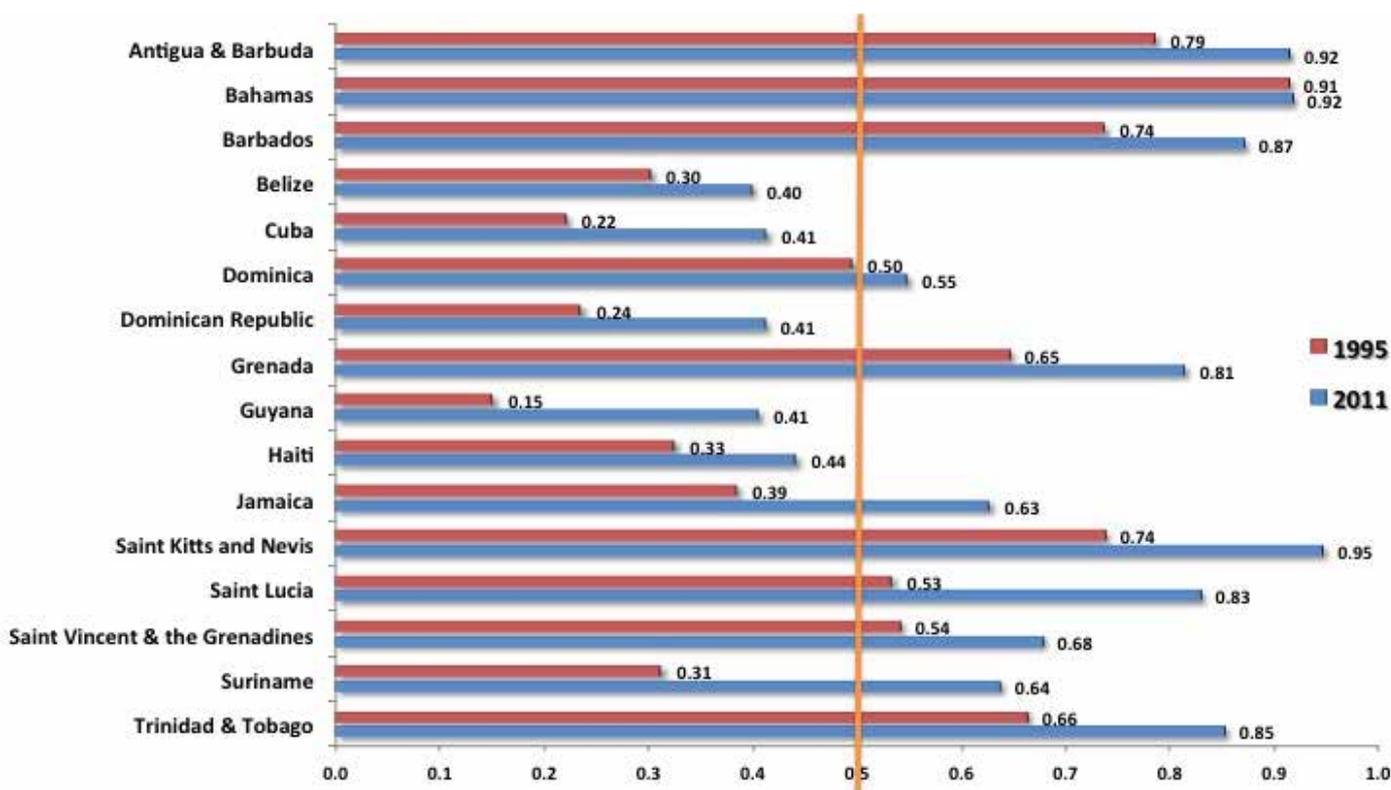
The trend is particularly alarming as the majority of SIDS Islands tend to depend more and more on food imports for their food availability.

It is estimated that in 1990, approximately 45 percent of food available in the Caribbean was imported. In 2011, this proportion increased to 67.5 percent. The trend is quite similar in the case of the Pacific SIDS islands moving from 40 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2011. Vanuatu Island has tripled its food imports between 1990 and 2011.

Farming in relatively all SIDS islands is small-scale and there has been limited investment in commercial agriculture and improved agricultural technology. Agriculture has not been competitive against imports and has difficulty competing in export markets. As a result, there has been a substantial decrease in agriculture's contribution to real GDP. Countries such as St. Lucia have had a dramatic reduction in agriculture's contribution to real GDP, a decline of 78.9 percent over the period 1990-2013, mainly due to the loss of banana markets.

