



GOVERNMENT OF FIJI

STATE INTERVENTION

FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

35TH SESSION

PRIORITIZATION OF COUNTRY AND REGIONAL NEEDS

Mr. Chairperson

Hon. Ministers

Excellency's

Distinguished Delegates

The Government of Fiji recognizes the work that FAO has undertaken in the provision of technical support particularly in policy development and planning and when partnering with the Government of Fiji, created opportunities for value adding, uprooting multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and crafting an environment that is resilient and sustainable. With the help of FAO, the Government of Fiji is exploring alternatives to build more sustainable and resilient food systems in light of the current COVID-19 crisis and pre-existent vulnerabilities to climate –related shocks.

The Government of Fiji is currently undertaking a Reform process to modernize the Agriculture Sector, harness its full potential and improve Food and Nutrition Security for all Fijians. Two primary objectives will be achieved through this review are:

- Securing the country for its food and nutritional requirements and progressively expanding agriculture to its full potential to raise national income and become the leading export earner for the country.

- At the same time, addressing secondary objectives in improving the livelihood of rural communities, provide employment opportunities and use sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate climate change issues.

Further to the above, there are a series of policies and initiatives formulated to bolster agricultural output and growth. The policy realizes Agriculture's aspiration of "Grow Beyond" targeting incremental growth and spearheading a paradigm shift in Agriculture. Some of the policies that are undergoing consultation include; National Food and Nutrition Security policy which was developed using a multi sectorial approach which address Food and Nutrition Security from complimentary perspectives. The multi sectorial approach will ensure that production is increased, multi-dimensional vulnerabilities are eliminated and shocks are absorbed.

Fiji recognizes that through FAO's partnership, designing and implementing comprehensive programs and coherent public policies that address the food environment where consumers make their food related decisions, is the only way to achieve real impact.

The food systems approach can facilitate the identification of leverage points along the continuum from production to consumption. The approach also requires that different sectors mainstream nutrition and work together to push for transformations of different parts of the food systems. As food security cannot only be addressed as an agricultural issue, obesity, overweight or anemia cannot be seen as a mere health problem.

Fiji's National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security is a huge step as it is aimed at bringing together the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS) , Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Industry and Trade/Tourism, and Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The approval of this policy will set the scene for multi-sectorial coordination, but for it to be actually implemented, more practical commitment is needed. Specifically, reviewing

the different actions proposed for each of the 6 ministries included in the Action Plan of the Policy is a necessary step to identify interventions with bigger potential and prioritize accordingly. The relevant Ministries' work plans have taken into account the policy and aligned it with general strategy including an allocated budget. The policy developed is to absorb shocks, create strategies for the informal sector and promote gender equality.

Another key area of interest in Fiji would be enhancing Research Capabilities and Facilities in; the Crop & Livestock Sector and utilization of non-Timber or non-Wood Forest products. This will improve livelihoods and realize full potential in Agro Forestry Sector. In the meantime, Fiji stands to welcome FAO's technical support to assist with Agro Forestry policy and planning.

Technical assistance is also sought for the reduction of post-harvest losses of horticultural crops along the value chain. This will ensure reduced cost of production and increase profitability of all the players along the value chain.

Now, with respect to "*Growing Aquaculture Rapidly*" for the next 3-10 years, Fiji would request the following:

- a. Support for Aquaculture development, technical support and capacity-building in business and entrepreneurial skills to support the growth of the aquaculture production system;
- b. Engagement of stakeholders across the Aquaculture value chain to improve full participation, ensuring gender equity and inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- c. Development of Aquaculture Innovative Technologies on feed and seed production; and
- d. Support the development of a Good Governance of administrative framework for Aquaculture Development to upscale Fiji's Food Systems.

Fiji is honored and grateful for this platform and wish to thank FAO for the opportunity to provide an insight on how to build better by discussing the needs of the Country.

Vinaka

