



## **St. Kitts and Nevis Food and Nutrition Security Policy**

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## SECTION I

### BACKGROUND TO ST. KITTS AND NEVIS FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis (GSKN) recognises that there is a direct relationship between food and the nutritional health and the well-being of its citizens. A desirable relationship cannot be left to chance and the Government has a key role to play in establishing food and nutrition policies and programmes that will promote rational food choices and healthy lifestyles by the population.

Considerable progress has been made over the years by the government to improve the nutritional well-being of the population through focused and deliberate policies and programmes. However, as with any development process, emerging problems demand changes in policies and programmes to meet new priorities. In particular, whereas undernutrition has been the major focus of attention during the 'Seventies', 'Eighties' and early 'Nineties', the emerging problems of obesity and related diseases of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and some cancers call for a reorientation of policies and programmes to address these problems while maintaining surveillance on undernutrition to avoid widespread recurrence of the problem.

In the area of food production, the high dependence on food imports should be reduced. Expanded incentives for local production of a wide array of foodstuffs would make for less emphasis on imports while providing opportunities for employment and income generation. Moreover, it is important that the food that is available to the population meet recommended population food goals. In particular, far too much food calories are drawn from fats/oils, sweeteners and foods from animal origins while there are significant deficits in foods such as fruits, vegetables, roots/tubers and legumes.

The increasing emphasis on tourism and hospitality services demands greater attention to issues of environmental health and sanitation to ensure satisfactory quality and food safety from production/importation to consumption. Expanded training of food handlers and greater frequency of inspections of hotels, restaurants and food vending sites should be given priority.

Public knowledge of Nutrition should increase and be evidenced by improved dietary habits. The importance of physical activity must be inculcated within the population. The population must be encouraged to take responsibility for their health and adopt healthy lifestyles.

The proposed policies and programmes are organized under the four pillars of food and nutrition security, viz., **food availability, food access, nutritional adequacy and stability**. The institutional mechanism for implementation and coordination of Food and Nutrition Security Policy that ensures good governance and the incorporation of Right to Food principles is also presented.

## **1.2 Regional and International Content**

The Caribbean is a highly diverse region with countries varying widely in terms of their land mass, population, levels of socio-economic development, and vulnerability to external shocks. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy in four countries: Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana and Haiti.<sup>1,2</sup> The other economies are largely services oriented, with the exception of Trinidad which is primarily energy-based. Suffice to say, as a group, the region experienced relatively strong real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates during the period 2002-2007. However, available estimates and projections of growth rates for the period 2008 – 2011 are not encouraging, as a consequence of the current global economic and financial crisis which started in 2007.

The impact of the global crisis on the economic sectors within the Caribbean (i.e. agriculture, manufacturing and tourism) has been sharp and swift. It has led to volatility in commodity export prices, declines in exports earnings, tourism inflows, foreign investment, as well as in general overall economic activity. This has had negative effects on employment, aggravated the general food and nutrition security situation, and exacerbated the levels of poverty and inequity, primarily in the rural areas. It has also contributed to social dislocation through increased rural unemployment, increased reliance on food imports, and market volatilities. Even though agricultural markets have always been subject to price variations, the speed and magnitude of these changes have been more pronounced in the last three years, which has led to instability in food and input prices.

Against the backdrop of global economic and financial crises, the following challenges and opportunities related to the development of agriculture in general and food and nutrition security programs in particular, in the Caribbean region have been identified:

- **The steady decline in competitiveness of their agricultural products** to traditional preferential markets and within domestic/regional markets has been a major concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Their main agricultural products are bananas, sugar, rice (considered traditional commodities) and tropical fruits and vegetables.

<sup>2</sup> Generally, the contribution of agriculture to GDP ranges from a low of 0.8% in Trinidad and Tobago to highs of 26 % and 28% in Guyana and Haiti, respectively. This does not include value generated by agro-industry and other agricultural production linkages.

This has been attributed to the process of trade liberalization, which has progressively eliminated import restrictions and reduced tariffs, and to domestic limitations, including, institutional, structural, economic and technological factors.

- **Threats to the Regions' environmental and natural resources** due to increases in the incidence and strength of hazards, coupled with the emerging impacts of climate change, and the growing vulnerability of human settlements concentrated in high risk areas where the risk is further exacerbated by inappropriate and unsuitable social, economic and environmental practices.
- **In the Caribbean, more than 50% of the total number of poor is to be found in rural areas.** A major activity in rural communities is agriculture, which is dominated by small-scale, local and community-based rural stakeholders. However, stakeholders in these rural communities are still hindered by a lack of 'space' and a lack of capacity to become involved in decision-making and the management of projects. Consequently, there is no question that meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015 will require a special focus on reinforcing the capacity of those organizations representing marginalized groups in rural areas (small farmers, agricultural workers, women and youth) through improved access to information as well as enhanced capacity for analysis and advocacy.
- **Limited coordination of regional policy and strategy initiatives in CARICOM.** Regional agricultural policy development, and more critically implementation, has been plagued by a steady diminishing capacity for policy formulation, implementation and coordination, both within Member states and at the level of the CARICOM Secretariat. This has been a major and continuous constraint to ensuring an enabling policy environment for agriculture and food and nutrition security in the region.
- **Food and nutrition security (FNS) concerns have been another major issue in the Caribbean.** The heavy dependence of Caribbean countries on a wide range of imported foods has resulted in most of the countries being designated 'net-food importing developing countries (NFIDCs)'. With regional food import bill estimated in 2008 at US\$4.0 billion, there is the urgent need to ensure that Member States and the region as a whole, retains the capacity to produce a minimum portion of its food needs. Changing food consumption patterns (linked to the increased reliance on food imports) has heightened the level of anxiety with regards to the rising levels of dietary-related illness and diseases (particularly NCDs) among a wider cross-section of the region's populations.

There is consensus in Region that there is the need for a regional response to reposition the agricultural sector. This is driven by its declining contribution to the Caribbean economy and the deepening of regional integration through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic (DR). Within CARICOM, there has been a history of common policies and strategies for agricultural development. Such frameworks include the 1996 Regional Transformation Program for Agriculture (RTP) and the 2003 Jagdeo Initiative (JI), which was developed in response to a CARICOM Heads of Government call for a regional agricultural repositioning strategy that would allow the Region to decide on the sort of institutions and mechanisms needed to reposition agriculture to be

implemented through interventions to alleviate nine (9) Key Binding Constraints (KBCs).

