

Concept Note:

Towards an Action Programme to Address Food and Nutrition Challenges facing Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

- Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives in September 2014, adopted the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities for Action (SAMOA) Pathway document and in Paragraph 61 invited FAO to facilitate the development of an Action Programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing SIDS. Towards fulfilling that mandate, FAO, DESA¹, and OHRLLS² have proposed an indicative road map which calls for consultation meetings in the context of the FAO Regional Conferences.
- FAO is therefore convening a Consultation Meeting for Caribbean SIDS to be held as a side event in conjunction with the 34th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City, Mexico from 29 February to 3 March, 2016. The current document and LARC/16/Inf SIDS serves as background information for this Consultation.

I. Introduction

1. Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held in Apia, Samoa in September 2014, adopted the SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action (SAMOA) Pathway. This conference followed the First and Second SIDS Conferences which were held in Barbados in 1995 and Mauritius in 2005, respectively. The SAMOA outcome document sought to increase the rate of implementation from all three conferences and invited FAO to facilitate a biennial forum in order to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing those states (paragraph 61).
2. In response to this invitation, a High Level Panel on FAO and SIDS was held during the 39th Session of FAO Conference in Rome, Italy on 6 June 2015. This was 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.
3. Following these meetings, an indicative road map (Figure 1) was proposed towards developing the requested Action Programme, including anticipation of the related outcomes from the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and other major international initiatives such as the “Paris Agreement” of the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the “Nairobi Package” adopted at the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference.
4. The road map calls for a close collaboration and consultation amongst 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.
5. The road map specifically calls for Consultation Meetings to be held at the FAO Regional Conferences in 2016 at which a “zero draft” of the Action Programme would be presented and discussed.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

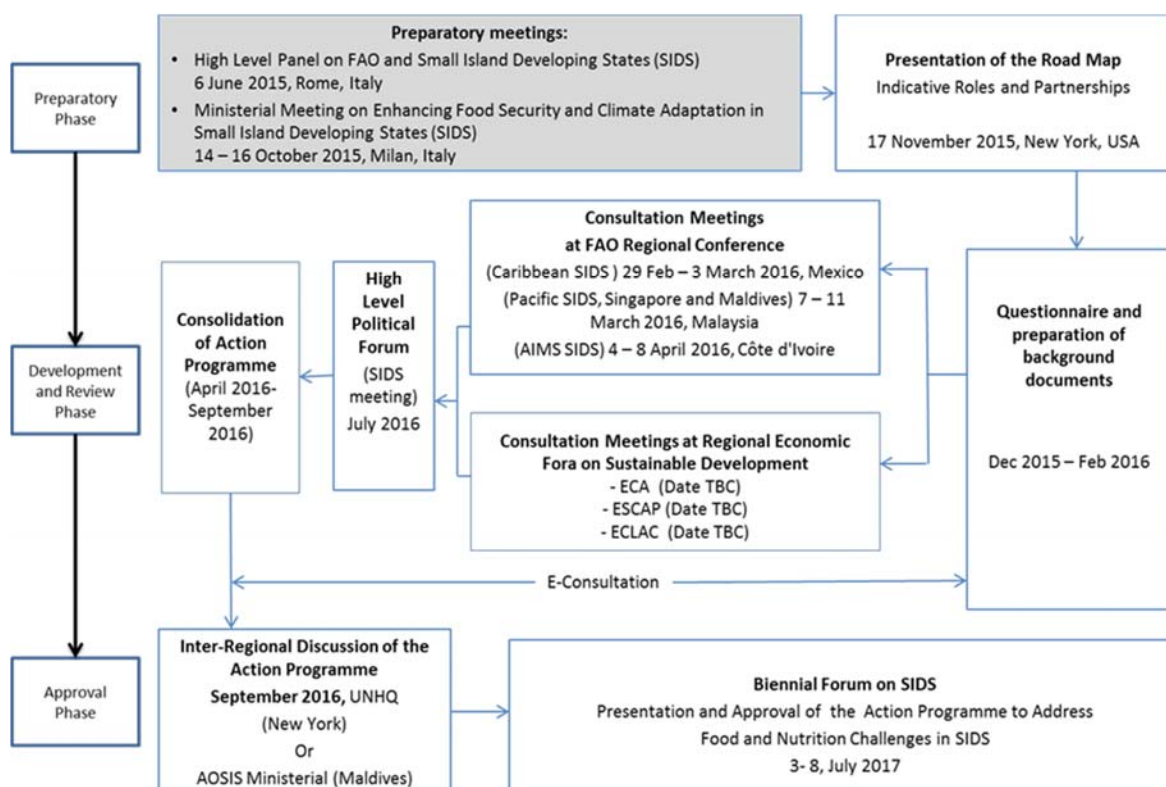
² United Nations Office of High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