Food Dependence Ratio in CARICOM

Every Caribbean SIDS has seen an increasing dependence on imports and in almost half of them more than 80 percent of the food consumed is imported.



Source: FAOSTAT

Food Dependence Ratio = Total Food Imports/Total Consumption



4. Food utilization in the SIDS

Food utilization in SIDS has been characterized by nutritionally poor food choices. A nutrition transition has taken place in most of these Islands contributing to an increased prevalence of chronic, non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Much of the imported food available is calorie-dense, high-fat, high-sweetener food. Poor households are more likely to choose higher levels of these types of foods. Such diets are more affordable than healthier ones, based on lean meats, fish, fresh vegetables, and fruit.

The excess consumption of fats and sugars is particularly worrying given their role as high energy sources in SIDS. These unhealthy diets contribute to overweight and obesity and to the potential for developing chronic non-communicable diseases including diabetes. The prevalence of overweight adults in some Pacific Island countries is among the highest in the world. More than 70 percent of males and females over 15 years old were overweight in 2010 in the Cooks Islands, Federal States of Micronesia, Nauru and Tonga and an estimated 75 percent of all adult deaths in the Pacific are due to NCDs. The majority of these deaths occurring in adults in the economically active age bracket.

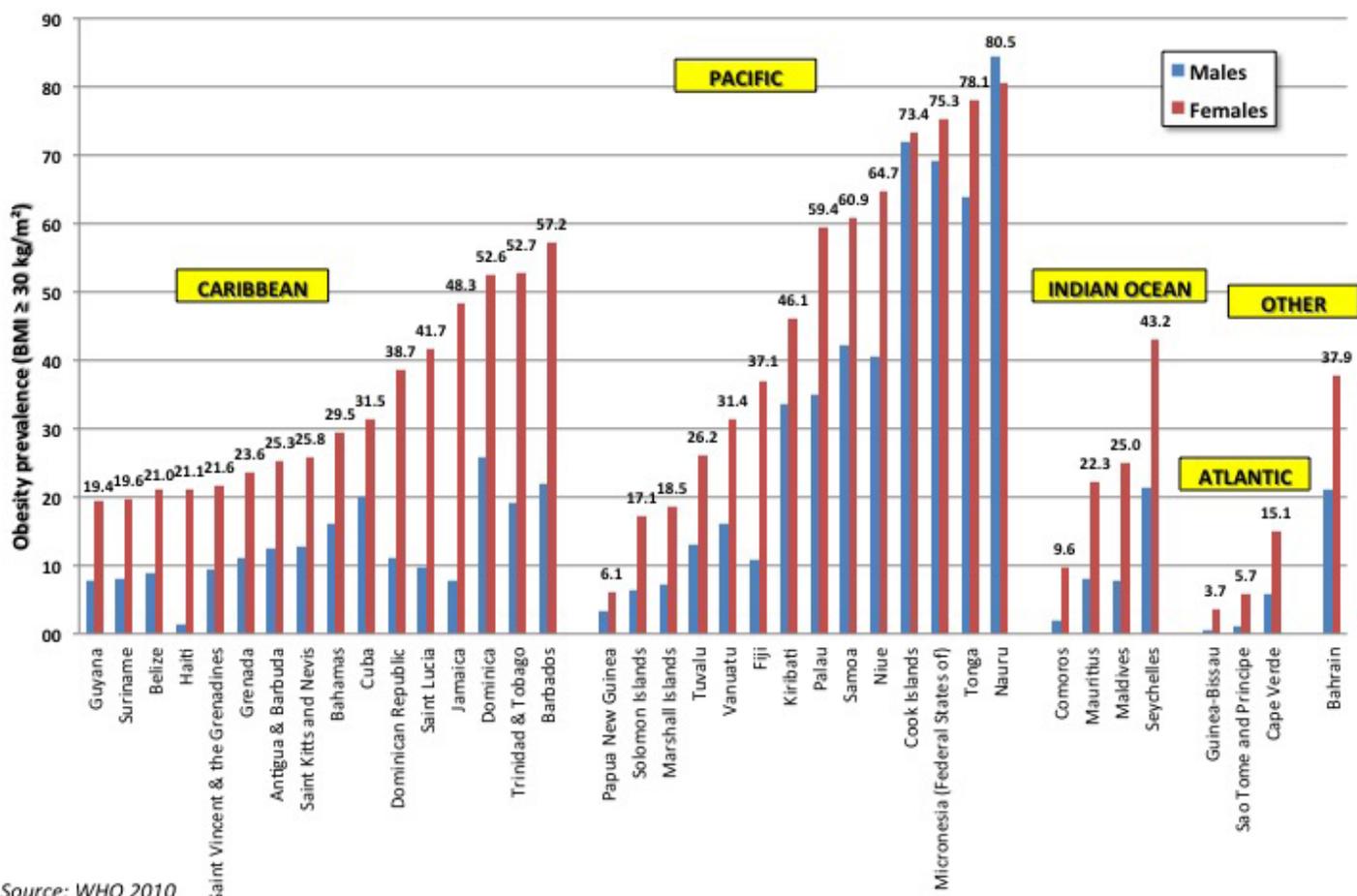
Female obesity rates in most Caribbean countries are about four times higher than those of their male counterparts. In Haiti, obese females outnumber obese males 16:1, and in Jamaica and St Lucia the ratios are 6:1 and 4:1, respectively. Barbados has the highest rate of female obesity (67.7 percent).