<b>Jagdeo Initiative (JI) Nine (9) Key Binding Constraints (KBCs)</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Lead Country/Agency</b>
1	Inadequate Financing and Investment in the Sector	Barbados/CARIBBEAN Development Bank (CDB)
2	Inefficient and outdated Agricultural Health and Food Safety Regulations	Trinidad and Tobago/CARICOM Secretariat
3	Inadequate Land and Water Resource Management and Distribution Systems	Guyana/ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
4	Deficient and uncoordinated Disaster Risk Management	Antigua and Barbuda/FAO/IICA/CARDI
5	Market and Marketing Development and its linkages	Jamaica/Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA)
6	Ineffective Research and Development	St. Lucia/CARDI
7	Lack of skilled human resources	Dominica/University of the West Indies
8	Disorganized, Un-Coordinated Private Sector	St. Vincent and the Grenadines/Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA)
9	Inadequate Transportation System	St. Kitts and Nevis/CARICOM Secretariat

At their Thirtieth Meeting in Liliendaal, Guyana, 2-5 July, 2009, Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community declared that agriculture is of strategic significance for the sustainable development of the Community, and have identified the sector as one of the drivers of the region's economic growth, contributing as it does to rural development, GDP, employment and export earnings of the Member States of the Community. The Liliendaal Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security re-affirms political commitments to pursue a strategic approach to transforming the agricultural sector into an internationally competitive one with increased capacity to contribute to the sustained economic development of the Community, profitability of entrepreneurs, the economic livelihood of the rural sector and to food and nutrition security. These separate initiatives are expected to bear strongly on the environment for agricultural and rural development in the region.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2012-2016 is expected to facilitate UN development cooperation in the Caribbean through partnerships with governments, civil society, and other development partners. The TCP is expected to contribute to the achievements of three of the six outcomes expected under UNDAF, namely:

- Strengthened enabling environment and social protection services and systems to reduce poverty and inequity, and increase economic participation and social inclusion, with emphasis on vulnerable groups;

- Strengthened policy, legislative framework and food production environment towards higher levels of food and nutrition security; and
- A more enabling environment established for the reduction of incidence, morbidity and mortality from HIV and non-communicable diseases.

These considerations highlighted the need for an urgent and coherent national and regional response to the food security and allied public health and nutrition challenges confronted by Antigua and Barbuda and other CARICOM Member States. They have led to the formulation of the CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy (RFNSP), which was approved by CARICOM Ministers of Agriculture in October 2010. A Regional Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan was elaborated and approved CARICOM Ministers in October 2011. Clearly, a common approach that builds on the comparative advantage of individual Member States will improve availability, accessibility and affordability of food, especially for the most vulnerable. However, a consideration of paramount importance in support of a regional approach and policy for food and nutrition security is that it will enable Member States to secure for their private and public sectors as well as for households and communities throughout the region, benefits and economic externalities that they would be unable to access acting in isolation, and at a lower cost than they would otherwise face.

St. Kitts and Nevis policy is grounded in the commitments made by the country and other Member States in adhering to the Right to Food Convention as well as those made at the World Food Summit in 2009, especially Principle 3: Strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of: 1) direct action to tackle hunger immediately for the most vulnerable and 2) medium and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. It will also enable them to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1, namely, to reduce respectively the proportion and the absolute numbers of people who suffer from hunger and malnutrition by half by 2015 and to measure progress towards its achievement.

The policy is set in the context of a mix of pro-actively linked national and regional policies including the Community Agricultural Policy (CAP), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH), Community Agribusiness Strategy (CAS), the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) and the SKN 2013-2016 Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS). There are also on-going discussions on Agricultural Risk Management and Crop Insurance Policy and Programmes.

It is in this context that this National Food and Nutrition Security Policy has been prepared, taking into account relevant regional policies and initiatives, to ensure that the national food production, processing, distribution, marketing, trade, and food safety and agricultural public health systems are capable of providing safe, adequate, nutritious and affordable food for the people of Antigua and Barbuda at all times, thereby achieving food and nutrition security.

### 1.3 Summary of Problems to be Addressed

The critical food and nutrition problems facing SKN relate to all four pillars of food and nutrition security, viz., availability, access, consumption/utilization and stability. With respect to food availability the situation analysis revealed that while total food energy is available to meet population food goals, the country faces deficits for staples, fruits, vegetables and legumes and an over-supply of energy from foods from animals, fats/oils and sweeteners. In particular, relative to recommended population food goals:

- Food energy deficit exists for staples (32%), fruits (7%), vegetables (67%) and legumes/nuts (36%);
- Food energy over-supply exists for fats/oils (85%), foods from animals (35%) and sweeteners (138%) (FAOSTAT, 2011).

St Kitts and Nevis is a net importer of food. Food import in 2008 was US\$45 million compared to US\$14 million in 1988, an increase of 221% over 20 years (Silva, 2010). The constraints to food availability include low productivity, short-term land tenures, inadequate water supply, difficulty in accessing credit, loss of arable lands to housing construction, lack of storage, and over-exploitation of marine food sources. The policy will therefore seek to address these constraints and align food availability with recommended population food goals through specific strategies and interventions in domestic food production and food imports.

With respect to food access, while poverty rates have declined from 30% in 2000 to 24% in 2008 this level of poverty constrains households' access to foods. Indigent poverty (i.e., the food-poor) has also declined significantly from 11% in 2000 to 1.4% in 2008, a good sign that poverty has been on the decline. The most recent (2008) data show that unemployment among indigent population is 6%.

With respect to nutritional adequacy of the population, SKN is undergoing a period of nutritional and epidemiological transitions. The nutrition transition is reflected in a shift in diets away from indigenous staples (starchy roots and cereals), locally grown fruits, vegetables, legumes, and limited foods from animals, to diets that are more varied and energy dense, consisting of more processed foods (including processed beverages), more from animals, more added sugars, high in fats/oils and sodium, and often more alcohol. This shift in diets is ultimately reflected in the epidemiological transition which is seen in a reduction of under-nutrition and infectious diseases and an increase of overweight and obesity, one of the main risk factors in nutrition/food-related non-communicable chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular diseases and some forms of cancers). These diseases are the main public health problems in SKN. Additionally, pockets of iron-deficiency anaemia remains a problem and the prevalence of un-supplemented exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months remains low.

Finally, with respect to stability, SKN is a small island state that is subject to frequent shocks from external economic forces and vulnerable to hurricanes, droughts and wind storms. Global changes in climate bring more frequent and higher risk of natural disasters that have the effect of reversing several years of economic growth. There is therefore need for disaster



preparedness and mitigation strategies to protect agriculture, social infrastructure, the ecosystem and housing.

In developing the National Plan of Action (NPAN) to implement the SKN Food and Nutrition Security Policy, it is important to distinguish between immediate, underlying, and basic root causes of food and nutrition security problems. These projects must be implementable at sectoral and community levels within the limitations of existing resources. This is a critical role of the SKN's Interim Committee on Food and Nutrition to assess and monitor the food and nutrition situation at national level and for other stakeholders, viz., the Public and Private Sectors and NGOs/CBOs, to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate nutrition interventions at all levels using the participatory approach.

## **1.4 Guiding Principles**

The preparation of the Policy Framework is based on the following principles:

### **Evidenced-based**

- A solid and concise FNS situational analysis was undertaken to ensure that the Policy and the subsequent Action Plan are evidence-based. The situational analysis was not be a research study, but clearly indicated what the key FNS problems and their causes are and which population groups/households are most affected by these problems. Thus, a causality and vulnerability analysis was conducted. Maximum use was made of available documentation which was complemented by information obtained by interviewing key informants, when necessary.

### **Good Governance Practices/Right to Food Principles**

- The FNS Policy and Action Plan will incorporate good governance practices or Right to Food principles, including issues related to Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Transparency, Full Respect for Human Dignity, Empowerment, Rule of Law, Inclusion and Considerations of Equity, and Responsiveness to Needs and Priorities.

### **Policy Coherence**

- The FNS policy and Action Plan will be coherent with underlying tenets of regional policies and actions and initiatives such as the RFNSP, the RFNSAP, the CARICOM Community Agricultural policy, the Jagdeo Initiative, the Liliendaal Declaration, Caribbean Cooperation on Health etc. and relevant national policies, and focused on translating into action these political statements and policies related to and supportive of good health and nutrition, rural and food crop/livestock/fisheries development and agro-food production, processing, marketing and distribution

### **Protection of the Natural Resources**

- Recognizing therefore that the forests and fisheries constitute substantive resources for food and nutrition security to be protected through adaptation to climate change.

