

Final Report

Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan

GOVERNMENT OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



Kingston, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

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FOREWORD

Whilst the Caribbean is making progress towards the World Food Target and the Millennium Development Goal #1 of halving the number of hungry people in the world, there still remained almost a million hungry people in the region. This accentuates the need for appropriate policies and programmes that will help to address critical and immediate Food and Nutrition Security issues that will lay the foundation for addressing long-term Food and Nutrition Security concerns. Hence, Food and Nutrition Security in the Caribbean is an important challenge to which regional governments must continue to respond.

Over the two decade or more the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has embraced a number of the regional and global initiatives on Food and Nutrition Security. St. Vincent and the Grenadines endorsed the FAO World Declaration on Nutrition (1992) with stated that: *"Hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a world that has both the knowledge and the resources to end this human catastrophe.... We recognize that globally there is enough food for all and... pledge to act in solidarity to ensure that freedom from hunger becomes a reality."*

The commitment of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the declarations of the ICN was seen in its endeavours to formulate and implement a National Plans of Action for Nutrition (NPAN). Over the period 2001 to 2006, an Inter-Sectoral Council known as the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNSC) developed a NPAN for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which was to be implemented over the period 2008-2012.

In 2013 the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation, and the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment agreed to reactivate the National Food and Nutrition Security Council with the aim of revising and updating the Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2008-2012) in keeping with the conceptual frameworks of the Caribbean Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan 2010.

The initiative comes at a time when St. Vincent and the Grenadines is being given special global recognition as being one of an elite group of 18 countries to have met two internationally recognised targets in the fight against hunger: the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), number one, of halving the proportion of hungry people between 1990 – 1992 and 2010 – 2012; and the World Food Summit (WFS) goal set in 1996, of reducing by half the absolute number of undernourished people between 1990 – 1992 and 2010 – 2012.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographic and Socio-economic facts about St. Vincent and the Grenadines¹

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an archipelagic State in the Eastern Caribbean. Overall the State covers a total land area of approximately (89% mainland and 11% cays) and a maritime area of 27,534 square kilometres.

The 2005 census estimated the population at 100,747 down from the 2001 census population of 106,253, with 92% of the population residing on mainland St. Vincent. The country has an economically-active population of 50,000 persons.

The decline in the primary productive sector and the growth of the Service industries has had a profound impact on the Food and Nutrition Security situation of the country. This is seen in the decline in the production and consumption of locally produced foods, the increase in the food import bill, increase in the number of restaurants and fast food outlets, resulting in the proliferation of poor food consumption practices and the corresponding spread of Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has available agricultural land for cultivation of about 20,000 acres out of a total land acreage of over 100,000 acres. The diminution or virtual cessation of market preferences internationally for St. Vincent and the Grenadines' agricultural commodities, including bananas, has shackled the agricultural sector because of its lack of international competitiveness.

Analytical Framework and Methodology

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, will provide a framework for coordinating and mainstreaming all activities of government and civil society, related to the availability, access, quality and stability of food within the country.

The Development of a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy was based on a process that was research driven, participatory and consultative and which sought to garner support from all relevant areas of society.

One of the initial steps in the process was the conduct of an Assessment of the existing Food and Nutrition Security situation. This Situational Analysis combined several qualitative and quantitative research methods and processes.

¹ Reference: Summarised extracts from Prime Minister's 2012 Budget Speech

Sector Studies provided in-depth reviews and analysis of selected priority sectors and provide the foundation for making recommendations for policy interventions based on identified gaps. In particular, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan incorporated the recommendations of important sector studies such as the *Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2011-2018*, and the *Strategic Plan for Health 2007-2011*.

An essential step in the Policy formulation process was the convening of The National Stakeholder Consultation. It served to further ensure that the process was participatory and inclusive. This forum afforded stakeholders the opportunity of making major contributions in assessing the situation, identification of gaps, and recommending appropriate policy objectives and actions.

The Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Policy Framework is developed to ensure coherence with relevant National, Regional and International policy commitments of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Proposed policies are therefore contextualized within the frame of the Draft the *National Economic and Social Development Plan; Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2011-2018; the Draft St. Vincent and the Grenadines Trade Policy Framework (2010); the Strategic Plan for Health 2007-2011; Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2008; Draft Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2008-2012); the Eight Point Growth and Stabilisation Programme of the ECCU (Eastern Caribbean Currency Union)*, and the various developmental instruments and programmes of the OECS and CARICOM, including the *Revised OECS Regional Plan of Action for Agriculture (2012-1022); the CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan; and the CARICOM- Strategic Plan of Action for NCDs (2011-2015)*.

National Food and Nutrition Security Situation

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is cognisant of the close interrelationship between food, nutrition and health in national development. The Government recognizes that the nutritional status of a population is the end product of many interrelated and complex factors reflecting the social and economic conditions of the country. A food secure nation has the capacity for greater productivity and is more inclined to socially acceptable behaviour.

Attained the status of a *Food Secure Nation* is therefore considered to be a major developmental goal of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and forms an integral part of the National Development Plan

Food Availability

Agricultural production data shows that in 2012 an estimated 7401 acres of the arable lands were utilised for agricultural production. Some 3025 acres were cultivated with permanent crops

while 4379 acres were planted with temporary crops. This represented a 22 percent decline in the total acreage of land cultivated in relation to the area cultivated in 2008. This decline could largely be attributed to the decline in banana production and the abandonment of farmland by a number of farmers.

A large percentage of the food available in St Vincent and the Grenadines is imported. The increasing trend in the importation of foods has had an impact on the variety and quality of foods available to the population. Over time this has resulted in a change in food choices and dietary practices, particularly within the context of declining domestic food production.

A review of data on food imports also reveals an increase in the importation of products classified as Oils and fats and Sugar and Sugar preparations.

The excess availability of food high in sugar and fat content coupled with other inadequate lifestyle practices predisposes some segments of the population to obesity and the nutrition-related chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer.

Food Access

The critical determinants of household access are purchasing power, the ability to generate income for various productive activities and the level prices of food. The level of poverty can therefore be consider to be a major contributor to food and nutrition insecurity and more specifically, access to food.

Available data shows that in 2000-2002, under-nourishment was about 10.6 percent of the population or eleven thousand (11,000) persons. By 2005 – 2007, the proportion of under-nourished persons fell to 6.7 percent, and the absolute number to seven thousand (7,000). Then finally by 2010 – 2012, the proportion of under-nourished persons in the population fell to 4.9 percent and the absolute number of the under-nourished to five thousand (5,000). Thus, between 2000 and 2012 the number of under-nourished persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines fell from eleven thousand (11,000) to five thousand (5,000).

Poverty is generally associated with poor environmental conditions, nutrient deficiencies, excess energy intake, unemployment, poor care-seeking tendencies and increased risky behaviours. Poverty can therefore be considered a major barrier to accessibility to adequate nutritious food.

Food Utilisation

Food Utilization as a food security pillar relates to the supply of adequate nutrition through wholesome, healthy and diverse food choices, adherence to appropriate and acceptable food quality and safety standards, increasing diversity in diets, as well as basic principles of nutrition and proper child care.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes that the nutritional status of a population is the end product of many interrelated and complex factors reflecting the social and economic conditions of a country. It also recognizes that good nutritional status is an essential prerequisite for optimal reproduction, growth and development and protection from disease, social well-being, as well as adequate learning and economic activity.

A number of factors affect the utilization of food. These include: i) food quality and safety; ii) dietary and lifestyle practices; iii) prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies and iv) child care practices.

The maintenance of the high quality and safety of foods throughout the food chain is critical for satisfactory nutritional status. The rapid growth of the informal food service sector has outstripped the capacity of the Public Health Department to monitor and regulate food safety and sanitation. This has resulted in situation where there is unacceptably low levels of analysis of chemical and microbial contamination of foods, whether imported or produced/processed locally, to ascertain safety for human consumption.

Over the past two decades dietary/nutritional transition has been observed in most of the Caribbean Countries, including St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is seen in a shift away from traditional diets made up primarily of locally produced whole root, tubers, and vegetables to more varied energy-dense diets based on more processed foods and beverages.

Chronic Non-communicable Diseases continue to be a huge burden on the health system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Available data shows that non-communicable diseases accounted for more than eighty percent (80%) of the deaths.

Birth weight is an indicator of low maternal nutritional status and a predictor of the nutritional status of the infant. The prevalence of low birth weight in infants as a percentage of total live births, fluctuated from 6.1% in 2000 to 6.3% in 2001 and 5.1% in 2002. Trend data also show a steady rise in overweight in this population particularly in children over 24 months of age, which may be attributed to inappropriate breastfeeding, and complementary feeding patterns.

Food and Nutrition Stability

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is one of the world's most prone disaster areas.² This Caribbean island is exposed to: hurricanes; earthquakes and earthquake-generated ocean waves; volcanic eruptions; flooding; landslides and rockslides; and droughts.

Environmental stability is particularly important to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in light of the heavy dependence of the economy on Tourism and Agricultural production. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan for the country will therefore identify appropriate policies and programmes that would establish and strengthen the disaster reduction management capacity of the country.

Recommended Food Security Policy Goals and Areas of Intervention

Food Availability

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure that consistent/stable supplies of affordable, nutritious, high quality food commodities are available to all people in St Vincent and the Grenadines, through the development of competitive and diverse domestic food production systems and sustainable level of food imports build primarily upon mutually collaborative links with CARICOM countries.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Availability Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the *Strategic* and *Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- Natural Resource Development – in particular land and water;
- Agriculture Human Resource Development- with particular emphasis on youth;
- Agriculture Diversification- based on improved Research and Development;
- Agro processing and agribusiness development;
- Effective management and utilisation of Fisheries resources;
- Market Development- Domestic and Export;
- Development of appropriate institutional structures and linkages;
- Partnership Development- Local, Regional and International.

² Issue Paper : Sustainable Land Management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines- (P. Isaacs 2013)

Food Access

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will facilitate the sustainable development of Human and Social Capital thereby increasing greater accessibility to safe and nutritious food, especially among vulnerable groups.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Access Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the *Strategic* and *Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- Food and Nutrition Insecurity monitoring and Vulnerability Mapping
- Reduction of poverty and unemployment
- Zero Hunger and Undernourishment
- Targeted and effective safety net programmes
- Access to basic services among some vulnerable groups
- Creation of employment and income generating opportunities

Food Utilisation

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will improve the nutritional status and well-being of the population of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the promotion of and commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious quality Caribbean food commodities/products.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Utilization Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the following *Strategic* and *Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- Food Quality and Safety;
- Care for the Socio-economically Deprived and Nutritionally Vulnerable Groups
- Dietary and Lifestyles Practices
- Prevalence of Micronutrient Deficiencies
- Child Care Practices
- Assessing, Analysing and Monitoring Food and Nutrition Situations

Food Stability

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will support the development and implementation of sustainable and environmentally friendly mitigation strategies to ensure that National Food and Nutrition Security systems are resilient to natural and socio-economic shocks including climate change.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Stability Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the following *Strategic and Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- FNS Early Warning Information and Management System
- Disaster Preparedness and Management
- Emergency Distribution Programmes
- Climate Change

Implementation Framework

Experiences with regards to the implementation of FNS Policies and Plans in several countries have shown that an effective and efficient implementation framework is one that ensures inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination. The Implementation of a Food and Nutrition Security Action Agenda requires complementary interventions in different sectors (agriculture, health, trade and education, and planning) and at different levels (household, community, national and regional)

The Institutional Framework being proposed as part of this FNS Policy and Plan would be one that builds on the structure established by the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (NFNSC) that was established in 2006.

It is recommended that the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (NFNSC) be retained as the primary Executive Body with responsibility for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan. It is further recommended that the NFNSC be comprised of five sub-committees, four of which are in keeping with the pillars of food and nutrition security. The fifth committee would be responsible for the coordination of information, monitoring and evaluation

An Inter-Ministerial Committee will also form part of the implementation framework and will be responsible for giving political direction by making policy decisions and reporting to the Prime Minister and to Parliament regarding progress towards achieving food and nutrition security targets, as well as to serve as the link to relevant national and regional organizations.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALBA	Bolivian Alternative for the Americas
BNTF	Basic Need Trust Fund
CBERA	Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act
CBI	Caribbean Basin Initiative
CBTPA	Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act
CDB	Central Development Bank
CFNI	Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute
COTED	CARICOM Council on Trade and Economic Development
ECIs	Early Childhood Institutions
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
FBDG	Food Based Dietary Guidelines
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HFLACI	Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean
ICN	International Conference on Nutrition
IYCN	Infant and Young Child Nutrition
MARTFFI	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries and Industry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPAN	National Plan of Action for Nutrition
NTA	National Tourism Authority
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
RFNSP	Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy
SVG	St. Vincent and the Grenadines

TCP	Technical Cooperation Project
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET);
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organisation
YES	Youth Empowerment Service

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Numerous publications by the United Nations estimate that by 2050 the world's population will reach 9.1 billion, 34 percent higher than today. Nearly all of this population increase will occur in developing countries. Urbanization will continue at an accelerated pace, and about 70 percent of the world's population will be urban (compared to 49 percent today). Income levels will be many multiples of what they are now."

*"In order to feed this larger, more urban and richer population, food production must increase by 70 percent. Annual cereal production will need to rise to about 3 billion tonnes from 2.1 billion today and annual meat production will need to rise by over 200 million tonnes to reach 470 million tones."*³

Ensuring current and long-term Food and Nutrition Security in the Caribbean is therefore an important challenge to which governments must respond. Whilst the Caribbean is making progress towards the World Food Target and the Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving the number/proportion of hungry people in the world, there still remained almost a million hungry people in the region. This accentuates the need for appropriate policies and programmes that will address critical immediate Food and Nutrition Security issues and also lay the foundation for addressing long-term Food and Nutrition Security concerns.

Over the past two decades and more, a number of global and regional initiatives have influenced the national drive towards making St. Vincent and the Grenadines a food and nutrition secured nation. St. Vincent and the Grenadines endorsed the FAO World Declaration on Nutrition (1992) with stated that: *"Hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a world that has both the knowledge and the resources to end this human catastrophe.... We recognize that globally there is enough food for all and... pledge to act in solidarity to ensure that freedom from hunger becomes a reality."*

Recognizing the gravity of the global Food and Nutrition situation, FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) convened the first global conference devoted solely to addressing the world's nutrition problems, the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), at FAO Headquarters in Rome in December 1992.

During the ICN, governments pledged to make all efforts to eliminate or reduce substantially, before the next millennium, starvation and famine; widespread chronic hunger; under-nutrition, especially among children, women and the aged; micronutrient deficiencies, especially iron, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies; diet-related communicable and non-communicable diseases; impediments to optimal breast-feeding; and inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and unsafe drinking-water.

³ FAO: (2009) How to Feed the World in 2050

The *World Declaration on Nutrition* and *Plan of Action for Nutrition* also serve as a guide to the technical issues of nutrition policy and programme development. Nine priority themes were elaborated in the *Plan of Action for Nutrition*:

- incorporating nutritional objectives, considerations and components into development policies and programmes;
- improving household food security;
- protecting consumers through improved food quality and safety;
- preventing and managing infectious diseases;
- promoting breast-feeding;
- caring for the socio-economically deprived and nutritionally vulnerable;
- preventing and controlling specific micronutrient deficiencies;
- promoting appropriate diets and healthy lifestyles;
- assessing, analysing and monitoring nutrition situations.

The commitment of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the declarations of the ICN was seen in its endeavours to formulate and implement a National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN). Over the period 2001 to 2006, an Inter-Sectoral Council known as the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNCS) developed a NPAN for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The NPAN was intended to represent the country's particular priorities and strategies for alleviating hunger and malnutrition. It would also serve as a mechanism for mobilizing political and funding support for food and nutrition programmes.

In keeping with its own social and economic development priorities and in accordance with the International Conference on Nutrition (1992); The Caribbean Health Promotion Charter (1993); the World Food Summit (1996); and the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative - Phase III (2007); on May 2006 the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines ratified a Food and Nutrition Policy for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

On October 2006 the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines launched the first National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This Policy was to be implemented by National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNCS). The Council's overall goal was "*to attain Food and Nutrition Security for all persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*". This Policy framework provided the mechanism for the planning, implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive set of policies and programmes aimed at improving the food and nutrition situation of the entire population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2008, the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in response to the global rise in food prices developed and implemented the National Food Production Plan. This plan was a short to medium term response to make food available and affordable to all Vincentians. It also

complemented the National Policies and Programmes for addressing National Food and Nutrition Security.

In 2010, the FAO Global Food Price Index surpassed the previous high level reached in 2008 which had led to food riots and social instability in many countries. This was the context in which the CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy (RFNSP) was prepared. The RFNSP was endorsed in Grenada at the special meeting of the CARICOM Council on Trade and Economic Development-COTED (Agriculture) in October 2010. This milestone was reached through an innovative policy design process, looking at practical issues and problems in which Member States and regional technical institutions collaborated with the CARICOM Secretariat, supported by the FAO, in a Technical Working Group⁴ (TWG) to formulate the RFNSP.

The issues of food and nutrition security have been given special attention by the CARICOM Heads of Government over the last decade. In September 2007, CARICOM Heads of Government convened a Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). This was a landmark event in which Heads of Government took policy decisions to prevent and control the NCD epidemic. The 15-point Summit Declaration outlines a framework for policies and programmes across several government ministries, in collaboration with the private sector, civil society, the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia and the community, aimed at creating supportive environments “to make the right choice the easy choice.”

Over the past decade the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UNFAO) in collaboration with CARIFORUM, has supervised the implementation of several major projects impacting Food and Nutrition Security in the Caribbean.

These projects have resulted in a number of significant outputs including:

- A clearer understanding of the principles and concepts of food and nutrition security and vulnerability and of the factors impacting on food security at the national and community levels;
- The use of basic qualitative and quantitative tools and methods for food security and vulnerability analyses; and
- The identification of policy interventions and programmes at the national and community levels that are improving national food security;

In 2011 approval was granted for a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP/RLA/3314) to be executed by the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office of FAO, that would facilitate the elaboration of Food and Nutrition Security Policies and Plans for Nine (9) Member States of the CARICOM

⁴The TWG members included Antigua, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, OECS, CFNI, CAFAN, UWI, and IICA

Region (Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago).

This initiative represented a continuation of FAO's support to the Food and Nutrition Security Agenda in the CARICOM Region, by ensuring that Member States develop FNS Policies and Actions in keeping with the overarching Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has provided noteworthy political and technical support to Regional FNS Initiatives. This has been reflected in the exemplary level of collaboration provided by Government ministers and representatives at Regional Fora and Consultations.

In 2013 the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation, and the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment agreed to reactivate the National Food and Nutrition Security Council with the aim of revising and updating the Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2008-2012) in keeping with the conceptual frameworks of the Caribbean Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan (2010).

The initiative comes at a time when St. Vincent and the Grenadines is being given special global recognition as being one of an elite group of 18 countries to have met two internationally recognised targets in the fight against hunger. These two internationally-recognised targets are:

- the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), number one, of halving the proportion of hungry people between 1990 – 1992 and 2010 – 2012; and
- the more stringent World Food Summit (WFS) goal set in 1996, of reducing by half the absolute number of undernourished people between 1990 – 1992 and 2010 – 2012.

The Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) Dr Graziano Da Silva, during a visit to the country in July 2013, indicated that St Vincent and the Grenadines had demonstrate to the world that with strong political will, coordination and cooperation, it is possible to achieve rapid and lasting reductions in hunger. This is a concept that is fully endorsed and embraced by the Hon Prime Minister, Dr Ralph E Gonsalves.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

As defined by the 1996 World Food Summit, food security “...exists when all people, 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.” (WFS, 1996 para. 1). This definition integrates **availability of food**, **access to food**, and the **biological utilisation of food** and the stability of these.

Availability relates to improving sustainable productivity in farming systems. It is underpinned by having sustainable, healthy food systems in place in-country, including better natural resources management and conservation, and enabling policies to enhance productivity. Food availability is also dependent upon the level of storage or stocks of food.

Access has two main components: physical access and economic access. The physical access refers to a person’s ability to reach a market for food products (physical or virtual marketplace). This would depend largely on the distance to market or the ability to use technology to access virtual markets. Economic access relates to peoples access to food through their purchasing power and their ability to generate income from cash crops, livestock products and other enterprises. Access also takes into consideration access to regional and global food systems, through trade.

Utilization relates to improving nutrition and food safety, increasing diversity in diets, reducing post-harvest loss and adding value to food.

Improving any one of the three elements alone is necessary but insufficient to improve food security. These factors are interrelated. Having food available at a national level would mean little if vulnerable and food insecure people lack the purchasing power or income to purchase food. Likewise, having the purchasing power or income to purchase food matters less if the food available in markets was insufficient. Food availability or markets access would also mean little if poor health status impinges on people’s ability to utilise the food they consume. Hence, developing **policies and interventions** to increase food security requires an understanding of each of these factors, their inter-relations and their relevance to particular groups of people and stakeholders.

In addressing these elements, there is need to consider institutional arrangements, gender and cultural norms that enable effective involvement of marginalized and poor communities in improving food availability, access and utilization.

A **policy** defines the underlying philosophy and approach that guides the practice of an organization, institution, or in this case a country. In general, a policy is a statement of intent that guides and constrains subsequent decision-making and action as well as, delegate authority and tasks.

Food and Nutrition Security Policy could therefore be defined as the underlying **Ethos, Goals, Objectives, Priorities and Decisions** adopted by a government that influences the level of stability with regards to food availability, access, and nutritional and dietary well-being of the countries' population. Food and Nutrition Security Policies are therefore critical elements in determining the rate and pattern of socio-economic growth and development within a country.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy will provide a framework for coordinating and mainstreaming all activities of government and civil society, related to the availability, access, quality and stability of food within the country.

The Development of a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy for St Vincent and the Grenadines was therefore based on a process that was research driven, participatory and consultative and which sought to garner support from all relevant areas of society.

One of the initial steps in the process was the conduct of an Assessment of the existing Food and Nutrition Security situation. This Situational Analysis combined several qualitative and quantitative research methods and processes.

Research methods included the collection and analysis of secondary data. This involved the review of relevant statistical data and information (population census, poverty studies surveys of living conditions, surveys of agricultural production, data on nutrition and consumption patterns), and other information taken from pertinent Sector Studies. Research Tools included internet and desk research.

Sector Studies provided in-depth reviews and analysis of selected priority sectors and provide the foundation for making recommendations for policy interventions based on identified gaps. In particular, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan incorporated the recommendations of important sector studies such as the *Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2011-2018*, and the *Strategic Plan for Health 2007-2011*.

Research also encompassed primary sources of data collected from key informant interviews, stakeholder consultations, including farmers' organizations, community and interest group, private sector businesses, government ministries and departments.

Meetings were held with key technicians from key Ministries in order to solicit their critical concerns and possible approaches for developing and implementing sector policy.

The Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation, and the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment agreed to reactivate the National Food and Nutrition Security Council with the aim of revising and updating the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan of Action in keeping with the conceptual frameworks of the Caribbean Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2010. This Council is made up of representatives from key line Ministries and other key stakeholders.

An essential step in the Policy formulation process was the convening of The National Stakeholder Consultation. It served to further ensure that the process was participatory and inclusive. This forum afforded stakeholders the opportunity of making major contributions in assessing the situation, identification of gaps, and recommending appropriate policy objectives and actions.

The preparation of a success Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan requires stakeholder responsibility and collaboration. Public sector, private sector and civil society all need to contribute and collaborate in the process. They also need to be fully cognizant of their respective important roles in the development process. It is for this reason that the identification of the appropriate coordination and implementation framework is a critical part of the process.

The Stakeholders Consultation presented the opportunity for key stakeholders to examine and discuss various options that would provide the appropriate framework for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

PART ONE: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

1. OVERVIEW OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

1.1. Physical Characteristics

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an archipelagic State in the Eastern Caribbean. St Vincent is the largest of the islands and is situated to the extreme north of the archipelago. Seven smaller inhabited islands and about thirty uninhabited islets and cays make up the Grenadines. The seven inhabited islands are Bequia and Mustique in the Northern Grenadines; Union, Canouan, Mayreau, Palm Island, and Petit St. Vincent. Overall the State covers a total land area of approximately 389 square kilometers, of which the main island is 344 square kilometres and a maritime area of 27,534 square kilometres.



Figure 1: Map of St Vincent and the Grenadines

The terrain of the main island and several of the Grenadines is mountainous. The island of St. Vincent is divided along a north-south axis by a central mountain range, with the active La Soufriere Volcano (1,234 m) to the extreme North and the Morne Garu Mountain Range (with Richmond Peak, 1077m and Grand Bonhomme, 970m), Petit Bonhomme (756m) and Mount St. Andrew all lying further south. Numerous steep, lateral ridges emanate from the central ridge,

culminating in high, rugged and almost vertical cliffs on the leeward (western) coast. The windward (eastern) coast, on the other hand, is more gently sloping, with wider, flatter valleys.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines tropical climate has two distinct seasons: a dry season from December to May; and a rainy season from May through November. The average annual rainfall is 3,800 mm inland, and 1,600 mm on the coast. However, the forested interior of St Vincent can receive as much as 5,100 mm, while the Grenadines may receive as little as 460 mm.

1.2. Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 displays information provided by the Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, St Vincent and the Grenadines

In 2011, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was estimated at 97,994 persons. This figure represented a decrease for the 2001 Population Census figure of 106,253. Approximately 92 percent of population reside on the main island, with the remaining population distributed throughout the smaller inhabited islands of the Grenadines. The Northern Islands of the Grenadines account for about two-thirds of the population of the Grenadines.

On the Mainland island, the major concentration of the population is in the more developed areas in the south, with an estimated 49 percent of the population living in Kingston, Kingston Suburbs, and Calliaqua. The areas with the least population densities are in the north: Chateaubelair, Georgetown, Barrouallie and Sandy Bay. With Sandy Bay accounting for the lowest percentage of the population (2.55 percent).

The decline in the population ((based on the Population census data) could to a large extent be attributed to outward migration. Vincentians are known to migrate to North America and to other Caribbean States including, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago and the British Overseas Territories.

With regards to the age composition, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be regarded as relatively young. The 2001 census showed that the largest single group of the population (30.7%) was under the age of 15 years. One could therefore safely extrapolate that approximately 60 percent of the population would be under the age of 30 years.

The predominant ethnic group (72 percent) is the African/ Negro/ Black population. An estimated 20 percent of the population could be considered to be of mixed race.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATED POPULATION IN EACH CENSUS DIVISION

CENSUS DIVISION	POPULATION (END OF YEAR)										
	2001*	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Kingstown	13,212	13,185	12,916	12,848	12,527	12,468	12,464	12,543	12,561	12,188	12,177
Suburbs of Kingstown	12,508	12,482	12,236	12,164	11,860	11,804	11,800	11,874	11,892	11,539	11,529
Calliaqua	22,095	22,050	21,499	21,487	2,095	20,851	20,844	20,976	21,006	20,378	20,359
Marriacqua	8,145	8,128	8,021	7,921	7,723	7,687	7,684	7,732	7,744	7,510	7,503
Bridgetown	6,754	6,740	6,678	6,568	6,404	6,374	6,272	6,412	6,421	6,227	6,221
Colonarie	7,482	7,467	7,381	7,276	7,094	7,061	7,058	7,103	7,113	6,898	6,892
Georgetown	6,914	6,900	6,832	6,724	6,556	6,525	6,523	6,564	6,573	6,375	6,369
Sandy Bay	2,716	2,710	2,777	2,641	2,575	2,563	2,562	2,578	2,582	2,504	2,502
Layou	6,303	6,290	6,241	6,129	5,976	5,948	5,946	5,984	5,992	5,811	5,806
Barrouallie	5,422	5,411	5,390	5,273	5,141	5,117	5,115	5,147	5,155	4,999	4,994
Chateaubelair	6,087	6,075	6,033	5,919	5,772	5,744	5,742	5,779	5,787	5,612	5,607
TOTAL (Mainland)	97,638	97,438	96,004	94,950	92,578	92,142	92,110	92,691	92,826	90,042	89,959
Northern Grenadines	5,389	5,378	5,358	5,241	5,110	5,086	5,084	5,116	5,123	4,969	4,964
Southern Grenadines	3,226	3,219	3,269	3,137	3,059	3,044	3,043	3,063	3,067	2,974	2,972
TOTAL (St Vincent and the Grenadines)	106,253	106,035	104,631	103,328	100,746	100,272	100,237	100,870	101,016	97,985	97,894

* Population & Housing Census 2001

Source: Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, St Vincent and the Grenadines

1.3 Macro-economic Performance

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a middle-income country, with a per capita GDP of EC \$19,323, and is heavily dependent on capital flows from overseas whether by way of foreign direct investment, grants or loans, and remittances. The domestic market or internal demand is quite limited and is thus dependent upon external source markets for trade in goods, tourism, and services generally. The internal demand, by itself, is unable to produce a sufficiency of surplus resources to drive economic, infrastructural or social development

Table 2 provides information on some selected economic indicators for the period 2006 to 2011. The country experience mixed economic performance during this period with positive GDP Growth Rates in 2006 and 2007 and negative growth for the period 2008-2010.