The poor food choices and resulting illnesses lead to increased health system expenditure, pressure on the national budget and contribute to a shortage of foreign exchange for development. It is estimated that per capita total expenditure on health in the Caribbean, for instance, has almost doubled during the period of 1995 to 2012.

Although in the Caribbean SIDS countries undernutrition tends to be low, chronic undernutrition is still a serious public health problem in some Pacific Island countries with stunting rates above 40 percent in Papua New Guinea according to WHO. The prevalence of anemia in children under the age of five years and pregnant women exceeds 40 percent in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Nauru, and the Solomon Islands.

Obesity in SIDS, Male & Female > 15 years old

For almost all SIDS, the second dimension of the food security challenge is malnutrition, poor food decisions leading to a major challenge related to obesity.



Source: WHO 2010

5. Stability of food supply and access in SIDS

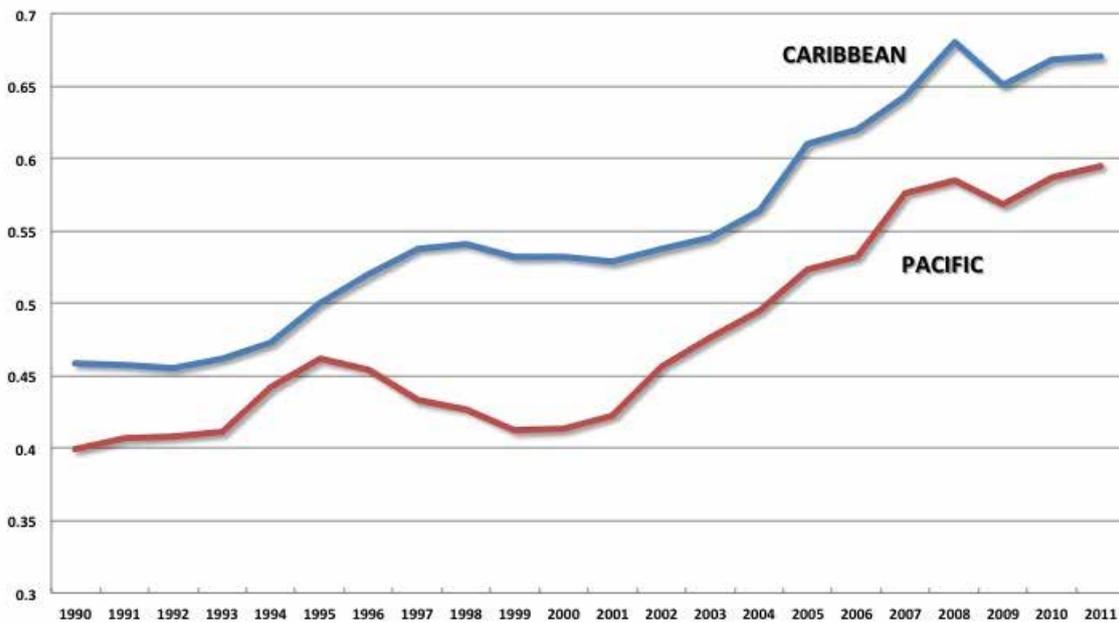
Instability and vulnerability constantly undermine efforts to advance food and nutrition security in the region. Caribbean countries are vulnerable to natural disasters, which adversely impact not only economic sectors (agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, industry and commerce), but also social sectors (housing stock and settlements, health, education and infrastructure), and food and nutrition security.