**Agriculture and Food Production**

- Recognizing the vital role of the food and agriculture sector in the quest for national food and nutrition security and the need to strengthen its ability to attract youth and entrepreneurship as well as adequate investment in agricultural production, post-harvest handling, storage, distribution and exchange as an integral part of the private sector of SKN and the Caribbean region and a major source of employment and incomes for a large segment of the population.

## SECTION II

### FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

## 2 FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

### 2.1 Introduction

This section provides the specific policy statements and associated strategies, which are organized under the four pillars of food and nutrition security, for addressing the critical food and nutrition problems of St. Kitts and Nevis. The purpose of these policy statements and strategies is to provide clear guidance with respect to the actions that are to be pursued by the Government of the Federation to improve the food and nutrition security status of the population. The long-term goal of the food and nutrition security policy is to ensure that all nationals, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Concurrently, and in conjunction with the action plan, this policy will support related actions within each of the four pillars of food and nutrition security to address the critical concerns to enhance the nutritional status of the people of St. Kitts and Nevis.

### 2.2 Vision and Strategic Objectives of the St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN) Food and Nutrition Security Policy

The long-term goal of the Policy is to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security and to eliminate all forms of malnutrition in order to have a well-nourished and healthy population that can fulfill its aspirations to good health and economic well-being and effectively contribute to national economic development.

More specifically, the Policy will seek to:

- Ensure that a sufficient quantity of nutritious food of appropriate quality is available to all people in twin island Federation of SKN, through increased domestic production and a **sustainable** level of imports, with special emphasis on a structured food import replacement programme (**Food Availability**).
- Ensure that all individuals in SKN have access to adequate resources to acquire appropriate foods for a nutritious diet (**Food Access**).
- Ensure that all individuals in SKN reach a state of nutritional well-being through food choices and consumption that reflect Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) (**Food Utilization**).
- Ensure that all people in SKN have access to adequate, safe and nutritious food at all times, are not at risk of losing access to it due to shocks, and consume/utilize foods that reflect physiological needs (**Stability of Food Supply**).

This will entail the formulation of policy instruments and the establishment of institutional mechanisms to impact under six (6) broad areas:

- Economic expansion and diversification of the agricultural sector, particularly given the large import bill and scope to increase domestic agricultural production.
- Improved nutrition and health status of the population.
- Improved management operations of the social protection systems.
- Expansion of pro-poor employment and income generating opportunities.
- Enhanced resilience against threats from natural disasters and economic shocks.
- Good governance and management of food and nutrition security – by institutionalizing the rules of good governance evident in greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services.

## **2.3 Food and Nutrition Security Policy**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

This section provides the specific policy statements and associated strategies, which are organized under the four pillars of food and nutrition security, for addressing the critical food and nutrition problems of St. Kitts and Nevis. The purpose of these policy statements and strategies is to provide clear guidance with respect to the actions that are to be pursued by the Government to improve the food security status of the population. The long-term goal of the food and nutrition security policy is to ensure that all persons living in St. Kitts and Nevis, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Concurrently, and in conjunction with the action plan, this policy will support related actions within each of the four pillars of food security to address the critical concerns to enhance the nutritional status of the people of St. Kitts and Nevis, such as alleviate poverty, increase agriculture output/productivity, food replacement, etc.

### **2.3.2 Food Availability**

**Promote the sustainable production of safe, affordable, nutritious, good quality of local food commodities/products.**

#### **Policy Statement 1:**

The Government of St Kitts and Nevis (SKN) will enact a Food Security Law to ensure domestic production of a minimum threshold of a selected basket of foods based on the production capacity and capability the resource endowment as well as national comparative advantage and to ensure the availability of safe and healthy food to consumers. This law will be supported by adequate production and trade policies to

increase production and productivity of the domestic agriculture and agro-processing sectors and protect local industries from unfair external competition. The specific trade policies will aim to promote the development of and access to domestic and regional markets for domestic food products and are needed both in terms of reducing food price and income instability and increasing industry profitability. Under the Food Security Law, the Minister of Agriculture will be empowered to determine and adjust the specific quantities and types of crops and livestock products to be covered from time to time. Imports of these products or close substitutes shall be subject to approval by Ministry of Agriculture.

### **Policy Statement 2:**

The Government of SKN will promote increased availability of locally produced nutritious food at competitive market prices through the utilization of a national approach to production planning in the Federation. This will be effected through:

- Identification and promotion of priority commodities that can be produced competitively and in required quantities based on resource endowment and comparative advantage in which:
  - Priority commodities will be selected on the basis of the promotion of a nutritionally balanced diet comprised of local food products and guided by Food Based Dietary Guidelines of the country
  - Criteria for selection of the commodities/products will be based on factors such as market demand, competitiveness, nutritional composition/elements, domestic resource endowment and their strategic importance
  - Small producers (farmers, fisher folk, cottage food processors etc., with a focus on gender) shall be critical in the production of the identified food commodities/products
  - The widest possible utilization of local products for domestic consumption in an aggressive buy-local campaign.
- Provision of trade policy support for selected commodities/products.
- Conduct of value chain analyses to diagnose and address constraints in the development of the identified industries in collaboration with relevant institutions.
- Support the establishment of a nationwide production schedule.
- Development of action plans for the selected industries, with all actors along the value chain.
- Promote the establishment of cooperatives and/or cooperative agreements among farmers for efficient, effective production of high quality commodities.

- Facilitation of dialogue among all relevant stakeholders along the value chain to ensure consensus building on strategic actions to be implemented.
- Support to the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive set of industry support measures to address identified challenges and to exploit opportunities.
- Support to the elaboration and implementation of an effective and efficient governance models for each targeted industry.
- Ensure an enabling environment for agro-industrial promotion and development.
- Support to measures aimed at building of capacity among small producers in the market driven production of identified food commodity products.

### **Policy Statement 3:**

The Government of SKN will facilitate the improvement of the production and productivity of the identified crops, livestock and fish commodities/products through:

- Promote the establishment of an integration and coordination mechanism between the Ministries of Agriculture of St. Kitts and Nevis.
- Generation and transfer of appropriate technology through market driven research programmes at existing institutions (strengthened where appropriate) and cooperation with international development partners.
- Facilitation of the adoption of new and existing technologies in food crop cultivation and fisheries and livestock management through the building of technical capabilities and capacities of producers through training and technology transfer in best practices.
- Identification, documentation and dissemination of best practices for sustainable production of identified food crops, livestock, fish and other food commodities/products.
- Development of a seed and genetic material plan, seed bank and implementation mechanism for the production/importation, conservation, evaluation and distribution of high quality planting and genetic material.
- Promote the adoption of new/improved technologies in livestock breeding, and production to ensure the preservation of existing and where necessary, the improvement of genetic stock.
- Promote the production and utilization of local raw material in livestock feed production.

