

VANUATU NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

2013 -2015

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Introduction and Background

Food security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to significant, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life

This document presents a policy direction and a plan of action on food security for Vanuatu.

Brief Country Profile

The Republic of Vanuatu is comprised of 80 islands, the majority of them mountainous due to their volcanic origins. The total land mass of 12,281 km² with an exclusive fishing economic zone of 71,000km². The country is divided into six administrative provinces, based on the geographical localities as indicated on the map below. The geographical spread of the islands presents logistical challenges for implementing national plans.



Figure 1 General Map of the Republic of Vanuatu

The climate is tropical with average rainfall of 2300mm. Vanuatu also experiences regular severe cyclones every three to five years between the months of November to April affecting different parts of the country. Climate change is also contributing to increased vulnerability of the country to frequent severe natural disasters in the future which could impact negatively on local food production levels.

There are approximately 115 different languages spoken in Vanuatu, but the three officially recognized languages are English, French and Bislama. In addition the diverse languages, cultures and traditions also pose challenges that need to be considered when implementing national policies and plans to ensure coverage and services are reaching the most vulnerable population groups.

In the 2009 census, the population of Vanuatu was estimated to be 234, 023¹ with an estimated annual growth rate of 2.6% and expected to reach approximately 280,000 by year 2015. Infant mortality rate was 21 and life expectancy was 69.6 years for males and 72.9 years for females. Approximately 37.3% of the population were under 14 years of age, 21% in the 15-24 age group, 35.9% in the 25-59 age group and 5.8% aged 60 and over.

According to Annual Development Report 2010², the economy continues to grow but slowly and not as strong as in previous years with the real GDP growth estimated at 2.2% of GDP in 2010 and the annual inflation was 3.4% an increase of 1.1% from previous year. Activities in the primary sector which included agriculture, forestry, fishing with some minor activities taking place in the quarrying and mining industries were identified as much contributors to economic growth in 2010.

The slow growth was attributed to the 'repercussions of global economic crises. Much of the economic growth reported in 2010 was supported by the significant aid programme assistance that the Government receives from development partners through donor-funded projects and programs implemented by line ministries.

Food Security situation

As noted in the Framework for action on food security in the Pacific³, "food security is achieved when all people at all times have sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food depends on the availability of healthy food (is there healthy food to eat?), accessibility of healthy food (can it be purchased or grown?), stability

¹ SPC-SDP_population_data_2011. www.spc.int/sdp/

² Annual Development Report 2010. Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and AID Coordination, M&E Unit. Government of the Republic of Vanuatu. July 2011

³ Towards a food secure Pacific: Framework for action on food security in the Pacific 2010. www.foodsecurepacific.org

(are there risks of losing access to healthy food due to economic or environmental shocks?) and the use of food (can the food be used to meet dietary requirements, i.e. is it nutritious?), and health needs (is it safe and are healthier choices preferred?). These factors are in turn influenced by the multiple sectors, groups and environments that affect food supply and demand”.

In Vanuatu, the majority of the population (76%) live in the rural areas and are engaged in rural subsistence agriculture. However, most of the agricultural activities are geared toward generating additional household income through sales in local markets (producing estimated annual income of 8,277 million vatu, Vanuatu 2006 Household Income and Expenditure Survey report⁴) as well as towards penetrating niche market for high value organically grown food products such as copra, beef, cocoa, kava and coffee contributing to 21% of the GDP.

The focus on improving economic development through increasing agricultural production and productivity for export must be managed properly to ensure production to address food security is not compromised. This would also include improving the domestic market for agricultural products supported by improved transport services, both inter-island and intra-island.

The 2006 HIES report showed that at the national level food expenditure was estimated at 14,025 million vatu annually, representing 49% of all expenditure: about half of all household spending in Vanuatu was for food. The data collected in the survey was also used to estimate the Food and Basic Needs Poverty Lines for 2 urban centres (Port Vila and Luganville) and rural areas. For the Food Poverty Line, the results indicated that on average every person needed 102 Vatu per day to have enough food to meet essential nutritional requirements and that 7% of the population were not spending enough money to acquire a basic nutritious diet. The report also noted that the incidence of food poverty was highest in rural areas with 7% of rural population experiencing food poverty but this could be due to under-reporting of the consumption of what they produced. It nonetheless highlighted the need to be vigilant in ensuring food security systems in rural areas is improved and maintained. It also highlights the need for more robust indicators for determining household food poverty.