In 2011 economic growth was fuelled primarily by 18.7 percent increase in tourism, 6.5 percent in manufacturing, and 1 percent growth in construction. Agriculture declined by about 15.2 percent, primarily due to the fall-out from Hurricane Tomas in October 2010, the April 2011 storm, and the Black Sigatoka disease. Non-banana agriculture also declined by 16.8 percent and the production of fish declined by 3 percent.⁵

The past two decades have seen Vincent and the Grenadines transformed from a commodity based economy with a reliance on the banana industry, to a service-based economy. Currently, some 70 percent of the economy is service-based, with the Tourism sector being the mainstay of the economy.

The decline in the primary productive sector, in particular agriculture and the growth of the Service industries has had a profound impact on the Food and Nutrition Security situation of the country. This is seen in the decline in the production and consumption of locally produced foods, the increase in the food import bill.

⁵ Reference: Summarised extracts from Prime Minister's 2012 Budget Speech

TABLE 2: SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS (2006-2011)

INDICATOR	UNIT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 P
GVA in Current Prices	EC \$M	1,411.80	1,577.92	1,570.69	1,524.13	1,555.75	1,596.14
GVA in Constant Prices	EC \$M	1,412.81	1,455.38	1,448.03	1,415.98	1,383.15	1,388.85
Per Capita Income (Current)	EC \$	13,921.00	15,759.00	15,852.00	15,214.00	15,349.00	16,345
Per Capita Income (Constant)	EC \$	13,933.00	14,535.00	14,614.00	14,134.00	13,646.00	14,222
GDP Growth Rate - (Current)	%	9.20	11.69	-0.46	-2.96	2.07	2.60
GDP Growth Rate - (Constant)	%	6.01	3.01	-0.50	-2.21	-2.32	0.41
Inflation Rate (Annual Average)	%	3.0	7.0	10.1	0.5	0.8	3.2
Inflation Rate (Point to Point)	%	4.8	8.3	9.4	-2.2	0.9	4.7
Current Account Balance	EC \$M	(322.35)	(517.71)	(621.89)	(532.78)	(562.45)	(536.97)
Tourist Expenditure	EC \$M	305.80	297.03	259.29	236.35	232.70	247.55
Capital & Financial Account Balance	EC \$M	399.17	543.92	570.94	519.96	616.65	479.81
Overall Balance	EC \$M	32.69	(4.99)	(8.80)	12.64	68.10	-62.61

Source: Statistical Office

**TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION OF GROSS VALUE ADDED⁶ BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY
IN CONSTANT (2006) PRICES: 2006 – 2011**

(EC \$M)						
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (P)
Agriculture	5.70	6.08	6.06	6.99	5.86	5.85
Crops	4.44	4.78	4.62	4.73	4.56	4.49
Bananas	0.92	0.96	0.87	0.76	0.46	0.08
Other Crops	3.53	3.82	3.75	3.97	4.11	4.41
Livestock	1.19	1.23	1.38	2.20	1.23	1.30
Forestry	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Fishing	0.45	0.55	0.33	0.53	0.44	0.39
Mining & Quarrying	0.30	0.33	0.35	0.36	0.29	0.23
Manufacturing	5.11	4.66	4.81	4.51	4.50	4.85
Electricity & Water	4.02	4.06	4.01	4.23	4.14	4.03
Construction	9.77	10.72	9.66	9.05	9.07	8.73
Wholesale & Retail Trade	15.25	16.14	16.85	15.79	16.15	15.79
Hotels & Restaurants	3.50	3.39	3.22	2.56	2.24	2.24
Transport, Storage & Communications	15.43	14.72	14.99	15.05	15.18	15.25
Financial Intermediation	7.79	7.27	7.21	7.19	6.60	6.52
Real Estate, Renting and Business services	16.10	15.75	16.16	16.24	16.59	16.68
Public Administration & Defence; Compulsory Social Security	7.48	7.71	8.39	9.37	10.45	10.49
Education	5.53	5.23	4.18	4.40	4.44	4.53
Health & Social Work	2.60	2.64	2.80	2.79	2.91	3.00
Other Community, Social & Personal services	1.85	1.71	2.03	1.97	2.22	2.46
Private Households with Employed Persons	0.24	0.21	0.23	0.22	0.23	0.23
Less FISM	1.11	1.14	1.27	1.27	1.31	1.26
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Statistical Office

⁶ Gross value added provides a dollar value for the amount of goods and services that have been produced, less the cost of all inputs and raw materials that are directly attributable to that production

**TABLE 4: RATE OF GROWTH OF GROSS VALUE ADDED BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY
IN CONSTANT (2006) PRICES: 2006 – 2011**

(EC \$M)						
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (P)
Agriculture	3.79	9.84	-0.83	12.96	-18.21	0.24
Crops	0.72	10.81	-3.87	0.25	-5.84	-1.31
Bananas	-19.44	7.80	-9.86	-14.60	-41.44	-82.64
Other Crops	7.75	11.60	-2.37	3.71	0.97	7.72
Livestock	17.23	6.65	11.05	56.29	-45.26	6.09
Forestry	2.00	2.00	-2.00	-3.00	-3.00	-2.00
Fishing	0.08	25.28	-40.16	55.80	-18.67	-11.49
Mining & Quarrying	5.00	13.77	5.06	2.73	-22.17	-20.64
Manufacturing	-0.36	-6.03	2.62	-8.13	-2.69	8.33
Electricity & Water	2.33	3.96	-1.58	3.24	-4.54	-2.19
Construction	8.58	13.04	-10.32	-8.30	-2.21	-3.39
Wholesale & Retail Trade	158.78	9.02	3.87	-8.27	-0.16	-1.85
Hotels & Restaurants	25.01	-0.25	-5.50	-22.11	-14.75	0.34
Transport, Storage & Communications	10.34	-1.75	1.33	-1.74	-1.58	0.90
Financial Intermediation	4.82	-3.90	-1.32	-2.33	-10.37	-0.95
Real Estate, Renting and Business services	5.42	0.72	2.10	-1.64	-0.28	0.94
Public Administration & Defence; Compulsory Social Security	6.92	6.20	8.27	9.27	8.86	0.83
Education	-2.65	-2.71	-20.35	2.89	-1.39	2.33
Health & Social Work	1.16	4.92	5.43	-2.56	1.82	3.65
Other Community, Social & Personal services	15.44	-4.71	18.26	-5.10	10.00	11.03
Private Households with Employed Persons	2.35	-8.61	9.42	-7.17	1.55	1.55
Less FISM	6.89	6.25	10.80	-2.14	0.43	-3.62
TOTAL	16.69	3.01	-0.50	-2.15	-2.38	0.41

Source: Statistical Office

1.4 Sector Performance

1.4.1 Agricultural Sector⁷

The agricultural sector, with a contribution approximately 21 percent to annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP), was considered to be the primary productive sector of the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in the 1990s. The Banana industry was then the main contributor to the sector. However, the downward trend in the banana industry over the past decade has resulted in the overall decline in the performance of the agricultural sector. **Table 3** and **4** shows an overall decline in the contribution of the sector to Gross Value Added over the period 2006 to 2011.

With the decline of the banana industry, there has been an evident change in the structure of agricultural sector. The 'other crops' (such as cassava, eddoes, dasheen, yams, and sweet potatoes) and the livestock sub-sectors have become the buttress of the sector.

Table 5 shows the contribution of the various sub-sectors, including Fisheries and Forestry to Agricultural GDP over the past decade.

TABLE 5: COMPOSITION OF AGRICULTURAL GDP

Sub-Sectors	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Banana	28.98	20.68	22.21	19.19	14.93	14.50	13.63	10.11	7.07
Other crops	50.86	55.51	52.59	55.06	57.31	57.53	58.66	52.82	65.25
Livestock	13.62	15.49	16.69	17.10	19.37	18.62	21.55	29.25	19.70
Fisheries	5.48	7.23	7.40	7.59	7.34	8.28	5.17	6.99	6.98
Forestry	1.06	1.09	1.11	1.07	1.05	0.96	0.98	0.84	0.99
TOTAL Agriculture	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Value of Agricultural GDP EC\$M	89.86	85.32	82.14	83.97	86.92	96.46	92.52	106.56	86.76

Source: Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, St Vincent and the Grenadines

⁷ Selected extracts from: Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development-2012-2018 (MARTFF 2011)

The agricultural sector is dominated by small farmers with less than 5 acres (2 ha) of land (Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2000). Increased competition from other sectors resulted in a 40% decrease in available land for agriculture between 1985 and 2000. Other contributing factors include: inadequate marketing arrangements, limited value addition, limited research and technology development, inadequate infrastructure, technical capacity and credit systems for sustainable production in non-banana agriculture.

Annex 1a and 1b provides information on the estimated acreage and yields of a wide range of Permanent and Temporary crops produced in St. Vincent. The information provided showed a decline in the production of Permanent crops (bananas, tree crops, and coconuts, citrus from an estimated 5690.50 acres in 2008 to 3025.1 acres in 2012. The reduction in acreage under banana production accounted for approximately 90 percent of the reduction in the acreage under permanent crops.

Acreage under Temporary crops (root crops, vegetables, and legumes) however displayed a slight increase from 3810.3 acres in 2008 to 4376.0 in 2012.

Bananas

In terms of its contribution to agricultural production, export earnings, employment and land use, banana is still the single most important agricultural commodity. There has however been a significant decrease in acreage under cultivation from over 4000 acres in 2002 to less than 452 acres in 2012. Likewise production has fallen from 119 million pounds in 2001 to 9.17 million pounds in 2012 (**Annex 1a**). Exports also declined significantly over this period. The Banana production and exports were affected by changes in rules for banana imports into the EU, which have meant increased price competition from non-ACP countries, and increased production costs from implementing the EUREPGAP standards. Farmers have adjusted by reducing acreage, increasing sales of fair trade bananas and increasing exports to the regional market. Exports of bananas to regional markets have been showing an increasing trend.

The presence of the Black Sigatoka disease continued in 2012 to impact negatively on banana production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As a result, for the first fifteen (15) weeks of the year, SVG was unable to ship bananas to the United Kingdom. However, the country was able to ship some amounts to the regional market during this period.

The 2012 Budget provided \$4.3 million for the Banana Services Unit of which \$3.1 million was for materials and supplies to be applied mainly to treating and controlling the Black Sigatoka disease.

Shipment of bananas to the UK was resumed with effect from week 16 of 2012. A total quantity of 744 tonnes valued at EC\$ 0.78 million were exported to the UK during 2012. This represents a decline of 1.5 percent and 11.7 percent in volume and value, respectively relative to 2011. On the other hand, there was an increase in exports to the regional market. A total of 1255 tonnes valued at EC\$ 1.96 million were exported in 2012 compared with 995 tonnes valued at EC\$1.2 million in 2011 (**Table 6**).

TABLE 6: BANANA EXPORTS TO THE UK VERSUS REGIONAL EXPORTS (2005 – 2012)

Period	WIBDECO UK		REGIONAL		TOTAL BANANA EXPORT	
	Tonnes	Value (EC\$)	Tonnes	Value (EC\$)	Tonnes	Value (EC\$)
2005	18,137	23,956,851	7,074	8,103,904	25,211	32,060,755
2007	18,222	24,748,644	4,435	4,379,807	22,657	29,128,451
2008	11,432	11,099,443	8,237	9,123,200	19,669	20,222,643
2009	7,533	10,415,237	10,134	10,771,574	17,667	21,186,811
2010	4,672	7,890,676	5,351	5,890,602	10,023	13,781,278
2011	755	882,985	995	1,219,101	1,750	2,102,086
2012	744	779,415	1255	1,957,712	1,999	2,737,127

Source: Agricultural Planning Unit, MARTIFF

Arrowroot

Production and area under arrowroot cultivation has been declining over the past decade. Production has fallen from an estimated 1.6 million pounds in 2004 to less than 0.4million pounds in 2012. Acreage under cultivation has also declined significantly. Over the past few years, the industry has implemented programmes for revival of the industry. These programs are aimed at production expansion; increased purchasing and processing; promotion, and marketing of arrowroot starch, and other value-added products for domestic and export markets. The industry continues to be plagued with many problems including, labour shortages for harvesting, difficulty in obtaining/developing a mechanical harvester, low yields, and low returns to farmers. The industry is an extremely high cost producer, uncompetitive in its current state and requires radical policy reforms to address issues of governance, commercialization, encourage joint venture investments and competitiveness.

Root crops

The island of St. Vincent has good soil, climatic conditions and the technical know-how for the production of a range of root crops. The major root crops (produced on small farms for domestic consumption, some processing and export) are dasheen, eddoes, yams, sweet potatoes, ginger, tannia. Aggregate exports of the major root crops (dasheen, eddoes, yams, sweet potatoes, ginger, tannia) has fluctuated in the past few years (2006-2010) between a low of 6,820 MT in 2008 and a high of 10,004 MT in 2009. Sweet potato production has shown a steady increase from 464 acres in 2008 to 809 acres in 2012.

As part of the programme to expand root crop production, an Industry plan has been implemented for cassava. This plan involved the establishment of a factory at Orange Hill and the introduction of new varieties to farmers.

Vegetables and Fruits

A wide range of vegetables and fruits are produced in St Vincent and the Grenadines. **Annex 1a and 1b** provides information on the average annual production acreage and yields for the period 2008-2012. Vegetable exports is currently limited to a few of the vegetable including, pumpkin and hot peppers.

Livestock

The livestock industry is relatively small, comprising of the production of poultry, pigs, cattle (mainly for meat) and small ruminants. The country is self-sufficient in table eggs and there is a significant level of self-sufficiency in pork and small ruminants. There is however a relatively high level of meat and dairy products imports into the country.

The development of the livestock industry faces a number of challenges including the need for modernized abattoir facilities and cold/cool storage; low productivity, poor husbandry and management practices.

Fisheries

The Fisheries Sub-Sector is of strategic important to the Small Island Development State of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Fisheries industry employs approximately 2,500 persons who are primarily from rural communities, where there is a deficiency of viable income earning opportunities. It is also a major source of protein in a numbers of rural coastal communities.

There has been little change in the technology utilised in the fisheries sub-sector over the past decade. The local fishing fleet consists mainly of open wood or fibreglass boats under-10m in length, with 2-stroke outboard engines (35-75hp) and three bigger longliners (up to 15m in length) with inboard marine diesel engines and modern navigational and fishing equipment.

On a number of the islands of the Grenadines fishing is uses as a means of enhancing and complementing tourism, in the forms of fishing excursions and fishing tournaments.

The industry is predominantly small-scale and artisanal with most fishermen operating from small boats close to the shore.

The fisheries sub-sector contribution to GDP has remained under 10% of the agricultural GDP or 2% overall GDP in the last decade. **Table 7** shows that in 2011, some 1.73 million lbs. of fish and sea products (estimated value of EC\$9.48 million) were landed on beach sites in SVG.

SVG has more than 25 landing sites around the coast of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Eight Fisheries Centres are currently in operation. The bulk of the landed catches are sold locally to retailers/vendors and directly to consumers, and to middlemen or fish traders for export to the United States, Martinique and other regional markets. Most of the landed catch is sold fresh with a very small proportion being salted and dried. The country is still unable to export to the European Union, though efforts are being made to meet the required standards.

Efforts to develop the Fisheries sub- sector should be focused on a number of strategic areas including:

- the strengthening of Fisher folk Organisation;
- reducing pressure on the inshore fisheries and increasing the returns to fishing effort;
- sustainable utilization of fisheries resources;
- sustainable aquaculture development;
- enhancing safety and quality assurance;
- value addition and marketing.

Achievement of these strategic priorities will require institutional capacity building and strengthening of the policy and legal frameworks.

Agricultural exports

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' agricultural export earnings to its major markets increased by 19.9 percent in 2012 relative to 2011. In 2012, the total value of agricultural exports was EC\$20.5 million compared with EC\$17.1 million in 2011.

Table 8 provides information on the export of selected commodities (2007-2011). Root crops, including sweet potatoes, dasheen, eddoes account for the major share of agricultural export earnings. In 2011 some 3.19 million Kg of dasheen valued at EC\$5.1 million was exported.

Increasing levels of exports were recorded for fruits such as golden apples, avocados, plums, coconuts and mangoes.

The major market for SVG non-traditional agricultural produce continued to be Trinidad and Tobago. In 2012, export earnings from Trinidad and Tobago was estimated at EC\$14.4 million (70.2 percent of total export earnings) compared with EC\$12.2 million (71.1 percent of total export earnings) in 2011. This also represents an increase of 19.9 percent compared to 2011 (**Table 9**). Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and the United Kingdom remained the top three (3) destinations for SVG's agricultural exports.

TABLE 7: ESTIMATED FISH LANDED AND MARKETED 2007 – 2011 (\$ EC)

Type	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Qty (lbs.)	Value	Qty (lbs.)	Value	Qty (lbs.)	Value	Qty (lbs.)	Value	Qty (lbs.)	Value
Conch	23,668	158,676	32,786	82,714	38,597	317,388	55,901	475,494	22,991	190,823
Lobster	19,365	255,519	7,156	132,836	29,478	470,625	15,656	246,024	29,974	385,069
Turtle	2,118	11,630	207	636	560	3,014	644	3,275	0	0
Whale	9,900	30,100	509	2,060	675	1,715	0	0	440	1,760
Shark	16,981	82,285	8,120	42,369	10,051	58,283	15,769	88,511	15,048	89,145
Balahoo	100,333	100,914	86,098	122,528	129,644	258,490	93,931	184,803	105,033	204,997
Bonito	50,479	291,326	58,493	391,284	32,698	219,253	12,270	88,776	44,804	328,464
Cavalli	28,869	181,307	46,635	324,657	20,260	137,653	6,518	198,284	26,936	189,570
Dolphin	297,829	2,110,230	200,203	1,518,749	244,601	1,753,129	134,068	1,072,745	201,723	1,709,871
Jacks	445,948	1,273,874	60,487	228,069	309,289	4,794	197,032	649,772	343,770	1,089,734
Kingfish	80,770	574,899	52,145	404,831	69,165	456,263	80,221	642,214	67,524	562,908
Porpoise	7,269	29,734	4,370	19,120	1,690	8,130	880	4,740	650	2,600
Red Hind	121,285	736,823	127,865	940,947	119,751	844,269	96,982	735,066	72,855	591,860
Red Snapper	24,874	176,028	13,154	103,388	9,157	73,261	9,331	78,312	25,240	69,330
Robin	332,938	1,117,216	253,005	1,011,156	520,466	1,723,059	360,458	1,122,021	364,955	1,174,304
Skip Jack	192,924	730,266	182,285	935,050	114,475	629,700	53,949	352,046	110,843	788,787
Other Species	408,803	2,304,844	268,217	1,921,088	485,671	6,959,026	257,402	1,481,418	293,484	2,099,544
TOTAL	2,164,353	10,165,671	1,401,735	8,181,482	2,136,228	3,563,477	1,391,012	7,423,501	1,726,270	9,478,766

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry & Fisheries, etc.

TABLE 8: EXPORTS OF SELECTED COMMODITIES (2007-2011)**(f.ob.) E.C.\$'000**

Commodities	Unit	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
		Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
Bananas	000 kg	22,657	29,128	19,669	20,448	17,667	21,187	10,023	13,781	1,750	2,102
Coconuts	000 kg	245	311	382	460	354	373	444	482	208	222
Nutmegs	000 kg	55	176	46	46	65	63	37	125	39	38
Mace	000 kg	10	27	2	32	12	49	3	17	5	17
Sweet Potatoes	000 kg	1,384	1,743	1,544	1,902	2,191	2,752	1,620	2,047	1,627	1,983
Plantains	000 kg	2,108	2,337	1,759	1,922	2,337	2,555	2,077	2,162	1,084	1,160
Eddoes	000 kg	1,979	3,593	1,635	2,795	2,742	4,717	2,092	3,500	2,260	3,897
Dasheen	000 kg	3,646	6,044	2,567	4,381	3,358	5,442	2,664	4,262	3,185	5,121
Tannias	000 kg	132	309	118	282	174	400	126	284	126	293
Yams	000 kg	276	535	371	694	422	779	275	479	174	356

Source: Statistical Office

TABLE 9: AGRICULTURAL EXPORT EARNINGS BY DESTINATION

DESTINATION	Value (EC\$)	
	2011	2012
Antigua and Barbuda	0	90
Anguilla	189,452	105,152
Barbados	1,866,018	2,690,380
Dominica	0	270
Grenada	1,052	9,571
Guyana	10,136	13,208
St. Kitts/Nevis	120,668	83,341
St. Lucia	349	427,203
Trinidad and Tobago	12,182,388	14,417,792
Puerto Rico	2,466	0
St. Maarten	234,715	222,043
Turks And Caicos Islands	0	10,324
British Virgin Islands	240,994	205,510
United States Virgin Islands	45,953	89,080
Sub- Total (Caribbean)	14,894,191	18,273,964
United States	390,670	583,734
Canada	68,146	87,794
Sub- Total (North America)	458,816	671,528
France	62,416	76,989
United Kingdom	1,710,270	1,479,464
Netherlands	0	579
Latvia	0	23,490

Source: Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

1.4.2 Manufacturing

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a small industrial sector, but one that has grown in importance in recent years. Most manufacturing revolves around food processing, such as rice milling and flour production, for the local and regional market.

There are a number of small cottage-level firms producing seasonings, hot sauces, jams, jellies, wines, milk-based drinks, and chips. Additionally, there is substantial small-scale processing of cassava, plantains and fruits.

There are several medium to large scale processors, such as the Arrowroot Association, WINFRA, the Vacuum packing Facility at Lauders, Erica's Country Style, and East Caribbean Group of Companies. The Eastern Caribbean Group of Companies utilizes a substantial amount

of imported inputs, in the production and packaging of produce such as rice, flour and animal feeds.

The local brewery, the Saint Vincent Brewery Ltd., produces beer and soft drinks, produces accounts for approximately 30 percent of total industrial production.

Substantial quantities of the manufactured products are exported largely to destinations in the East Caribbean region.

Some amount of produce is exports into the North American market and includes a handful of assembly plants producing garments and sports goods, especially tennis rackets. These products are manufactured by foreign- owned light manufacturing enterprises engaged in the production of children's wear, elementary electronics assembly, and sporting goods.

The development of the manufacturing sector in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is hindered by several factors, including poor infrastructure, relatively high wages, and fierce competition from lower-wage areas elsewhere in the Caribbean and Latin America. Increasingly, Saint Vincent's industrial output has been directed towards other territories in the Eastern Caribbean.

1.4.3 Tertiary/ Service Sector

On account of trade liberalization and the dismantling of trade preferences, St. Vincent and the Grenadine's has since the early 1990s been moving away from predominantly agriculture to a services based economy. Several report have shown that the contribution of bananas to GDP has declined from approximately 10 percent in the early 1990s to about 2 percent in 2005, although agricultural crops (bananas in particular) remain important in supporting the incomes of the country's large rural population. Since the early 2000, the Services Sector has therefore become a dominant economic sector accounting for 71% of GDP up from 61.7% in 1990. Statistics have shown, for example, that between 2002 - 2006, services trade was growing at an annual rate of 5% per annum and thus spurring an economic growth in excess of 5.7% between 2004 - 2007- with tourism, construction and financial services contributing over 60% of all foreign exchange earnings.

The Tourism industry is an important hub for the tertiary sector in St Vincent and the Grenadines contributing an estimated 25 percent to GDP. The Tourism industry relies heavily of a number of other service industries including, the Hotel and Restaurant industry; Food and Beverage industry; Transportation, and Communication; and Retail and Local Craft industries

Over the past decade and in the context of the declining banana industry, the Tourism industry has become more important to the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In numerous publications on the potential of Tourism in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, this island is referred to *"as one of the few remaining unspoilt destination treasures in the Caribbean Sea"*.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a multi-faceted tourism product which covers stay-over tourism, sailing, eco-tourism, proposed sports and business tourism, excursions and private island resort development. Data from the Central Statistical Office show that in 2011 a total of 207, 121 visitor arrived in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This figure included stay over, same day visitors, yacht and cruise ship visitors. The 2011 data on visitor arrival represented a 10 percent decline on the previous year visitor's arrival figure of 231,121 persons.

2. NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY SITUATION

Food security refers to the ability of individuals, households and communities to acquire appropriate and nutritious food on a regular and reliable basis, and using socially acceptable means.’ - American Dietetic Association.

Food insecurity can therefore be described as not having sufficient food; experiencing hunger as a result of running out of food and being unable to afford more; or eating a poor quality diet as a result of limited food options. Food insecurity is often experienced by persons who are socio-economically disadvantaged and or have low disposable incomes for examples the unemployed, low wage earners, and single mothers. People who are disadvantaged or have special needs as a result of disability, ill health or other physical or social factors, are also at risk of food insecurity.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is cognisant of the close interrelationship between food, nutrition and health in national development. The Government recognizes that the nutritional status of a population is the end product of many interrelated and complex factors reflecting the social and economic conditions of the country. A food secure nation has the capacity for greater productivity and is more inclined to socially acceptable behaviour.

Attained the status of a *Food Secure Nation* is therefore considered to be a major developmental goal of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and forms an integral part of the National Development Plan.

The Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves in his recent publication” *War Against Poverty*” emphasized the faithful commitment of the Government since 2001, towards reducing poverty and undernourishment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The global *Zero Hunger Initiative* being supported by the UNFAO, has been given priority attention by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) Dr Graziano Da Silva, during a visit to the country in July 2013, indicated that St Vincent and the Grenadines had demonstrate to the world that with strong political will, coordination and cooperation, it is possible to achieve rapid and lasting reductions in hunger.

The preparation and implementation of a Zero Hunger Action Plan is therefore seen as an important component of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

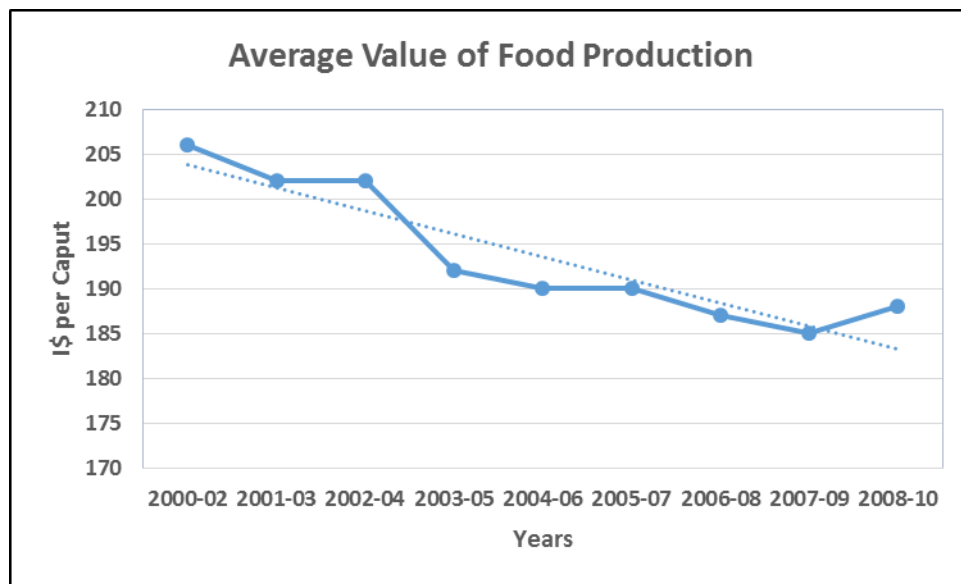
2.1 Food Availability

Food Availability relates to amounts of food available at the national level as a result of national food production, food imports and stocks or stores of food. Food availability is therefore linked to sustainable agricultural practices, including appropriate natural resources management and conservation, and enabling policies to enhance productivity. Food availability is also determined by trade and marketing policies and mechanisms that facilitate the importation of food.

The production of agricultural produce is invariably linked to the availability of productive arable lands. The land area available for agriculture in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is rapidly decreasing due to increased competition from the housing and commercial sectors. In the 1985/86 Agricultural Census, the estimated total arable area was 29,696 acres. In the 2000 census, the total area was estimated at 17,789 acres. In addition, land degradation and deforestation, due to illegal cultivation, pose serious threats to water quality, soil fertility as well as disruption to ecosystems.

Agricultural production data shows that in 2012 an estimated 7401 acres of the arable lands were utilised for agricultural production. Some 3025 acres were cultivated with permanent crops while 4379 acres were planted with temporary crops. This represented a 22 percent decline in the total acreage of land cultivated in relation to the area cultivated in 2008. This decline could largely be attributed to the decline in banana production and the abandonment of farmland by a number of farmers.

Figure 2: Average Value of Food Production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (I\$ per Caput)



Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

Figure 2 shows that the average value of food production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has displayed a declining trend over the past decade. The Average Food Production is estimated as the total value of Annual Food Production (in International dollars) divided by the total population.

One may argue that the decline in the value of food production, as indicated in **Figure 2**, may not provide a true indication of the state of Food Availability, since the depicted declining trend could primarily be attributed to the decline in the production of bananas, a commodity produced largely for export. However, the decline in the banana industry has resulted in a number of farmers and laborers moving away from farming communities and from agricultural production. This phenomena has had an overall negative impact on agricultural production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and specifically on the quantities of locally produced agricultural produce.

A large percentage of the food available in St Vincent and the Grenadines is imported. **Table 10** provided information on the volume and value of Food Imports by selected commodities for the period 2008 to 2012.