- Promote the sustainable exploitation of the country's fisheries resources and greater investment in aquaculture to increase the availability of fish and fish products.
- Promotion of on-farm mechanization through greater use and improved access to modern and appropriate small-scale equipment/tools.
- Promotion of and utilization of Good Agricultural Practices by producers to include, inter alia:
  - Promotion and utilization of appropriate fertilizer practices through proper soil testing and application types and levels.
  - Promotion and utilization of soil conservation practices to reduce soil slippage, enhance soil fertility and facilitate increased land productivity on a sustainable basis.
  - Promotion and utilization of Integrated Pest Management in agri-food production systems.
  - Encouragement of more effective, efficient and sustainable use of agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals in agri-food production systems.
  - Promotion and utilization of traceability in agri-food production systems.
  - Promotion and utilization of effective and efficient land and water management practices in agri-food production systems.
  - Promotion and utilization of environmentally sound waste disposal and recycling systems in the production processes.
  - Promotion and utilization of sustainable fisheries management practices.
- Provide the necessary incentives to farmers for the production of commodities as determined by the department based on country-wide requirements

#### **Policy Statement 4:**

The Government of SKN will create an enabling environment for increased production and productivity and improved marketing of identified crops, livestock and fish commodities/products through the:

- Establishment of a modern efficient and effective institutional structure and mechanism to facilitate the Departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and related Agencies in order to provide more effective and efficient support to producers.
  - Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity for research and development so that it is demand driven and responsive to the needs of producers through the development, adaptation and adoption of appropriate technologies and methods to improve agricultural productivity.

- Fostering greater synergies between extension and research and development to ensure the effective dissemination of new and existing technologies to stakeholders.
- Expanding and strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of extension services to provide better support and more rapid and extensive transfer of new and innovative technologies to primary producers and other actors along the value chain as well as for linking producers to markets.
- Strengthening the institutional mechanism for inter-sectoral linkages (agriculture, environment, tourism, health, education etc.) to prevent duplication effort and wastage of resources.
- Strengthening the Departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and related Agencies capacities to provide market intelligence and information to producers and end users, thereby reducing information asymmetries and creating greater marketing opportunities along the value chain and to encourage greater use of market intelligence information among value chain actors.
- Promoting increased finance and investment to the sector by:
  - Increasing Government budgetary allocation to the sector.
  - Accessing and securing, in an aggressive manner Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).
  - Providing improved incentives to nationals to attract investment in agriculture.
  - Providing business facilitation and critical support services to expand and attract new foreign direct and domestic investments to the sector through investment promotion actions.
  - Expanding the pool of loan-able funds and supporting the creation and implementation of innovative financial instruments.
  - Facilitating the accessibility and affordability of credit to producers, including agro-processors to enable them to invest in new agri-business ventures and technologies.
  - Promoting measures to improve the capacity of cooperatives to access grant funds and other sources of available funding.
  - Facilitating improved delivery of credit to the agri-food by financial institutions and micro-credit agencies by supporting the strengthening of existing institutions and, where necessary, the creating new ones.
  - Providing access to low cost funding and risk management facilities and mechanisms to targeted farming population and processors.
  - Identifying and progressively closing the infrastructure investment gap required to meet the food and nutrition security needs of the most vulnerable groups in the Federation



- Improve market access for small producers through improved market information and buyer/seller coordination and by promoting the value chain approach.
- Reducing the incidence of praedial larceny through the implementation of a holistic approach involving improved legislation, traceability systems, monitoring, surveillance, enforcement and public awareness.
- Strengthening the overall agricultural education framework and increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of the relevant institutions in providing leadership in education, research, training and policy formulation and planning to support the sustainability of the agricultural sector.
- Developing/Strengthening of national training curricula with a strong practical element to certify relevant workers at various levels aimed at improving management and technical capabilities.
- Improving the management of trade policy to ensure that it is conducive to agricultural the development by providing local producers with a level playing field on which to compete with their foreign counterparts.
- Improving the access and availability of land to producers in order to facilitate the expansion of agricultural production by creating a single, viable and sustainable approach to the development of agricultural lands through the promulgation of an Agricultural Land Utilization Policy.

#### **Policy Statement 5:**

The Government of SKN will put in place Quality Management Systems and Measures, and establish the related legislative framework (for example, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point-HACCP, ISO 9001:2008, ISO 17025, ISO 14001) throughout the food production and processing sector (FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and similar legislation in the European Union) to ensure the certification of farmers and agro processors by:

- Accessing and facilitating technical assistance for HACCP certification and also seek as far as possible to assist entities through institutional support and financing to attain ISO certification.
- Improve support systems for equipment, quality, and food safety management that are more affordable and accessible to small companies.

### **Policy Statement 6:**

The Government of SKN will promote cost efficiency of value added production for locally produced and imported semi-processed foods and livestock products.

- Facilitating the creation of production clusters and value chains to satisfy increasing sophistication of consumer demand.
- Strengthening Producers Organizations and support capacity building of rural producers to facilitate collaborative production planning, supply to intermediaries and marketing of foods to meet consumer demand.
- Constructing and operating critical infrastructure such as post-harvest facilities, abattoirs, cold storage, packing houses through strategic public/private sector partnerships.
- Promoting and implementing systems for food safety- traceability, residue testing, standards and grades.
- Providing assistance in strengthening the linkages among the actors along the value chain (processors, importers, hotels, restaurants, fast food, etc.) through dialogue, coordination and technical support and advice from the Departments of Ministry of Agriculture and its related Agencies.
- Providing the necessary incentives to promote the use of small scale processing equipment that reduces the cost of production.
- Increasing the efficiency of value addition in food processing based on regulated (using necessary safeguards) levels of imported raw materials, which impacts the cost of production and the price of food to consumers.
- Implementing measures to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Promoting and implementing public education programmes to ensure buy-in by producers.

### **Policy Statement 7:**

The Government of SKN will formulate and implement management systems for sustainable land and water use taking into consideration variations in climate through the:

- Implementation of the SKN Land Use Policy to ensure the adoption/utilization of production systems that are appropriate to production zones and size of enterprises.
- Promoting the adoption of efficient, effective and sustainable soil and water management practices including:
  - Drainage and irrigation
  - Water harvesting
  - Soil and water conservation
  - Watershed management
  - Adoption of practices to mitigate land based sources of water pollution and land degradation.
- Establishment of an institutional mechanism for better integration and coordination of water management initiatives.
- Promoting the adoption of climate adaptable practices e.g. varietal selection, protected agriculture.

#### **Policy Statement 8:**

The Government of SKN will create and exploit all trade related agreements that will benefit domestic agriculture through the:

- Identification of elements of trade-related agreements that can benefit domestic agriculture.
- Development of mechanisms and strategies to exploit benefits that can be derived from trade-related agreements.
- Supporting efforts at the national and regional level to improve quality and reduce the cost of transportation of agricultural produce.

#### **2.3.3 Food Access**

**Ensure access of the SKN Federation households and individuals to sufficient nutritious affordable foods all times.**

#### **Policy Statement1:**

The Government of SKN will improve access to affordable nutritional foods to low socio-economical groups (elderly, single parents and/or adults who live at or below the poverty level, school children) through the following:

- Implementing improved mechanisms for measuring and monitoring food insecurity and poverty, including:
  - Identifying and mapping vulnerable groups (taking a gender sensitive approach) that are prone to chronic and /or transitory food insecurity, and establish a national database of this information.
  - Compiling a basic dataset of food insecurity/vulnerability indicators. Indicators include among others, level of education, household income, and number of children in household.
  - Enhancing data collection methodologies.
  - Utilizing evidence-based research, such as the Surveys of Living Conditions and Household Budget Surveys as a basis for food insecurity and poverty measurement, planning and monitoring.
  - Strengthening the capacity and capabilities of relevant agencies to monitor food insecurity/poverty vulnerability factors.
  - Building national capacity in the use of Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems to identify food insecurity, under-nutrition and malnutrition at the household level.
  