FAO is therefore convening a Consultation Meeting for Caribbean SIDS to be held as a side event in conjunction with the 34th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City, Mexico from 29 February to 3 March, 2016. FAO submits this document and LARC/16/#SLC as background information for discussion at this Consultation.

II. Food and nutrition security situation in Caribbean SIDS³

6. The food and nutrition challenges of the Caribbean SIDS are complex, reflecting both the diversity of the group in terms of socio-economic conditions and institutional capacity, and their many shared challenges. Selected socioeconomic indicators for the Caribbean SIDS are presented in Table 1.

Figure 1: Road map to develop an Action Programme to address food and nutrition challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS)



7. Most Caribbean SIDS have achieved relatively low rates of undernourishment, but they continue to suffer from food insecurity and malnutrition as related to access (poverty and high food prices), utilization (poor dietary choices), availability (import dependency) and instability (vulnerability to economic shocks and natural disasters).

8. Three countries (Barbados, Guyana and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) have met both the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goal targets of halving the number and prevalence of undernourished people by 2015. Barbados and Dominica have undernourishment rates of less than 5

³ Caribbean SIDS in this document refers to the 14 Caribbean FAO Member Countries that form the CARICOM region.

percent, meaning they have effectively eradicated hunger. Six countries (Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) have undernourishment rates between 5 and 10 per cent, and five more (Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia) have undernourishment rates between 10 and 20 per cent. The remaining country, Haiti, is a unique case in the Caribbean sub-region with an estimated 53.4 per cent of the population undernourished.

Table 1: Selected Economic and Social Indicators of Caribbean SIDS

CARICOM States	Pop. ('000) (2014) ¹	GDP (current US\$ M) (2014) ²	Average annual real GDP growth (%) (2014) ³	Agriculture value added (% of GDP) ⁴	Poverty Level (%) ⁵	Prevalence of Undernourished (%) ⁶	Unemployment Youth (% of total labor force) ^{6,7}	Trade openness (exports + imports) / GDP (%) (2012) ⁸
Larger island States								
Haiti	10 533	8 713	2.7	n/a	58.5	53.4	17.4	66
Jamaica	2 806	13 891	1.3	7	19.9	8.1	30.5	80.8
Trinidad and Tobago	1 346	28 882	1.6	0.6	28.8	7.4	10.6	98.9
Smaller island States								
Antigua and Barbuda	92	1 220	3.2	2.4	22.0	13.9	19.9	107.1
The Bahamas	386	8 510	2.6	1.8	12.8	5.6	30.1	102.3
Barbados	286	4 354	0.2	1.5	19.0	<5	26.8	96.8
Dominica	73	524	2.4	15.9	28.8	<5	26	92.4
Grenada	107	911	1.5	7.1	37.7	18.7	31.5	71.0
St. Kitts and Nevis	55	852	6.3	1.5	21.8	10.2	n/a	75.5
St. Lucia								
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	185	1 404	-1.6	2.8	28.8	12.2	27.5	112.0
	109	729	-0.5	7.8	30.0	6.2	33.8	82.5
Mainland States								
Belize	344	1 699	1.5	15.3	41.3	6.2	22	136.3
Guyana	806	3 096	3.8	18.3	36.1	10.6	23.8	142.7
Suriname	546	5 210	2.9	7	31	8	17.9	118.2
Total CARICOM	17 674	79 995	(Avg) 1.9	(Avg) 6.8	(Avg) 29.7	(Avg) 12.1	(Avg) 24.9	(Avg) 103.4
Cuba	11 379	77 149	2.7	5	n/a	<5.0	7.1	44.3
Dominican Republic	10 405	64 137	7.3	6.2	40.9	12.3	31.4	56.3
Total non-CARICOM	21 784	141 286	5	5.6	40.9	8.6	19.2	50.3
Total Caribbean	39 458	221 281	(Avg) 2.4	(Avg) 6.7	(Avg) 30.5	(Avg) 11.7	(Avg) 23.8	(Avg) 92.7