TABLE 10: IMPORTS OF SELECTED FOOD CATAGORIES (2009-2012)

Food Items	2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Qty. (Kg)	Value (EC\$)	Qty. (Kg)	Value (EC\$)	Qty. (Kg)	Value (EC\$)	Qty.	Value (EC\$)
Vegetables and Fruit	3,501,537	15,922,038	3,912,601	18,077,048	5,305,689	19,079,017	3,608,548	19,088,227
Meat and Meat Preparation	8,366,091	41,090,058	8,879,287	41,542,550	8,879,287	47,590,520	8,956,087	49,717,570
Fish and fish Products	466,372	5,249,525	-	-	34,114	641,597	-	-
Dairy Products and Eggs	2,493,847	16,418,801	2,848,290	19,957,470	2,484,519	21,281,388	2,687,151	21,130,816
Sugar and Sugar Preparation	6,317,021	10,515,138	7,102,188	10,961,003	4,389,767	10,961,003	5,871,492	11,366,861
Cereals and Cereal Preparation	2,027,005	14,566,368	2,114,077	15,806,303	2,266,990	16,970,967	2,264,870	17,786,690

Source: Ministry of Trade

Figure 3 shows the trend in the value of Food Imports over total Merchandise exports over the past decade. The information provided indicates that for the reviewed three-year period (2009-2010) the average value of Food Imports in relation to Total Merchandise Exports was over 140 percent. Thus emphasising the significant of the food import bill.

The increasing trend in the importation of foods has had an impact on the variety and quality of foods available to the population. Over time this has resulted in a change in food choices and dietary practices, particularly within the context of declining domestic food production.

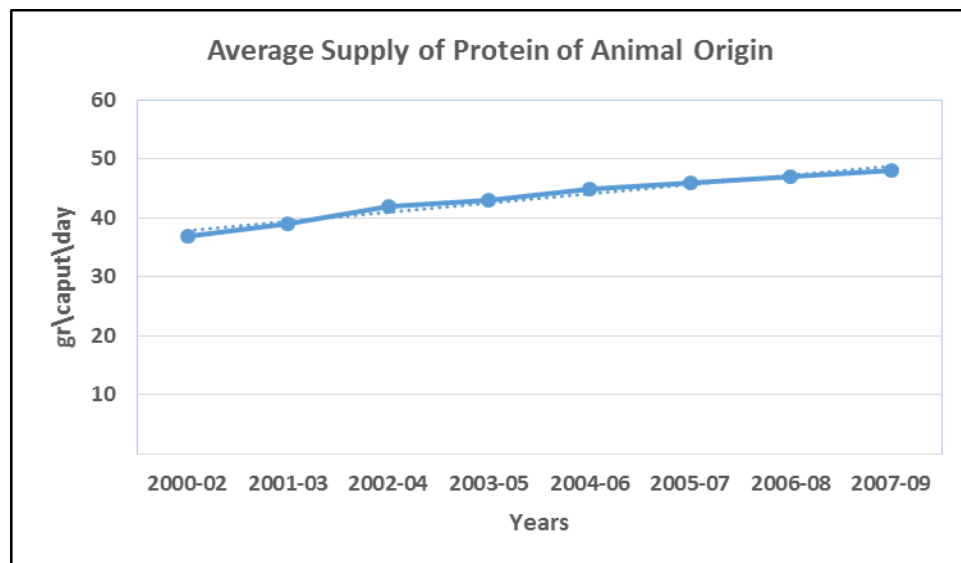
Figure 3: Value of Food Imports over Total Merchandise Exports



Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

Figure 4 shows that the average supply of Protein of Animal Origin has been on the increase over the past decade and in fact is above recommended the 43 gr / caput/day.

Figure 4: Average Supply of Protein of Animal Origin (gr/caput/day)

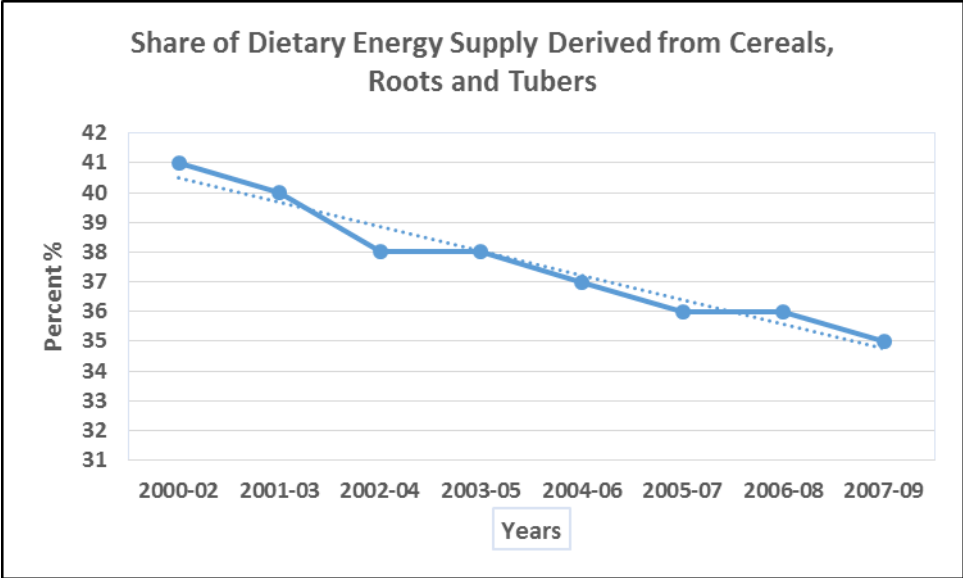


Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

On the other hand the share in the Dietary Energy Supply Derived from Cereals, Roots and Tubers has shown a declining trend (**Figure 5**). In reality this is reflected in the reduction in the consumption of locally produced root crops and tubers such as dasheen, sweet potato and cassava.

A review of data on food imports also reveals an increase in the importation of products classified as Oils and fats and Sugar and Sugar preparations.

Figure 5: Share of Dietary Energy Supply Derived from Cereals, Roots and Tubers

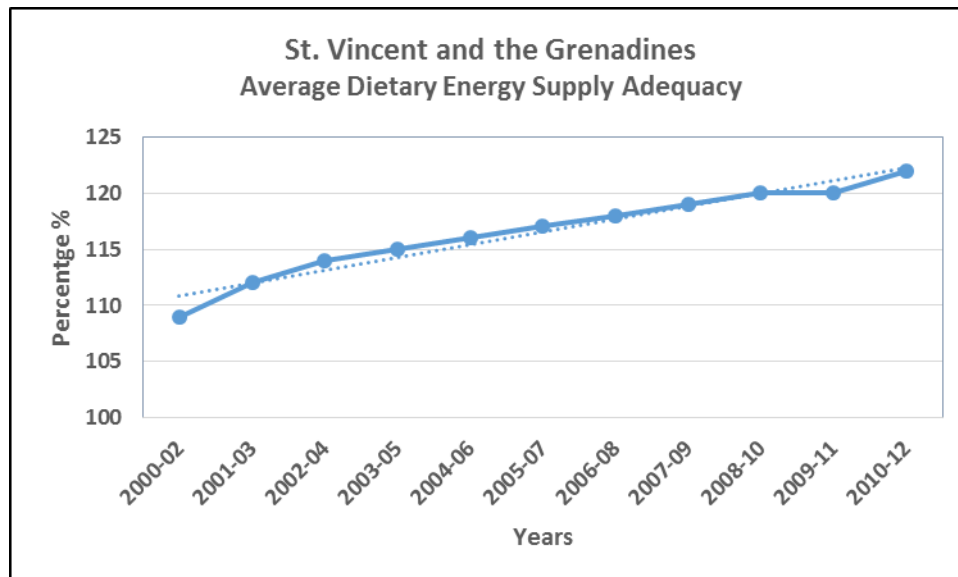


Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

Figure 6 graphically presents statistics from FAOSTAT that shows the Average Dietary Energy Supply Adequacy for St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the period 2000-2012. This indicator expresses the Dietary Energy Supply (DES) as a percentage of the Average Dietary Energy Requirement (ADER) in the country. The information provided shows an increasing trend, with the period 2010-12 illustrating an Average Dietary Energy Supply that exceeded the Average Dietary Energy Requirement by more than 20 percent.

This excess availability of energy, and protein coupled with other inadequate lifestyle practices predisposes some segments of the population to obesity and the nutrition-related chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer.

Figure 6: Average Dietary Energy Supply Adequacy



Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

2.1.1 Factors Impacting on National Food Availability

The decline in the traditional banana industry has had an overall negative impact on the agricultural sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Over the past decade there have been consistent efforts to improve the efficiency and diversify the sector. However, these efforts have generally been faced with challenges in respect to low productivity, and inconsistency of quality and volumes. This has generally had a negative impact on the competitiveness of the sector.

The agricultural sector faces a number of challenges that would have to be addressed if the domestic production of food is to be at the level considered desirable.

For the purpose of this Report the constraints impacting national food availability are categorised as: production, marketing and institutional constraints.

Production Constraints:

- i. Land tenure and land use challenges
 - Under-utilization of large areas of arable lands;

- Small, inefficient, and fragmented farms including many located on land of low capability;
 - Accelerated erosion resulting from over-intensive cultivation and misuse of steep slopes;
 - Undefined land tenure status and squatting on agricultural lands;
 - Land degradation and deforestation, due to illegal cultivation, cultivation pose serious threats to water quality, soil fertility and disruption to ecosystems;
 - Poor condition of farm access roads.
- ii. Inadequate utilisation of improved farming technologies and practices
- Weak R and D systems and insufficient trained personnel - agriculture extension;
 - Most of the farmers have only primary school education and are aging;
 - Predominance of small-scale/ subsistence production;
 - Poor farm management practices;
 - Inadequate attention given to crop cultivation utilizing sustainable ecological and environmental management practices;
 - Labour intensive production practices- Limited use of mechanised processes.
- iii. Small farmers unable to benefit from the economies of scale
- Predominance of small farms (under 5 acres) utilising traditional production technologies;
 - Insufficient levels of collaboration among farmers in sourcing inputs and other forms of production support;
- iv. Other production related challenges
- Difficulty in attracting labour at the offered wage rate in an economy which is increasingly service-based
- v. Production challenges affecting the Fisheries sub-sector
- Inadequate production resources (fishing vessels and equipment)
 - Insufficient attention given to the utilisation of sustainable fishing methods and practices
 - Fragmented and disorganised Fisher folk Organisation;

Marketing Constraints:

- Limited marketing infrastructure;
- Challenges with regards to inadequate and reasonably priced transport to markets;
- Marketing arrangements with intermediaries may not always be favourable for farmers;
- Inadequate marketing support service, in particular marketing information support eg. price data, cost of production, value chain opportunities etc.;
- Insufficient developed manufacturing and value adding sectors

- Insufficient levels of collaboration among farmers to facilitate required access to marketing information and services;
- Inadequate management and operation of Fisheries Centers;
- Limited value added and fish processing activities;
- Inadequate food-safety and quality assurance systems

Institutional Constraints:

- Limited technical staff in support Ministries
- Lack of availability of credit facilities favourable to small farmers
- Poorly managed and functioning Producer Organisations
- Inadequacies of the country's Land Administration systems;
- Inadequate linkages and coordination of programmes and incentives, to motivate the involvement of youth in agriculture;
- Inadequate institutional arrangement to deal with the issue of praedial larceny;
- Absent or poorly coordinated institutional mechanism to facilitate inter-sectoral linkages (agriculture, environment, tourism, health, trade, education etc.) to effect the optimization of resources and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.

2.2 Food Access

Food access implies that households and individuals have resources to obtain supplies of food that are considered adequate and nutritious. Excess availability of food at the national level does not therefore guarantee universal household access. The critical determinants of household access are purchasing power, the ability to generate income for various productive activities and the level prices of food. *The income available to an individual or household together with the supporting livelihood systems and strategies, are therefore essential factors in determining access to food.*

A number of social and economic determinants can therefore impact the population's access to food. These include:

- Lack of access to productive resources including land and capital
- Limited access to basic services
- Limited employment opportunities
- Low per capita income
- Low levels of education
- High price of food.

People are generally considered poor because they lack income, food, clothing and shelter. The level of poverty can therefore be consider to be a major contributor to food and nutrition insecurity and more specifically, access to food.

2.2.1 Poverty Situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

A National Survey of Living Conditions/ Household Budgetary survey conducted for St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2007/2008 is the most recent reliable source of poverty data and information for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A sample of 4.4 percent of the population was surveyed. The methodology used included the establishment of indigent line or food poverty line which establishes the minimum expenditure required to secure a daily minimum 'food basket that would ensure an individual's good bodily health. The Vulnerability line was set at 1.25 times the poverty line. This measures the number of persons who are at risk at becoming poor as a result of risks and shock factor.

Some of the Basic Poverty Indicators of Living Conditions as revealed by the survey were:

- 30.2 percent of the population was deemed to be poor in 2008, and 2.9 percent were considered indigent.
- An additional 18 percent of the population, though not poor were considered vulnerable.
- The highest incidence of poverty was found in the Georgetown/ Sandy Bay Census Division. Some 55.6 percent of the residents in this district were deemed poor.
- The lowest incidence of poverty was found in North Grenadines, 12 percent.

A slightly higher percentage of the rural population was poor as compared to the urban population - 38.7 percent as opposed to 35.4 percent. Some of the major causes of poverty identified in National Survey of Living Conditions (2007/ 2008) were:

- The decline in the competitiveness of the Banana Industry.
- The decline in wage competitiveness in the area of export-oriented light manufacturing and assembly operations.
- The absence of new viable activities and the low base from which the Tourism Sector has emerged have meant that there is little to compensate for the reverses in the Banana Industry.
- The general deficiency in the capacities necessary to support alternative activities.
- The reliance on fiscal policy rather than monetary policy in securing adjustment.
- Limitations in physical infrastructure.
- Weaknesses in social infrastructure.

The Poverty Assessment revealed a number of the characteristics of poverty as experienced in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These features included the following:

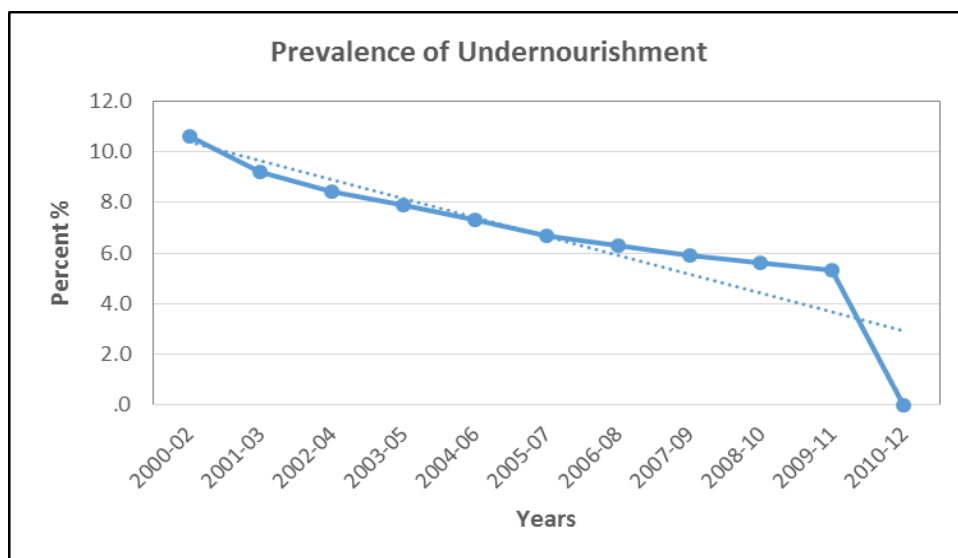
- poor households are larger than non-poor households;

- poor households are primarily female-headed and characterized by a large number of dependents (children and the elderly);
- poor households contain different generations of persons thus indicating some degree of inter-generational transfer of poverty;
- poverty is much higher in designated 'rural' areas than in 'urban' ones;
- the human capital (education and training) base of the poor is quite low;
- the unemployment rate is highest among members of poor households;
- there is evidence of high rates of malnutrition among children in poor households;
- poor households tend to participate more in the secondary or informal labour market (employment in low-paying jobs partly reflects the low human capital base of the poor).
- the incidence of poverty among the elderly (60 years and over) tend to be high

These descriptive features of poverty can help to identify some of the underlying causes of poverty in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Figure 7 shows that in 2000-2002, under-nourishment was about 10.6 percent of the population or eleven thousand (11,000) persons. By 2005 – 2007, the proportion of under-nourished persons fell to 6.7 percent, and the absolute number to seven thousand (7,000). Then finally by 2010 – 2012, the proportion of under-nourished persons in the population fell to 4.9 percent and the absolute number of the under-nourished to five thousand (5,000). Thus, between 2000 and 2012 the number of under-nourished persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines fell from eleven thousand (11,000) to five thousand (5,000).

Figure 7: Prevalence of Undernourishment



Source: FAOSTAT- Food Security Indicators 2013

Rural poverty

The term 'rural' refers to the 'countryside', that is those parts of the country that are not part of the towns or the cities. The Strategic Plan for Rural Development in St Vincent and the Grenadines have defined rural St. Vincent as all of the communities outside of Census Divisions 1 and 2 (Kingston and Suburbs of Kingston and some communities in Census Division 3 (Calliaqua)).

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines rural communities face many challenges, despite the potential to attract investment in tourism and other related activities. The rural sector is characterised by agricultural and non-agricultural production. The agriculture sector comprises of small farmers. Small farmers are involved in the production of Bananas and non-traditional crops and livestock. Non-agricultural rural activities include home and cottage industries such as cottage-level agro processing (production of seasonings, hot sauces, jams, jellies, wines, milk-based drinks, and chips) and craft.

In view of the limited number of productive opportunities available in rural communities, and also taking into consideration the limited work skills of community members, rural poor families function in a precarious economic environment. The rural population is thus quite susceptible to risk and shock factors such as changes in economic, political, social, or climatic conditions in their rural environment. In recent years there has been an increasing trend in rural to urban migration as a result of the decline in agricultural production in rural areas.

Insufficient public investment in rural infrastructure such as roads and irrigation systems has negatively influenced the level of private investment in rural communities.

In addition, agriculture support services including research and extension, marketing and financial services are either absent or of sub-standard quality in most rural communities.

Urban poor

The South and South Central Districts of St Vincent has been the areas of highest population growth and densities over the last forty years. This has resulted in over 50% of the mainland population being concentrated in a 6 mile radius of the capital Kingstown. This increased urbanization is due largely to the decline of agriculture in rural areas which stimulated rural-urban migration, as rural residents came to Kingstown in search of job in the service sector and the expanding tourism sector. Rural residents also left the northern areas as a result of the eruption of La Soufriere in 1974 and 1979.

The urban poor population is made up of a number of social and economic groups including low-income wage earners (the employed poor), the unemployed and seasonally employed, youth (particularly the uneducated and unskilled), female single parents, and the elderly. Among the urban poor are a number of youth who are unable to obtain formal employment as

a result of lack of education and appropriate skills training. A number of these have dropped-out of the formal school system, either at the primary or secondary school level and are now forced to 'hustle' as a means of making a living. Many come from poor households that cannot provide them with the socio-economic and psychological stability to get out of the situation.

A number of the unemployed youth are females who invariably become pregnant teenagers and single parents without the economic means of caring for a family.

The expansion in the number of urban poor in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, have given rise to the increase in the number of individuals involved in the informal retail trade. These individual are referred to as 'Traffickers', who make their living by traveling to neighboring countries to sell and obtain goods for retail in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Kingston has witnessed a significant increase in the small operators and street vendors at the informal end of the retail trade. Pavement vending of agricultural produce and other non-food items is one of the primary cause of congestion on the pavements and streets of downtown Kingston.

The elderly, including pensioners, are regarded as a growing group of poor and vulnerable persons among the urban population. In urban areas, (in contrast to rural areas) the general absence of the extended family as part of the household and the increasing number of females working outside the home, have resulted in a growing number of elderly persons being left to fend for themselves. In some instances family member may have migrated abroad leaving elderly parents behind with limited support systems in place. The financial security offered by the retirement and national age pension systems is far from adequate, even in situations where persons may own their own homes. Without the support of social organizations and relatives and friends living abroad, a number of the elderly urban poor would face situations of serious deprivation.

A UNICEF Study of Child Vulnerability in selected Caribbean States, including St Vincent and the Grenadines (2005) have shown that one of the highest proportion of children 'at risk' were found to be in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The term 'at risk' was used to describe children who were exposed to one or more of the specific risk factors that are used internationally as indicators of risk. One of main risk factors identified was household food insecurity, followed by chronic illness of a parent. Food insecurity is closely linked to poverty. Chronic illness can be a cause and an effect of poverty. Chronic illness can prevent a parent from earning an income or maintaining a healthy diet. HIV/AIDS is a good example of a chronic illness that often leads to household poverty. Sometimes a person living with AIDS is able to work, but he or she may be reluctant to do so for fear of stigma and discrimination.

Interviews with principle technicians from the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment have revealed that the young mothers of a number of severely undernourished children were diagnosed as HIV/AIDS patients.

Poverty is generally associated with poor environmental conditions, nutrient deficiencies, excess energy intake, unemployment, poor care-seeking tendencies and increased risky behaviours. Poverty can therefore be considered a major barrier to accessibility to adequate nutritious food.

2.3 Utilization of Food

Food Utilization as a food security pillar relates to the supply of adequate nutrition through wholesome, healthy and diverse food choices, adherence to appropriate and acceptable food quality and safety standards, increasing diversity in diets, as well as basic principles of nutrition and proper child care.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes that the nutritional status of a population is the end product of many interrelated and complex factors reflecting the social and economic conditions of a country. It also recognizes that good nutritional status is an essential prerequisite for optimal reproduction, growth and development and protection from disease, social well-being, as well as adequate learning and economic activity. A well-fed and healthy population has a greater capacity for learning, higher productivity and more socially acceptable behaviour. Thus, a healthy population is a major developmental goal as well as a major contributor to the development process.

2.3.1 Factors Affecting Food Utilisation

Food Quality and Safety

The maintenance of the high quality and safety of foods throughout the food chain is critical for satisfactory nutritional status. The rapid growth of the informal food service sector has outstripped the capacity of the Public Health Department to monitor and regulate food safety and sanitation. This has resulted in situation where there is unacceptably low levels of analysis of chemical and microbial contamination of foods, whether imported or produced/processed locally, to ascertain safety for human consumption.

The Public Health Department is charged with the responsibility for safeguarding the public's health by assuring that the animals slaughtered and sold for human consumption are wholesome. However, there are some serious concerns with regard to the operations of the lone abattoir and several of the approved slaughter houses. The equipment used are not regularly/appropriately washed, rinsed and sanitized. Physical structures are not aesthetically pleasing and are poorly constructed and designed. There are no storage facilities, no cold rooms (opened atmosphere), carcasses exposed to flies, dust and excessive heat and smoke from the burning of wood used as fuel in the operation.

The transportation and handling of meats from the abattoir at Diamond to Kingstown leaves much to be desired as there are no refrigerated and insulated vehicles to transport meats. Workers, despite many warnings, continue to ignore the rules of the Public Health Department and pay little attention to protective clothing or general sanitation and personal hygiene.

On a yearly basis several thousand pounds of meat and other foods are condemned, seized and destroyed, not only at the Port but throughout the country. Several hundred pounds of locally produced meats are destroyed as a result of spoilage at the Kingstown Meat market from time to time, as they periodically encounter problems with their cold storage facilities.

Itinerant and street vending of food is also of great public health concern as the proliferation of these make-shift establishments continues to operate without pipe borne water, proper storage facilities and other minimum standards required for their operation.

Pesticide/chemical residue analysis in food receives little or no attention nationally. Residues in food are not detected and their potentially harmful effects such as pesticide/chemical-induced cancers, sterility, or other disorders go unnoticed. There is an urgent need for the analysis of pesticide/chemical residues and greater regulatory efforts to reduce human and biodiversity exposure to agricultural and other chemicals in the country.

Dietary and Lifestyles practices

Over the past two decade dietary/nutritional transition has been observed in most of the Caribbean Countries, including St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is seen in a shift away from traditional diets made up primarily of locally produced whole root, tubers, and vegetables to more varied energy-dense diets based on more processed foods and beverages. These are invariably imported items many of which may be genetically modified, with higher sugar, fats and salt content. The rapid increase in incidence of Chronic Non-communicable Diseases (CNCDs) in the Caribbean is strongly linked to this shift in dietary and lifestyle practices.

Chronic Non-communicable Diseases continue to be a huge burden on the health system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Available data shows that non-communicable diseases accounted for more than eighty percent (80%) of the deaths. Hypertension, Diabetes, the combination of diabetes and hypertension, arthritis, cardiac problems and asthma are among the most common diseases responsible for clinic visits. Hypertension is the leading cause of clinic visits in all health districts and accounts for almost one third (1/3) of total clinic visits. .

The significant changes taking place in our country regarding diet and physical activity, and their relationship with CNCDs have been long understood.

The growing prevalence of obesity, particularly in the 25-44 years age group, is another diet and lifestyle related condition that is increasingly affecting the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment have developed and implemented the Nine Pillar National Food Based Dietary Guidelines for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These guidelines aim to promote a balanced diet, healthy eating habits and active lifestyles to prevent chronic nutrition related diseases.

The Nine Dietary Guidelines are:

1. Eat a variety of foods from the six food groups;
2. Eat more fruits and vegetables every day.
3. Reduce fats and oils by cutting back on fatty, oily and greasy foods.
4. Use steaming, boiling and baking as often as possible instead of frying, stewing and barbecuing.
5. Reduce the intake of sugar: Use less sugar, sweet foods and drinks
6. When cooking, use less salt and salted seasonings. Eat less salted foods and snacks.
7. Water is essential. Drink it several times a day!
8. If you use alcohol do so sparingly both in drinking and in food preparation.
9. Get moving! Increase physical activity daily.

Prevalence of Micronutrient Deficiencies

In the absence of a recent Survey of Micronutrients Status, data solicited from health establishments suggest that Iron deficiency anaemia continues to be the most significant micronutrient deficiency in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

A 1996 CFNI/UNICEF survey of micronutrient status (Vitamin A, Vitamin E and Iron) in a sample of pregnant women and children showed that while Vitamin A and Beta-carotene status in the target population was good, 41.2 % of children 1-4 years were iron deficient, 32.4% were marginal and 20.8% were deficient in Vitamin E. In that survey in a sample of children 5-19 years Vitamin A and Vitamin E status were good but 18.9% were found to be deficient in iron (serum ferritin) with 15.2% marginal.

Assessment of anaemia status in antenatals indicated that from 1996 to 2000 there was a fluctuating trend in the percentage of antenatals with low haemoglobin levels (<10 g/dl) from 7% at first visit in 1995 to 6% in 1997 and over 10.6% in 1999. The 1996 Micronutrient Survey showed that while the status of Vitamins A and E were good in antenatals the overall iron deficit (serum ferritin) was 42.8 percent.

There is a need for the continued surveillance of the haemoglobin/iron status of children 0-15 and also the surveillance of pregnant and lactating mothers. Such surveillance should be combined with the promotion of iron-rich foods in the daily diet; monitoring the iron levels of enriched flour and cereal and the provision of iron supplements as medically required.

Child Care Practices

Birth weight is an indicator of low maternal nutritional status and a predictor of the nutritional status of the infant. The prevalence of low birth weight in infants as a percentage of total live births, fluctuated from 6.1% in 2000 to 6.3% in 2001 and 5.1% in 2002.

The nutritional status of children 0-59 months old indicate that for the period 2001 to 2002 the prevalence of energy protein malnutrition (EPM), both moderate and severe, remained negligible while the prevalence of overweight/obesity was significant. Trend data from 1998 show a steady rise in overweight in this population particularly in children over 24 months of age, which may be attributed to inappropriate breastfeeding, and complementary feeding patterns.

2.4 Food and Nutrition Stability

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is one of the world's most prone disasters areas.⁸ This Caribbean island is exposed to:

- Hurricane and its associated phenomena such as storm surges and wave action;
- Earthquakes and earthquake-generated ocean waves;
- Volcanic eruptions;
- Flooding
- Landslides and rockslides;
- Droughts.

The key attribute of the country's vulnerability to natural hazards is its small size and its dependence on agriculture and tourism, as the buttress of the economy. Although these natural occurrences are occasional and short-term they can have a significant negative impact on the physical, ecological, economic and social stability of the country.

According to the Hurricane Tomas Emergency Recovery Project Environmental Assessment of St. Vincent & the Grenadines (June 2011), the impact of Hurricane Tomas in October 2010 was significant enough for the government to declare disaster areas within the northern section of the Mainland. Given the geographical concentration of the agricultural sector in the northern part of the island, the most significant economic impact was felt in that sector. Losses were estimated at US\$25 million, with the banana industry recording the most significant losses.

⁸ Issue Paper : Sustainable Land Management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines- (P. Isaacs 2013

From Park Hill to Sandy Bay (on the Windward coast), and Belle Isle to Fitz Hughes (on the Leeward coast) – all within the affected northern section – over 1200 persons were displaced, taking refuge in the designated shelters. Official figures revealed that 26% of the country's total population was severely affected – though not displaced – by the impact of Hurricane Tomas

It has been projected by the UWI Disaster Risk Reduction Centre that St. Vincent and the Grenadines will experience:

- Increase in temperature;
- The frequency of very hot days and nights will increase;
- Decrease in Rainfall of up to 24% (2030's), 41% (2060's) and 58% (2090's).
- Overall number of stimulated storms will decrease but storms that do occur tend to be more intense with higher rainfall rates and increased maximum winds.