- Ensuring that economic opportunities for sustainable livelihoods are enhanced, created and/or expanded by:
  - Improving rural livelihoods, especially that of small producers, agricultural labourers and marginalized urban dwellers, through the promotion of entrepreneurship and home food production (vegetables, root crops, poultry, small ruminant rearing), utilizing backyard/container/protected gardening technology.
  - Supporting mechanisms to ensure that the activities implemented have maximum and sustained effects on rural livelihoods.
  - Expanding production processes along the food chain to include post-harvest handling, food processing and preparation, as well as strengthening the linkages with other alternative livelihood activities, in order to expand employment opportunities for producers and broaden the household income base.
  - Revising of poverty reduction programmes to encompass productive safety net mechanisms/interventions and complementary measures to preclude a dependency syndrome and promote sustainable livelihoods and food and nutrition security.
  - Developing and implementing appropriate mechanisms and programmes for transition and absorption of displaced workers, especially in rural areas.
  - Promoting human capital development among poor and vulnerable groups through the widening of the scope and reach of vocational training programmes, adult learning certification programmes, and continuous learning programmes.

- In collaboration with the private sector, expanding apprenticeship and other welfare-to-work programmes to equip relevant groups with the necessary skills in preparation for entry in the workforce.
- Promoting increased access of affordable and innovative means of credit to vulnerable groups through new and existing microfinance credit schemes and relevant business support services to finance new and existing business ventures.
- Promoting increased access to land through the Land Divestment Programme and the implementation of the Agricultural Land Use Policy.
- Developing and implementing interventions to enable poor individuals and households to formalize asset ownership.
- Enhancing coordination and strengthening of community support systems through capacity building of Community Based Organizations (CBO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) and Producer Organizations to provide greater support to their members and communities for livelihood creation and enhancement.
- Improving and ensuring equitable access to basic public goods and services (such as water, electricity, sanitation, education, roads, healthcare, etc.) and community infrastructure and through existing programmes and institutions to improve human welfare and facilitate investment.
- Ensuring access of the population to minimum basic food items providing recommended dietary allowance, through:
  - Developing and implementing appropriate fiscal measures to mitigate the cost of food on the vulnerable population.
  - Using moral suasion in collaboration with private sector business interests.
  - Improving statutory regulations and implementing appropriate market interventions as necessary.
  - Promoting a minimum cost nutritious food basket to inform the setting of minimum wage, and for promotion of healthy eating.
  - Developing and improving social meal programmes, such as school based meal programs, meals on wheels, food basket programmes to include at least 50% local food content, etc.
  - Reviewing and adjusting periodically, the minimum wage food basket and tracking and monitoring food prices, including the list of zero-rated items.
  - Facilitating comprehensive and accurate market information dissemination to the population, including the aggressive use of Public Service Announcements.

## **Policy Statement 2:**

The Government of SKN will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the food marketing and distribution system through:

- Developing a central market in St. Kitts and upgrading of the Nevis Marketing Corporation and the establishment retail market facilities and packaging centers as public goods to facilitate efficient markets and food safety/hazard control and to improve food availability and lower market prices.
- Strengthening the capacity and capability of the St. Kitts Central Marketing Corporation and the Nevis Marketing Corporation to implement a National Market Intelligence system in order to facilitate greater linkages between buyers and sellers and reduction of information asymmetries.
- Improving farm to market channels, e.g. access roads and post-harvest grading and handling (Support the rehabilitation and maintenance of the farm/feeder road network).
- Promoting greater market integration through the construction and rehabilitation, and operation of post-harvest and distribution facilities, utilizing public and private sector partnership arrangements.
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of producer organizations to assist in the collective marketing of agricultural produce.
- Encouraging community bartering of agricultural produce in the absence of monetary provisions.
- Collaborating with the private sector to upgrade the transportation infrastructure by fostering greater use of refrigerated trucks and appropriate packaging material, and by maintaining cold chains for crops and livestock products to ensure quality assurance and food safety.
- Improving ports facilities and logistics and reducing bureaucratic rigidities.
- Ensuring that food imports conform to all public health and commerce regulations and standards of food safety, including storage and transportation, as well as facilitate island-wide access to food.
- Developing emergency response mechanisms to assess and address general food accessibility at times of ad hoc shocks, such as natural disasters and price increases.
- Collaborating with health, national security, and industry and commerce authorities to ensure that appropriate licenses and other standards are enforced throughout the food distribution system.

## **Policy Statement 3:**

The Government of SKN will improve the social protection system, including the strengthening of the safety net system which provides coverage for vulnerable groups (women, aged, children, youth, and persons with disabilities) through:

- Preparing and implementing a modern Social Protection Plan, utilizing a strategic approach which details the country's medium to long-term priorities and actions in relation to social protection.
  - Establishing a National Social Protection Commission to oversee coordination, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation of social protection.
  - Evaluating and restructuring of the social safety net programmes to allow for proper identification and targeting and provision of service for the poor. A Life cycle approach and gender mainstreaming will be key to planning and decision-making in respect and of the restructuring of the programmes.
  - Including consideration of food security status in the identification of social assistance beneficiaries.
- 
- Improving the coordination and collaboration among stakeholder agencies to ensure that efforts are not duplicated, that resources are properly apportioned, that information is shared, that gaps are better identified and bridged that efforts are mutually supported.
  - Establishment of a Social Benefits Management Information System database to provide details of each recipient and benefits received from the various programmes, which would allow for real-time evaluation of the impact of the programmes and better targeting, and reduce the chance of recipients 'working the system'.
  - Increasing general awareness of the existence and provisions of social assistance programmes.
  - Establishing reliable mechanisms for sustained financing of the requisite range of welfare support programmes. In this regard, in addition to traditional means of funding, Government shall also seek to promote and encourage multi sector partnerships between state and non-state sectors to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable.
  - Encouraging and strengthening the capacity of families to provide for their vulnerable members; fostering general awareness about the needs of poor and vulnerable groups so as to engender greater participation by civil society in helping to meet their food and other needs.
  - Improving and expanding the school feeding programme in order to provide adequate and nutritious food for children in schools.
  - Providing appropriate access to food for all wards of the state in institutional care.

#### **Policy Statement 4:**

The Government of SKN will ensure that persons made vulnerable and food insecure during emergencies caused by natural hazards/ economic shocks and food shortages, have access to food through:

- Provisions in the National Food Emergency Plan outlining the national strategy for collaboration with the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, donor agencies and

disaster relief agencies for temporary assistance to meet the basic food needs of vulnerable and food insecure persons.

- Integration of food security provisions into emergency assistance strategies for extremely vulnerable groups under existing social welfare programmes and social safety nets.
  - Making provisions/accommodations for the special dietary needs of certain groups, including the chronically ill, infants, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. This will be accomplished by the use of facilities such as clinics and health centers as access points for those basic foods
  - Using fiscal measures and trade policy to ensure the accessibility of a low cost basket of nutritious food to the vulnerable population.
- 
- Develop various vocational training programs for vulnerable groups, especially women, to improve their skills
  - Identify a minimum nutritious food basket and advocating for this to used as a key element in setting the minimum wage in the federation.