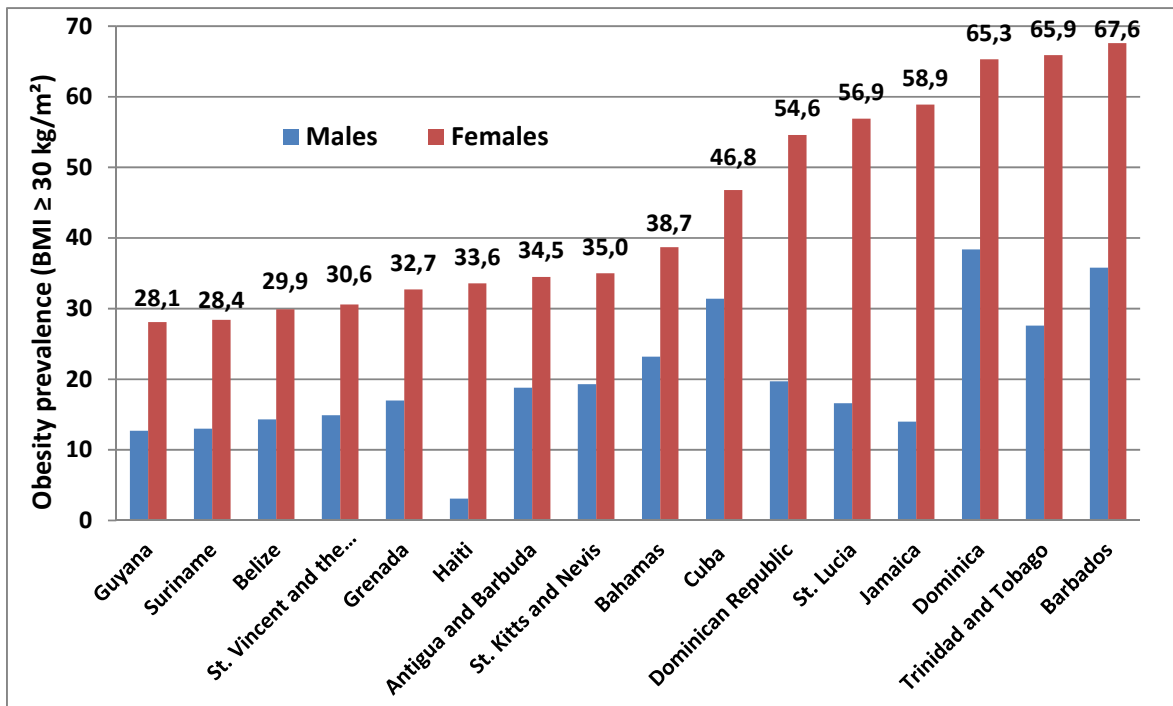
Source: ^{1,2,3,4,7} Last Available at: www.worldbank.com, ⁵World Bank, UNDP, CIA - last available; ⁶The State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) in the World, 2015 (FAO, 2015). Data for Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia are from the SOFI 2013; ⁸IMF (2013), for Cuba and Dominican Republic last available data from www.worldbank.com.

9. Food access, linked to poverty and high food prices, is a key food and nutrition security problem. Severe income inequality and high unemployment rates mean that many of the Caribbean SIDS have a relatively high proportion of the population living below the national poverty line.

Poverty rates exceed 30 per cent in six of the Caribbean SIDS, with the poverty rate in Haiti approaching 60 per cent. Unemployment is particularly high among youth, being in excess of 25 per cent in seven of the fourteen Caribbean SIDS. Price volatility is another major problem for the poor as it means that high quality fresh foods are often beyond their reach.