The topography and size of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines also increases the vulnerability to Climate Change. The mountainous Back bones, limited land space, narrow coastal plains, are features which makes St. Vincent more sensitive to climate change. The effects of climate change are predicted to have huge implications for land and its utilisation in SVG. It estimated by the UNDP/ Caribsave (2010) that:

- 1% percent of SVG land area would be lost
- 2% lost in agriculture land
- 1% of the population will be displaced
- 10 % tourism resorts damage or lost, with beach assets lost or greatly degraded at many more tourism resorts
- Storms surge is projected to affect 3% of land and 7 % Agricultural land.

Environmental stability is particularly important to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in light of the heavy dependence of the economy on Tourism and Agricultural production. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan for the country should therefore identify appropriate policies and programmes that would establish and strengthen the disaster reduction management capacity of the country.

2.5 Profiling of Food Insecure and Vulnerable Groups in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Small Farmer

Agricultural production is the main source of income for the small farmer. Small farmers cultivate plots that may vary in size from 0.5 to 5.0 acres. Traditionally, banana production was the primary agricultural crop cultivated, but with the decline of the performance of the Banana Industry, focus has shifted to non-traditional crops such as vegetables, ground provision, and fruits.

Land is held under various tenure arrangements. The majority of land is however held under various forms of insecure arrangements: rent or lease, freehold and sharecropping.

The small farmer faces a number of challenges. Agriculture is generally rain-fed agriculture. Poor drainage and irrigation infrastructure often contribute to the loss of crops as a result of flooding or drought. Farmers depend a lot on their own experience and the knowledge within the community to resolve challenges that they encounter as a result of the difficulties related to accessing reliable agricultural extension services.

The general trend of increasing costs of inputs, inadequate marketing arrangements, exploitation by middlemen, limited access to financial capital, and relatively high interest rates contribute to seriously eroding the livelihood of the small farmer.

The small farmers consume some of the root crops, vegetables and fruits they produce. A significant proportion of their income is however spent on food supplies such as rice, flour, bread, sugar, cooking oil, chicken, fish and some canned products.

These small farmers are considered a potentially food insecure group as a result of the small acreages being cultivated and the seasonal and/or irregular forms of off-farm employment opportunities.

Small Fishermen

A sample survey of fishing communities done as part of the CARICOM Diagnostic Study⁹, identified poor and vulnerable households in six of the studied region namely: Fitz Huges, Owla, Barrouallie, Great Head Bay, Layou, and Union Island. All poor households were involved in extractive fishing as apposed to processing. Some of the vulnerable households identified in Barrouallie and Great Head Bay lacked basic facilities such as running water, indoor toilets, and electricity.

⁹ Diagnostic Study to determine Poverty Levels in CARICOM Fishing Communities- November 2011.

Small fisherfolks generally practise artisanal fishing utilising small wooden or fibreglass boats under 10 meters in length and powered by 2 stroke outboard (35-75 hp. Some of the boats carry ice boxes. The fisherfolks utilise limited technology which is comprised of traps, cast nets and hooks and lines.

Lack of access to affordable credit and the inability to generate savings are major constraints to for many poor small fishers and fishworkers. The high cost of fuel also has a negative impact on productive activities. This is a major cause of concern since fuel is a critical operational cost of for fishermen. Generally the increases in the price of fuel are not matched by increased prices for the sale of their catch.

The coastal fishing villages generally have access to nursery, primary and secondary schools. Based on information generated in the Sample Survey, 70 percent of the fisher folk households have only attended primary education.

While a few of the larger villages have physical infrastructure for marketing produce, most of the small fishermen rely of middlemen who would come to the sea coast to purchase fish and fish products.

Overfishing and inadequate management of the marine fishing resources have resulted in the depletion of some key fish stock over the years.

Wage Labourers

Wage labourers are found in rural and urban regions of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In the rural coastal fishing communities labourers are employed on the fishing boats. Labourers are also employed on the farms, in particular the banana farms.

A general characteristic of wage labourers is the lack of specific formal education or training beyond primary education and in some cases a partial secondary education. In urban areas wage labour is utilised in a variety of jobs ranging from providing unskilled to semiskilled labour on construction, or to the private and public sector such as domestic work, weeding and maintenance of yards, and working as bus conductors on mini buses.

A number of the wage labourers in urban areas are migrant labourers from rural communities. Persons from this group living in the capital town would live in rented housed in marginal communities. In some cases the labourers would be living with relatives.

The urban wage labourers reside in and around the town centres or in close proximity to these urban centres and therefore have access to the public schools and medical facilities that are available in towns.

Remittances from relatives abroad are considered an important source of income for this group. Although within close proximity to commercial banks in urban centres, wage labourers have limited access to the formal financial system for credit because of low and sometimes irregular income earning capacity. In addition, they often have limited access to appropriate collateral or to someone who can guarantee the loan.

Expenditure on food accounted for a larger amount of the income earned by wage labourers. The relatively higher retail prices for certain food for example meat and dairy product, results in the consumption of meals with larger portions of starchy foods.

Some wage labourers often develop credit relationships with the small retail outlets that service the communities. In that way they would be able to obtain groceries on credit and make payment fortnightly or on a monthly basis.

In order to accommodate the limited purchasing capacity of their customers, the operators of these retail outlets often sell small quantities of food items such as a quarter pound of butter or cheese, half pint of cooking oil or even a single teabag. The majority of persons affected include small-scale farmers (earning less than EC\$1000/ US\$370 per month), labourers within the local construction industry (also earning less than EC\$1000/ US\$370 per month - due to unstable jobs), junior-level public servants, and small/ micro-enterprise operators.

Other Socio-economically Deprived and Vulnerable Groups

The elderly, the indigent, the chronically ill, mentally ill, street children, the disabled can be included in food insecure and vulnerable population.

3. REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES AFFECTING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Over the past decade, the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been implementing a numbers of policies and support programs as part of it strategy to create a vibrant and stable economy.

This section of the report examines some of the key policies and programmes implemented by the Government and their influence on the Food and Nutrition Security situation of the country.

3.1 Macro-Economic Policies and Strategies

Macro-economic stability is essential for sustainable economic growth and development. Appropriate macro-economic policies help to create an environment that facilitates financial stability, economic growth and competitiveness, public debt sustainability, low inflation, enhanced public sector efficiency and a motivated and private sector. Appropriate macro-economic policies can have a positive impact on overall economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation, and private sector growth and investment in a country.

Recent global economic instability had contributed to a slowing down in the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is evident in the marginal growth in the GDP of 1.5 percent experienced in 2012 compared to 0.4 percent in 2011. GDP was projected to grow by 1.5 percent in 2013 as a result of anticipated growth in the agricultural, tourism, manufacturing, transport, communications, wholesale and retail and trade sectors.

In 2012, total external debt stood at \$884M (46.0 percent of GDP) which was 0.5 percent lower than in 2011. The overall position on the balance of payments shifted to a surplus of \$56.2M in 2012 (2.9 percent of GDP) from a deficit of \$62.2M (3.3 percent of GDP) in 2011. The improvement was primarily attributed to a larger surplus on the capital and financial account which negated the widening of the current account deficit.

In St Vincent and the Grenadines a combination of macro-economic, social and sectoral policies and actions are being implemented. For example, with regards to fiscal policy, the threshold level for the payment of PAYE (taxes) was increased from \$12,000.00 to \$18,000.00. The higher PAYE tax band was reduced from 40 percent/per dollar earned to 32.5 percent. With respect to the Value Added Tax, a wide range of food items (particularly those considered as food for the poor, babies and the elderly) have been zero rated while some products have been placed under price control. In addition, there is regular price monitoring by the Ministry of Trade and the publication of weekly wholesale and retail prices for selected basket of goods.

The performance of the energy sector is known to have a profound impact on the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The government, in recognition of the importance of the

availability of an affordable source of energy to the fostering of the environment required for sustainable economic, has embarked on several essential initiatives, including:

- Signing of the Bolivarian Alternatives for Development (ALBA)
- Becoming an established member of the Petro Caribe Arrangement where oil is purchased under a special agreement. An account of 50 percent payment upfront on each shipment and the other 50 percent paid at a subsequent period up to 20 years. The 50 percent deferred payment can be settled using special arrangements under an oil-for-food programme (food can be supplied by SVG to Venezuela and the amounts debited)
- Exploring the option of alternative energy using Photo Voltaic Energy and the possible exploration of Geothermal energy.

3.2 Agricultural Policies and Programmes

Over the past decade the development of the Agricultural Sector has been guided by a number of Sector Polices, Programmes and Actions. These included:

- The Agricultural Diversification and Development Programme (1997 to 2006)
- The National Food Production Plan (2008 to 2013)
- Advanced Proposals: Agriculture Development Programmes (2007 to 2012)
- The Plan of Action for the Restructuring of the Banana Industry (2009)
- Agriculture Development Programmes for financing under the Petro-Alimentos (2009)
- The Agriculture Sector Modernization and Development Programme under the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM/EU funded programme)
- Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2011-2018,

The programmes and actions promoted as part of these Policy Framework and Strategies were generally aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. The provision of persons from rural communities with the skills and conditions necessary for them to become economically viable and self-sufficient, thereby facilitating the development of their own communities and contributing to national growth, whilst ensuring the sustainable use and management of natural resources;
- ii. The stimulation of export development based on selected commodities, including fisheries, in order to generate higher levels of foreign exchange earnings;
- iii. The stimulation of import substitution targeted at the production of special commodities for import replacement, thereby saving foreign exchange, increasing

linkages particularly with the tourism sector, and development of an export-based agro-industries.

- IV. Diversification of the agricultural sector in order to achieve modernization and transformation through technical innovation and improved services.

These Agricultural Policy and programmes focused on pertinent issues such as land resource, improved marketing and development of agro-industry, physical infrastructure development and modernization of legislation to address the problem of praedial larceny, squatting, and destruction of forested areas.

The Capital Budget for 2012, allocated significant resources to Agriculture, Rural Transformation and Forestry. These allocations included:

- EC\$500,000 as a local contribution to post-Tomas agricultural rehabilitation;
- \$4.938 million under the BNTF-6 to implement small projects in rural communities;
- \$340,000 for forest protection and sustainable livelihood opportunities for forest-users;
- \$1.27 million to procure machinery and equipment for crop and livestock production and to provide training for farmers.

Further development and diversification of the agriculture sector is anticipated through the European Union funded Agricultural Modernization Programme under the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM). Under the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM), which was set up to assist ACP banana exporters adjust to new trading arrangements, St. Vincent has been allocated €10 million (EC\$35.8 million).

This programme will provide financial and technical support for:

- The development of agricultural related infrastructure (Improved Breeding Centres; improved irrigation; establishment of covered agricultural production systems; improved farm access roads; establishment of a food technology lab and an agricultural training institute).
- The establishment of sustainable land use, forestry and marine resources practices and improved environmental management systems.
- The establishment of a youth agriculture incentive support programme that would be linked to agribusiness incubator development programmes.
- The provision of greater access to credit facilities;
- The strengthening of producer organisations and the building of stronger Public/Private partnership to facilitate investment in production and marketing.

A notable initiative aimed at the commercialization of production and processing of root crops, in particular cassava was seen in the establishment of the cassava processing plant and processing facilities by the National Properties Ltd, along with efforts by WIBDECO. WIBDECO has been rebranded as WINFRESH to market fresh agricultural produce, including bananas. WINFRESH has a mandate from its shareholders to be a strategic partner in agricultural diversification and agro-processing in the Windward Islands. Other related initiatives include the establishment of packing and agro-processing facilities to aid the export thrust.

A number of other planned initiatives, if well executed, have the potential for significant impact to the pace of sector development. These include the following:

- i. The establishment of packing and agro-processing facilities to aid the export thrust.
- ii. The expansion and reconfiguration of the fishing fleet to a higher proportion of larger boats capable of fishing in the open seas and remaining at sea for longer periods. This initiative involves making loans available to fishers and providing technical assistance in the procurement of suitable boats.
- iii. The commercialization of Banana and Arrowroot production, processing and export.
- iv. Commercialization of vegetables, fruit crop production and processing.
- v. The commercialization of livestock production (pigs, sheep and goats, cattle, rabbits and poultry)
- vi. Promotion and implementation of a programme for the commercialization of condiments and spices

Land Use Policy

The government is in the process of ratifying land use policy that would be aimed at:

- Improving economic efficiency and productivity in the use of the limited and fragile land resources by developing more dynamic land markets and enhancing security of tenure;
- Increasing access of disadvantaged groups to land and housing; and
- Ensure greater protection, conservation and sustainable use of land resources to satisfy current and future generation needs.

3.3 Trade Policies¹⁰

The Government employs a number of policy instruments to facilitate value adding activities or protect import substitution industries with the intention of reducing imports and promoting exports. Therefore, a combination of tariffs and non-tariff instruments are utilized in goods whereas in services, market access restrictions are applied including in public services sectors like water and electricity, where there are total monopoly in state-owned enterprises.

Tariffs, other duties and taxes

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning principally sets St. Vincent and the Grenadine's tariff policy. The Customs Department applies the Harmonized Commodity Description System. According to the 2007 WTO Trade Policy Review, a majority of the tariff rates are ad-valorem and there are no seasonal tariffs, nor any tariff quotas. While bound tariffs on imports of industrial products (HS 25-97) are at a uniform rate of 50%, applied MFN (Most Favoured Nation) tariff rates on agriculture and non-agricultural products average 40 per cent and 20 percent respectively. In some cases, the Government applies tariffs measures to protect certain sensitive industries and these include tariff exemptions and concessions on the imports of raw materials or machinery for the manufacturing, construction and tourism sectors. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has also been applying the CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET) since 1991¹¹.

The Government also applies taxes that include excise duties and a value added tax (VAT). The Government introduced a VAT (15 %) on goods and services in May 2007, to reduce the reliance on trade taxes as the main source of tax revenue resulting in a significant boost in revenues.

Non-tariff measures applied to imports include prohibitions, quotas and restrictions on agricultural products, livestock and other related products.

Technical Regulations and Standards

St. Vincent and Grenadines Bureau of Standards (SVGBS) is the body responsible for technical standards and regulation and its mandate includes the preparation, promotion and implementation of national standards for goods, services, processors and practices.

Technical regulations are intended primarily to protect health and safety, prevent fraud or deception, ensure quality in goods produced for export, or ensure quality when supply is restricted. Imports of goods that are subject to technical regulations are submitted to an examination of samples, if they are not accompanied by a certificate of examination and compliance with the standard issued by a laboratory recognized by the SVGBS or similar

¹⁰ Extracted from: St Vincent and the Grenadines' Trade Policy Framework: Fostering a Modern Competitive Post-Colonial Economy (2010).

¹¹ WTO Trade Policy Review (2007), St. Vincent and the Grenadines, p17.

institution in the country of origin. The SVGBS is authorized to certify products and services, although it is not itself a fully fledged certifying body”.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures

The Ministry of Agriculture has the responsibility for the establishment and implementation of SPS measures. Sanitary measures are handled by the Veterinary and Livestock Division through the Animal (Disease and Importation) Ordinance while the Plant Protection and quarantine Unit (Board) administers phytosanitary measures under the Plant Protection Act No. 16 of 2005. However, a bill was introduced in 2004 to supersede the Plant Protection Act of 1988. Whether imports or domestic products, all food items must first be inspected and certified as being fit for human consumption. Additionally, import licenses, quarantine regulations and other measures are utilised to control importation of live animals, plants, and seeds. However, inadequate laboratory testing facilities hamper the Ministry’s capacity to conduct regular conformity assessments.

Duties and Other Measures Applying to Exports

St. Vincent and the Grenadines does not apply taxes or levies to exports. Its main instruments of export promotion are provided under the Fiscal Incentives Act No.5 of 1982 amended by Act No. 20 of 1987 and Act No. 16 of 1991, and the Export Free Zones Act No. 15 of 1999. Incentives take the form of exemptions or reductions in duties; income tax relief in the form of tax credits; export financing guarantee schemes and insurance facilities provided by the ECCB Eastern Caribbean Central Bank among other things.

Competition and Consumer Protection Policy

The Fair Trade Act No. 23 of 1999 is the existing legislation to regulate competition in the trading of goods and services. However, because a competition commission as prescribed in the Act has never been established to administer the law, the Act has not been fully operational. There is currently an effort to harmonise competition policy in the region and as such a CARICOM model competition law has been adopted following stakeholder consultations. While the law is still being finalised for adoption, there is no effective laws governing competition in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. On the other hand, consumer protection is governed by the Distribution of Goods Act. The provisions dealing with enforcement in particular are considered to be inadequate. Until the competition legislation is revised and adopted, there will continue to be an uneven level playing field among and between traders. Similarly, consumers will not have sufficient recourse to address their grievances for deficient products or unfair treatment by traders until a more comprehensive revised legislation is passed.

Trade Agreements and Market Access Conditions for Exports

St. Vincent and the Grenadines participate in several bilateral, regional and multilateral trading arrangements. Although most of its external trade is conducted under preferential conditions, trends seem to indicate that the country is losing market share in all markets including the

protected and preferential ones. St. Vincent and the Grenadine's trade negotiations interests and opportunities are examined in this section:

Bilateral Agreements

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has signed bilateral trade agreements with Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Venezuela through CARICOM. The agreements provide duty free preferential access for a specified number of goods and do not cover services exports. Based on available trade data, there were no exports from St. Vincent and the Grenadines between 1999 and 2007. The only exports were to Venezuela averaging EC\$27,000 (thousand) per annum comprising of (HS 47079000 - unsorted waste and scrap). In contrast, St. Vincent and the Grenadine's imports on average from Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela over the same period amounted to EC\$15 million per annum. The imports from Venezuela comprised generally cement, oil and mineral products. However, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not yet ratified the Costa Rica and Cuba agreements hence the duty free concessions are currently inaccessible.¹² Besides, the agreements have not been analysed to reveal St. Vincent and the Grenadine's special trade interest and opportunities. Moreover, the private sector, as beneficiaries, is predominantly unaware of these trade agreements.

Regional Agreements: CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a founding member of CARICOM established in 1973 to foster regional integration. Under the revised treaty of Chaguramas, member states agreed modalities for a CARICOM Single Market and Economy and hence, in July 2006, St. Vincent and the Grenadines declared readiness to implement the CSME.

In terms of trade and market access, St. Vincent and the Grenadine's market focus has been CARICOM (60%). This is linked to condition that CARICOM exports face zero tariffs and are protected from foreign competition by the Community's Common External Tariff (CET). While the CSME is bound to foster free movement of goods, capital, and labour, there is no guarantee that St. Vincent and the Grenadines will increase market share unless it harness competitiveness. This could be done under the CSME free movement window by leveraging on the region's human and material resources.

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a founding member of the OECS, a fully established Monetary Union, since the signing of the Treaty of Basseterre in 1968. The OECS is St. Vincent and the Grenadine's largest market for agricultural exports and other re-export merchandise. In 2009, Member States signed a treaty for an Economic Union to come into effect while consultations continue for an eventual political Union.

¹² Price, Lincoln (2009): CARICOM's (Goods) Export Performance, Private Sector Trade Note.

Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

The EPA negotiations between CARIFORUM, (CARICOM plus the Dominican Republic) and the 27 members of the European Community commenced in April 2004. After many series of difficult and prolonged negotiations, the parties endorsed an Agreement on 16 December 2007.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines signed on to the EPA in October 2008. The EPA covers trade in goods and services, investment and other trade related issues like competition policy, Government procurement, trade facilitation, intellectual property as well as labour and environmental issues. While there are many benefits and opportunities to be derived from the EPA there are also significant challenges.

The EPA is however believed to have the capacity to contribute to deepening CARICOM regional integration in the sense that utilizing EPA development support to build trade competitiveness can actually increase trade between CARICOM countries and as such, accelerate the region's fuller integration into global markets. Like all other CARIFORUM countries, St. Vincent and the Grenadines could benefit meaningfully from the EPA provided that its implementation process includes a capacity building needs assessment. Using internally generated resources or support from the EC, some of the challenges like the lack of organization in the service sector; lack of adequate standards and regulations can be addressed to levels that allow trade competitiveness.

Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of America (ALBA)

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a member of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of America (ALBA)¹³ since June 2009. This agreement has a trade component (the People's Trade Agreement) that is "aimed at paving the way for a fair and compensated trade". For example, the Peoples Trade Agreement provide special and differential treatment to goods and services exports from least developed country members, in particular, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica, without reciprocity. If operationalised, the Peoples Trade Agreement will govern trade among a combined population of over 120 million which is a huge market access for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI)

The Caribbean Basin Initiative is commonly referred to as the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA). In 2000 and 2002, it was amended to enhance the product coverage and thus became Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA). The CBTPA was granted a waiver by the WTO until 2012 and it provides non- reciprocal duty free and quota preferences to the US market for certain textile and apparel products manufactured in the Caribbean Basin. According to Carlos Wharton, a Senior Trade Policy Advisor with the Caribbean Export Development Agency, "while all CARICOM countries are eligible for CBTPA tariff treatment, a

¹³ ALBA Member countries constitute Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

number of CARICOM countries [including St. Vincent and the Grenadines] have not satisfied the eligibility criteria and as such do not participate in trade under this programme".¹⁴ He notes further that the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) has established that "only some of the eligible 24 countries satisfied US customs requirements to access the benefits from CBTPA [and that the] eligible CARICOM countries are: Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago".¹⁵

Commonwealth Caribbean Trade, Investment and Industrial Cooperation (CARIBCAN)

Goods exported from St. Vincent and the Grenadines also enjoy preferential access to the Canadian market through CARIBCAN in existence since June 15, 1986. In terms of product coverage, Carlos Wharton notes that CARIBCAN "allows for duty free entry for most goods except those falling under HS 50-65 as well as some agricultural and agro-processed goods that carry high rates of duty. Duty free access is not unconditional. CARICOM firms must satisfy the rules of origin requirements which state that qualifying goods must have at least 60% of its inputs originating from CARIBCAN beneficiary countries or Canadian sources. These criteria can have an impact on the level of market penetration since a number of exporting firms import raw materials from third countries".¹⁶ It could be assumed that the low level of preference utilization by St. Vincent and the Grenadines is because most of its exports are traditional products, which are subject to zero-duty MFN rates; and taking advantage of improvements to the CBTPA and the CARIBCAN is predicated on St. Vincent and the Grenadine's ability to branch out into non-traditional products as well as fulfilling the eligibility criteria which include customs reforms.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

St. Vincent and the Grenadines became a GATT contracting party on 18 May 1993 and thus a founding member of the World Trade Organization in 1995. St. Vincent and the Grenadines strategy for effective participation in WTO trade negotiations include: harmonization of trade policies with OECS and CARICOM countries; establishment of a common OECS Technical Mission in Geneva for active representation in trade negotiations; and co-operating with OECS and other small developing countries in ensuring that the WTO (DOHA) negotiations factor their concerns and (Development) interests. Hence St. Vincent and Grenadine's main areas of interest in the Doha Development Agenda include: special and differential treatment; market access; lowering tariffs and non-tariffs barriers; commitment from developed countries to reduce and eventually eliminate trade distorting agricultural subsidies; access to key medicine (public health); aid for trade (AFT) and the extension of protection to trade preferences to products of regional interest like bananas.

¹⁴ See Wharton, Carlos (2009), The future of CARICOM Trade Relations with the United States and Canada: A Review of CBI and CARIBCAN & Prospects for Future Trade Agreements.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

St. Vincent and the Grenadine's notifications of trade policies to the WTO are few and sporadic. And according to the 2007 WTO Trade Policy Review, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not yet passed legislation to domesticate the WTO Agreement even though a number of the agreements have been incorporated into domestic law since 2001. However, participation in WTO trade negotiations has been restricted by weak inter-ministerial coordination on trade policy. Hence implementation of WTO agreements and the ability to derive benefits from its participation will require significant investment in developing trade-related capacity.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes the importance of trade and investment to its development agenda. Although there is no comprehensive trade policy framework, trade policy objectives have consequently been integrated into the broad development strategy frameworks since 2001.

The Government has initiated several policy measures to not only enhance trade and export competitiveness in services but also to improve and diversify the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. However, St. Vincent and the Grenadine's trade potential is constrained by supply-side constraints such as health and quality standards, access to trade finance, high costs of energy, infrastructure development and lack of sufficient linkages among the various trade sectors. Beside the supply-side challenges, trade policy is also constrained by the lack of sufficient institutional coordination among stakeholders. A concerted attempts is therefore required to tackle these challenges in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

3.4 Poverty Alleviation and Socio-Economic Development Policies and Programme

Poverty reduction strategies adopted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines have been either direct or indirect. Some of the key measures adopted have been associated with:

- the promotion of sustainable economic growth, via export promotion, small business development, economic integration and economic diversification;
- human resources development through the development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET);
- skills training programs, reforming the secondary school system;
- rural enterprise development and urban renewal to reduce the extent of rural and urban poverty.
- Small and micro enterprise development, along with social infrastructural development, has been important aspects of these measures;
- the strengthening of social safety net provisions such as welfare payments, child support, conditional cash transfers, unemployment insurance
- community development programs in association with NGOs/CBOs to promote better governance and empowerment.

The Ministry of Social Development has adopted certain policies and programmes, which are impacting upon health and nutritional status of the poor, the challenged and the elderly. These include:

- The continuation of the monthly public assistance given to the needy.
- The introduction of its Youth Empowerment Service (YES) programme targeting at least 400 young people. Through such a programme young people, while training to enter the job market, receive a monthly stipend of at least \$400.00.

The Family Services Department, through the Public Assistance Programme targets some 6000 beneficiaries with the majority being females (65%). Approximately 27% of all recipients are 65 years old and over. The allotted amount of money is \$100.00 per recipient. Additionally, several hundred of the elderly are beneficiaries of the fortnightly contributions from the National Insurance Scheme.

The Family Services Department also has an Immediate Assistance Programme which has substantially replaced the Food Voucher Programme. This service is offered particularly to persons who seek aid in obtaining food supplies. Several hundred individuals benefit from this programme annually.

These social welfare and anti-poverty measures strengthened further through the National Insurance Services, including initiatives such as the Non-Contributory Aged Assistance Programme (NAAP), the Elderly Assistance Programme (EAP), and the operation of two high-quality Golden Years 'Activity Centres.

The CDB funded Basic Need Trust Fund is a targeted program aimed at addressing the need for "capabilities enhancement and income creation at the community level".

BNTF 7 is funded by a Grant of USD4.7million (EC\$12.7million) of which approximately USD3.9 million will be spent on various community driven sub-projects in Education and Human Resource Development, Basic Access and Drainage Enhancement and Water and Sanitation Enhancement.

The BNTF Programme in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is administered through the BNTF Office which is under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries and Industry.

3.5. Health Policies and Programmes

The Health Policy advocated by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is one that provide universal health care that reflects the principles of equity, affordability, quality and cultural acceptance.

The Policies and Programmes for Health currently being implemented under the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, are based on several National, Regional and International Policy Frameworks including:

- The Strategic Plan for Health (2007-2012);
- Draft St Vincent and the Grenadines Child Nutrition Plan of Action (2013- 2018)
- The Strategic Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Non-communicable Diseases for countries of the Caribbean Community (2001-2016);
- The International Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This commitment is demonstrated in the effort placed in the design and implementation of its national programmes and policies using multi-functional, multi-dimensional approaches. The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines was commended in the United Nations 2012 Report on its achievement of two of the Millennium Development Goals including the reduction of undernourishment by half.

In 2005, the Food Based Dietary Guidelines were launched as a vehicle for ensuring healthy eating and healthy lifestyles and in 2007, the government declared a Wellness Revolution targeting healthy eating and the reduction of NCDs among the Vincentian population.

At the regional level, the government has endorsed the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration on reducing the incidences of NCDs. The Government has also support the CARICOM Wellness Day, the 2009 Lilindaal Declarations on Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, and in 2010 endorsed the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan.

The Nutrition Support Programme

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment operates a supplementary feeding programme. The aim of the programme is to promote food and nutrition security among nutritionally vulnerable groups of the population and to contribute to the human resource development. The Nutrition Support Programme (NSP) targets lactating mothers of low birth weight babies attending public clinics, undernourished children attending pre-schools and primary schools.

In 2012 some 9,622 children in 64 primary schools and 3,390 children in 87 Pre-schools benefit from the programme. The budgeted amount for the programme in 2012 was EC\$1,572,500.

The programme provides pre-schoolers aged 2-5 years with sweetened hot milk daily at no charge and primary school children aged 5-15 years with four hot meals and one snack-type meal every week. These programmes aim to supply one-third of the daily requirement for energy and nutrients. A small fee is collected to cover cost of procuring fuel, seasoning, green vegetables and fruits, and for paying the wages of the cooks/helpers. No child is denied a meal due to an inability to pay. A major shortcoming of the NSP is that it does not cater for pregnant women and children at risk of becoming malnourished.

Some of the challenges facing the programme include:

- the lack of monitoring of the impact of the programme on child nutrition status indicators;
- the nutritional quality of the distributed food packages need to be reviewed in accordance with the National Dietary Guidelines.
- Insufficient collaboration with Departments of other Ministries such as the Family Services Department of the Ministry of Social mobilisation;

The Early Childhood Health Outreach (ECHO)

The Early Childhood Health Outreach (ECHO) is a programme in St. Vincent and the Grenadines which was designed to link early childhood development and the health care services for 'at risk' children and families.