#### **2.3.4 Food Utilization**

**Promote the commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable and nutritious food commodities/products.**

##### **Policy Statement 1:**

The Government of SKN will increase consumer awareness of nutritional standards and food safety by:

- Promoting, through the mass media, nutritional standards and good nutrition practices, wise purchasing, storage and utilization of food products by:
  - Implementing a promotional a national campaign that emphasizes the health and nutritional benefits of selected national foods.
  - Utilizing outstanding National/Regional personalities to promote the consumption of nutritious national/regional foods.
- Increasing awareness among policy makers and planners of the extent and severity of nutritional problems and of their causes, of the economic benefit of interventions and of how activities under their control can affect the nutritional status of different socio-economic groups.
- Supporting the development, promotion and implementation of population dietary (nutritional) goals (Food based Dietary Guidelines).



- Analyzing and disseminating data and information on the cost of a nutritionally balanced economical food basket with a view to monitoring access to food for vulnerable groups.
- Encouraging and supporting the inclusion of the community in the identification of their own nutritional problems and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- Promoting and facilitating linkages with civil society, private sector and consumer advocacy groups to increase their participation in the process of food and nutrition security planning and implementation.
- Ensuring the prevention and management of food borne diseases through standardized food safety programmes including inspection of restaurants and food shops and certification of food handlers.

### **Policy Statement 2:**

The GSKN will implement policies to ensure optimal nutrition and health of young children.

- Promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding and young feeding practices through:
  - In service training for healthcare providers.
  - Breastfeeding campaign.
  - Support for families and spouse.
  - Baby Friendly hospitals imitative.
  - Training in preparing safe and nutritious complementary feed.
- Supporting increased coverage of immunization for all children 0 – 5.years. activities will include:
  - Education on safe vaccines.
  - Monitoring, treating and reporting adverse drug reaction.
  - Training on “cold chain system.”
  - Follow up to ensure full immunization coverage.
- Supporting surveillance at hospitals, health centres and doctors clinics to monitor growth, supplementary breastfeeding and infectious diseases.
- Conducting continuous training for growth monitoring.
- Conducting the training for parents and child minders in preparing safe and nutritious foods.
- Establishing baby friendly infrastructure in areas such as hospitals, clinics and airports.

### **Policy Statement 3:**

The Government of SKN will promote and support the utilization of schools and other institutions to provide entry points for interventions aimed at the prevention and control of some of the identified nutrition conditions and influence food tastes and preferences. In this context, the policy will seek to address the following critical areas:

- Developing and implementing a national comprehensive school nutrition policy through:
  - Supporting the development of curricula at different levels of the education system - teacher training, early childhood institutions, primary and secondary schools - that include nutrition and family health education for good health and lifestyle choices.
  - Developing national guidelines for the preparation and sale to children of school meals that promote health and wellness.
  - Adopting a policy that the local content of the meals provided under national school feeding programmes should increase in line with the national food import replacement policy/strategy.
  - Reviewing the school gardening programmes to identify strategic areas for intervention, including the provision of technical support, promotional and other relevant materials. (Objectives: Nutrition; Growing food; Dietary choices.
  - Developing national social marketing campaigns to encourage nutritious dietary/food choices in schools communities.
- Recruitment of qualified nutrition officers to monitor implementation of school nutrition policy.
- Promoting, supporting and protecting appropriate infant and young child feeding practices.
- Promoting the development and implementation of national school health and nutrition policies.
- Establishing mechanisms for the effective monitoring and evaluation of school health and nutrition programmes.
- Ensuring that the meals provided under national school feeding programmes have a high input of local/regional foods.
- Encouraging and support an environment conducive to increased physical activity in schools, work places and the wider community in compliance with WHO guidelines.

- Influencing food tastes and preferences in the education sector starting at the level of pre-schools through tertiary level to prevent and mitigate against identified nutrition-related conditions.
- Supporting the expansion and promotion of competitions about food and nutrition in schools.
- Enhancing the human resource capital to promote healthy diets and lifestyles.
- Promoting the availability of foods in line with recommended national population dietary goals through.
  - Promoting the use of food based dietary guidelines.
  - Promoting domestic production and align food imports in keeping with national dietary food goals.
  - Strengthening the nutrition surveillance system to monitor the nutritional status of the population (throughout life course) and identify those at risk of nutrition related conditions.
  - Analyzing and disseminating data on the cost of a nutritionally balanced economical food basket with a view to monitoring access to food for vulnerable groups.
- Utilizing pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools as entry points for interventions to prevent and mitigate some of the identified nutrition conditions, and influence tastes and preferences in the education sector.
- Transiting PE programmes to Physical Education and Health programmes which includes the studying of Food and Nutrition, Health and Fitness ( areas of healthy lifestyle: fertility, activity levels of the population, promotion of abstinence from smoking and drugs, drinking in moderation and managing stressful situations).
- Ensuring that all Physical Education and Health programmes at all schools have a qualified teacher/facilitator.
- Creating and maintaining healthy public spaces, such as school recreation centres/gyms, parks, public swimming pool, etc.
- Establishing and maintaining school gardening programmes including the provision of technical support, promotional materials, etc.
- Supporting promotional campaigns that emphasize:
  - the consumption of local commodities/products
  - the planting of fruit trees (orchards, gardens at homes, businesses, public areas, etc.).
- Give support for actions against substance abuse.

#### **Policy Statement 4:**

The Government of SKN will increase support for the prevention and management HIV/AIDS

- Promoting education campaign for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- Promoting early health care and counseling services for people with HIV/AIDS
- Strengthening VCT, PICT and PMTCT programmes

- Subsidizing nutritious food and supplements.
- Conducting continuous training of health care workers in the nutritional needs of PLHIV.
- Supporting PLHIV in developing skills in preparation of safe and nutritious foods.

#### **Policy Statement 5:**

The Government of SKN will strengthen initiatives to prevent micronutrient deficiencies.

- Promoting healthy diets and lifestyles throughout the life cycle.
- Promoting healthy practices among women of child bearing age and in the prenatal period placing emphasis on micronutrient rich foods such as iron, folate, zinc, etc.
- Conducting dietary counseling with pregnant woman in the antenatal and postnatal clinics.
- Monitoring and strengthening the distribution system for iron/folate tablets in antenatal clinics.
- Implementing food and nutrition supplementary programmes for vulnerable groups such as women of childbearing age, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, children and adolescent girls.
- Conducting systematic reviews of available evidence on effective approaches to food fortification of staple products.
- Undertaking pilot fortification of commonly used staple foods based on available evidence and best practices.
- Reviewing and strengthening food fortification programmes and legislation.

#### **Policy Statement 6:**

The Government of SKN will support the implementation of diversified programmes throughout the life course in order to combat the problems of NCDs through:

- Promoting, protecting and supporting for appropriate infant and young child feeding practices by:
  - Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a comprehensive *national policy and national plan of action* on infant and young child feeding.
  - Identifying and allocating adequate *resources* – human, financial and organizational – to ensure the plan’s timely and successful implementation.