9. The key issue of food utilization in the Caribbean is poor food choices. It is one of the most serious food and nutrition security problems in the Caribbean SIDS. The Caribbean SIDS continue to undergo a rapid nutritional and epidemiological transition, resulting from changing food consumption patterns and more sedentary lifestyles. The nutrition transition contributes to increased levels of obesity and high rates of micronutrient deficiencies. Obesity rates have reached alarming levels, especially among women (Figure 2). Eleven Caribbean SIDS have obesity rates greater than 30 per cent among adult women, and five of these countries have adult female obesity rates exceeding 50 per cent. The nutrition transition is linked to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease and cancer, for which the Caribbean SIDS have some of the highest rates in the world.

Figure 2: Obesity prevalence (%) among males and females (above 30 years old), Caribbean SIDS (2015)

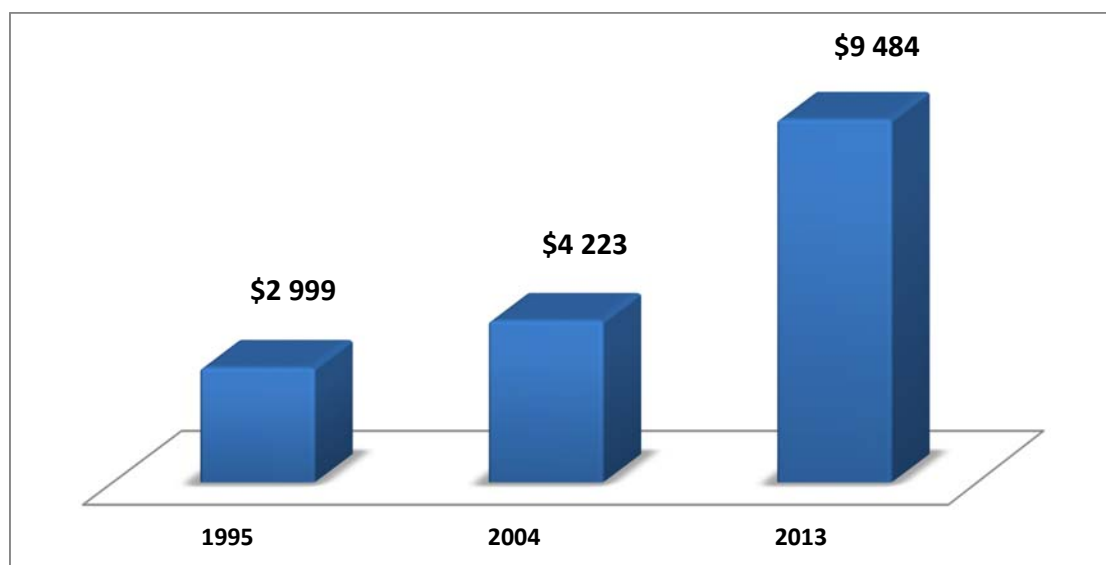


Source: World Health Organization (WHO), Global Infobase 2015

11. Food imports are by far the largest source of food availability for Caribbean SIDS which currently import in excess of US\$ 5 billion in food annually, an increase of more than 50 per cent since 2000 (Figure 3). Food imports are projected to increase to US \$8-10 billion by 2020 if current consumption and production patterns remain as they are now. Almost all Caribbean SIDS import more

than 60 per cent of the food they consume, with half of them importing more than 80 per cent. Only three countries (Belize, Guyana, and Haiti) produce more than 50 per cent of their consumption. Processed foods, grains (wheat and corn), and livestock products (meat and dairy) are among the top five food import categories, accounting for over US\$ 1 billion or approximately 25 per cent of annual food imports regionally. At the same time, national per capita production of several essential food groups, most notably fruits and vegetables, has registered decline, further increasing the region's dependence on importation.

Figure 3: Food import bill of Caribbean SIDS, 1995, 2004 and 2013



12. From the perspective of stability, the Caribbean SIDS food and nutrition security can be described as precarious, given the region's trade dependence and susceptibility to tropical storms, floods, droughts and earthquakes. The impacts of Climate Change add a further element of vulnerability to the food security of the region. Caribbean SIDS are vulnerable to natural disasters, which cause extensive damage to property and loss of lives, undermine national efforts to enhance food security and to reduce poverty. Land degradation, loss of forest cover and damage to coastal ecosystems exacerbate the risks in low-lying coastal areas. Over the period 1990-2014, 182 major natural disasters occurred in the region, affecting 11.5 million persons, causing 241,550 deaths (over 200,000 of these deaths occurred in Haiti as a result of the 2010 earthquake) and US\$ 16.6 billion in damage to immovable assets and stock. Building resilience is increasingly articulated as a major development goal of the Caribbean SIDS.