Over the period 1990-2014, 182 major natural disasters occurred in the Caribbean. These included landslides (1 percent), earthquakes (3 percent), droughts (7 percent), floods (30 percent), and storms/hurricanes (59 percent).

During this period, 11.5 million persons were affected, 241,550 deaths were recorded, and the region sustained US\$ 16.6 billion in damages (on immovable assets and stocks), and loss including disruption to the flow of goods and services due to the disaster.

Food Import Dependence Ratio in SIDS in 1990-2011

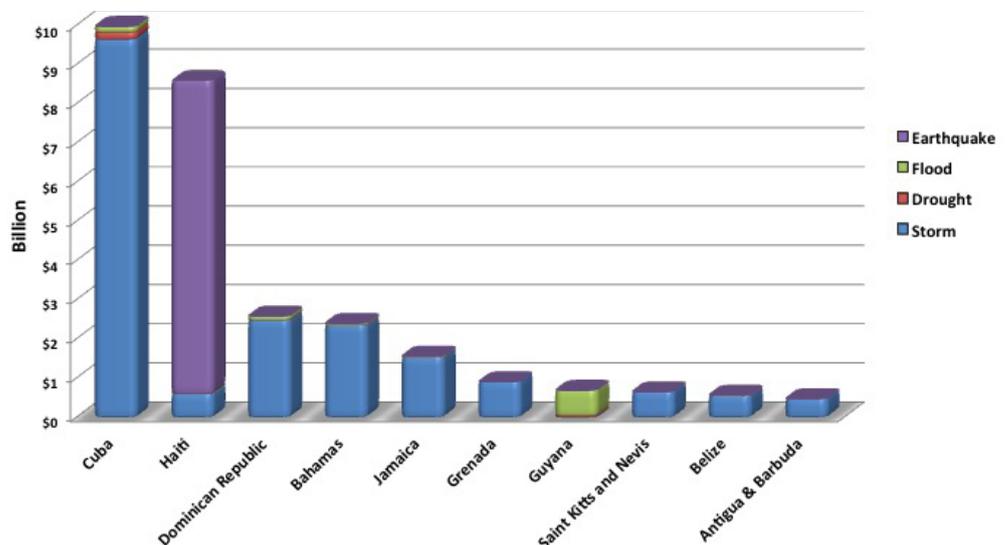
SIDS have increasingly imported a greater proportion of their food consumption and the fastest category of imported foods is processed foods. The move away from local healthier foods has health and economic consequences.



Impact of Natural Disasters on Economy

Top 10 CARICOM Economies by Economic Damages in 1994-2013 from Natural Disasters (\$US billion)

The impact on Caribbean countries is much more than other SIDS and results mainly from hurricanes/storms. Both the frequency and intensity increased in the latter period of the two ten year periods compared.



Source: EM-DAT, International Disaster

6. S.A.M.O.A Pathway Food Security and Nutrition Outcome

The outcome of the Third International Conference on SIDS, the S.A.M.O.A Pathway, highlights food security and nutrition and the interplay of these issues with climate change and other sustainable development challenges. Member States called for a number of concrete actions to advance food security and nutrition in SIDS, namely (from paragraph 63):

- A.** To promote the further use of sustainable practices relating to agriculture, crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture to improve food and nutrition security while ensuring the sustainable management of the required water resources;
- B.** To promote open and efficient international and domestic markets to support economic development and optimize food security and nutrition;
- C.** To enhance international cooperation to maintain access to global food markets, particularly during periods of higher volatility in commodity markets;
- D.** To increase rural income and jobs, with a focus on the empowerment of smallholders and small-scale food producers, especially women;
- E.** To end malnutrition in all its forms, including by securing year-round access to sufficient, safe, affordable, diverse and nutritious food;
- F.** To enhance the resilience of agriculture and fisheries to the adverse impacts of climate change, ocean acidification and natural disasters;
- G.** To maintain natural ecological processes that support sustainable food production systems through international technical cooperation.

7. SIDS Biennial forum on Food and Nutrition Security (paragraph 61)

The Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) took place in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 26-28 August 2013. Members of the three SIDS regions—Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS), the Caribbean and the Pacific—held discussions addressing, inter alia: the outcomes of the three regional preparatory meetings; gaps and constraints in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI); the blue economy; debt management strategies; and the upcoming first International Year of SIDS (2014).

At the end of the meeting, delegations were presented with a draft declaration, the 'Needham's Point Bridgetown Declaration,' which was provisionally adopted with amendments.