- Establishing a governmental/private sector/civil society body with the requisite expertise to perform an advisory role on all matters concerning infant and young child feeding.
- Ensuring that every facility providing maternity services implements international best practices and follows the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding set out in the joint WHO/UNICEF statement "Protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding: the special role of maternity services".
- Undertaking necessary actions to give effect to the aim and principles of all Articles of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety.
- Reviewing/upgrading and enacting legislation to protect the breastfeeding rights of working women and establish means for its implementation/enforcement.
- Developing and implementing a framework and/or mechanisms for promoting the responsible marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children, in order to reduce the availability to them of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars and salt.
- Promoting the consumption practices consistent with national population dietary goals in line with international standards through:
  - Establishing and implementing food-based dietary guidelines and healthier composition of food by reducing sodium/salt levels, eliminating industrially produced trans-fatty acids, decreasing saturated fats, limiting free sugars.
  - Developing the technical capability within the relevant ministries for operating an updated system for monitoring the cost of a nutritionally balanced food basket.
  - Implementing programmes of incentives and dis-incentives, where appropriate, for nutritious and less-nutritious foods.
  - Providing accurate and balanced information for consumers to enable them to make well-informed, healthy choices by implementing social marketing programmes (schools, workplace, communities).
- Strengthening the national nutrition surveillance systems in accordance with WHO standards, so as to monitor the nutritional status of the population and to identify those at risk of nutrition-related disorders by:
  - Implementing a strategy of universal assessment for all children (0 to 18 years old) to identify those at risk of malnutrition (deficiency diseases, overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases).

- Surveillance of dietary intake, physical activity, and related disease burden to include food borne illnesses and behavioural risk factors for under/over-nutrition.
- Developing and implementing of national guidelines on physical activity and dietary intake to promote health and wellness in schools, workplaces and communities.
- Providing Nutrition Standards and guidelines to strengthen programme development and implementation in all sectors through:
  - Incorporating nutrition principles into competency development and core curricula in schools and in professional and industry training.
  - Increasing the proficiency of persons giving nutrition information to the public.
  - Strengthening training programmes for nutrition and dietetic professionals to meet the needs of the national population by establishing on a sustainable basis an internship programme as an integral element of the curriculum, and ensuring a successful outcome to the collaborative efforts between MOH and the relevant training institutions.
  - Promoting nutrition training among food producers to assist the development and promotion of healthy, desirable food products and the development of standardized portions and labeling.

#### **Policy Statement 7:**

The Government of SKN will promote consumer protection through improved food quality and safety by:

- Strengthening of existing legislation and regulations and enacting new laws, where necessary, to foster the implementation/enforcement of food safety standards in keeping with international standards.
- Coordinating national guidelines for maintaining food safety and traceability programmes along the food value chain.
- Reviewing and upgrading the Food and Drug Act to incorporate standards for food and nutrition labeling.
- Developing and enacting consumer protection legislation to include accurate labelling of food for nutrition content and redress measures.
- Harmonizing national food standards based on the Codex Alimentarius and CARICOM and international standards.

- Developing and disseminating information on food safety and health hazards and standards for food and nutrition labeling.
- Promoting and increasing its investments in potable water, sanitation and waste disposal especially for vulnerable populations:
  - Strengthening regular water and sanitation monitoring of communities and institutions.
  - Providing facilities to communities for waste disposal.
- Upgrading the abattoir and meat market facilities.
- Building capacity of stakeholders including producers and technical personnel in the efficient management of pesticides, hormones, antibiotics and other agrochemicals as well as animal feeds.
- Training of crop and livestock farmers in GAP.
- Facilitating the safe handling of animals and local animal products including:
  - Ensuring appropriate slaughtering facilities, conditions and practices.
  - Training of producers and staff in safety practices for animal and animal products management.
  - Training of abattoir and meat market personnel in Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)
- Organizing educational/training workshops, programmes for certification in Food and Nutrition for medical practitioners, nurses, educators, food vendors, caregivers and hospitality workers.

### **2.3.5 Food Stability**

*Create an effective disaster preparedness and management system that can efficiently deal with the immediate and short-to-medium term food and nutrition security consequences of economic and financial shocks and natural disasters (hurricanes, drought, flooding, earthquakes) while at the same time strengthen the resilience to those consequences among the most vulnerable population groups.*

## Policy Statement 1:

The Government of SKN will support adaptation and mitigation strategies as a means of enhancing the stability of food and nutrition security over time among the vulnerable groups as a result financial and economic shocks through:

- Facilitating the establishment of a National Information Early Warning System (NIEWS), as part of a Regional Information Early Warning System (RIEWS), that ensures, inter alia, the national capability for the timely detection, prevention and resolution of threats to food and nutrition security as a result of economic and financial shocks.
- Improved national capacity for and conduct vulnerability mapping by:
  - Identifying national vulnerability/social protection policies and associated relevant legislative provisions as well as an analysis of the institutional framework for their implementation.
  - Compiling a basic dataset of vulnerability/food insecurity indicators.
  - Analyzing on-going social welfare/food access programmes and their inter-linkages, within the framework of the Right to Food Assessment Guidelines.
  - Build capacity at the national level in the use of the **Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems (FIVIMS)** to identify food insecurity, under-nutrition and malnutrition at the household level.
  - Conducting food insecurity and vulnerability mapping of vulnerable populations.
- Improved human capacity for the translation of information and data into policy decisions and the design of intervention strategies to address financial and economic threats by training a critical mass of personnel from various sectors, including the private sector, development partner institutions, universities and other academic institutions, in critical aspects of food and nutrition security issues, data analysis and interpretation, policy analysis and planning.
- Forge stronger relationships with member states and international agencies to improve information sharing especially during crises.
- Encouragement and participation in mechanisms to reduce poverty levels and provide increased opportunities for women and youth to become more involved in the food and agricultural sectors by:



- Creating of a Venture Capital Fund, with a particular focus on women and youth, to support innovative and creative value addition activities for traditional and non-traditional commodities along the supply value chain.
- Establishing of a Nation-wide inventory of vulnerable groups (farmers, producers groups, communities) and the levels of vulnerability (vulnerability analysis and mapping).
- Expanding (where needed) and linking of relief interventions with longer term structural improvement measures.
- Establishing of a food crisis fund that will cater to the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Identifying and establishing a portfolio of social welfare programmes, safety nets and other policy prescriptions (e.g. encouraging breastfeeding) that can be applied in times of crises.
- Promoting the establishment of additional safety nets for extremely vulnerable groups.
- Establishing of a mechanism that is triggered when there is a food crisis and consensual agreement on procedures to be followed at country level after a disaster (Preparedness strategy).

## Policy Statement 2:

The Government of SKN will support adaptation and mitigation strategies as a means of enhancing the stability in domestic food supplies and household access over time from threats of natural disasters and climate change through:

- Developing and implementing of Agricultural Disaster Risk Management and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies including risk management schemes for the agriculture, fisheries and forestry subsector.
- Pursue of climate resilient development which focuses on **adaptation** as well as mitigation strategies for the food and agriculture sector. In respect of **mitigation**, priority focus shall be placed on coastal management (which affects the fishing industry) as well as sustainable forest management for reducing emissions while improving livelihoods and ensuring their stability over time. This will also support a reduction in deforestation, improved watershed management and protection of carbon reservoirs.

- Promotion and encouragement of capacity enhancement within relevant ministries and public entities, research institutions and the hydro-meteorological departments and foster links with Institutions such as the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Emergency Disaster Management Agency (CEDMA), the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the National Met Office so that they can provide accurate and timely climate information to the farming community. In this area, within the framework of the ISFNS, Government of Antigua and Barbuda will seek technical and financial assistance for institution building and capacity development at national level from bilateral and multilateral partners and the International Finance Institutions.
  