III. FAO's proposed work programme and the SAMOA Pathway

13. The proposed work programme for FAO in the Caribbean SIDS, outlined in LARC/16/XXSLC, focuses on three broad elements:

- Improving food and nutrition security;
- Increasing sustainable production and productivity growth in the crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries sector through value chain development, including support for family farming and territorial development; and
- Promoting resilience through improved natural resource management, disaster risk management and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- The food security and nutrition outcome of the SAMOA Pathway (paragraph 61) reflects the inter-connectivity of these core areas of FAO's mandate, including social protection (paragraph 78); environmental issues related to areas such as sustainable natural resource management, resilience and climate change, and disaster risk management (paragraph 52); fisheries, oceans and seas (paragraph 53); and agricultural trade and investment issues (paragraph 107).

14. FAO's work in food and nutrition security focuses on the four dimensions - availability, access, stability and utilization - with a recognition of the cross-cutting emphasis on governance and public policy as a foundation for sustainable impact. The SAMOA Pathway recognizes social protection as one of the fundamental public policy instruments needed to achieve sustainable development and to build more equitable and inclusive societies. School feeding programmes, promoted by FAO, are one of the most important social protection programmes in the Caribbean region and serve as excellent examples of how public policy outcomes can be amplified through a more inclusive approach to governance and can serve as a national development strategy.

15. The SAMOA Pathway addresses resilience and the environment mainly in the context of sustainable development, Climate Change and disaster risk management. This approach is consistent with FAO's comparative advantages and priorities. Regarding sustainable development, FAO, in collaboration with its UN partners and through the UN Country Teams, is developing a Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework which identifies key strategic priorities around which the UN can focus its efforts in the Caribbean SIDS.

16. FAO is committed to supporting Caribbean SIDS in meeting the challenge of Climate Change, through resource mobilization, implementation of Climate Smart Agriculture, and promotion of renewable sources of energy which are abundant in the region (such as wind, water and solar power). In the area of disaster risk management, FAO's work focuses on developing, protecting sustainable livelihoods and restoring affected and vulnerable communities that depend on farming, livestock and natural resource-related livelihoods.

17. The SAMOA Pathway acknowledges that healthy, productive and resilient fisheries, oceans and seas are "critical for, inter alia, poverty eradication, access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, sustainable livelihoods, economic development and essential ecosystem services... in Small Island Developing States" (para 53). FAO and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) are committed to continue the support for the effective governance of fisheries by the Caribbean SIDS including assessment, conservation, protection, management for the sustainable use the fisheries resources in region. This includes the transition process of WECAFC into a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO). FAO assists its Member States in the Caribbean with capacity

building and information to improve governance of fisheries, to strengthen institutions and to develop policy and legal frameworks, for example for the control of illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing.

18. The SAMOA Pathway identifies trade and investment as critical areas for addressing the challenges faced by SIDS. The Nairobi Package arising from the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference contains several issues that are relevant to Caribbean SIDS and lie within the mandate and expertise of FAO. FAO has long supported CARICOM in the promotion of regional markets and regional food security strategies. Developing value chains for domestic, regional and global markets is a priority area of work for FAO in the Caribbean. This work includes policy advice for the creation of a conducive climate for investment, support for compliance with market access requirements and addressing efficiency in production and post-harvest management to improve competitiveness. An on-going area of work for FAO support is in the adoption and compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary measures, including best practices in the prevention and management of pest and diseases and the exclusion of invasive species. This work is essential for Caribbean SIDS and contributes to strengthened linkages and the creation of synergies between tourism and agriculture. In turn, this ensures that tourism growth is sustainable and that the benefits of tourism are shared with rural communities and contributes to increased economic and social development.

IV. Conclusion

19. The proposed work programme for FAO in the Caribbean, as presented in LARC/16/XXSLC and summarized here, may be discussed as a “zero draft” of the SAMOA Pathway Action Programme to Address Food and Nutrition Challenges facing Caribbean Small Island Developing States.

20. FAO will continue to support SIDS development in the formulation and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway Action Programme.