Food production also is dependent on availability and accessibility to land. Only one third of the total cultivable land is presently farmed. Land tenure issues have been identified as a major barrier to improving primary sector development.

⁴ Vanuatu 2006 HIES Report. http://www.spc.int/prism/images/Reports/VUT_HIES-2006_MainReport.pdf

Climate change is also threatening food security in Vanuatu as noted earlier, affecting local food production.

Health and Nutrition situation

Having food to eat is the most basic human need. Getting enough food to eat is more than just having enough food to survive. It means eating a balanced healthy diet from a variety of foods to meet the nutritional requirements for health.

The Vanuatu Nutrition Survey 2007⁵ and the STEPs Survey 2010⁶ reports highlight the nutrition issues in Vanuatu and the impact on health.

Vanuatu is dealing with a double burden of malnutrition due to unhealthy diets. The negative impact of both under nutrition (from not eating enough safe and nutritious foods) leading to nutrition deficiency illnesses such as anaemia (iron deficiency) and goitre (iodine deficiency) and over nutrition (from eating too much unhealthy food which are usually high in salt, sugar and fat) leading to lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases, some cancers and obesity, have contributed to the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Vanuatu.

Micronutrient deficiencies are a consequence of malnutrition. Malnutrition is a key indicator for population health contributing to increased risk of morbidity and mortality. The 2007 National Nutrition Survey⁷ showed 8.3% of children under 5 years of age were severely stunted (indicated as percentage below -3SD the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards). Low height-for-age or stunted growth reflects failure to reach linear growth potential as a result of suboptimal health and/or nutritional conditions. On a population level, high level of stunting is associated with poor socioeconomic conditions and high risk of frequent and early exposure to adverse conditions such as illness and/or inappropriate feeding practices. Childhood stunting leads to significant reduction in adult size. One of the main consequences of small adult size is reduced work capacity which in turn has impact on economic productivity. Maternal size is associated with specific reproductive outcomes. Short stature in women places an increased risk of delivery complications because of small pelvic size. Maternal size also increases risk of giving birth to low weight babies who themselves have increased risk of becoming small sized adults.

⁵ Vanuatu Nutrition Survey 2007. UNICEF Pacific Office, Fiji.

⁶ Vanuatu Preliminary STEPs Survey 2010 Report. World Health Organisation, Western Pacific Region, Fiji

⁷ Vanuatu Nutrition Survey 2007. UNICEF Pacific Office, Fiji

Iron deficiency anaemia is more common in young children and women of reproductive age, especially pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. These population subgroups are more susceptible to anaemia because of their increased iron needs due to growth, pregnancy and lactations. Women of reproductive age also have increased iron losses from menstrual blood flow.

The 2007 National Nutrition Survey showed that 10.4% of children under 5 years of age were found to be moderately anaemic (prevalence of >10% indicates a public health problem). Iron deficiency anaemia in children impairs mental capacity, motor development and behaviours of children. Iron deficiency predisposes children to diseases through reduced immune functions. The apathy associated with anaemia in young children adversely affects their cognitive and social development. Children born to mothers who are iron deficient have reduced iron stores at birth which may not be corrected by breastfeeding alone leading to early onset of anaemia. Low birth weight babies are born with reduced iron stores and have additional requirements for catch up growth. These additional iron requirements cannot be met by breast milk alone and if iron supplements are not provided for these babies, they will also have an increased risk of early onset of anaemia.

Iron deficiency anaemia among reproductive women is also high at 20.9% and an anaemic mother would not be able to adequately nurture her child and family. Causal factors of iron deficiency anaemia among women include blood loss (menstruation), poor diet, hookworm infestation and haemorrhage during child birth.