The issue of food security was discussed during the session on Practical and Pragmatic Actions for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI).

One of the main recommendations of that session was that FAO should facilitate a special meeting on food and nutrition security in SIDS in order to develop an action program to address the food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS.

In the final outcome document in S.A.M.O.A this recommendation became Paragraph 61.

"61. We recognize the call, in the outcome of the interregional preparatory meeting for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, adopted in Bridgetown on 28 August 2013, 28 to facilitate a meeting on food and nutrition security in small island developing States in order to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing those States, and we invite the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to facilitate this biennial forum."

FAO recognizes the importance of this S.A.M.O.A Pathway recommendation and in order to give it a results orientation and emphasize the strategy would be to implement it in direct relation to the ongoing work of FAO related to respective Regional Strategic Frameworks and Regional Initiatives which address the main pillars of Food and Nutrition Security. The focus of the biennial forum would thus remain on issues such as the zero hunger challenge, governance and public policy (including the right to food, parliamentary fronts, school feeding programmes), nutrition, food safety, family farming, sustainable production intensification and sustainable food systems. The forum would be as much a planning activity as an accountability activity. Thus each biennial forum would be a stocktaking, an identification of gaps in food and nutrition security strategies and a rolling plan for the period ahead. Given the fact that the periodicity of Regional conferences coincide with the frequency recommended in Paragraph 61 of the S.A.M.O.A pathway FAO could seek to make this SIDS forum a part of the FAO Regional Conference as an additional SIDS sub-regional session turning the now normal side meeting of the sub-region of the Caribbean and Pacific into a full one day activity.

The FAO Regional Conference is the highest governing body of FAO in the region. It sets out the priorities for FAO's technical assistance in the region for the biennium. If the SIDS forum was organized at the same time it would be beneficial for integrating and mainstreaming SIDS issues, increasing the impact of interventions, as well as more economical as already there is always almost full attendance by all Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security at these Regional conferences.

Critical issues that should always be included in the SIDS forums would be major concerns related to food

and nutrition security areas identified in the S.A.M.O.A pathway. These would include attention to healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture; trade opportunities for SIDS agricultural products; insurance of economic losses due to the adverse impacts of climate events and natural disasters, and to cater for food shortages resulting from natural disasters; and enhancing and supporting more sustainable agriculture, including crops, livestock, and forestry.

Conclusions

Good governance is perhaps the most essential factor in increasing food and nutrition security. It is characterized by predictable, enlightened and transparent processes that are cross-cutting, multidisciplinary and multilevel. It is focused and results oriented. In the Caribbean and Pacific there are regional and subregional bodies, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) or the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), that are important leaders in this process. They assist countries in gathering around common solutions and strategies in order to achieve results. In the Caribbean concrete efforts of regional integration in agriculture and food security include CARICOM's Regional Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Policy and Action Plan; the CARICOM Common Agricultural Policy; the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Regional Plan of Action for Agriculture 2012–2022. Almost all the countries have a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan. These are excellent bases for SIDS countries to launch into processes that advance them towards reaching their food and nutrition security goals.

8. Road Map to develop An Action Programme to address Food and Nutrition challenges facing SIDS; Follow up Paragraph 61 of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway

Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives in September 2014 adopted SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A Pathway) inviting FAO to facilitate a meeting on food and nutrition security in Small Island Developing States to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS (Paragraph 61).

Towards fulfilling the mandate, FAO during the 39th Session of FAO Conference organized a High Level Panel in Rome, Italy on 6 June 2015; followed by a Ministerial Meeting on Enhancing Food Security and Climate Adaptation in SIDS jointly organized by the Government of Italy and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in Milan, Italy, on 14–16 October 2015. The Ministerial Meetings provided a platform to exchange experiences and priorities in the areas of food security and nutrition, especially in light of the challenges facing SIDS with the adverse impacts of climate change.

Following the two meetings, an indicative road map is proposed towards fulfilling paragraph 61 of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway by developing the requested action programme, in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The roadmap calls for a close collaboration and consultation with SIDS member States, the UN System, regional inter-governmental bodies, development partners and non-state actors, including non-governmental and civil society institutions and the private sector.

The proposed road map is a living document consisting of 3 phases: (i) preparatory, (ii) development and review, and (iii) approval. The development and review phase widens participation of multi-stakeholders (through regional consultation meetings, e-consultations, and questionnaire to be sent out to SIDS governments and other partners) throughout the development of action programme.