The Mission of the Programme is *"To provide non-formal early childhood intervention services in disadvantaged communities for families with children from birth to three years to realize the immediate and long-term benefits of good quality early childhood development experiences"*.

The Programme Objectives are:

- To offer early stimulation to young children and improve parenting practices in disadvantaged communities.
- Promote and monitor good health and early development of young children.
- To train community health aides (CHAs) within the communities to assist in the delivery of parent support services.
- To transfer the CHAs newly acquired knowledge and skills in working with families and communities to produce a range of local support agencies.
- To promote friendly and healthy relationships between parents/guardians and children.

ECHO uses methods of an informal home-visiting programme for children (birth to three years) which support parents in communities with limited access to these services giving them access to early stimulation and parenting education.

The program addresses the development needs of the very young in disadvantaged conditions where children benefit from: quality care, development of basic skills, better health and nutrition and at the next level, better performance in pre-school; and future education.

A method ECHO uses to reach parents involved in the program is through parenting workshops. One-day workshops involve practical methods of equipping parents with knowledge and skills of early childhood health development. These parent workshops are ongoing.

For the sustainability of the ECHO programme efforts have been made to integrate ECHO concepts into existing maternal and child health services in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Highlights of relevant Milestones over the past decade

- Cabinet-approved National Food and Nutrition Policy and Plan of Action (2003).
- Launch of the Cabinet-approved National Food-based Dietary Guidelines (2006).
- Development of new Child Health Records for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2010).
- Introduction of new World Health Organization Child Growth Standards in all government health centres (2010).
- Zero percent of District Nurses, Nursing Assistants and Community Health Aides trained in new child growth monitoring standards (2009-2010).
- 50% of nursing staff and 20% early childhood educators trained in UNICEF/WHO infant and young child feeding guidelines (2007-2010).
- Introduction of new surveillance system for monitoring nutritional status in children under five years registered at government health centres (2011).
- Integration of critical nutrition indicators in the Health Information System.
- 100% of successful registered nurses provided with thirty (30) hours of training in human nutrition and diet therapy (1990-2012).
- 90% of VINSAVE trainee Early Childhood Educators provided with eighteen (18) hours of training in infant and young child nutrition (1990-2012).
- Methodology documented for nutrition component of National Health and Nutrition Survey (2012).
- Healthy Nutrition for Workplaces Programme conducted for SVG Coastguard, Ministry of Finance, Invest SVG, and Ministry of Housing (2012).
- Nutrition Youth Summer Camp conducted for Kingstown Health District (2012).
- National Infant and Young Child Nutrition Policy submitted to Cabinet (2012).
- Nutrition Screening and Referral System introduced at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital (2012).

Plans and Projects for 2013 and beyond

- Co-ordinate nutrition component of National Health and Nutrition Survey
- Expand child growth monitoring to include children 5-11 years (primary school) and 12-19 years (secondary school)
- Develop, establish and monitor nutrient and meal standards for the National School Feeding Programme
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Nutrition Support Programme to improve nutrition standards in the National School Feeding Programme
- Develop National School Food and Nutrition Policy

- Strengthen capacity for nutrition response in national emergencies
- Introduce healthy nutrition programmes as part of Private sector Occupational Health and Safety Programmes
- Hold second Annual Nutrition Youth Summer Camp
- Continue skills training and nutrition outreach in select communities
- Continue provision of curricular nutrition training at VINSAVE and Division of Nursing Education
- Strengthen capacity for provision of quality dietetic service at MCMH and other health institutions
- Introduce Nutrition Screening and Referral System introduced at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital (2012-2013)
- Develop, establish and monitor nutrient and meal standards for the National School Feeding Programme
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Nutrition Support Programme to improve nutrition standards in the National School Feeding Programme
- Develop policy framework for the protection and promotion of access to healthy diets in schools National School Food and Nutrition Policy
- Reactivate the National Food and Nutrition Security Council

3.6 Educational Policies and Programmes

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has declared an Education Revolution for the country. The government promotes its 'Revolution' on the principle that education is one of the principal pillars that will take the population out of poverty into prosperity.

It has implemented the policy of Universal Secondary Education by ensuring that all students leaving primary school are placed either in a secondary school or one of the multi-purpose centres. There is also a well-established Adult Educational and Literacy Programme with outreach throughout the state.

The government through the amalgamated Community College provides associate degrees in various disciplines. Over 100 Nurses graduate per year (nurses who now provide services to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago). On average, an estimated 800 students graduate per year with BSc Degrees in Teacher Education, Associate Degrees and A' levels in various subject areas, disciplines and skills.

The policy of the government is to have at least one graduate per household by 2020 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This policy is facilitated further through an extension of the number of National and Exhibition Scholarships from 3 in 2001 to 10 in 2010 and, the provision

of guarantees for student loans and special loans for the disadvantaged children. In the case of the latter, no interest payment is required until completion of the course of study.

3.7 Infrastructure and Housing Development Policies and Programmes

The government also has a comprehensive policy on infrastructure development with the construction of an international airport at Argyle costing in excess of EC\$800M (largest capital project ever in the country). This project is estimated to be completed in 2014. The new airport is expected to provide the gateway for entry of additional visitors to the country and to allow goods and services from St. Vincent and the Grenadines to enter existing and new markets.

There are also major infrastructure development projects in the pipeline and ongoing (e.g. the upgrading of the leeward highway, the construction of a business complex at Arnos Vale (airport site) and, the construction of a tunnel from Arnos Vale to Kingstown.

A review of the government approaches to housing reflects that there is an aggressive housing policy and strategic programme in place since 2001. Government lands on which squatters settled were redefined as informal settlements. The lands were surveyed and offered through special government policies at a small percentage of the market value (ranging in most cases from 10 to 30 percent of the market value, evidence of which is seen in communities such as Fitz Hughes/Chateaubelair, Barroullie, Glen and Sandy Bay). During the existence of the National Commercial Bank, the government established special arrangements for low and middle income public servants to obtain 100 percent mortgages of up to EC\$100,000 and \$150,000 respectively for the construction of homes. With the change in ownership of the bank, the arrangement is now 90 percent mortgage financing.

Through an institutionally strengthened Housing and Land Development Cooperation, the government established over 200 low and middle income homes over the period 2001 to 2012. These homes have been constructed at various locations throughout the country (Peters Hope/Barroullie, Green Hill, Brighton, Diamond, Langley Park and Clare Valley). This policy of constructing low and middle income homes is an ongoing policy of the government which is extended to persons who fit the criteria and have their own land. The government also has a policy through the Ministry of Social Mobilization to provide materials to the poor for the upkeep of their homes and in extenuating circumstances, the entire home may be replaced.

The government, in partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank, is implementing the Basic Needs Trust Fund. This programme seeks to provide direct infra-structural and capacity building support to communities in an effort to reduce poverty. Investments in village roads, riverbank stabilization, community markets, upgrade and supply of pipe borne water, upgrading and construction of pre-schools and community clinics and the provision of inputs for production by vulnerable farmers are just some of the policies and programmes being implemented.

3.8 Emergency and Disaster Management Policies and Programmes

Recognizing the importance of developing and implementing comprehensive disaster management Policies and Actions, the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has over the years strived to put in place measures to ensure adequate and effective responses in emergency and disaster situations. The country's Emergency and Disaster Management Act of 2006 currently provides the general framework for managing the government responses in these situations. This legislative instrument is further supported by legislation protecting the country's fragile ecosystems – which act as natural buffers against the impact of hazards (particularly of a meteorological nature). Policy makers have thus sought to develop a suit of policies and legislations to this end– all in keeping with international environmental conventions, to which St. Vincent & the Grenadines is a signatory.

Unfortunately, the existing cadastral and land tenure arrangements for St. Vincent and the Grenadines do not sufficiently support comprehensive approaches to disaster management as prescribed by the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). This is particularly due to the large gaps in the national spatial data infrastructure, and the inherent non-responsiveness of the deeds registration system to the current socio-economic demands of the local society. This by no means takes anything away from the significant strides made thus far towards the development of a comprehensive national disaster management framework.

CONCLUSION

The assessment of the food and nutrition security situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines presented in **Part 1** of this documents, serves to highlight a number of pertinent parameters required for the development and implementation of a targeted and effective Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan. The assessment clearly articulates the existing challenges, both at the national and household levels, which would have to be addressed in the thrust towards poverty reduction and making St. Vincent and the Grenadines a food-secure and hunger free Nation.

The assessment also provided a review of the policies and actions, implemented by the Government over the past decade, aimed at addressing the challenges related to food and nutrition security. The review of relevant policies and programmes served to highlight the broad and multi-sectoral scope of issues related to National food and nutrition security and the need for inter-ministerial collaboration in the coordination and implementation of relevant programmes and actions.

Noteworthy is the fact that the analysis of existing policies and programmes served to highlight the commitment of the Government over the past decade, towards providing a better life for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and in particular to protecting the poor and indigent and to lifting them out of poverty in an on-going, sustainable manner.

**PART TWO: FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY
STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ACHIEVING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Introduction

The Situational Analysis presented in Part 1, provides an in-depth analysis of the National Food and Nutrition Security situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The key issues and challenges are highlighted. An assessment is also done of existing policies and programmes related to the availability, access, utilisation and stability of food within the country. These policies and programmes were introduced within the context of a National Development Framework, and were intended to impact the rate and pattern of socio-economic growth and development within the country.

The information generated from the analysis has contributed to the process of developing the appropriate Policy Framework required for improving the food and nutrition security situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy Framework presented in Part 2 of the document takes into consideration the overarching National Development Agenda of the country. The suggested policy framework provides a holistic mechanism for conceptualising, elaborating, particularizing and detailing the Food and Nutrition Security Agenda that is required to make St. Vincent and the Grenadines a Food Secure and Hunger Free Nation.

Food security issues relate to a number of key sectors in the economy. The formulation of a Food and Nutrition Security Policy therefore provides a framework for coordinating and mainstreaming all activities of government and civil society, related to the availability, access, quality and stability of food within the country.

A Policy Framework describes an overall strategic approach, identifying the desired future and setting out what needs to be achieved in order to bring about change. This section of the study will provide information on **Policy Goals**, and associated **Strategic and Specific Objectives** for addressing the critical food and nutrition security challenges of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Information is also provided on the targeted **Areas of Intervention** and the **Action Agenda** in relation to the four pillars of food and nutrition security- the availability, access, utilisation and stability of food

The Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Policy Framework is developed to ensure coherence with relevant National, Regional and International policy commitments of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Proposed policies are therefore contextualized within the frame of the Draft the *National Economic and Social Development Plan; Framework and Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2011-2018*; the *Draft St. Vincent and the Grenadines Trade Policy Framework (2010)*; the *Strategic Plan for Health 2007-2011*; *Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2008*; *Draft Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2008-2012)*;

the Eight Point Growth and Stabilisation Programme of the ECCU (Eastern Caribbean Currency Union), and the various developmental instruments and programmes of the OECS and CARICOM, including the Revised OECS Regional Plan of Action for Agriculture (2012-2022); the CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan; and the CARICOM-Strategic Plan of Action for NCDs (2011-2015).

The proposed Policy Framework for Food and Nutrition Security in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, is also be developed within the context of several Global Initiatives. In particular the L' Aquilla Joint Statement on Global Food security issued at the G8 Summit, and the Global Zero Hunger Initiative.

Particular reference is made to The “Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security adopted at the World Summit on Food Security in Rome (2009):

- Principle 1: Invest in country-owned plans, aimed at channeling resources to well-designed and results-based programmes and partnerships.
- Principle 2: Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global level to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify response gaps.
- Principle 3: Strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of: i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and ii) medium- and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty.
- Principle 4: Ensure a strong role for the multilateral system by sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of multilateral institutions.
- Principle 5: Ensure sustained and substantial commitment by all partners to investment in agriculture and food and nutrition security, with the provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion, aimed at multi-year plans and programmes.

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy Framework for St. Vincent and the Grenadines incorporates elements of ‘best practices’ from regional and global programmes including the Brazilian Fome Zero Strategy.

Guiding Principles

The development and implementation of a Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is based on the following guiding principles:

Policy Coherence: Proposed Policies should be in coherence with relevant National, Regional and International policy commitments of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Equity: The Recognition of the 'rights to food' by all people to food as demonstrated in the equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of food resources.

People Centered: The Policies and Action should reflect priority Food and Nutrition Security needs of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and in particular the food insecure and vulnerable groups.

Participatory: Recognition that all individuals and in particular identified food insecure and vulnerable groups have a role and responsibility in participating in making decisions which affect their lives.

Promoting Innovation: The eradication of hunger, poverty and food insecurity should be based on the development, adoption and promotion of appropriate production technologies that facilitate the sustainable utilisation of productive resources and the development of value added opportunities.

Accessibility: Access by the food insecure and vulnerable to adequate and appropriate programmes and services aimed at addressing food and nutrition security, regardless of gender, geographic location, social, cultural or economic circumstances.

Import substitution: Reduce the dependence on import foods through expanded of the variety and quality of domestically produced primary and processed foods

Sustainability: To encourage and stimulate the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources, in particular land and water.

4.1 Policy Goal- Food Availability

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure that consistent/stable supplies of affordable, nutritious, high quality food commodities are available to all people in St Vincent and the Grenadines, through the development of competitive and diverse domestic food production systems and sustainable level of food imports build primarily upon mutually collaborative links with CARICOM countries.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Availability Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the *Strategic* and *Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

Areas of Intervention

- Natural Resource Development – in particular land and water;
- Agriculture Human Resource Development- with particular emphasis on youth;
- Agriculture Diversification- based on improved Research and Development;
- Agro processing and agribusiness development;
- Effective management and utilisation of Fisheries resources;
- Market Development- Domestic and Export;
- Development of appropriate institutional structures and linkages;
- Partnership Development- Local, Regional and International.

Strategic Objective 1:

Promote development in rural communities through the facilitation of increased investment (public and private sector) in agricultural and food production systems, especially targeting smallholders.

The importance and relevance of this Strategic Objective is heightened within in the context of the decline in agriculture production in recent years and the resulting migration to urban areas of a significant number of the rural population (in particular the youth) in search of productive income generation opportunities. Increased investment and development in areas of Land and Water Management would contribute significantly to ensuring the availability and accessibility of quality agricultural land for productive use by the present and future generations and the improved rates of productive utilization of agricultural land.

The development of efficient Agriculture and Food Production systems would require appropriate focus on key production and marketing factors such as the availability of labour,

inputs, use of appropriate technologies and financing. The creation of marketing opportunities, (both domestic and export) is also a critical success factor.

Several Special objectives are identified below that would contribute to the achievement of Strategic Objective 1:

Specific Objectives:

- Ensure the availability and accessibility of quality agricultural land and water resources for productive use;
- The creation of a competitive and diverse agricultural sector that would provide commodities for domestic consumption and for export (crops, livestock);
- Promote development within the fisheries industry in order to create a livelihood system that would be considered socially desirable and financially rewarding.
- Improving marketing opportunities (domestic and export) for producers and traders (including 'traffickers') through the promotion of appropriate post-harvest, storage, transport and distribution practices, including improved market information and the promoting of the value chain approach;
- Ensure the adherence and compliance with regional and international Quality Management Systems and Measures, as required in the agro-food production processes.

Action Agenda

The Action Plan outlined in Part 3 of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, provides information on the specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. These include:

- Review of Land-Use and Land Allocation Policies;
- Development of land use zoning plans to preserve all arable lands, in particular Class I and II lands;
- Develop appropriate institutional arrangements for the planning, use and management of water resources;
- Establish demonstration farm to promote improved technologies;
- Develop the infrastructural and institutional support and networks required for local and export market development

Strategic Objective 2:

Stimulating greater involvement of Youth in Agriculture

The average age of a farmer in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is between 45-50 years. With the migration of young people from rural to urban areas, shortage of labour available for agricultural production has become more critical. Over the years a number of programs have been employed to stimulate the interest of youth in agriculture these include the YES (Youth Empowerment Services) and the 4-H or school garden programmes. The programmes were however unable to adequately mitigate the key constraints affecting the involvement of youth in the agriculture.

The involvement of youth in agriculture is constrained by several factors including, (i) the capital intensive nature of farm ownership and operation, (ii) difficulty accessing land, (iii) inadequate technical training, and (iv) the general increasingly negative attitude to agriculture, (v) the unattractiveness of agriculture because of its relative low profitability, high risk and drudgery; and (vi) the long gestation period of many agricultural projects.¹⁷

The specific objectives identified for Strategic Objective 2 are focused on helping to encourage young persons to become involved in agriculture by promoting programmes and actions that would help to mitigate the major disincentives to involvement in the sector.

Specific Objectives

- Targeted Agricultural Education and Training Programmes
- Creating the enabling environment to ensure that Agribusiness is seen as a viable career option for Young people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Action Agenda

The specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives includes:

- Development of Schemes to make land available to youth
- The establish of Land Bank to address the issue of access to land
- Facilitating greater exposure and stimulating interest in improved and less labour intensive agriculture production technologies
- Encouraging the uses of improved production technologies (hydroponics, aquaponics)

¹⁷ Agriculture Policy Framework and Strategic Plan -Final 2012 -2018

Strategic Objective 3:

Strengthening institutional mechanisms and procedures to facilitate stronger intra and inter-sectoral linkages at the National level and the establishment of Regional and International relationships/ Agreements and Protocols that will facilitate more effect utilisation of limited production and marketing resources.

The coordination and implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policies and Actions at the national level requires an effective collaboration among key institutions and stakeholders.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan must be multi-sector in nature in order to address the cross-cutting food and nutrition security issues. There must be complementary inputs from and coordination between various sectors (e.g. agriculture, health, markets, trade and education) and at multiple levels e.g. household, community, and national levels.

Strengthening the institutional environment require attention to issues of governance, institutional coordination and collaboration. In some situations changes and reforms to Ministerial Policies and procedures are required in order to facilitate increased efficiency and effectiveness. The establishment of relevant Private-Public sector partnerships and the strengthening of stakeholder institutions, such as producer group and organizations is also required to ensure the optimization of benefits.

In addition, the strengthening of regional institutional collaboration should serve to identify added-value from collective regional measures and initiatives as a CARICOM Member States. In so doing it will secures benefits and positive economic outcomes that Member States would normally be unable to achieve when acting in isolation.

The specific objectives identified for Strategic Objective 3 are focused on ensuring that required collaborative links and networks are established particularly at the National, Regional and International levels to ensure reliable quantity of affordable, nutritious, high quality food commodities are available to all people in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Specific Objectives:

- Support the development and strengthening of producer organizations with special emphasis on the participation of women.
- Establish collaborative links with regional and international partners for information sharing, investing and marketing collaboration.
- The full exploitation of beneficial regional and International Trade agreements that have a positive impact on domestic food Production and Food Availability.

Action Agenda

The Action Plan outlined in Part 3 of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, provides information on the specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. These include:

- Establish/strengthen industry/value-chain committees to provide input in policy and planning for commodities and commodity groups;
- Support the establishment of a regional market information system;
- The implementation of trade facilitation measures to improve intra-regional trade in food products (raw and processed as well as beverages);
- Improvement of food safety systems and harmonization of food standards to facilitate trade among Member States

4.2 Policy Goal- Food Accessibility

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will facilitate the sustainable development of Human and Social Capital thereby increasing greater accessibility to safe and nutritious food, especially among vulnerable groups.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Access Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the *Strategic* and *Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

Areas of Intervention

- Food and Nutrition Insecurity monitoring and Vulnerability Mapping
- Reduction of poverty and unemployment
- Zero Hunger and Undernourishment
- Targeted and effective safety net programmes
- Access to basic services among some vulnerable groups
- Creation of employment and income generating opportunities

Strategic Objective 1

The reduction of Poverty and Unemployment through the enhancement of sustainable and stable employment generating opportunities and the establishment of appropriate safety nets.

The critical determinants of household access are purchasing power which is linked to the ability to generate income for various productive activities, as well as the prices of basic food items. The income available to an individual or household together with the supporting livelihood systems and strategies, are therefore essential factors in determining access to food.

Creating stable income generating opportunities for food insecure vulnerable groups in rural and urban communities is therefore seen as a key strategic objective in the fight against poverty and food insecurity.

The development of income generation opportunities should be based on the sustainable utilization of natural and human resources in conjunction with appropriate infrastructure and capital support programmes. The CDB Funded Basic Need Trust Fund is a targeted program aimed at addressing the need for capabilities enhancement and income creation at the community level.

Specific Objectives

- Enabling a better understanding of the poverty and food insecurity situation through the implementation of improved mechanisms for measuring and monitoring food insecurity and poverty.
- To enhance employment opportunities and access to food among non-agricultural vulnerable groups

Action Agenda

The Action Plan detailed in Part 3 of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, provides information on the specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. These include:

- Strengthening the capacity and capabilities of relevant agencies to monitor food insecurity and poverty vulnerability factors;
- Improving national capacity in the use of Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems;
- Assessment of existing safety net programmes and the implementation of targeted and effective programmes;

- Modification of poverty reduction programmes to encourage and promote the development of sustainable livelihoods activities;
- Promoting income generating opportunities among the marginalized urban dwellers, through the promotion of entrepreneurship and cottage industry production.

Strategic Objective 2

Implementation of a Zero Hunger Initiative aimed at the reducing the level of Hunger and Undernourishment in St. Vincent and Grenadines.

While a situation of hunger and poverty are technically not the same, they are clearly linked. The proposed Zero Hunger initiative is therefore focused on the implementation of measures that that will reduce the level of hunger and undernourishment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Based on information provided by FAOSTAT 2013, the number of under-nourished persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is estimated at five thousand (5,000). In 2000-2002, under-nourishment was about to 10.6 percent of the population or eleven thousand (11,000) persons. By 2005 – 2007, the proportion of under-nourished persons fell to 6.7 percent, and the absolute number to seven thousand (7,000). Then finally by 2010 – 2012, the proportion of under-nourished persons in the population fell to 4.9 percent and the absolute number of the under-nourished to five thousand (5,000). The Zero Hunger Action Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is aimed at creating a nation free of hunger and under-nourishment by 2020.

The Zero Hunger initiative being proposed takes into consideration the fact that hunger cannot be overcome solely through the distribution of food and the implementation of safety net programmes, but are linked to economic and social development strategies that help to develop income generating opportunities for the targeted population.

The Initiative will therefore implement measures which will provide the hungry and undernourished with immediate relief in the form of targeted safety nets, but also build capacity through the implementation of medium and long term initiatives.

These would include the strengthening of programmes that facilitate greater access to health care and educational training (adult literacy programmes) that would help to break the cycle of poverty.

Specific Objectives

- Developing of an appropriate Technical and Institutional Framework for the identification of appropriate indicators and measures and the monitoring and evaluation of the Zero Hunger Programmes and Actions.
- Promotion of the development and expansion of Urban Agriculture
- Improvements in the nutrition and health status of the Food insecure and vulnerable population.
- Improvement of the Nutritional Status of Children through the development of and implementation of Child Nutrition Protection and Promotion programmes.
- Expansion in the social protection system and improvements in the management and efficiency of its operations.
- Expansion of pro-poor employment and income generating opportunities.

Action Agenda

These *Specific Objectives* will be achieved through the implementation of a number of actions detailed in the *Action Plan* in Part 3 of the FNS Policy and Action Plan. These actions include:

- The establishment of a Vulnerability Mapping and Information management system.
- Widening and deepening vocational training programmes for artisans, farmers, fishermen and vulnerable groups (especially women) etc. to improve their skills and employability.
- Targeted Agricultural Education and Training Programmes.
- Mobilisation of resources through the preparation of community-based project proposals.
- Increase vegetable and fruit production through home gardening/ backyard gardening.
- Develop and implement special nutrition programmes for children from poor urban and geographically vulnerable regions.
- Effective targeting of food assistance and safety net measures to ensure maximum benefits to the vulnerable groups.
- Widening and deepening vocational training programmes for artisans, farmers, fishermen and vulnerable groups (especially women) etc. to improve their skills and employability
- Implement apprenticeship and other welfare-to-work programmes, in collaboration with the private sector;
- Conduct of annual assessment, including the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the zero hunger initiative

4.3 Policy Goal – Food Utilization

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will improve the nutritional status and well-being of the population of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the promotion of and commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious quality Caribbean food commodities/products.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Utilization Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the following *Strategic and Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- Food Quality and Safety;
- Care for the Socio-economically Deprived and Nutritionally Vulnerable Groups
- Dietary and Lifestyles Practices
- Prevalence of Micronutrient Deficiencies
- Child Care Practices
- Assessing, Analysing and Monitoring Food and Nutrition Situations

Strategic Objective 1:

To ensure food safety and quality control through the introduction of appropriate institutional and legislative framework and the promotion of hygienic and safe food practices by food processors, food handlers and consumers.

The maintenance of high quality and safety of foods throughout the food chain is critical for satisfactory nutritional status. The rapid growth of the informal food service sector has outstripped the capacity of the Public Health Department to monitor and regulate food safety and sanitation. It should however be emphasised that food safety should be the responsibility of all stakeholder in particular the final consumer

The lack of appropriate food safety and quality control systems and practices has resulted in situation where there is unacceptably low levels of analysis of chemical and microbial contamination of foods, whether imported or produced/processed locally, to ascertain safety for human consumption. Some of the key issues to be addressed within the context of *Strategic Objective 1* are:

- Inadequate national food safety and quality standards for local products;
- Insufficient capacity for implementing monitoring and surveillance mechanisms for food safety and quality;

- Improper food handling practices by food handlers and the generally limited food safety awareness by consumers;

The special objectives identified below are intended to guide the identification of programs and actions that would be aimed at challenges contributing to poor food safety and quality control practices.

Specific Objectives

- Review and harmonize food safety and quality regulatory and institutional framework to improve coordination and enforcement.
- Strengthen the capacity to enforce appropriate food safety standards
- Promotion of hygienic and safe food practices by food processors, food handlers and consumers.

Action Agenda

The specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives include:

- Adoption and incorporation of international food safety standards into the national laws, legal framework and regulatory ordinances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- The introduction of measures to deal with the use of illegal chemicals by farmers;
- Establishment of a committee/advisory body that will coordinate the education of farmers, vendors, consumers and all other stakeholders about food safety practices;
- Review of mandate and function of the National Committee of Agricultural Health and Food Safety;
- Training of regulatory and food processing plant personnel in food inspection and sanitary audit procedures;
- Increasing the frequency of inspection and monitoring of food establishments;
- Continued training of food handlers to improve food handling practices.

Strategic Objective 2:

To provide for the basic health and nutrition needs of the vulnerable groups (mentally ill, disabled, elderly, street children, the chronically ill and PLWHA)

The elderly, the indigent, the chronically ill, mentally ill, street children, the disabled, and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are groups classified as food insecure and vulnerable. Specific

programmes and actions are therefore required to address the need of these of population groups.

Currently several hundred of the elderly are beneficiaries of the fortnightly contributions from the National Insurance Scheme. There are plans to implement a Government assistant programmes that will provide hot meals on a daily basis for at least twenty vagrants and or desperately helpless individuals.

Immediate Assistance Programme run by the Family Services Department offers help particularly to persons who seek aid in obtaining food supplies. Several hundred individuals benefit from this programme annually. Recent studies have revealed that some older persons would not eat for days because of a lack of money to buy food.

While these and other programs have been making some impact on the target social groups, there still the need for significant improvement in the livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms open to these groups.

The specific objectives and actions defined as part of this Strategic Policy Framework would help to address these additional concerns.

Specific Objectives:

- Surveillance of the Nutritional status to determine the basic health and nutrition needs of the targeted vulnerable established.
- Strengthening of institutional systems to provide Social Services support for targeted vulnerable groups.
- Support provided (information/technical and material) to facilitate improved home care for the vulnerable, in particular the elderly, the disabled and the chronically ill.

Action Agenda

These *Specific Objectives* will be achieved through the implementation of a number of actions detailed in the *Action Plan* in Part 3 of the FNS Policy and Action Plan, these include:

- Conducting survey (nutritional assessment) of all core vulnerable groups;
- Setting-up nutrition surveillance system for the vulnerable at institutions and health centres;
- Training more field officers for vulnerable persons (public sector and NGOs);
- Conducting public education for caregivers of vulnerable persons;
- Providing support training for family members and friends.

Strategic Objective 3

To reduce the incidence and prevalence of diet related CNCDs through enhanced control and management.

Chronic- Non-Communicable Diseases are responsible for six of the top ten leading causes of death in the region, and represent a growing portion of health spending, and impose a large economic burden at the societal, community, and household level.

Available data from the WHO's Diabetes Atlas indicates that treating NCDs is costly. In the OECS countries including St. Vincent and the Grenadines the annual cost for treating a diabetic ranges from US\$322 to US\$769. Some NCD patients spend 36 percent of their total household expenditure annually for care. Poorer households spend 48 percent of their per capita expenditure on healthcare.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes that the negative and long-term effects of NCDs on the workforce can have serious consequences for the economic, social, political and cultural life of the Nation. NCDs are life-threatening and can have debilitating effects on the quality of family and community life. The Government is committed to a comprehensive approach to the prevention and management of NCDs.