Poor growth among children is an indicator of their nutritional and health status. Poor nutrition status in children under five years of age is associated with an increased risk of morbidity and mortality. Malnutrition in childhood can cause failure of children to thrive and grow which can lead to poor health outcomes in adulthood. For example, malnutrition in childhood can lead to short stature (stunted) in adulthood which is associated with reduced productivity and increased obstetrics risks (difficulty during childbirth) for women. Poor nutrition status in children is related to maternal malnutrition, low birth weight, inadequate breastfeeding and unhygienic practices and poor food choices during weaning and high levels of infectious disease morbidity such as diarrhoea. Improvements in nutritional status of children will reduce severity of common childhood illnesses and reduce risk of death.

The 2007 Nutrition survey report showed that 26.3% of children aged five years and under surveyed were moderately stunted (a measure of height for age, stunting reflects children not achieving their linear growth due to long-term cumulative effect of not eating enough food and/or repeated exposure to illness and other adverse condition) with 8.3% severely stunted.

Unhealthy diets are associated with lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases, some cancers, high blood pressure and diabetes. Eating fruits and vegetables have been shown to improve health outcomes. However the Vanuatu STEPS 2011 results showed that 61.8% of adults are not eating enough fruits and vegetables for health. In addition to this, nearly 20% (18.8%) of adults are obese (BMI \geq 30 kg/m²), 28.6% have high blood pressure and receiving medication for it and 21.2% have diabetes and receiving medication for it.

The foods people eat affect their health for good or bad. Health and nutrition status are important pre-requisites for national development as healthy people are productive people. It is essential that people not only have access to enough food but the food also needs to be nutritious.

Political situation

The Government of Vanuatu has a vision for an educated, healthy and wealthy ni-Vanuatu and ensuring a food secure Vanuatu can contribute significantly towards achieving this vision. This needs to be supported by a stable and consistent policy environment, appropriate rules and regulations and adequate funding of programmes to support and promote development.

However, in recent years, changes in Government and consequent lack of political stability has led to frequent policy shifts and inconsistency in policy formulation, analysis and application, contributing to lack of progress towards achieving the vision of an educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu. Lack of clear leadership at the highest level has also contributed to lack of progress in addressing food security. Although food security was not explicitly identified as a Government priority in the Governments' Priority and Actions Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015⁸, it nonetheless acknowledged that there was considerable scope for strengthening and increasing the primary sector productivity and production for the domestic market to strengthen national food security and reduce dependence on food imports.

Moreover, the Government recognized food and nutrition security as an important development issue under its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particular the first goal to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. Addressing food security would also contribute towards achieving the goals on reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. However, the primary sector development is focused on exploring niche-market production for export rather than on increasing production for domestic consumption. Not prioritising primary production for local consumption can lead to increased dependence on imported foods

⁸ Priority and Action Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015. Department of Economic and Sector Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management. June 2006.

which are vulnerable to price market shocks. In addition, most imported foods are unhealthy, high in sugar, fat and salt.

The Millennium Development Goals 2010 Report for Vanuatu⁹ identified food security is a problem contributing to extreme hunger and highlighted the same challenges that were identified during the national food summit. It also noted that it is unlikely that the Government will meet its target for eradicating extreme hunger and that the policy environment in this area is weak. It is therefore crucial that the Government establishes a formal food security policy whereby it clearly recognizes food security as a national priority and according it the support and commitment it requires to ensure a food secure Vanuatu.

