Inputs from the Ministry Of Agro Industry

For the CFS Policy Convergence Process on Building Resilient Food Systems

1. Priority Issues

Mauritius is a small island developing state, faces distinctive vulnerabilities that must be reflected in global policy recommendations on resilient food systems. Our agriculture sector is challenged by climate variability, high import dependency, and structural constraints, yet it also offers opportunities for innovation and transformation.

- **Climate resilience** is paramount. Cyclones, droughts, and saltwater intrusion increasingly threaten production. Recommendations should emphasise climate-smart agriculture tailored to island ecosystems, including drought-resistant crops, integrated water management, and early warning systems.
- **Food import dependency** undermines resilience. Mauritius imports over 70% of its food, exposing the population to global price volatility and supply chain disruptions. Diversification of local production, particularly in vegetables, pulses, and aquaculture, is essential, alongside nutrition-sensitive agriculture to address rising non-communicable diseases.
- **Value chain integration** is essential. Farmers must be connected to agro-processing, storage, and export chains. Investment in infrastructure, cold storage, and logistics, as well as incentives for private sector participation, will strengthen resilience.
- **Digital agriculture** offers transformative potential. Precision farming, mobile platforms for market access, and digital extension services can reduce costs and improve productivity.
- **Regional collaboration** is indispensable. Mauritius can serve as a hub in the Indian Ocean, leveraging South-South cooperation and French expertise to strengthen resilience through shared research, seed systems, and trade.

2. Complementary Elements

To complement the HLPE-FSN analysis, several elements are particularly relevant for Mauritius:

- **Circular economy approaches**: Waste-to-compost initiatives, renewable energy in farming, and water recycling can reduce costs and environmental impacts.
- **Financial instruments for resilience**: Insurance schemes for climate shocks, blended finance for smallholders, and public–private partnerships can de-risk investments.

- **Knowledge transfer and training**: Farmer field schools, vocational training, and partnerships with French and international research centers can accelerate adoption of best practices.

3. Practical Example:

A practical illustration of resilience-building in Mauritius is the transition being undertaken by organic farmers and farmers adopting climate-smart and precision agriculture practices across different regions of the island. These initiatives show how small-scale producers can strengthen productivity, reduce vulnerability to climate shocks, and improve the sustainability of their farming systems.

Key features include:

- Agroecological and Organic Farming Practices:

  Organic farmers increasingly adopt diverse cropping systems—intercropping, crop rotation, integration of fruit trees, and use of natural soil amendments. These practices improve soil structure, enhance biodiversity, reduce pest pressures, and make farms more resilient to droughts and heavy rains.

- Circular Resource Management:

  Many farmers are implementing composting, mulching, and the use of green manure, reducing dependence on imported fertilisers. Some farmers also engage in the use of biofertilisers, vermicomposting, and small-scale livestock integration to close nutrient loops and reduce production costs.

- Climate-Smart Water Management:

  Adoption of drip irrigation, moisture sensors, mulching, and rainwater harvesting systems allows farmers to cope with increasing water scarcity. These technologies help maintain yields during dry spells and mitigate the impacts of irregular rainfall.

- Use of Precision and Digital Agriculture Tools:

  Farmers adopting smart agriculture technologies—such as automated irrigation systems, on-farm weather stations, mobile advisory platforms, and remote sensing—benefit from better decision-making and reduced losses during extreme weather events.

- Crop Diversification for Resilience:

  Introduction of climate-tolerant varieties, including improved sweet potatoes, cassava, taro, pulses, and spices such as ginger and turmeric, helps stabilise production and contributes to national food security.

- Strengthened Extension and Research Linkages:

FAREI's extension services support farmers through training, demonstration plots, farmer field schools, and participatory trials that accelerate technology adoption and disseminate climate-smart innovations.

- Value Chain Development and Postharvest Innovations:

The shift toward value addition—such as small-scale processing of vegetables, fruits, and onions—helps farmers reduce losses, access new markets, and improve income stability.