At the CARICOM Summit on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases convened in September 2007, heads of Governments took decisions to prevent and control the NCD epidemic in the Caribbean. As a result of the decisions made at the Summit, The Strategic Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was prepared. This Strategic Plan was intended to form a road map for action and resource mobilisation at both the regional and country levels. The Plan also includes recommendations for country plans, and at the national level. The guidelines provided in this document therefore formed an important part of the process used in the identification of Specific Objectives and Actions required to realise the above defined Policy Goal.

Specific Objectives

- To improve the level of Physical Fitness among the population.
- The strengthening of Nutrition surveillance systems.
- To improve adequate dietary and nutritional practices at the household level

Action Agenda

The Action Plan outlined in Part 3 of the FNSPAP, provides information on the specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. These include:

- Promoting healthy diets and lifestyles including physical exercise;
- Developing mass media campaign to promote proper nutrition and exercise throughout the life cycle;
- Developing National Physical Activity Guidelines;
- Promoting of research and monitoring systems focused on prevalence and trends of NCDs.
- Integration of National Dietary Guidelines into the schools curricula from pre-primary to tertiary level, inclusive of adult and continuing education;
- Development and implementation of food and nutrition standards for feeding in schools from pre-primary to tertiary level;
- Development and implementation of national information, education and communication strategies to promote the National Dietary Guidelines.

Strategic Objective 4

To reduce the incidence of Micronutrient deficiency in particular Iron deficiency anaemia in the population in general and specifically targeting children and pregnant and lactating women.

Iron deficiency anaemia is the most significant micronutrient deficiency in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Low levels occurred more frequently in the 1 - 2 years age group. Past surveys have shown that while Vitamin A and Beta-carotene status in the target population was good, there were deficiencies in Vitamin E.

Micronutrient deficiencies increase the general risk of infectious illness and of dying from diarrhoea, measles, malaria and pneumonia. These conditions are among the 10 leading causes of disease in the world today. The groups most vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies are pregnant women, lactating women and young children, mainly because they have a relatively greater need for vitamins and minerals and are more susceptible to the harmful consequences of deficiencies. For a pregnant woman these include a greater risk of dying during childbirth, or of giving birth to an underweight or mentally-impaired baby. For a lactating mother, her micronutrient status determines the health and development of her breast-fed infant, especially during the first 6 months of life. For a young child, micronutrient deficiencies increase the risk of dying due to infectious disease and contribute to impaired physical and mental development.¹⁸

¹⁸ Joint statement by the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund

Specific Objectives

- To implement system for the surveillance of Iron status of the population;
- To promote the utilization of foods rich in iron, vitamin A and other micro-nutrients.

Action Agenda

The specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives include:

- Assessing of the effectiveness of anaemia prevention and management services in antenatal clinics;
- Planning and conducting training for staff based on findings of evaluation;
- Exploring the feasibility of introducing anaemia screening in child health clinics & primary schools;
- Conduct public awareness campaigns for the use of fortified food products;
- Advocate for industries to fortify specific food products.

Strategic Objective 5:

To establish and maintain the appropriate institutional, legal, policy and implementation framework for the protection and promotion of child nutrition.

Several WHO publications have highlighted the fact the malnutrition is responsible, directly or indirectly for about one third of deaths among children under five. Well above two thirds of these deaths, often associated with inappropriate feeding practices, occur during the first year of life.

Nutrition and nurturing during the first years of life are both crucial for life-long health and well-being. In infancy, no gift is more precious than breastfeeding; yet barely one in three infants is exclusively breastfed during the first six months of life.

Promoting sound feeding practices among children is one of the main programme areas of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Environment. The activities being implemented by the relevant Department of the Ministry is expected to be guided by the *St. Vincent and the Grenadines Child Nutrition (0-17 years) Plan of Action 2013-2018*. The Draft Action Plan is to be submitted to Cabinet for ratification.

This draft IYCN Action Plan contains measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate institutional, legal, policy and implementation framework for the protection and promotion of child nutrition.

The Specific Objectives and Actions being proposed as part of the FNS Policy and Action Plan for SVG, to a large extent incorporates the proposals of the IYCN Action Plan (2013-2018).

Specific Objectives

- To implement measures to adopt, implement and enforce a National Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes;
- To develop measures and enact legislation to protect the breastfeeding rights of working women in keeping with the relevant ILO Conventions;
- To develop national standards and laws on the production and marketing of food products for children based on Codex Alimentarius Standards and WTO obligations
- To strengthen capacity for delivery of infant and young child nutrition education programmes in, early childhood institutions and primary schools (grades K –3)
- To strengthen capacity of health workers for promoting and supporting optimal breastfeeding & complementary feeding practices, & counselling HIV+ women about infant feeding
- To increase family, community and public awareness and support for the adoption of optimal IYCF practices
- To strengthen the capacity for delivery of nutritionally safe and adequate feeding programs for children attending clinics, ECI's, primary and secondary school
- To improve and maintain efficiency & effectiveness of Growth Monitoring and Promotion Programme (GMPP) in health centres
- To establish nutrition surveillance system for children to monitor trends in nutrition – related problems
- To establish and maintain a national mechanism for planning, implementing, coordinating and monitoring the National Policy and Plan of Action on Child Nutrition

Action Agenda

The Action Plan outlined in Part 3 of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, provides a summary of the specific action proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. Further details are available in the *IYCN 2013: St. Vincent and the Grenadines Child Nutrition Plan of Action 2013-2018*.

Strategic Objective 6:

Establishment of systems and capacity to facilitate the Assessment, Analysis and Monitoring of the key FNS - Food Utilisation pillar.

A number of limitations in the current surveillance system make it difficult to accurately assess the status of a number of the key components of the FNS-Food Utilisation situation on a regular and systematic basis. Surveillance is necessary to advise the readjustment of public policy and the strengthening and modification of public health action.

While the basic elements of a good surveillance system are currently in place, there is a need for greater integration of key elements of the system and the effective use of generated information for upgrading of the management and decision making processes. The key elements of a national surveillance are:

- An ongoing systematic collection of reliable and quality data;
- Timely analysis and dissemination of data;
- The use of that data for decision making and public health action;
- Regular evaluation of the systems to ensure effectiveness.

This surveillance system must be integrated, since data will be collected from different sources. The enactment of appropriate legislation will be required to strengthen the capacity for effective inter-sectoral collaboration required for systematic collection, analysis and utilisation of reliable and quality data. This would involve the establishment of a regulatory and policy framework to facilitate surveillance activities of all sectors including the private sector.

Appropriate measure will have to be put in place to ensure the protection of confidentiality and for establishing critical indicators identified for regular monitoring. Food Surveillance Systems will be required to facilitate the monitoring of national and household food security, food consumption patterns and nutrient profiles using food balance sheet data, mapping systems, nutrient-cost analyses and periodic surveys. Nutrition Surveillance Systems will have to be strengthened to monitor the nutritional status of vulnerable population groups.

Information generated from Food Security Assessments and Vulnerability Profiling will be used as tools for planning intervention programmes. For example, Nutrient-cost analysis can be used as the basis for reviewing the minimum wage and old age pensions to ensure accessibility to food.

The special objectives identified below are intended to guide the identification of measures that will facilitate the establishment of effective systems for the Assessment, Analysis and Monitoring of the key elements of Food and Nutrition Security.

Specific Objectives

- The establishment of structures and mechanisms to monitor the following: Household food access; National food availability; and Food stability.
- The instituting of systems to monitor: Nutritional status (growth, body size, micronutrient deficiency); eating patterns and physical fitness.
- The organisation of systems to monitor core nutrition care and institutional feeding standards.
- The establishment of the framework, procedures and the capacity for the monitoring and evaluation of food and nutrition policies and programmes.

Action Agenda

The Action Plan outlined in Part 3 of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, provides information on the specific actions proposed for the attainment of the defined Specific Objectives. These include:

- Developing mechanisms (MOUs, legislation) for data sharing using existing sectoral data management systems;
- Monitoring National Food Balance Sheets using FAO STAT;
- Generating periodic reports;
- Incorporate new WHO child growth and infant/child feeding standards in national growth monitoring programme (GMP);
- Train health staff in new standards and revised GMP;
- Planning and conduct National Food Consumption, Fitness and Anthropometric Survey.
- Establishment of system to monitor standards for nutrition care and institutional feeding of vulnerable groups.

4.4 Policy Goal – Food Stability

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will support the development and implementation of sustainable and environmentally friendly mitigation strategies to ensure that National Food and Nutrition Security systems are resilience to natural and socio-economic shocks including climate change.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure the achievement of the defined Food Stability Policy Goal through the pursuit and attainment of the following *Strategic and Specific Objectives* in a number of identified *Areas of Intervention*:

- FNS Early Warning Information and Management System
- Disaster Preparedness and Management
- Emergency Distribution Programmes
- Climate Change

Strategic Objective 1:

The establishment of an Early Warning Information and Management System for Food and Nutrition Security

A well-established Early Warning Information and Management System can be an effective measure for disaster preparedness. Such a system would be a major element of disaster risk reduction that can help to prevent loss of life and reduces the potential economic impact of disasters. Effective early warning systems provide short and long-term forecast with regards to climatic conditions, the state of food production and existing supply-demand and price situation.

In order to be effective, early warning systems are required to actively involve the communities at risk, facilitate public education and awareness, communicate and disseminate warnings and messages, and ensure there is a constant state of preparedness.

The development of an effective Early Warning management system would requires information and expertise that necessitates the collaboration of a number of stakeholders, including Public sector agencies such as the Meteorological Offices, Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry responsible for Social Mobilisation.

Vulnerability analysis and mapping is done as part of the Early Warning Management System in order to provide a situational analysis, including nutrition and socio-economic information on

vulnerable population groups. This information can be used by decision-makers to enable the design of more effective emergency and relief responses.

Specific Objective

- Establishment of the required information and institutional framework to ensure comprehensive analysis, prediction and the Management of FNS Crisis situations.

Action Agenda

To achieve the above specific objective the proposed Action Plan articulates the undertaking of a number of activities aimed at developing and improving technical and organisational capacities with regards to the Early Warning Information Management. These include:

- Conduct of a situational analysis /including an inventory of existing systems
- Upgrading and developing appropriate forecasting models to provide information on prices, demand, supply and production;
- Development of an Early Warning Information system Framework including Warning Information transmission processes to relevant stakeholders;
- Provide training and capacity building at the national levels with regards to vulnerability mapping, food crisis prevention and risk manage;
- Integration of domestic Early warning Systems into Regional and Global systems.

Strategic Objective 2

Enhanced Disaster Management Capacities, including post-disaster rehabilitation in Agricultural systems.

The human, physical, economic and environmental cost associated with natural disasters and emergencies could have a devastating economic and social effects on a country. This emphasizes the need for a comprehensive National Plan for Disaster Management, that would clearly articulate the critical procedures, and coordination mechanisms and resources required in such situations. The St. Vincent and the Grenadine National Emergency and Disaster Management Act, 2006 provides such a framework for disaster management.

The National Disaster Response Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is designed to enhance the capacity of the government to prepare for, respond to, and recover from, disasters. The plan outlines basic procedures for returning the country to a state of normality as quickly

as possible following a disaster. It includes the establishment of a national emergency operations center, the structure of the various emergency committees, the roles and functions of Government Ministries and key departments, public utilities, statutory bodies, non-governmental and other voluntary organisations. This plan provides the framework for the policies and actions recommended in this document.

Specific Objectives

- Elaboration of the National Plan for Disaster Management with a special focus on agriculture disaster and risk reduction and preparedness

Action Agenda

The specific actions proposed to facilitate the achievement of the above articulated Specific Objective includes:

- Establishment or strengthening of post-disaster rehabilitation programmes in agriculture;
- Continued research on weather and disease resistant varieties;
- Expansion of appropriate disease and pest management programmes;
- Appropriate use and management of water resources
- Exploring the feasibility of introducing insurance systems for small farmers and other agricultural producers
- Zoning of agricultural production as necessary to reduce vulnerability
- Developing and implementing a national cropping plan, taking into consideration prevailing weather hazards, in order to reduce overall production risks.

Strategic Objective 3:

The development of Production systems and practices that are resilient to the impact of Climate Change, with particular focus on the Agricultural sector.

Climate Change is expected to have an impact on several key productive sectors of the economy. The Health of the population can be affected if there is too much or too little water. The conditions can facilitate the spread of water and vector borne diseases such as malaria, and dengue. The number of hot days and nights will increase and may cause heat stress especially in vulnerable groups such as the elderly and children. Further, the increase in the intensity and

frequency of tropical storms and hurricanes can also directly affect persons by causing physical injury and even death.¹⁹

Information provided in the referenced material (PPCR- Phase 1 Proposal) indicates that over 80 percent of the total infrastructure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (including fish landing sites, fish markets, roads, telephone and electricity lines, water lines, airports, homes and hotels) is located in the coastal zone and at is therefore at risk to flooding, tropical storm and hurricanes.

Despite the increasing growth in the service sector over the past decade, the agricultural sector will remain vital to the livelihoods of many in the rural and poorer communities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It is therefore critical that appropriate consideration be given to developing measures to ensure that production systems become more resilient to Climate change in order to ensure food and nutrition security in the future.

Decreasing rainfall and increasing temperatures in the future, will have a negative impact on agriculture in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation recognises the importance of plant genetic resources in the reduction of vulnerability to climate change. It sees the development and introduction of new varieties able to withstand drought, increased soil salinity, higher temperatures and new pests and diseases as vital to ensuring food security. It also regards genetic diversity as vital to its trust towards promotion of healthier eating habits and reducing the food import bill. It is believed that the consumption of cheaper locally-grown staples as well as a variety of medicinal herbs found in the wild will go a long way towards reducing the incidence of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, obesity, high-blood pressure and certain types of cancer²⁰.

Based on the above referenced FAO Report, over the past decade or more, there have been limited action taken to improve inventories and surveys of plant genetic resources, crop associated biodiversity and wild plants for food production. The greatest constraints to carrying out inventories and surveys were: lack of policy direction; limited financial resources; and the absence of adequate number of appropriately trained scientist.

¹⁹ St. Vincent and the Grenadines Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) Phase 1 Proposal

²⁰ FAO (2008) Second Country Report on the State of Plant Genetic Resources in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Specific Objective

- To develop the appropriate legislative/regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for planning and responding to climate change.
- Development of a comprehensive Strategic Program for Climate Resilience with special emphasis on the establishment of effective plant genetic resources disaster response mechanisms

Action Agenda

The recommended actions aimed at achieving the defined Specific Objectives are in keeping with the actions proposed in the above referenced (PPCR) Phase 1 Proposal. These include:

- Undertake public education and training program to increase awareness about the potential impact of climate change and climate variability on socio-economic development: including, health, food production; physical infrastructure etc.
- Development of the physical and human capacity to measure and monitor climate change impact on key economic and social development parameters;
- Incorporation of climate change related factors into sustainable land use planning and spatial mapping;
- Development of a National Strategic Plan focused on Climate Change resilient agricultural practices;
- Implementation of research programmes aim at identifying, and conserving plant genetic resources that display resilience to climate change constraints;
- Establishing/strengthening of a National genebank resources focused on management and conservation of climate resilient germplasm for identified commodities;
- Develop economic incentives programmes to encourage investment in public and private sector adaptation measures.

**SECTION 3: ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION
FRAMEWORK**

5. ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

5.1 Action Plan

The Action Plan presented in this section is an elaboration of the Action Agenda presented in summary form in Part Two of this document. The Action Plan presents the activities that are required to be implemented, under the four pillars of Food and Nutrition Security, in order to realise the Specific and Strategic Objectives and Goals defined as part of the Policy Framework. The Action plan will also provide information on the Desired Outcomes related to the particular Strategic Objectives, as well as the responsible and supporting entities that will ensure the implementation of the Actions and the realisation of the desired Outcome.

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will ensure that consistent/reliable quantity of affordable, nutritious, high quality food commodities are available to all people in St Vincent and the Grenadines, through the development of competitive and diverse domestic food production systems and sustainable level of food imports build primarily upon mutually collaborative links with CARICOM countries.

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p>A. Promote development in rural communities through the facilitation of increased investment (public and private sector) in agricultural and food production systems, especially targeting smallholders</p>	<p><u>G1.A1</u> Ensure the availability and accessibility of quality agricultural land and water resources for productive use;</p>	<p><i>Improved Land & Water Management and Information systems:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing of a land information system; ▪ Review of Land-Use and Land Allocation Policies; ▪ Develop land use zoning plans to preserve all arable lands, in particular Class I and II lands; ▪ Develop the capacity with the Ministry of Agricultural to enable the preparation of land-use crop zoning maps to identify land capability and suitability for various types of crops; ▪ Develop and promote conservation measures and better agricultural practices to reduce soil erosion; 	<p>Quality Agricultural lands available for production.</p>	<p>MARTFFI, L&S, Physical Planning Dept.</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a state land banking system to reduce the amount of under-utilized arable land; ▪ Strengthen the technical and administrative capacity of the Land Management Unit to better manage leased, rented and other state lands. ▪ Develop incentive programme to promote the utilization of abundant agricultural lands ▪ Monitor and evaluate land management to ensure productive use of leased lands. ▪ Improvement in the quality and quantity of water for domestic agriculture and other purposes, particular in areas of deficiency ▪ Promote the utilising of agricultural production technologies that promote the conservation of soil and water resources ▪ Develop appropriate institutional arrangements for the planning, use and management of water resources; ▪ Develop and promote conservation measures and best water use practices to ensure optimal utilization of the water resources. 	<p>Appropriate water resource management systems being utilised by farmers and other consumers;</p> <p>Increased number of farmers and agricultural workers trained in the efficient use of irrigation water and on-farm water management</p>		2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>GI.A2</u> The creation of a competitive and diverse agricultural sector that would provide commodities for domestic consumption and for export (crops, livestock).</p>	<p><i>The development of a focused and effective Agricultural Research and Training agenda:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Work Plan and implementation framework for NCCARD based on identified priority research areas. ▪ Strengthen the dissemination of research findings by NCCARD, through promotion and facilitation of access to journals, research papers etc. ▪ Identify critical production constraints and undertake research programme and activities in the field that are in responsive to these challenges. <p><i>Promotion of on- farm use of sustainable and improved Agricultural production techniques:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training to farmers on appropriate crop and animal husbandry practices to improve production and productivity using utilising methods such as the Farmers’ Field School Approach ▪ Establish demonstration farm to promote improved technologies ▪ Increase the availability and selection of cultivars and planting material. 	<p>Strengthened institutional capacity to conduct applied and adaptive agricultural research;</p> <p>Improved agricultural technologies and ‘best practices’ disseminated through improved extension institutions</p> <p>Sustained increases in food availability through growth in smallholder farmer food production</p>	<p>MARTFFI (Extension & Advisory Unit);</p> <p>CARDI and IICA</p> <p>Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN)</p> <p>NCCARD</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on appropriate technologies and support services in livestock production <p><i>Increase The competitive Production of Agro-food Products:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the production of selected vegetable crops, root crops, and tree crops (bananas, mangoes, cocoa) utilising improved production technologies; <p><i>Implement Food Production Incentive Schemes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement tax concessions on agricultural equipment and inputs and on income earned from agriculture; ▪ Implement tax relief on income generated from agro-processing; ▪ Provide duty free concessions and soft loans for agro-processors; ▪ Promote fair trade policies and techniques; ▪ Formulate legislation on praedial larceny; <p><i>Improve the environment for increased lending to the agricultural sector by financial institutions</i></p>	<p>Increased domestic production of primary and processed agricultural products.</p> <p>Agro-processing capacity increased.</p> <p>Food Distribution system strengthened</p> <p>Adjustments to trade and tax policies encourage better functioning food markets through improved regional political and economic integration and better functioning environments for trade in food.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MARTFFI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G1.A3</u> Promote development within the fisheries industry by the introduction of measures for the effective management, conservation, sustainable utilisation and development of fisheries resources</p>	<p><i>Introduction of improved technologies and measures that would facilitate improved production opportunities and practices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reliable and affordable access to inputs; ▪ Improved landing sites facilities; ▪ Establishment of adequate on-shore facilities for post-harvest handling and storage (including ice making facility). <p><i>The provision of technical and vocational training in a number of key areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food safety and hygiene; ▪ Sustainable fishing techniques; ▪ Fish processing and preservation techniques; ▪ Marine resource conservation; ▪ Safety at sea; ▪ Engine repairs etc. <p><i>Organisational/management strengthening of Producer groups and Associations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training in integrated business management skills ▪ Fostering of appropriate linkages with other stakeholders. ▪ Adequate representation at the decision-making/policy making level. 	<p>Improved marine fisheries management systems being implemented;</p> <p>Strengthened fisheries extension capacity and skills;</p> <p>Increased exports of fish and fisheries products</p>	<p>MARTFFI (Fisheries Department)</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G1.A4</u> Improving marketing opportunities (domestic and export) for producers and traders through the promotion of appropriate post-harvest, storage, transport and distribution practices, including improved market information and the promoting of the value chain approach;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The establishment of community markets for the display of local agricultural and fishery products ▪ Establishment of a Unit within the MARTFF to be responsible for marketing information and marketing systems including the development of links between producers and larger buyers (supermarkets, processors, exporters.) ▪ Develop the institutional support and networks required for export market development ▪ Establishment of wholesale markets and packing houses in targeted locations; ▪ Capacity building of agro-processors, particularly Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SMEs), to meet international quality and safety ▪ Strengthen access of smallholders and other food value chain actors to financial and risk management instruments ▪ Provision of the institutional support and networks required for export market development particularly for 'traffickers'. 	<p>Increased domestic consumption and export of locally produced primary and processed agricultural products</p>	<p>MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<u>B.</u> Stimulating greater involvement of Youth in Agriculture	<u>G1. B1</u> Agricultural Education and Training Programmes given priority attention as part of the Primary and Secondary schools' curriculum, as well as vocational training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The offerings of the Agricultural training Institute (ATI), complemented with a youth apprenticeship/ mentorship scheme for agriculture. 	Increased number of youth trained in relevant areas of technical and vocational agriculture	MARTFFI Ministry of Education	2013-2018
	<u>G1.B2</u> Creating the enabling environment to ensure that Agribusiness is seen as a viable career option for Young people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate access of youth and in particular young women, to developmental funding for promotion of value-addition, and agro-processing development ▪ Development of Schemes to make land available to youth ▪ The establish of Land Bank to address the issue of access to land ▪ Facilitating greater exposure and stimulating interest in improved and less labour intensive agriculture production technologies ▪ Encourage the cultivation of crops with greater value and less labour intensity. ▪ Encouraging the uses of improved production technologies (hydroponics, aquaponics) ▪ Establishment of a youth window in a credit programme for the agricultural sector. 	Increased number of youth involved in agriculture and agribusiness	MARTFFI Ministry of Education Ministry of National Mobilisation.....and Youth	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>C.</u> Strengthening institutional mechanisms and procedures to facilitate stronger intra and inter-sectoral linkages at the National level and the establishment of Regional and International relationships/Agreements and Protocols that will facilitate more effect utilisation of limited production and marketing resources.</p>	<p><u>G1.C1</u> Support development of, and strengthen producer organizations with special emphasis on the participation of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation of an umbrella body intended to present the views of agricultural stakeholders at the level of policy and planning. ▪ Establish/strengthen industry/value-chain committees to provide input in policy and planning for commodities and commodity groups 	<p>Strengthened producer organisations, including women’s producer groups</p> <p>A bottom-up approach to Policy formulation and planning developed at the National level.</p>	<p>MARTFFI CAFAN VINCYKLUS WINFA WINFRESH</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G1.C2</u> Establish collaborative links with regional and international partners for information sharing, investing and marketing collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate and strengthen joint production and marketing initiatives at the regional level ; ▪ Support the establishment of a regional market information system; ▪ Development of marketing infrastructure for the movement of products to meet national and regional and international food and nutrition requirements. 	<p>Increased regional and international trade and partnership;</p>	<p>Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs CAFAN IICA, FAO, CARICOM</p>	

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD AVAILABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G1.C3</u></p> <p>The full exploitation of beneficial regional and International Trade agreements that have a positive impact on domestic food Production and Food Availability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to support the development of institutional and other arrangements to support Agri-food Producers organisations' participation in regional and international fora. ▪ The implementation of trade facilitation measures to improve intra-regional trade in food products (raw and processed as well as beverages); ▪ Improvement of food safety systems and harmonization of food standards to facilitate trade among Member States 		<p>Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs</p> <p>CAFAN</p> <p>IICA, FAO, CARICOM</p> <p>CROSQ</p>	

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD ACCESSIBILITY

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will facilitate the sustainable development of Human and Social Capital thereby increasing greater accessibility to safe and nutritious food, especially among vulnerable groups.

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
A. The reduction of Poverty and Unemployment through the enhancement of sustainable and stable employment generating opportunities and the establishment of appropriate safety.	<u>G2.A1</u> Enabling a better understanding of the poverty and food insecurity situation through the implementation of improved mechanisms for measuring and monitoring food insecurity and poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening the capacity and capabilities of relevant agencies to monitor food insecurity and poverty vulnerability factors ▪ Improving national capacity in the use of Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems ▪ Defining of relevant Food Insecurity and Vulnerability indicators ▪ Collection and analysis of data and information. 	<p>Enhanced data and analysis;</p> <p>Enhanced capacity for the monitoring of the rate of Poverty and Food and Nutrition Insecurity.</p>	<p>MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p> <p>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</p>	2013-2018
	<u>G2. A2</u> To enhance employment opportunities and access to food among non-agricultural vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of existing safety net programmes and the implementation of targeted and effective programmes ▪ Modification of poverty reduction programmes to encourage and promote the development of sustainable livelihoods activities. ▪ Promoting income generating opportunities among the marginalized urban dwellers, through the promotion of entrepreneurship and cottage industry production. 	<p>Areas for improvement and 'Best Practices' identified.</p> <p>Targeted vulnerable groups have greater access to food.</p>	<p>MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p> <p>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</p>	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD ACCESSIBILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>B.</u></p> <p>Implementation of a Zero Hunger Initiative aimed at the reducing the level of Hunger and Undernourishment in St. Vincent and Grenadines.</p>	<p><u>G2.B1</u></p> <p>Developing of an appropriate Technical and Institutional Framework for the identification of appropriate indicators and measures and the monitoring and evaluation of the Zero Hunger Programmes and Actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing and implementation of appropriate data collection systems ▪ The establishment of a Vulnerability Mapping and Information management system. ▪ Monitoring and evaluating the impact of food-based/safety net/nutrition interventions/ programmes; 	<p>Vulnerability Assessments completed and vulnerable groups/ individuals identified</p> <p>Food-based/safety net/nutrition intervention reviewed and modified accordingly.</p>	<p>MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation..... and Youth</p> <p>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G2.B2</u></p> <p>Promotion of the development and expansion of Semi-Urban and Urban Agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targeted Agricultural Education and Training Programmes ▪ Training in vegetable seedling production and pot grow box or multi-story farming techniques for landless persons. ▪ Mobilisation of resources through the preparation of community-based project proposals. ▪ Increase vegetable and fruit production through home gardening/ backyard gardening. ▪ Promotion of small-scale backyard poultry production in selected areas. 	<p>Increased involvement of the urban and semi-urban population in productive agriculture;</p> <p>Increased consumption of locally produced fruits, vegetables and poultry in urban areas.</p>	<p>MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation..... and Youth</p> <p>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD ACCESSIBILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G2.B3</u> Improvements in the nutrition and health status of the Food Insecure and Vulnerable population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a minimum cost nutritious food basket to inform the setting of minimum wage, healthy eating, and monitoring food prices; 		Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	2013-2018
	<p><u>G2.B4</u> Improvement of the Nutritional Status of Children through the development of and implementation of Child Nutrition Protection and Promotion programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement special nutrition programmes for children from poor urban and geographically vulnerable regions; ▪ Develop/strengthen supplementary feeding programmes for children 6 months to 5 years 	Child Nutrition Protection and Promotion programmes operational	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment Ministry of National Mobilisation	2013-2018
	<p><u>G2.B5</u> Improvement and expansion in the social protection system basic services, including improvements in the management and efficiency of its operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective targeting of food assistance and safety net measures to ensure maximum benefits to the vulnerable groups. ▪ Improved access to basic services in semi urban and rural areas (water, electricity, sanitation, roads) ▪ Introduce measures to ensure improved coordination and strengthening of community support and producer organisations. 		Ministry of National Mobilisation	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD ACCESSIBILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G2.B6</u> Expansion of pro-poor employment and income generating opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of skill development needs based on local and regional market demand; ▪ Widening and deepening vocational training programmes for artisans, farmers, fishermen and vulnerable groups (especially women) etc. to improve their skills and employability; ▪ Implement apprenticeship and other welfare-to-work programmes, in collaboration with the private sector; ▪ Support activities that enhance the income generation capacity of people with special needs, the physically challenged, the elderly and the indigent. 	<p>Poor and vulnerable better equipped for employment in income generation activities</p>	<p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G2.B6</u> Development of an appropriate technical framework for regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Zero Hunger/Undernourishment in SVG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct of annual assessment, including the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the zero hunger initiative. 	<p>Annual Assessment of the Programme completed</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment Ministry of National Mobilisation Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will improve the nutritional status and well-being of the population of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the promotion of and commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious quality Caribbean food commodities/products.