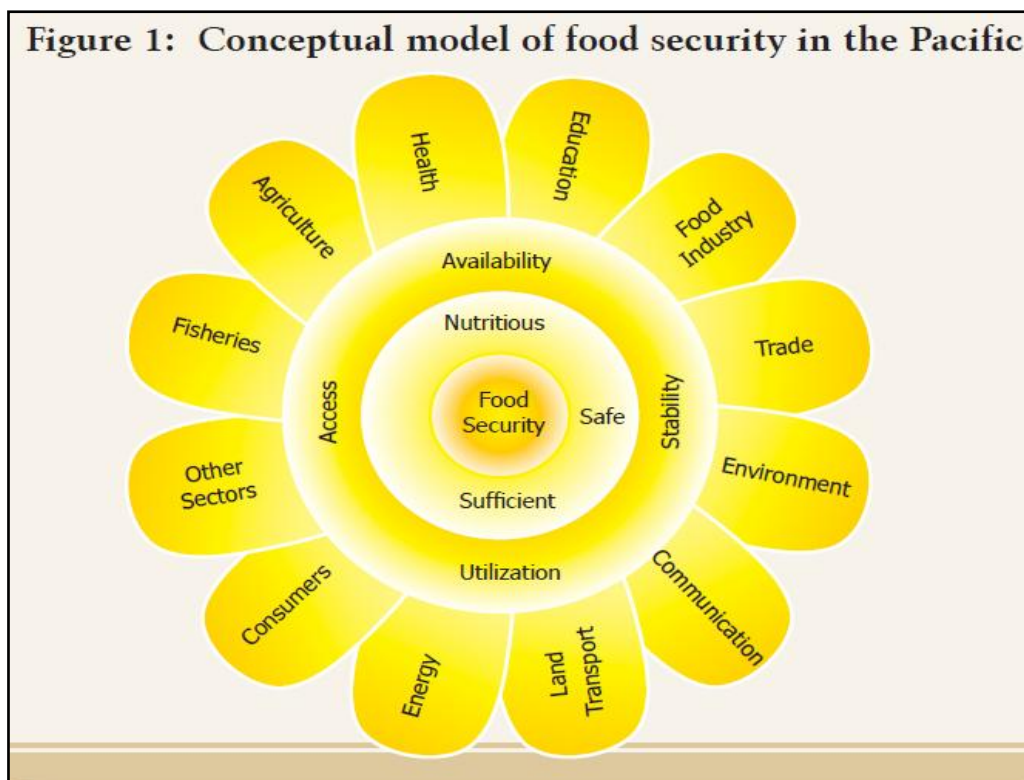
Framework for Action on Food Security in the Pacific¹⁰

The framework was developed in 2010 in response to calls from Pacific Ministers of Health and Pacific Forum Leaders to address the issue of food insecurity in the Pacific. This included the impact of the global food price crisis and the increasing risks of climate change on the food supply systems that was threatening the very existence of Pacific people. In addition, the impact of food related illnesses on Pacific people was reaching epidemic proportions.

The framework recognized the need for multisectoral approaches as there are many factors that influence what people eat. The following conceptual model of food security in the Pacific highlights the multiple actors involved. Strengthening partnerships and collaborations among the various stakeholders as well as a joint approach to improve food security is essential.

⁹ The Millennium Development Goals 2010 Report for Vanuatu. Prime Ministers Office. September 2010.

¹⁰ Towards a food secure Pacific; a framework for action on food security in the Pacific. 2010. www.foodsecurepacific.org



Source: Towards a food secure Pacific; a framework for action on food security in the Pacific. 2010.