- Integration of climate management considerations into the National Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Programme as well as into programmes to develop farm management and build industry and farming community capacities to increase resilience by:
  - developing dynamic farm/agricultural management tools that integrate climate change risks into existing and emerging farm management systems;
  - developing, where possible, environmental management systems for the agricultural sector;
  - identifying and building on successful indigenous knowledge and strategies for adaptation.
  
- Promoting the inclusion of adaptation and mitigation strategies in the curricula of all training institutions and extension training mechanisms for farmers and other producers e.g. farmer field schools.
  
- Reducing the impact of climate change on food production, incomes and livelihoods by:
  - Adopting an Integrated climate change management approach.
  - Developing and adapt sustainable land and water management practices to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
  - Retraining and retooling of farmers in appropriate production practices (e.g. conservation farming, zero tillage etc.) to adapt to the changing environment.
  - Developing sustainable land, water, forest and fishery management systems *inter alia* to address shortages and excessive rainfall and protect the natural resource base in the face of climate change.
  - Promoting cost-effective alternatives to fossil fuels that improve energy efficiency in agriculture.

- Supporting and funding increased water use efficiency across irrigated agriculture.
  - Investment in new or existing water management and control infrastructure.
  - Supporting the improvements in national monitoring and forecasting systems for weather and natural phenomena and endorse the development of a regional monitoring and forecasting system for the same.
  - Facilitating continuous training of stakeholders in preparedness and mitigation strategies.
  - Strengthening capacity at the local/community level to adapt to the changing climate.
  - Conducting public education campaign using a multiplicity of media forms to raise awareness of CC and its implications for livelihoods to effect behavioural change.
- Introducing systems of governance to empower communities to adapt to climate change.
  - Developing and implementing of a communication plan to disseminate accurate and timely climate and weather information to the farming/fishing community.
  - Improving the systems for the collection of agro-meteorological data (for key climate variables such as rainfall, river flow/levels, temperature, sea level rise and the incidence of extreme weather events (e.g.. hurricane, flood, drought) at the national and parish levels.
  - Improving the harmonization and better coordination in the collection and collation of information *inter alia* on markets, production-type and level, income sources and reliability, policies affecting trade and distribution of food products, baseline information on food availability, access, utilization, population numbers and distribution, infrastructure, rainfall information, crop and livestock diseases, monthly state of crops in the fields, security conditions-extent of praedial larceny, etc.
  - Construct resilience indicators and develop comprehensive risk profiles for the main economic and food crops.

- Developing comprehensive agricultural insurance and risk transfer schemes.
- Integration of the pest, weed and disease implications of climate change and weather risks into strategies that minimize their impact on the agricultural and natural resource systems.
- Develop a preparedness strategy and an early warning system (short medium-long term) dealing with climate change parameters.
- Promote the use of appropriate technologies to improve energy efficiency in agriculture, and reduce carbon emissions.
- Exploitation of the benefits of regional initiatives that support efforts to build resilience of the food and nutrition security system.
- In collaboration with the Office for Disaster Management, establish a Protocol of steps to be taken by Government, private sector (agro processors, importers, and distributive trade), farmers and their respective organizations and donors in the event of a national and/or global food shortage and national emergencies caused by natural hazards.

## SECTION III

### IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

### 3.1 Overview

The multi-causal nature of food and nutrition problems points to the need for multi sectoral partnerships and approaches to their solution. In this regard, this policy and programmes shall be integrated with other sectoral policies and programmes that constitute the national development plan of the Ministry of Finance and Planning. The St. Kitts and Nevis Food and Nutrition Co-ordinating and Advisory Committee (FNCAC) will coordinate implementation of the policy with Ministries and Departments of Government such as Health, Education, Agriculture, Trade, Finance, Planning, the Private Sector and NGOs, regional and international agencies to ensure implementation of proposed activities in a manner that is cost effective and optimizes on benefits from programme implementation; maximizes efficiency and effectiveness; and avoids duplication of efforts. Additionally, the FNCAC will liaise with the CARICOM Secretariat to ensure that SKN's Food and Nutrition Security Policy will benefit from dispensations accruing to nation-states from the implementation of the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan as well as the Community Agriculture Policy and the CARICOM Agri-Business Strategy. The Secretariat of the FNCAC will be housed in the Ministry of Health, and will be headed by a Technical Secretary (St. Kitts) ably supported by an Assistant Technical Secretary (Nevis).

### 3.2 Composition and Organizational Structure

Membership of the SKNFNCAC will be multi-sectoral with representation from public, private and NGOs. The members of the Committee will be proposed by the Minister of Health and appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers. However, the Committee is under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and will consist of representatives from the following ministries, agencies and organisations:

- Ministry of Health, Social Services, Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs; (Department of Health – to include a representative from the Nutrition Division, Primary Health Care and Environmental Health)
- Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, and Consumer Affairs; Agriculture, Marine Resource and Cooperatives; Constituency Empowerment (Department of Agriculture – to include a representative of the Fisheries Division)
- Ministry of Finance, Sustainable Development and the Anti-Crime Unit
- Ministry of Education and Information
- Ministry of Tourism and International Transport

- Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports, Information, Technology and Telecommunications and Posts
- Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs
- Planning Unit
- Statistics Department
- Chamber of Commerce

### **3.3 Functions**

*The FNCAC will perform the following functions:*

- Promote inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination in programme planning, facilitate programme implementation and evaluation with particular reference to food and nutrition.
- Approve plans proposed by the secretariat.
- Submit proposed plans to Cabinet for approval

### **3.4 Responsibilities**

*The FNCAC will be responsible for:*

- Accessing all necessary data and information regarding the planning and implementation of projects relevant to food and nutrition.
- Collating, analyzing and disseminating information for effective decision making in food and nutrition planning.  
Co-opting resource personnel and mobilizing resources for the improvement of food and nutrition situation in St. Kitts and Nevis.
- Developing national food and nutrition policies and plans and act as the national advisory body on food and nutrition matters.
- Facilitating and strengthening the coordination of policy development, the implementation of projects and programmes of the various agencies and Government department influencing food and nutrition in the state.
- Promoting acceptable food and nutrition status of the population and the maintenance of adequate food and nutrition surveillance.
- Advocating for the development of research and training programmes and implementation of corrective measures to improve national food security in the nutrition and health status of vulnerable groups.
- Performing functions related to food and nutrition that the government may from time to time deem necessary.
- Monitoring the implementation of projects and programmes and redefining policies and strategies.
- Identifying research and training needs and making recommendations for satisfying such needs.

### **3.5 Relationship of FNCAC to Government:**

- The Committee shall consist of a Cabinet-appointed Chairman and members serviced by a Permanent Secretariat in the Ministry of Health, Social Services, Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs.
- The Committee shall have direct access to Cabinet through that Ministry.
- The Committee shall comprise senior level personnel of the relevant public and private sector agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- The head of the Secretariat shall be the Technical Secretary to the Committee and must have the requisite administrative and technical capabilities.
- The Secretariat shall have the power to collect relevant data and information from Ministries and Agencies.
- Cabinet decisions relating to matters submitted by the Committee will be circulated to the relevant Ministries and Agencies for implementation and information by the Secretary to the Cabinet.
- Sectoral policies, plans, programmes and projects with a food and nutrition impact shall be submitted to the Secretariat for its comments and recommendations.
- The Committee's Secretariat shall be provided with adequate budgetary allocations for administrative purposes and for the projects it is empowered to implement.