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p>A</p> <p>To assure food safety and quality control through the introduction of appropriate institutional and legislative framework and the promotion of hygienic and safe food practices by food processors, food handlers and consumers.</p>	<p><u>G3. A1</u></p> <p>Review and harmonize food safety and quality regulatory and institutional framework to improve coordination and enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update existing food safety legislation. ▪ Adopt and incorporate international food safety standards into the national laws, legal framework and regulatory ordinances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. ▪ Enforce mandatory food safety and quality standards. ▪ The introduction of measures to deal with the use of illegal chemicals by farmers. ▪ Establishment of a committee/advisory body that will coordinate the education of farmers, vendors, consumers and all other stakeholders about food safety practices. ▪ Review mandate and function of the National Committee of Agricultural Health and Food Safety ▪ Establish the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (NAHFSA) 	<p>Capacity to enforce appropriate food standards strengthened</p> <p>The legislative and institutional structure in place for the promotion of hygienic and safe food practices</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment;</p> <p>CAHFSA</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p>G3.A2</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity to enforce appropriate food safety standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop appropriate training programme; ▪ Recruit, train and certify specialists in food inspection; ▪ Train regulatory and food processing plant personnel in food inspection and sanitary audit procedures; ▪ Train laboratory personnel in food testing protocols; ▪ Train and certify Cadet Environmental Health Officers; ▪ Upgrade the equipment and infrastructure of the current food testing facilities to facilitate certification and accreditation; 	<p>Effective systems in place for the enforcement of food safety standards.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment;</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p>G3.A3</p> <p>Promotion of hygienic and safe food practices by food processors, food handlers and consumers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased frequency of inspection and monitoring of food establishments; ▪ Continued training of food handlers to improve food handling practices; ▪ Institute food testing of samples collected periodically from selected food processing establishments and vendors. 	<p>Additional national food safety and quality standards developed</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment;</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop training programme and train regulatory and food processing plant personnel in food inspection and sanitary audit procedures; ▪ Develop national training module and manual for food handlers; ▪ Provide incentives to food handlers to increase quality and safety of their offerings; ▪ Establish systems for the regular monitoring and grading of restaurants and other food outlets so that people would be aware of the national standards; ▪ Develop promotional materials on food safety for the media and general public ; ▪ Conduct Food Safety Public awareness campaigns. 	<p>Food surveillance systems established</p> <p>Capacity for the monitoring for food safety and quality enhanced</p> <p>Public better informed on Food Safety Issues</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment;</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade & Consumer Affairs</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<u>B</u> To provide for the basic health and nutrition needs of the vulnerable groups (mentally ill; disabled; elderly; street children; the chronically ill and PLWHA)	<u>G3.B1</u> Surveillance of the Nutritional status to determine the basic health and nutrition needs of the targeted vulnerable established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct survey (nutritional assessment) of all core vulnerable groups; ▪ Set up nutrition surveillance system for the vulnerable at institutions and health centres; ▪ Develop nutrition algorithm of care for PLWHA; ▪ Develop norms and standards for food banks for PLWHA. 	Nutritional status of the vulnerable groups established Nutritionally adequate meals provided to vulnerable groups	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment; Ministry of National Mobilisation	2013-2018
	<u>G3.B2</u> Strengthening of institutional systems to provide Social Services support for targeted vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide multi-purpose Centres (MPC) for PWD (Persons with disabilities); ▪ Provide more facilities for the elderly; mentally ill and street children ▪ Train more field officers for vulnerable persons (public sector and NGOs) ▪ Conduct public education for caregivers of vulnerable persons ▪ Establish a package of benefits for the vulnerable 	Adequate institutional support available to provide for the basic health and nutrition needs of the vulnerable	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment; Ministry of National Mobilisation	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.B3</u></p> <p>Support provided (information/technical and material) to facilitate improved home care for the vulnerable, in particular the elderly, the disabled and the chronically ill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop care plan ▪ Train health workers in nutrition and food security ▪ Support training provided for family members and friends ▪ Support linkages provided with local NGO and faith-based organizations. 	<p>Home care for the vulnerable/elderly improved</p> <p>Capacity to care for PLWHA improved</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment;</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	2013-2018
<p><u>C.</u></p> <p>To reduce the incidence and prevalence of diet related NCDs and enhance their control and management</p>	<p><u>G3.C1</u></p> <p>To improve the level of Physical Fitness among the population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote healthy diets and lifestyles including physical exercise. ▪ Develop mass media campaign to promote proper nutrition and exercise throughout the life cycle. ▪ Develop National Physical Activity Guidelines. ▪ Update Physical Education curriculum in schools at all levels. ▪ Design fitness programmes for schools, workplaces and communities. ▪ Train personnel to administer fitness programmes. ▪ Establish and monitor a Physical Education Index. 	<p>Wellness programmes developed and implemented;</p> <p>Media campaigns and demonstrations conducted</p> <p>Improvement in the physical fitness level of the population</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.C2</u></p> <p>The strengthening of Nutrition surveillance systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the development/strengthening of research and monitoring systems focused on prevalence and trends of NCDs. 	Information system strengthened	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	2013-2018
	<p><u>G3.C3</u></p> <p>To improve adequate dietary and nutritional practices in schools, workplaces and at the community and household levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrate National Dietary Guidelines in schools curricula from pre-primary to tertiary level, inclusive of adult and continuing education. ▪ Sensitize Teachers and Adult Education Facilitators about the National Dietary Guidelines. ▪ Offer food and nutrition as a subject at C.A.P.E. level. ▪ Develop and implement food and nutrition standards for feeding in schools from pre-primary to tertiary level. ▪ Develop and implement national information, education and communication strategies to promote the National Dietary Guidelines. ▪ Develop mass media programmes in keeping with the I.E.C. strategy. 		<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<u>G3.C3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve marketing strategies and nutrition promotion ▪ Increase the consumption of healthy foods especially high in fibre foods, iron (fruits, vegetables, peas and beans). ▪ Support Programs to create awareness on the importance of individual routine health and nutritional assessment. ▪ Promote the consumption of wholesome and nutritious indigenous foods in households and eating outlets. ▪ Promote consumption of wholesome indigenous foods in households and eating outlets ▪ Develop comprehensive programs on prevention and management of diet related NCDs. 	Overall Increase in the preparation and consumption of healthy foods	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment Ministry of Education Ministry of National Mobilisation	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>D.</u></p> <p>To reduce the incidence of Micronutrient deficiency in particular Iron deficiency anaemia in the population in general and specifically targeting children and pregnant and lactating women.</p>	<p><u>G3. D1</u></p> <p>To implement system for the surveillance of micronutrient deficiencies, including Iron status, of the population;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the effectiveness of anaemia prevention and management services in antenatal clinics ▪ Plan and conduct training for staff based on findings of evaluation ▪ Explore feasibility of introducing anaemia screening in child health clinics & primary schools ▪ Prepare proposal to seek funding for anaemia prevalence study in young children 	<p>Availability of more reliable information on micronutrient deficiencies.</p> <p>More effective monitoring systems in place.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G3. D2</u></p> <p>To Promote the utilization of foods rich in iron, vitamin A and other micro-nutrients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen routine and therapeutic micro-nutrient supplementation (vitamin A and foliates) initiatives for children and women and other identified vulnerable groups; ▪ Conduct public awareness campaigns for the use of fortified food products. ▪ Advocate for industries to fortify specific food products. 	<p>Micro-nutrient supplementation programme strengthened;</p> <p>Increased used of fortified food and improved nutritional status of target groups</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>E.</u></p> <p>To establish and maintain the appropriate institutional, legal, policy and implementation framework for the protection and promotion of child nutrition</p>	<p><u>G3.E1</u></p> <p>To implement measures to adopt, implement and enforce a National Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and conduct CRC-based assessment of child nutrition laws, policies and programmes ▪ Finalize national policy on infant and young child nutrition (IYCN) and plan of action. ▪ Mobilise public support for the IYCN policy and programme 	<p>Draft National Code available for approval by Cabinet/Parliament</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G3.E2</u></p> <p>To implement measures to adopt, implement and enforce a National Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene sensitisation meetings with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders; ▪ Draft national Code regulations including provisions for effective monitoring, implementation and enforcement; ▪ Conduct public education on the National Code; ▪ Monitor implementation of National Code; 	<p>Draft Legislation available/enacted</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.E3</u></p> <p>To develop measures and enact legislation to protect the breastfeeding rights of working women in keeping with the relevant ILO Conventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene sensitization meetings with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders ▪ draft/update maternity protection legislation through consultative process ▪ Ratify revised legislation ▪ Conduct public education on maternity protection entitlements. 	<p>Draft legislation available for circulation</p> <p>Legislation revised & enacted</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G3.E4</u></p> <p>To develop national standards and laws on the production and marketing of food products for children based on Codex Alimentarius Standards and WTO obligations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop national nutrition standards; ▪ Develop national food laws for food products for infants and young children based on relevant Codex Alimentarius standards and International trade obligations; ▪ Establish systems for monitoring and enforcement of food legislation to ensure compliance; ▪ Conduct public education on national nutrition standards and food laws for child nutrition. 	<p>Relevant National nutrition Standards and laws developed and being implemented</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of Legal Affairs</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p> <p>UNICEF</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.E5</u></p> <p>To strengthen capacity for delivery of infant and young child nutrition education programmes in, early childhood institutions and primary schools (grades K –3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop nutrition education curricula and information packages for early childhood institutions and primary schools (grades K-3) ▪ Conduct training on nutrition IEC support materials for teachers in early childhood institutions and primary schools (grades K-3); ▪ Development of nutrition monitoring and evaluation tools. 	<p>Early Childhood Nutrition education capacity strengthened</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>UNICEF</p>	2013-2018
	<p><u>G3.E6</u></p> <p>To strengthen capacity of health workers for promoting and supporting optimal breastfeeding & complementary feeding practices, & counselling HIV+ women about infant feeding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct IYCF counselling training courses for all relevant categories of health and ECE workers ▪ Conduct training for midwifery students Conduct training for peer counsellors/support groups to increase support for women less likely to breastfeed ▪ Review/update pre-service curricula, competency standards and training materials on maternal & infant/young child nutrition in health & ECE training institutions ▪ Develop monitor and evaluation system to assess the coverage and effectiveness of in-service training programs 	<p>Improved knowledge base and strengthened capacity of health workers.</p> <p>Appropriate monitoring and evaluation system in place.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.E7</u></p> <p>To increase family, community and public awareness and support for the adoption of optimal IYCF practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a proposal for baseline data, collection for development of an IEC program ▪ Conduct of media campaign targeted at families and community members ▪ Disseminate of relevant information to the public. 	<p>IEC programme developed addressing IYCN related issues ;</p> <p>Media campaign funded; implemented and evaluated</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G3.E8</u></p> <p>To strengthen the capacity for delivery of nutritionally safe and adequate feeding programs for children attending clinics, ECI's, primary and secondary school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop nutrition policy for ECIs and secondary schools ▪ Develop nutrient- & food-based standards, & procedures for feeding programs in ECI's and secondary schools; ▪ Conduct training for staff in ECIs, primary and secondary schools; ▪ Evaluate and strengthen the Food and Nutrition curriculum 	<p>Improved quality and effectiveness of feeding programs for young children</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILISATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3.E9</u></p> <p>To improve and maintain efficiency & effectiveness of Growth Monitoring and Promotion Programme (GMPP) in health centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct training on GMP for primary health care staff based on audit findings ▪ Mobilization of resources to procure equipment and supplies needed to sustain effective GMPP ▪ Develop protocols for nutritional management of low birth weight infants, under-nourished, and overweight/obese children. ▪ Conduct training of health workers in use of the protocols. 	Improved detection and management of nutrition-related problems in infants and young children	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	2013-2018
	<p><u>G3.E10</u></p> <p>To establish nutrition surveillance system for children to monitor trends in nutrition-related problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collate and analyse anthropometric and feeding data from GMP in child health clinics and prepare annual reports ▪ Integrate anthropometric and feeding data into health information reporting systems ▪ Introduce routine nutrition (anthropometry and dietary intake) screening of primary school children ▪ Collate and analyse anthropometric and feeding data on primary school 5-17 years. 	Improved detection and management of nutrition-related problems in children	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	2013-2018

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILIZATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>F.</u> Establishment of systems and capacity to facilitate the Assessment, Analysis and Monitoring of the key FNS - Food Utilization pillar.</p>	<p><u>G3. F1</u> The establishment of structures and mechanisms to monitor the following: Household food access; National food availability; and Food stability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop mechanisms (MOUs, legislation) for data sharing using existing sectoral data management systems; ▪ Monitor National Food Balance Sheets using FAO STAT; ▪ Recruit nutrition surveillance officers and provide relevant technical training; ▪ Develop procedural manuals ▪ Generate periodic reports 	<p>Systems established to monitor: Household food access; National food availability; and Food stability</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>
	<p><u>G3. F2</u> The instituting of systems to monitor: Nutritional status (growth, body size, micronutrient deficiency); eating patterns and physical fitness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate new WHO child growth and infant/child feeding standards in national growth monitoring programme (GMP); ▪ Train health staff in new standards and revised GMP; ▪ Procure required equipment (height/weight and hemoglobin screening equipment) for Health System; ▪ Plan and conduct Basic Risk Factor Survey in communities; ▪ Plan and conduct National Food Consumption, Fitness and Anthropometric Survey. 	<p>Systems established to monitor: Nutritional status; growth, body size; and micronutrient deficiency; Eating patterns and physical fitness</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD UTILIZATION

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G3. F3</u></p> <p>The organization of systems to monitor core nutrition care and institutional feeding standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish systems to monitor standards for nutrition care and institutional feeding of vulnerable groups ▪ Establish nutrition mapping system; ▪ Generate periodic reports 	<p>Systems established to monitor core nutrition care and institutional feeding standards</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD STABILITY

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will support the development and implementation of sustainable and environmentally friendly mitigation strategies to ensure that National Food and Nutrition Security systems are resilience to natural and socio-economic shocks including climate change.

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible/ Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>A</u></p> <p>The establishment of an Early Warning Information and Management system for Food and Nutrition Security</p>	<p><u>G4. A1</u></p> <p>Establishment of the required information and institutional framework to ensure comprehensive analysis and the Management of FNS Crisis situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct of a situational analysis /including an inventory of existing systems ▪ Developing an appropriate basic dataset of vulnerability/food insecurity indicators; ▪ Provide training and capacity building at the national levels with regards to vulnerability mapping, food crisis prevention and risk manage ▪ Upgrading and developing appropriate forecasting models to provide information on prices, demand, supply and production; ▪ Undertake integrated analysis and monitoring of the impacts of shocks on food and nutrition security ▪ Development of an Early Warning Information system Framework including Warning Information transmission processes to relevant stakeholders. ▪ Integration of domestic Early warning Systems into Regional and Global systems. 	<p>Early Warning Information and Management established and being implemented.</p> <p>Relevant technical capacity developed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p> <p>Meteorological Offices</p> <p>Bureau of Statistics</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD STABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>B</u></p> <p>Enhanced Disaster Management Capacities including post-disaster rehabilitation in Agricultural systems</p>	<p><u>G4. B1</u></p> <p>Elaboration of a National Plan for Disaster Management with a special focus on agriculture disaster and risk reduction and preparedness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment or strengthening of post-disaster rehabilitation programmes in agriculture; ▪ Continued research on weather and disease resistant varieties; ▪ Expansion of appropriate disease and pest management programmes; ▪ Appropriate use and management of water resources; ▪ Zoning of agricultural production as necessary to reduce vulnerability ▪ Developing and implementing a national cropping plan, taking into consideration prevailing weather hazards, in order to reduce overall production risks ▪ Training extension workers on disaster risk reduction and preparedness; ▪ Exploring the feasibility of introducing insurance systems for small farmers and other agricultural producers 	<p>An Effective Disaster Management Plan being implemented;</p> <p>Farmers and extension workers have the technical resources to cope with challenges related to post-disaster rehabilitation in Agricultural systems.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MARTFFI</p> <p>Ministry of National Mobilisation</p> <p>Meteorological Offices</p> <p>Bureau of Statistics</p> <p>National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD STABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible / Support Entities	Time Frame
<p><u>C.</u> The development of Production systems and practices that are resilient to the impact of Climate Change, with particular focus on the Agricultural sector</p>	<p><u>G4. C1</u> To develop the appropriate legislative/regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for planning and responding to climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake public education and training program to increase awareness about the potential impact of climate change and climate variability on socio-economic development: including, health, food production; physical infrastructure etc. ▪ Development of the physical and human capacity to measure and monitor climate change impact on key economic and social development parameters; ▪ Incorporation of climate change relates factors into sustainable land use planning and spatial mapping; ▪ Identify cost effective methods to increase water recovery. ▪ Develop economic incentives programmes to encourage investment in public and private sector adaptation measures. ▪ Establishing/Strengthen linkages with regional organisations and networks in the field of Climate Change (eg. CCCCC) 	<p>Improved public understanding of the potential impact of climate change;</p> <p>Increased participation in bilateral research on climate change;</p> <p>Improved networking at the regional level in sharing of relevant information.</p>	<p>MARTFF Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment Ministry of National Mobilisation Meteorological Offices Bureau of Statistics National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

ACTION PLAN

POLICY GOAL: FOOD STABILITY

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes	Responsible / Support Entities	Time Frame
	<p><u>G4. C2</u></p> <p>Development of a comprehensive Strategic Program for Climate Resilience with special emphasis on the establishment of effective plant genetic resources disaster response mechanisms;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of a National Strategic Plan focused on Climate Change resilient agricultural practices; ▪ Implementation of research programmes aim at identifying, and conserving plant genetic resources that display resilience to climate change constraints; ▪ Establishing/strengthening of a National genebank resources focused on management and conservation of climate resilient germplasm for identified commodities; ▪ Establishment of system for the characterization and documentation of resilient Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) 	<p>A National Strategic Program for Climate Change Resilience agriculture developed;</p> <p>Enhanced potential for long-term FNS through the increased availability food crops resilient to climate change stresses;</p> <p>Technical capacity in plant genetic resources management enhanced;</p>	<p>MARTFF</p> <p>CARDI</p> <p>CCCCC</p> <p>Meteorological Offices</p> <p>National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>

5.2 Implementation Framework

Overview

Experiences with regards to the implementation of FNS Policies and Plans in several countries have shown that an effective and efficient implementation framework is one that ensures inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral coordination. The Implementation of a Food and Nutrition security Action Agenda requires complementary interventions in different sectors (agriculture, health, trade and education, and planning) and at different levels (household, community, national and regional).²¹

Experience in other countries have served to identify several constraints that could be encountered during the implementation/coordination process. These include:

- a preponderance and greater visibility of actions (and funding) aimed at prevention and especially crisis management, with no apparent link to longer-term initiatives;
- poorly equipped institutions with scant human or operating resources for FSN coordination, governance, information and monitoring and evaluation (M&E);
- insufficient translation of FSN-related issues into national legislative and regulatory frameworks;

Countries that have had a continual process of institutional development and economic growth (e.g. Brazil) have proven to be better prepared to develop the complex institutional and policy reforms required to implement sound and effective FSN frameworks.

In practical terms, FSN continues to be mainly associated to emergency food aid and acute food insecurity, and/or with the need to increase agricultural production and productivity. This largely explains why most government sectors consider FSN to be linked to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Experience has shown that an effective FNS implementation framework requires a cabinet-level unit to secure coordination at a high political level, as well as effective programme implementation and clear lines of authority and communication to lower-level implementers and the creation of bodies responsible for programme implementation. FNS decentralization processes are crucial to make FNS policies more effective.

The Best Practice Case studies have shown that FNS institutional frameworks should include:

- Provision for inter-ministerial coordination;

²¹ **FAO (2012):** A Comparative Study on Institutional Frameworks for Food and Nutrition Security at National Levels

- Creation of institutional spaces representing civil society's interests and demands;
- Endowment of legally supported mechanisms. Legally approved institutional frameworks contribute to the sustainability of institutional arrangements). The incorporation of the human Right to Food into national constitutions and legislation is considered to be a fundamental step towards the effective realization of these rights at the national level.
- Existence of effective decentralized systems for FNS coordination at local levels;
- Mechanisms to monitor progress using results-based management systems, to ensure that the FNS situation is regularly assessed in order to provide accurate information on problems.

The referenced Comparative Study on Institutional Frameworks for FNS (FAO 2012) also details the lessons learned for effective implementation of FNS Actions. These include:

- political commitment;
- donor involvement;
- use of existing structures in parallel to capacity-building;
- inter-ministerial coordination of FSN programmes;
- adequate resources, decision-making and leadership for effective coordination;
- restructuring for coherent and effective performance;
- creating synergies between policies;
- transparency;
- social safety nets that are not temporary;
- food and nutrition security programmes that go hand in hand with broader economic development schemes.

Proposed Implementation Framework

One of the 'best practices' cited in the Comparative Study of Institutional Framework for FNS (FAO 2012) is that of "*using existing structures in parallel to capacity building*". In keeping with this recommendation, the implementation framework being proposed for the initial implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, is one that builds on the foundation established by the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNCS).

The National Food and Nutrition Security Council was an Inter-Sectoral Council appointed over the period 2001 to 2006, to develop a National Plans of Action for Nutrition (NPAN) for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The NPAN was intended to represent the country's particular

priorities and strategies for alleviating hunger and malnutrition. It was also intended to serve as a mechanism for mobilizing political and funding support for food and nutrition programmes.

On October 2006 the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines launched the first National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This Policy was to be implemented by National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNNSC). The Council's Overall Goal was *"to attain Food and Nutrition Security for all persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines"*. The Mission Statement was *"to coordinate, advocate for and advise the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on all national food and nutrition security matters in order to improve their wellbeing and quality of life"*.

This Institutional framework provided the mechanism for the planning, implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive set of policies and programmes aimed at improving the Food and Nutrition Security situation of the entire population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The FNNSC was comprised of an executive committee and five sub-committees each with specific mandates. The **Matrix A** below provides information of the Titles of the Sub-committees and their mandates. The sub-committees were made-up of representatives from various Ministries, Government organisations, regional organisations, private sector and civil society organizations. The Executive Committee was chaired by a representative from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and was comprised of representatives from the various sub-committees.

In May 2013 the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Rural Transformation, and the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, agreed to reactivate the *National Food and Nutrition Security Council*, with the aim of revising and updating the Draft Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2008-2012), in keeping with the conceptual frameworks of the Caribbean Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan (2010).

The Institutional Framework being proposed as part of this FNS Policy and Plan is therefore one that builds on the structure established by the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNNSC). **Figure 8** presents the proposed Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Framework.

It is recommended that the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (NFNSC) be retained as the primary Executive Body with responsibility for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Plan. It is further recommended that the NFNSC be comprised of five sub-committees, four of which are in keeping with the pillars of food and nutrition security. The fifth committee would be responsible for the coordination of information, monitoring and evaluation. The proposed sub-committees are:

- Food Availability Sub-Committee;
- Food Accessibility Sub-committee;
- Food Utilisation Sub-committee;
- Food Stability Sub-Committee;
- Sub-Committee for Information, Monitoring and Evaluation.

MATRIX A: Titles and Mandates of the Existing Sub-committees of the Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNCS)

Title of Committee	Mandate
Committee on Food Security, Safety and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving household food security ▪ Protecting consumers through improved food quality and safety.
Committee on Nutrition Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caring for the socially deprived and nutritionally vulnerable groups.
Committee on Health Diet and Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting appropriate diets and healthy lifestyles
Committee on Infant and Young Child Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preventing and managing micro nutrient deficiencies. ▪ Protecting and promoting optimal infant young child feeding
Committee on Monitoring and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessing, analyzing and monitoring food and nutrition situations.
Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporating nutrition objectives into sectoral and national development policies and plans

These sub-committees will be made-up of representative from Ministries, government agencies, regional organisations, private sector and civil society organizations that relates to the mandate of the various sub-committees. **Matrix B** below provides information of the mandate and the Agencies, institutions and stakeholders recommended to be part of the proposed sub-committees.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Council will function as the Executive Committee, coordinating the activities of the various sub-committees. The NFNSC will be made-up of representatives from the various Sub-Committees. The Executive Committee will be chaired in rotation by representatives from the various sub-committees.

It is recommended that the Executive Committee be responsible for the review of the Final Draft of the FNS Policy and Action Plan (2014) and the coordination of additional stakeholder consultations as may be required in the finalisation of the document.

The recommended institutional framework proposes that the NFNSC report to an Inter- Ministerial Cabinet Committee. This Cabinet Committee would be composed of a social and an economic cluster. The social cluster will be comprised of Ministers from the Ministries of Health Wellness and the Environment; Education; National Mobilisation and Social Development. While the economic cluster will be made-up of Ministers from the Ministries of Agriculture; Finance and Economic Planning; Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade & Consumer Affairs.

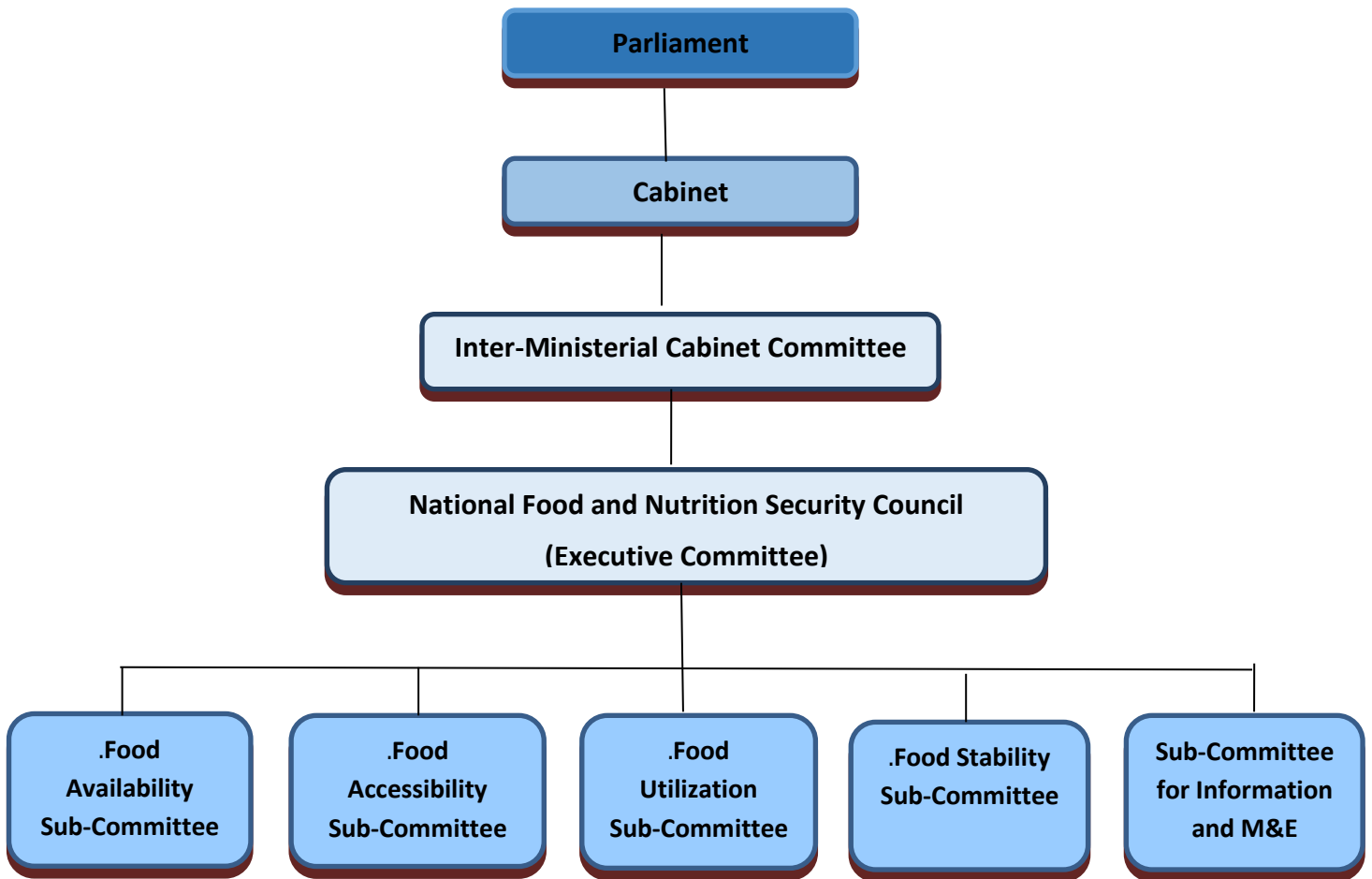
The proposed mandate of the Inter- Ministerial Cabinet Committee will include:

- Providing oversight and coordination of the implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan;
- Consulting and communicating with the NFNSC on issues with regards to food and nutrition security;
- Providing supervision in the preparation of legislation (including the amending of existing laws and regulation) to be submitted to Cabinet
- Ensuring that there is available financial resources for the implementation of the FNS Policy and Plan.
- Reporting to Cabinet on matters of importance to food and nutrition security.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee will further be responsible for giving political direction by making policy decisions and reporting to the Prime Minister and to Parliament regarding progress towards achieving food and nutrition security targets, as well as to serve as the link to relevant national and regional organizations.

It is being recommended that the Inter-Ministerial Committee be chaired by the Minister with responsibility for Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries and Industry. This Ministry currently has responsibility, for the implementation of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Zero Hunger Initiative, which forms an important component of the FNS Policy and Plan for the country.