National Food Summit

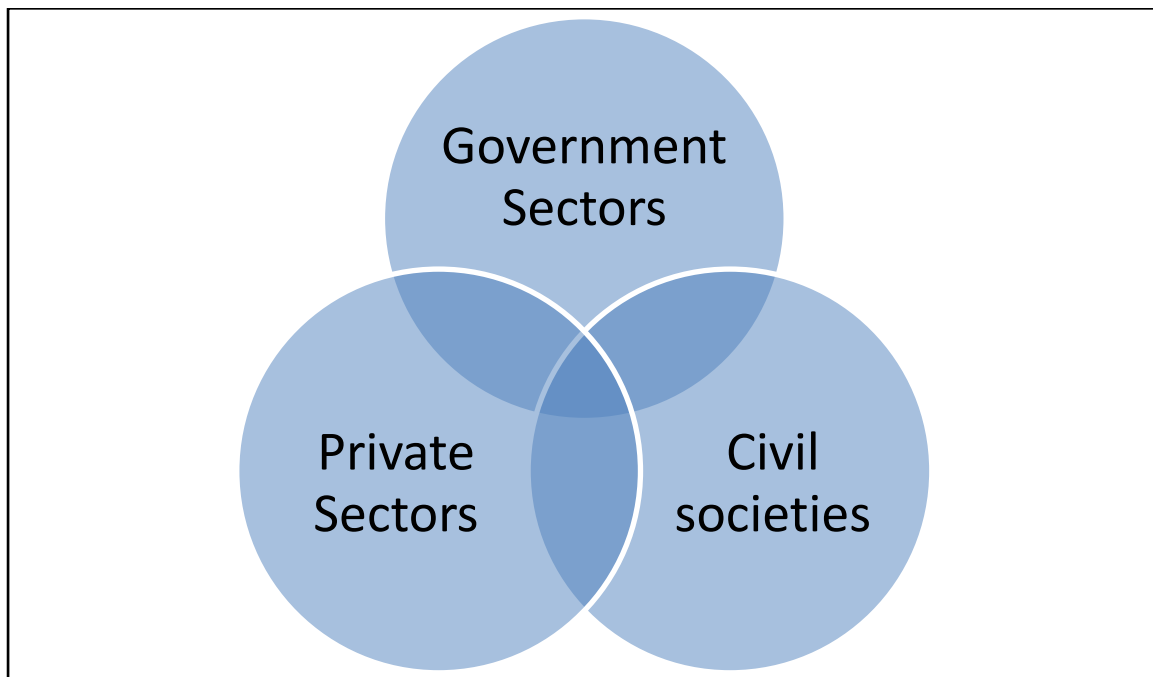
In 2009, the Ministry of Health in collaborations with other key Ministries, NGOs, Port Vila Municipal Council as well as the private sector representatives held the inaugural Vanuatu National Food Summit. The outcome of the summit included 38 recommended actions organised under six thematic areas which formed the basis for a national plan of action to improve food security. These recommendations also contributed to the development of the regional framework for action on food security which the Government of Vanuatu supported during the regional food summit that was held in Port Vila in 2010.

However, since the 2009 national summit little has happened to progress the recommendations from the summit. Weak leadership and coordination, limited monitoring and accountability for progress, limited capacity, high staff turnover and many competing government priorities were identified as key barriers to the slow implementation of the recommendations. Strong political commitment and leadership is needed to ensure a food secure Vanuatu.

Coordinating Mechanism

Coordination is crucial because of the involvement of multiple sectors that contribute many factors that influence what people eat and they are all inter-related as highlighted in the conceptual model of food security in the Pacific. The three major sectors include Government sectors, private sectors and civil societies. Each sector has an important role to

play in mitigating the effects of these factors to ensure a food secure Vanuatu. Government has the obligation of protecting its citizens while at the same time fostering economic growth and development among the private sectors. Civil societies include the various communities in which people live and other non-government organisations, they have a role in ensuring participation of consumers in the food security debate. Partnerships and collaborations among these different sectors will require strong leadership, coordination and accountability mechanisms as often these sectors will have competing interests.



Leadership and coordination were identified as a priority area for action during the 2009 National Food Summit to address food security and ensure a food secure Vanuatu. The coordinating efforts of government sectors are an essential component of implementation of government policies and plans. The draft terms of reference for the national coordinating body is attached as annex 1.

About this plan

Development

The development of this plan of action was initiated in 2009 when the Ministry of Health in collaborations with other key Ministries, NGOs, Port Vila Municipal Council as well as the private sector representatives held the inaugural Vanuatu National Food Summit in response to the emerging issue of food security precipitated by rising global food prices and climate change, which was posing to be a real threat to the future wellbeing of the people of Vanuatu.

However, since the 2009 national summit little has happened to progress the recommendations from the summit. Then in 2012, the Ministry of Health with assistance from the World Health Organization convened a one day multi sectoral stakeholder workshop to progress the recommendations from the 2009 national summit.

This national plan of action adopts the vision and goals outlined in the regional framework of action on food security as they also capture the Governments long term goal of a healthy and wealthy Vanuatu. The strategic objectives and actions are specific to the Vanuatu situation and based on the recommendations from the 2009 national food summit and the 2012 multisectoral stakeholder consultation workshop.

Purpose of the Plan

This plan aims to organise all concerted efforts and responses from government sectors, civil society and development partners to work collaboratively at national, provincial and community levels to ensure a food secure Vanuatu.

The plan recognises the multifaceted nature and the interrelatedness of the various factors that influence what people choose to eat and it calls for strong leadership and coordination and advocates for a strong political commitment to support the implementation of recommended actions. Addressing leadership at the highest level is crucial to achieving a food secure Vanuatu.

This plan is an advocacy tool to communicate to national leaders and policy makers of the need for a long term formal government policy to address the threat of food insecurity on national development. It is also a tool for securing funding support from development partners whose agendas include improving food security and national development. Coordination and leadership is an essential element for the success of implementation of government policies and plans, so this action plan also serves as a tool to guide the coordination of efforts to address food security in Vanuatu.

The scope of the plan

The national plan of action outlines a holistic approach to address all key elements of food security along the food chain from farm to fork, i.e. from primary production, processing, trading, marketing, preparation and consumption. Investing in improving and increasing production and productivity of the Agricultural and fisheries sectors is emphasised and aligned to the overall Government's primary sector development and the environment.

Multiple stakeholders were consulted and participated in the development of this plan highlighting the importance of the multisectoral collaborations and strong partnerships among all stakeholders. The plan is multi sectoral in formation reflecting the need for multi sectoral approaches and interventions.

Vision

A food secure Vanuatu, where every ni-Vanuatu have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Goal

To strengthen and improve the key elements of food security:

1. **Availability of food.** Is there sufficient healthy food to eat?
2. **Access to food.** Can healthy food be purchased (affordable) or grown?
3. **Stability of food systems.** Are there risks of economic (food price surges) and environmental (climate variability) shocks that jeopardize healthy food availability and access all the time?
4. **Food utilization.** Can the food be used to meet dietary (is it nutritious?) and health (is it safe?) needs?

Guiding Principles

The Pacific Framework for Action on Food Security in the Pacific identified the following guiding principles as essential for effective implementation of the plan of action which are also adopted by the Government of Vanuatu for this plan of action.

1. Commit to a coordinated multi sectoral approach as addressing food security requires whole of Government and civil society to work together in a coordinated way to address all the elements of food security along the food chain from 'farm to fork'
2. Recognised food security as a human rights issue. Accessing sufficient, safe and nutritious food at all times is a pre-requisite to good life and health. Pacific health leaders recognised this as a right for all Pacific people in endorsing the vision of 'Healthy Islands' as an overarching framework for health protection and promotion in the Pacific. Thus, ensuring food security must be accorded priority to improve the living conditions and protect the life and health of Pacific populations.
3. Adopt sustainable solutions that build self-reliance and empowerment
4. Respect and value the Melanesian traditions, culture and customs.

Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives are based on the six thematic areas for action identified in the 2009 National Summit.

1. To improve and strengthen leadership and coordination of food security activities

2. To strengthen food security information systems particularly the monitoring and research capacity
3. To empower consumers and mobilise industry partners to make informed decisions
4. To enhance the sustainable production, processing, trading, marketing and use of safe and nutritious foods
5. To strengthen regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance activities and public-private sector collaborations
6. To protect infants and vulnerable populations

Descriptions

These are the detail description of the strategic objectives listed above.