Figure 8: Proposed Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Framework



Matrix B: Sub-Committees of the National Food and Nutrition Security Committee/Council

Committee (Title and Mandate)	Composition
<p><i>Food Availability Sub-Committee</i></p> <p>Ensure that consistent/reliable quantity of affordable, nutritious, high quality food commodities are available to all people in St Vincent and the Grenadines, through the development of competitive and diverse domestic food production systems and sustainable level of food imports build primarily upon mutually collaborative links with CARICOM countries.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MARTFF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Manager, Agricultural Diversification</i> - <i>Chief Agricultural Officer</i> - <i>Director of Planning</i> - <i>Head of Research and Extension</i> 2. Senior Technical Officer, Rural Transformation 3. Director, Bureau of Standards 4. Representative, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs 5. President, National Consumer Association 6. Executive Director, WINFA 7. Representative, VINCYKLUS 8. Representative Chamber of Commerce 9. Representative, CARDI 10. Representative, CAFAN 11. Representative IICA 12. Representative FAO 13. Representative, ECTAD
<p><i>Food Accessibility Sub-Committee</i></p> <p>To facilitate the sustainable development of Human and Social Capital thereby increasing greater accessibility to safe and nutritious food, especially among vulnerable groups.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development. 2. Director, BNTF 3. Ministry of Finance and Planning 4. Office of the Prime Minister 5. Ministry of Education 6. Representative SVG Christian Council 7. Social Worker, HIV/AIDS Secretariat 8. St. Vincent and the Grenadines Social Investment Fund 9. President, National Society of Persons with Disabilities 10. President, National Council of Older persons 11. Supervisor, Community Development

Committee (Title and Mandate)	Composition
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Food Utilization Committee</i></p> <p>Improve the nutritional status and well-being of the population of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the promotion of and commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious quality Caribbean food commodities/products.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>School Health Nurse</i> - <i>Nutrition Officer</i> - <i>Representative, Maternity Dept. MCMH</i> - <i>Representative, Paediatric Dept. MCMH</i> - <i>Nutrition Officer</i> - <i>Health Educator</i> 2. Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development.....: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Coordinator, National Family Planning Programme</i> - <i>Youth Officer</i> 3. Director of Sports 4. Ministry of Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Coordinator, Adult Education Unit</i> - <i>Coordinator, School Feeding Programme</i> - <i>Senior Education Officer-Curriculum Unit</i> - <i>Education Officer, Early Childhood Education</i> 5. Representative, Bureau of Standards 6. Representative, SVG Home Economics Association 7. Population Policy Coordinator 8. President, National Association of Early Childhood Educators 9. Representative, VINSAVE

Committee (Title and Mandate)	Composition
<p align="center"><i>Food Stability Sub-Committee</i></p> <p>Support the development and implementation of sustainable and environmentally friendly mitigation strategies to ensure that National Food and Nutrition Security systems are resilience to natural and socio-economic shocks including climate change.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MARTFFI 2. Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment 3. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 4. Economist, ESDU 5. National Epidemiologist 6. Representative, Social Development 7. Director, Agency for Public Information 8. Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs 9. Meteorological Offices, 10. Bureau of Statistics 11. National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)
<p align="center"><i>Sub-Committee for Information and M&E</i></p> <p>Establishing effective mechanisms at the national level for Assessing, analyzing and monitoring the food and nutrition security situation in the country</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MARTFFI (Statistical Dept.) 2. Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment 3. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 4. Bureau of Statistics 5. Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development.... 6. Ministry of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1a: PRODUCTION ESTIMATES (Permanent Crops)

Permanent Crops	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)
Avocado	76.2	700,000	78.50	675,000	71.00	596,000	72.3	602,000	73	662,200
Banana	2870	62,000,000	2846.00	58,206,000	1702.00	42,000,000	330.77	8,600,000	450	9,172,000
Breadfruit	138.5	3,960,000	139.5	4,120,000	120.0	3,400,000	123	3,760,000	125	3,626,000
Breadnut	11.9	180,000	12.5	190,000	10.2	175,000	10.6	181,000	11.2	146,000
Carambola	17.5	100,000	19.50	120,000	16.30	120,000	17.2	115,000	17.8	128,500
Christophene	5.5	23,000	5.5	23,000	5.50	23,000	7	28,000	7.9	33,000
Cinnamon	7.1	30,000	8.8	36,000	7.50	30,000	5.8	26,000	5.8	24,000
Clove	4.7	23,000	4.9	2,500	5.00	2,000	3.8	1,800	4	1,660
Coconut	1572	5,820,000	1578.00	5,710,000	1452.00	4,400,000	1468	4,760,000	1471	4,480,000
Golden apple	35	2,590,000	39.00	2,670,000	28.50	1,475,000	30.1	1,790,000	32	1,681,000
Grape	4.9	68,000	2.40	33,000	2.50	28,000	2	18,000	2.2	16,200
Grapefruit	34.6	699,000	35.80	720,000	31.00	385,000	32	398,000	33	404,000
Guava	5.0	240,000	5.20	251,000	4.80	205,000	5	265,000	5.2	246,000
Jujubee	14	300,000	14	320,000	14.2	400,000	14.5	410,000	15.2	383,000
Lemon	8.1	88,000	8.40	92,200	3.40	56,000	4.6	68,000	5.2	84,000
Limes	142	2,500,000	143.00	2,715,000	120.00	1,600,000	126	1,840,000	128	2,054,000
Mandarine	7.2	58,000	7.8	64,000	6.4	30,000	6.7	37,500	7.6	46,000
Mangoes	178.6	3,850,000	180.00	3,962,000	161.00	3,850,000	162	3,460,000	165	3,282,000
Nutmeg	44	856,000	44.00	825,000	36.00	630,000	37	540,000	37.4	553,000
Orange	109.6	4,150,000	111.50	4,220,000	102.00	2,090,000	104	2,970,000	106	2,915,000
Orchid	5.6	15,000	6.2	17,000	6.2	15,000	6.3	14,600	6.5	15,200
Passion Fruit	21.3	180,000	23.50	184,000	21.00	150,000	22	165,000	26	280,000
Pawpaw	9.3	85,000	13.50	97,000	10.80	95,000	11	112,000	15	186,200
Pineapple	60	410,000	60.80	540,000	62.80	560,000	65	676,000	70	770,000
Plantain	256	6,200,000	254.00	6,800,000	196.00	5,780,000	126.33	3,790,000	128	4,752,000
Sapodilla	37	750,000	37.50	770,000	35.40	785,000	35.7	784,000	35.7	700,000
Soursop	9.2	138,000	10.20	143,000	8.60	114,000	9	126,000	9	124,500
Sugarapple	5.7	50,000	6.00	53,000	5.10	47,000	5.3	50,000	5.5	57,400
Tangerine	8.2	50,000	8.6	60,000	7.3	28,000	7.5	42,000	8.9	62,000
Waxapple	14.6	750,000	16.6	850,000	14.60	805,000	15	820,000	18	891,000
TOTAL	5690.50	96,073,000	5696.00	93,558,700	4245.20	69,041,000	2865.5	36,449,900	3025.1	37,775,860

Source: Statistical Office

ANNEX 1b : PRODUCTION ESTIMATES (Temporary Crops)

Temporary Crops	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)
Arrowroot	92	541,450	60.5	548,350	84.00	484,036	74.0	441,878	54	431,470
Asparagus	1.23	5,000	0.8	3,650	0.30	960	0.2	800	0.2	875
Beet	0.5	2,000	0.4	1,860	0.50	1,860	0.9	3,600	1.2	4,400
Broccoli	5.1	30,000	3.8	24,000	3.90	24,000	5.4	38,000	5	34,000
Cabbage	176	1,780,000	170	1,703,000	175.00	1,850,000	175.4	2,105,000	153	1,844,300
Carrots	150	1,050,000	170	1,703,000	156.00	1,580,000	170.0	1,360,000	162	1,308,000
Cassava	45	1,430,000	40	1,120,000	42.00	1,160,000	54.0	1,350,000	70	1,492,000
Cauliflower	7.4	40,000	5.3	35,600	6.20	42,000	5.9	53,000	6.2	55,400
Chive	92.4	378,000	86.6	365,000	83.00	358,000	40.0	320,000	46	355,200
Corn	94	1,430,000	96.30	1,480,000	75.00	1,280,000	60.8	1,520,000	80	1,877,500
Cucumber	82	1,500,000	75	1,248,000	71.00	1,120,000	78.9	1,420,000	58	1,001,000
Dasheen	550	7,700,000	618	9,740,000	592.00	8,200,000	783.2	10,965,000	795	11,098,400
Edoos	544	5,200,000	534	8,070,000	489.00	6,800,000	558.5	7,260,000	589	8,185,000
Eggplant	14.6	176,000	16.2	191,000	14.50	182,000	12.0	180,000	9.6	133,400
Ginger	95	1,900,000	114	2,872,000	101.00	2,360,000	148.4	2,967,000	203	4,574,000
Hot Pepper	34.3	230,000	35	232,000	11.50	196,000	15.3	122,000	18	144,200
Lettuce	31.5	82,000	38	94,000	42.00	102,000	36.0	108,000	25	70,200
Melons	6.3	75,000	7.4	83,200	5.80	52,000	11.2	112,000	8.5	84,500
Ochro	70	255,000	65	248,000	38.00	220,000	33.3	200,000	35	201,000
Parsley/Celery	7.2	17,500	8	22,500	10.00	29,200	7.5	45,000	6.2	38,000
Patchio	8.3	63,000	9.2	76,000	8.20	70,000	8.2	98,000	6	60,000
Peanut	192	600,000	188	600,000	176.00	560,000	154.0	462,000	150	459,500
Peas	9.6	18,600	10.5	23,000	12.00	26,000	10.7	32,000	11	34,000
Pigeons Peas	125	520,000	120	502,000	68.00	380,000	60.8	486,000	61	489,000
Pumpkins	40.5	712,000	34	676,000	31.00	650,000	68.7	687,000	65	616,000
Radish	2.75	4,600	2.1	3,500	1.40	3,000	1.9	3,800	1.5	2,800
Sorrel	32	85,000	35	98,000	14.00	68,000	24.6	123,000	27	137,100

Temporary Crops	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)	Acreage	Yield(lbs)
Squash	4.5	20,000	4.6	22,000	5.20	25,000	6.2	31,200	5.6	48,500
String Beans	72	200,000	70.00	212,000	92.00	280,000	61.1	305,600	56	289,000
Sweet Pepper	70	330,000	64.00	448,000	55.00	385,000	53.6	375,000	50	346,000
Sweet Potatoes	464	5,210,000	518.00	7,150,000	502.00	5,600,000	747.5	5,980,000	809	6,640,000
Tannia	178	1,200,000	175.00	1,215,000	170.00	1,100,000	183.6	1,285,000	190	1,369,000
Tomatoes	128	1,400,000	110.00	1,460,000	96.00	1,180,000	117.2	1,758,000	93	1,380,000
Water Melons	23.6	408,000	24.00	437,000	20.00	390,000	24.3	485,000	26	506,000
White Yam	60	550,000	58.00	696,000	62.00	710,000	71.7	860,000	95	1,136,000
Yellow Yam	12.6	106,000	11.50	130,000	13.80	143,000	18.5	148,000	15	144,000
Other Yam	265	2,200,000	265.00	2,400,000	278.00	2,240,000	280.7	2,386,000	275	2,737,000
Portuguese Yam	116	1,500,000	110.00	1,588,000	104.00	1,360,000	121.7	1,460,000	115	1,341,000
TOTAL	3810.38	8,407,700	3796.4	47,521,660	3,659.30	41,212,056	4285.6	47,536,878	4376.0	50,667,745

Source: Statistical Office

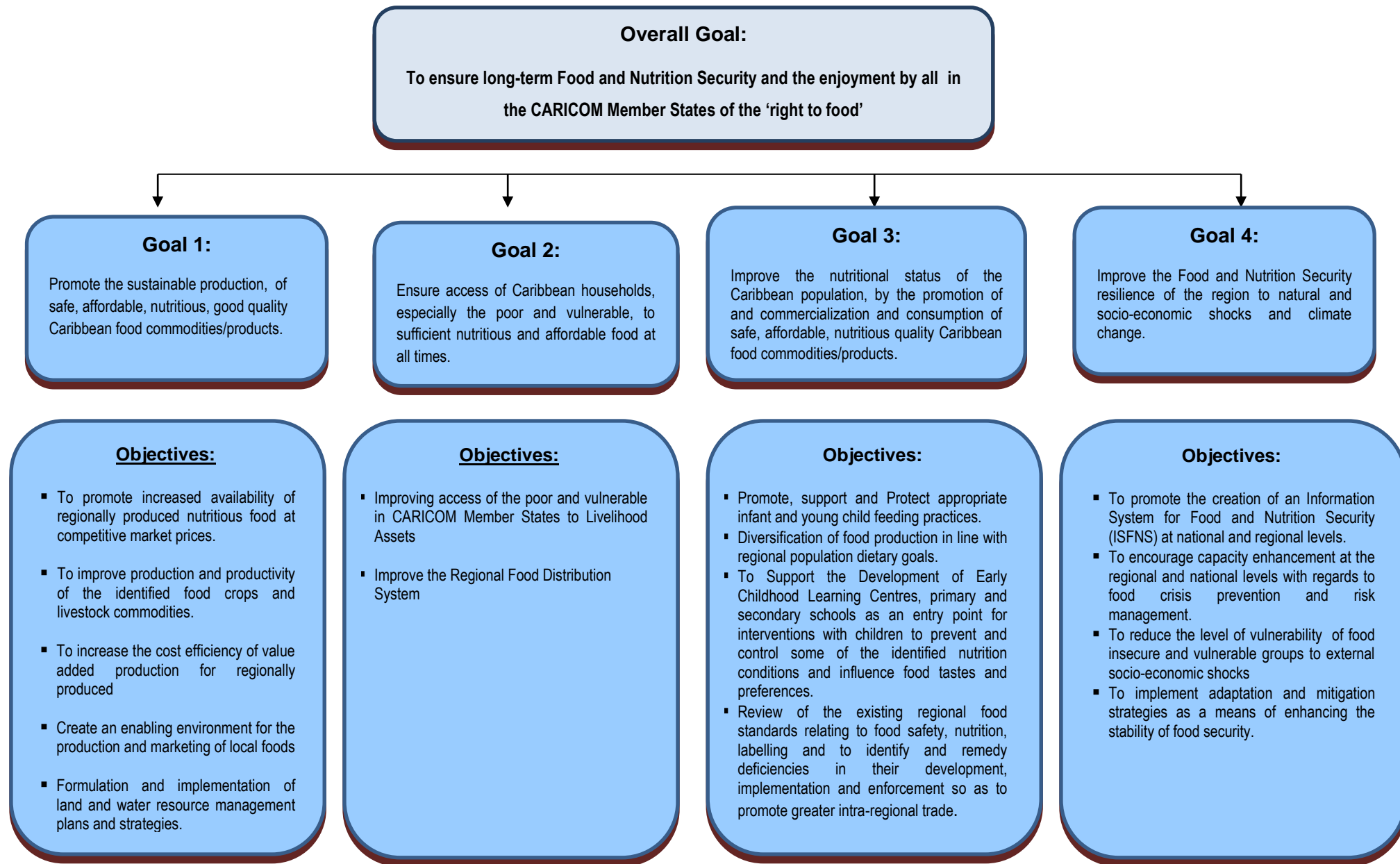
ANNEX 2: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

Historically, as a region and at the national level, CARICOM Member States have been trying to separately address the issues relating to the different dimensions of food and nutrition security (*food availability; food access; proper food utilization for good health, nutrition and wellbeing; and stable and sustainable food supplies at all times*). These efforts have resulted in a mix of policies that have had limited impact. The decision emanating from CARICOM's Liliendaal Declaration (July 2009) therefore mandated an integrated, multi-sector and regional approach for the achievement of food and nutrition security. Food and nutrition security was seen as a multi-dimensional and multi-sector issue that requires simultaneous, holistic and concerted action in a number of areas including the production of food (agriculture, fisheries and forestry), food processing and distribution, health and nutrition, trade, infrastructure, social welfare, education and information and communication.

The Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan (RFNSPA) seeks to provide a clearly articulated, holistic policy and implementation framework (for the period 2011-2025) that will guide the design, implementation and monitoring of specific future national and regional strategic programmes to address the major food and nutrition security challenges in CARICOM.

*The policy provides a coherent, convergent and comprehensive framework within which national governments, civil society and private sector actors can join forces with regional organizations and development partners in cross-national, multi-sector and synergistic partnerships to identify, finance, implement and monitor an integrated set of concrete actions to achieve the four objectives of : **food availability; food access; proper food utilization for good health, nutrition and wellbeing; and stable and sustainable food supplies at all times.***

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY- OVERALL GOAL, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



REGIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
<p>To ensure long-term Food and Nutrition Security and the enjoyment by all in the CARICOM Member States of the 'right to food'</p>	<p>Goal 1: Promote the sustainable production, of safe, affordable, nutritious, high quality Caribbean food commodities/products</p>	<p>To promote increased availability of regionally produced nutritious food at competitive market prices through the utilization of a territorial approach to production planning in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority commodities will be selected on the basis of the promotion of a nutritionally balanced diet comprised of Caribbean food products. ▪ Criteria for selection of the commodities/products will be based on: market demand, competitiveness, nutritional composition/elements and natural endowments of Member States. The Dietary Guidelines for the Region will also guide the selection of these food commodities/products. ▪ Small scale producers (farmers, fisher folk, cottage food processors etc.) in the Member States (with a focus on gender) will be critical in the production of the identified food commodities/products.
		<p>To improve production and productivity of the identified food crops and livestock commodities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generation and transfer of appropriate technology through market driven research programmes at existing institutions (strengthened where appropriate and international development partners. ▪ Documentation and dissemination of best practices for identified food crops/livestock and other food commodities, including sustainable production practices. ▪ Development of a Regional Seed and Genetic Material Policy that addresses the need for a stable regional supply of seed and genetic material.
		<p>To increase the cost efficiency of value added production for regionally produced and imported semi-processed foods and livestock products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitating the creation of product clusters and value chains to satisfy increasing sophistication of consumer demand. ▪ Increased 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 consumer.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	Goal 1:	Create an enabling environment for the production and marketing of local foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and progressively cover the infrastructure investment gap required to meet the food security needs of the most vulnerable groups in each Member State. ▪ Improve market access for small producers through improved market information and buyer/seller coordination and by promoting the value chain approach. ▪ Accelerate the implementation of the free movement of labour protocol of the CSME. ▪ Develop regional training curricula with a strong practical element to certify relevant workers at various levels.
To ensure long-term Food and Nutrition Security and the enjoyment by all in the CARICOM Member States of the ‘right to food’	Goal 2: Ensure access of Caribbean households, especially the poor and vulnerable, to sufficient nutritious and affordable food at all times.	Improving access of the poor and vulnerable in CARICOM Member States to Livelihood Assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of a Vulnerability Mapping and Information management system. ▪ Widening and deepening vocational training programmes for artisans, farmers, fishermen and vulnerable groups (especially women) etc. to improve their skills and employability. ▪ Encouraging Member States to prepare Poverty Reduction Programmes encompassing safety net mechanisms/programmes and complementary measures to preclude a dependency syndrome and promote sustainable livelihoods and food and nutrition security. ▪ Identifying a minimum nutritious food basket and advocating for this to be used as a key element in setting the minimum wage in Member States.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p>Goal 2: Ensure access of Caribbean households, especially the poor and vulnerable, to sufficient nutritious and affordable food at all times.</p>	<p>Improve the Regional Food Distribution System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of non-tariff barriers to trade (SPS-TBT barriers) that raise transaction costs and hinder access to and distribution of food within the Region, especially for the identified basket of food commodities/products. ▪ Facilitation of greater linkages between buyers and sellers and reduction of information asymmetries through the implementation of a Regional Market Intelligence System. ▪ Development of strategies to address regional transportation with a view to reducing distribution costs and improving movement of food commodities across the region. ▪ Encouraging Public/private partnerships to deal with maritime and air transport and port infrastructure in and between the Member States. ▪ Measures to encouraged the implementation of trade facilitation measures to improve intra-regional trade in food products (raw and processed as well as beverages ▪ Improvement of farm to market channels, for example, access roads and post- harvest grading and handling. ▪ Member States should be encouraged to develop wholesale and retail market facilities and packaging centres as public goods to facilitate efficient marketing. ▪ Improvement of food safety systems and harmonisation of food standards across the Region to facilitate trade among Member States. ▪ Encouraging Member States to develop policies to ensure that the food distribution services industry (which includes fresh markets, supermarkets, food services and institutions) operates in a cost efficient manner and delivers the targeted basket of foods at optimal prices. ▪ Encourage Member States to establish a regional network of reserve food stocks in partnership with the private sector as a Risk Mitigation Response. CDEMA will facilitate the mobilizing of resources for this purpose.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
<p>To ensure long-term Food and Nutrition Security and the enjoyment by all in the CARICOM Member States of the 'right to food'</p>	<p>Goal 3: Improve the nutritional status of the Caribbean population, by the promotion of and commercialization and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious quality Caribbean food commodities/products.</p>	<p>Diversify food production in line with regional population dietary goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of regional population dietary (nutritional) goals in line with international standards. ▪ Development and dissemination of food based dietary guidelines for each Member State. ▪ Analysis and dissemination of data from Member States on the cost of a nutritionally balanced economical food basket with a view to monitoring access to food for vulnerable groups. ▪ Encouragement of the creation and/or strengthening of the nutritional surveillance systems in Member States in accordance with WHO standards, so as to monitor the nutritional status of the population and identify those at risk of nutrition-related ailments. ▪ Encouragement of physical activity in line with WHO recommendations.
		<p>Support the Development of Early Childhood Learning Centres, primary and secondary schools as an entry point for interventions with children to prevent and control some of the identified nutrition conditions and influence food tastes and preferences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of the preparation and implementation of national school health and nutrition policies in Member States. ▪ Support the development of curricula at teacher training colleges and at pre-school, primary and secondary school levels that include nutrition and family education for good health and lifestyle choices. ▪ Development of regional guidelines on school health and nutrition as a guide in school meal preparation and in respect of the foods allowed to be sold in schools. This may include the development of manuals (e.g. recipes, food safety and food service etc) to encourage Member States to adopt a policy that the meals provided under national school feeding programmes should have at least a 50% regional food content.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p align="center">Goal 3:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewing the school gardening programmes in the Region to identify strategic areas for intervention, including the provision of technical support, promotional materials, etc. ▪ Developing regional promotional campaigns to encourage healthy and nutritional food choices in schools. ▪ Encouraging and assisting Member States to develop standards of care for the elderly, mentally challenged and persons living in institutions e.g. orphanages, prisons etc
		<p>Review of the existing regional food standards relating to food safety, nutrition, labelling and to identify and remedy deficiencies in their development, implementation and enforcement so as to promote greater intra-regional trade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harmonize regional food safety standards based on the Codex Alimentarius (CAHFSA, CARPHA, CROSQ): ▪ Member States enact and implement appropriate legislation to foster the implementation/enforcement of food safety standards. ▪ Develop and disseminate regional guidelines for maintaining food safety and traceability along the value chain. ▪ Develop and disseminate standards for food and nutrition labeling. ▪ Assist Member States in developing or amending consumer protection legislation to include accurate labelling of food for nutrition content, redress, etc. (Regional consumer body). ▪ Organize and strengthen civil society and consumer advocacy groups to increase their participation in the process of food and nutrition security planning and implementation. ▪ Develop and implement a Regional Marketing Campaign to promote Caribbean foods based on their nutritional content. ▪ Implement a promotional campaign that emphasizes the health and nutritional benefits of selected Caribbean foods. ▪ Outstanding Caribbean personalities will be used to promote the consumption of nutritious regional foods.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
<p>To ensure long-term Food and Nutrition Security and the enjoyment by all in the CARICOM Member States of the 'right to food'</p>	<p>Goal 4: Improve the Food and Nutrition Security resilience of the region to natural and socio-economic shocks and climate change.</p>	<p>To promote the creation of an Information System for Food and Nutrition Security (ISFNS) at national and regional levels aimed at food crisis prevention and risk management and the construction of adequate risk profiles for the region's main crops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harmonization and coordination of the collection and collation of relevant information <i>inter alia</i> on : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of food insecure persons; - Level of food insecurity (long term or short term); - Major causes of food insecurity (structural and cyclical) etc - Markets – sources and volume of commodity supply to the market, number of traders and prices of commodities, agricultural labour and livestock and terms of trade including trends; - Production-type and level; - Income sources and reliability; - government policies affecting trade and distribution of food products; - Baseline information on food availability, access, utilization; - Population numbers and distribution; - Infrastructure – roads, financial institutions, etc. - Household coping mechanisms; - Rainfall information (volume, water deficit, flooding, drought and climate outlook; - Crop and livestock diseases; - Monthly reports on state of crops in the fields; - Security conditions-extent of praedial larceny; - Health and nutrition situation; n) areas affected by food crises and/or chronically food-insecure;

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p>Goal 4:</p>	<p>To encourage capacity enhancement at the regional and national levels with regards to food crisis prevention and risk management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage capacity enhancement within such entities as Ministries of Agriculture (extension services in particular), Research Institutions and Hydro-Meteorological Departments so that they can provide accurate and timely climate information to the farming community ▪ Integrate climate management considerations into programmes to develop farm management systems ▪ Promote the inclusion of adaptation and mitigation strategies in the curricula of all training institutions and extension training programmes for farmers and other producers. ▪ Retraining and retooling of farmers in appropriate production practices (e.g. conservation farming, zero tillage etc.) to adapt to the changing environment.
		<p>To adopt environment-friendly agricultural practices and the Integration of climate change adaptation into agricultural adjustment programmes through a risk management approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-zoning of agricultural production as necessary to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. ▪ Integration of the pest, weed and disease implications of climate change into strategies that minimize their impact on the agricultural and natural resource systems. ▪ Promotion of cost-effective alternatives to fossil fuels that improve energy efficiency in agriculture. ▪ Increasing understanding and integration of scientific knowledge of climate change into farm management decisions. ▪ More efficient land, water, forest and fishery management systems <i>inter alia</i> to address shortages and excessive rainfall and protect the natural resource base in the face of climate change.. ▪ Investment in new or existing water management and control infrastructure. ▪ Formulation and implementation of land and water resource management plans and strategies.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p>Goal 4:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority focus 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. ▪ Encourage Member States to reduce tariffs on goods that could assist in the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions by the agricultural and agro-processing industries. (eg. liberalization of environmental goods, solar panels, and the use of crops/livestock/food waste as an input to biogas production).
		<p>Fostering the development of an early warning system and a preparedness strategy with regards to food and nutrition insecurity and vulnerability and natural disaster management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting the harmonisation of agro-meteorological data; ▪ Development of a regional monitoring and forecasting system for weather and natural phenomena (for example, tsunamis). ▪ Development of effective disaster preparedness and mitigation systems/plans (CDEMA). ▪ Development of vulnerability analysis and mapping to provide timely nutrition and socio-economic information on vulnerable population groups to decision-makers to enable the design of more effective emergency and relief responses. ▪ Development of a cropping plan for the region, taking into consideration hurricane patterns, in order to reduce overall production risks. ▪ Identification and monitoring of supplies of key staple food commodities/products in Member States, for storage at an agreed minimum level and managed by an institution with a specific mandate, which would be available for distribution in times of crisis.

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p align="center">Goal 4:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of an agricultural risk management scheme, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional agriculture/crop risk management and insurance scheme to compensate for losses incurred due to the impact of natural disasters; - A regional disaster fund; - A functional germplasm bank at locations both within and outside of the region. - A regional emergency response plan (for food).
		<p>To reduce the level of vulnerability of food insecure and vulnerable groups to external socio-economic shocks (such as price increases, reduced remittances etc.) and market impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of a nation/region-wide inventory of vulnerable groups (farmers, producers groups, communities) and the levels of vulnerability (vulnerability analysis and mapping); ▪ Creation 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. ▪ Establishment of a functional market information system to reduce price volatility, taking into account global prices; ▪ Expansion (where needed) and linking of relief interventions with longer-term structural improvement measures; ▪ Evaluation of the feasibility of bulk buying and hedging in the purchase of production inputs and basic commodities/products. ▪ Promotion of non-distorting intra-regional trade policies and programmes to be applied in times of food crises to reduce the risk to the most vulnerable and reduce market uncertainty. ▪ Establishment of a food crisis fund that will cater to the needs of the most vulnerable ▪ Dissemination of information on trade policies to be applied during times of crisis or after a natural disaster. ▪ Establishment 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);

Overall Goal	Policy Goal	Policy Objectives	Actions
	<p align="center">Goal 4:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of social welfare programmes, productive safety nets and other policy prescriptions that can be applied in times of crisis. ▪ Advocacy with Member States for the establishment of additional safety nets for extremely vulnerable groups. ▪ Development of a food aid policy consistent with regional and national food security and agricultural policies. ▪ Development of principles and criteria to assess the environmental impact of agriculture and the Value Chain System e.g. sustainable use of water resources, use and disposal of packaging materials, energy, fertilizer, pesticides, outputs (waste from agricultural processes), and introduction and enforcement of systems and mechanisms to minimize any negative effects and impact.