1. Leadership and Coordination

The coordinating efforts of government sectors are an essential component of implementation of government policies and plans. Leadership and coordination were identified as a priority area for action during the 2009 National Food Summit to address food security and ensure a food secure Vanuatu. The multisectoral dimensions of food security require a robust coordination mechanism involving multiple sectors and actors that is supported by stable leadership. To this effect, the 2009 summit participants recommended that the CODEX Committee be strengthened and its terms of reference amended to include food and nutrition security as it was the only multi-sectoral committee operating at the time that dealt with food. To facilitate the establishment of a national coordinating body, the Vanuatu Codex Committee's terms of references need to be amended to include food security. The Committee then becomes the Vanuatu National Codex and Food Security Coordinating Council to be supported by a standalone office to be known as Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Office. It is recommended that the office should be staffed by one full time equivalent position of a Codex and Food Security & Nutrition Coordinator who will also serve as the National Codex Focal Person. The key action under this strategic objective is the establishment of the Codex and Food Security Coordinating Council and Office.

To ensure stability, it is prudent to allow the Ministry of Trade to lead the implementation of this objective as the Vanuatu National Codex Committee is currently hosted by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

2. Food security information systems, especially monitoring and evaluation and research capacity

Availability of relevant information from multiple sources in a timely manner is needed for making good decisions and in an environment of limited resources, this is important to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of investment and efforts. It is important to build and

use existing tools and survey data to provide better evidence to inform policy decision making process.

Attention must also be given to building national capacity in the area of monitoring and evaluation to improve food security and vulnerability. Monitoring and evaluation are important components of any planning process, so developing the monitoring and evaluation framework for the national plan of action was identified as a priority. Developing the monitoring and evaluation framework for the action plan will be a key action under this objective.

3. Consumer empowerment and mobilising food industry partnerships

There are many factors that influence what people choose to eat. There is a need to empower consumers, to foster community participation, mobilise food industry partners and to encourage whole of society including governments and food industries to make healthy choices along the food chain. Education alone does not often translate to action. Strategic health communications to raise awareness, share information and to create supportive environments are needed to enable and empower people to make healthy choices. Engaging food industry partners to raise awareness of their contribution to promoting and protecting consumer health through production, trading and marketing of healthy food options is an important action under this objective. Healthy food choices need to be made available, affordable, accessible and acceptable to consumers.

4. Enhanced and sustainable production, processing, trading, marketing and using of safe and nutritious foods

Food security is improved when people have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Having access to sufficient safe and nutritious foods depends on whether the food is available, can it be purchased or grown, even if available is the food acceptable or preferred, are there risks of losing this access to the supply due to economic or environmental shocks and whether the food is safe to use to meet dietary needs for good health. Taking a 'farm to fork' approach addresses the multiple dimensions of food security along the food chain from production through to end use. The Government of Vanuatu acknowledged the importance of strengthening and increasing productivity and production of the primary sector (agriculture and fisheries sectors) for the domestic market to strengthen national food security and reduce dependence on food imports. However, the primary sector development currently is focused on exploring niche-market production for export rather than on increasing production for domestic consumption. Recommended actions under this objective focus on strengthening and improving primary sector

production and productivity as well as strengthening the intersect between health and trade to improve the availability, accessibility and stability of healthy imported foods.

Other factors that affect various dimensions of food security include access to and proper utilisation of land, reliable transport infrastructure and affordable energy sources are addressed under this thematic area as well as health promoting trade environments and trade agreements.

5. Regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance and public-private sector collaborations

Collaborations between public and private sectors is important for the formulation and implementation of regulatory frameworks that not only promote fair trading of food but also protect consumers by ensuring the minimum standards of the nutrition quality and safety of foods being marketed are maintained. In an environment of increasing dependence on imported foods, there is a lack of food regulations in place to ensure compliance with minimum requirements for food safety and quality standards.

Food control systems need to be strengthened in order to facilitate trade and protect consumers from poor quality and unsafe foods. Enforcement of legislations also needs strengthening. Food businesses also need support to implement voluntary measures to improve the nutrition profile of their products through reformulation or other means to ensure available food is safe and nutritious to eat

6. Protecting infants and vulnerable groups

Infants, young children and women are the most vulnerable population groups here in Vanuatu. Protecting those most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of food insecurity is especially important given the high dependency of these groups on others for food and survival. Millennium Development Goals recognized the importance of protecting the poor, women and children. Effective actions must take into account the needs of those most susceptible to food insecurity.

Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is focused on achieving as well as to allow for better resource and performance management of the plan.

The designated lead agency is based current capacity and activities of each relevant stakeholder as presented during the 2012 stakeholder consultation workshop.

The timeframe for implementing these recommendations is limited to three years from 2013 to 2015 based on the Government planning timeframe. The current long term plan *Priorities and Action Agenda 2006-2015* is due for renewal in 2015. However, to effectively address food security, recommended actions need to be maintained for the longer term.

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Actions	Lead/Responsible Agency
1. To improve and strengthen leadership and coordination of food security activities	1.1 The national coordinating body for food security activities is established and formally recognized by the Council of Ministers	1.1.1 Revise and amend the TORs including the structure, membership and functions of the existing CODEX Committee to be the national coordinating body for CODEX and Food Security (<i>CODEX and Food Security Coordinating Council</i>)	Ministries of Health, Trade and Agriculture
		1.1.1 Prepare a submission to the Council of Ministers to endorse the National Plan of Action on Food Security and the proposed national coordinating body.	Ministries of Health, Trade and Agriculture
	1.2 Additional resources and funding secured for food security activities	1.2.1 Advocate for increased budgetary allocation to support establishment of new coordinating body	Ministries of Health, Trade and Agriculture
		1.2.2 Advocate for a formal recognition of food security as a Government priority and to accord it due attention	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency
2. To strengthen food security information systems particularly the monitoring and evaluation and research capacity	2.1 M&E Framework for the National Plan of Action on Food Security developed and implemented	2.1.1 Develop the M&E framework for the plan of action	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
		2.1.2 Undertake stocktake of existing data sources and consider possible solutions to address gaps	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office with support from SPC Statistics Unit.
		2.1.3 Regular collection of data using existing tools	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
	2.2 Food security information disseminated to all concerned stakeholders	2.2.1 Provide awareness and regular food security update workshops for policy makers and community groups	All stakeholders Media
		2.2.2 Publish and distribute reports widely on food security when available	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
	2.3 Technical capacity of key Ministries in the area of M&E and research is strengthened	2.3.1 Provide training opportunities and scholarships in the area of food security	All stakeholders
		2.3.1 Advocate and support establishment of a centralised analytical lab	PHAMA

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency	
3. To empower consumers and mobilise industry partners to make informed decisions	3.1. Consumers engaged in and contributed to the food security debate and decision making process	3.1.1 Advocate for the establishment of a Consumer Council	National Council of Women	
		3.1.2 Conduct consumer forums to encourage and strengthen consumer participation in the decision making process	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office Media	
	3.2 National awareness campaign on food and nutrition security issues developed and implemented	3.2.1 Develop a national food and nutrition campaign focusing on the promotion of healthy and nutritious local foods	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office Media	
		3.2.2 Identify a local champion to lead the implementation of the nation campaign	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office Media	
	3.3 Food Industry and private sector engaged in addressing food security through the provision of healthy food options		3.3.1 Advocate for the establishment of a Food Industry Partnership Group including retailers and importers	Chamber of Commerce Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce
			3.3.2 Work with food industry to develop and adopt voluntary standards for salt reduction in locally processed foods	Food Technology Centre
			3.3.3 Develop and implement measures that can facilitate import of healthy food products (food products low in fat, salt and sugar).	

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency
4. To enhance the sustainable production, processing, trading, marketing and use of safe and nutritious foods	4.1 Increased productivity and production in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors	4.1.1 Advocate and support reviews of legislation to secure access to land and water for subsistence food and cash crop production	Ministry of Agriculture
		4.1.2 Advocate for duty exemptions on food production equipment	Ministries of Trade and Agriculture
		4.1.3 Build knowledge base of farmers on diversity and tradition farming systems	Ministry of Agriculture
		4.1.4 Improve access of farmers and rural communities to rural finance credits and savings	Agriculture Bank
		4.1.5 Improve access of rural communities to fuel including harnessing of solar energy to assist with the production, storage, preservation and transportation of food	Ministry of Agriculture
	4.2 Improved resilience of agriculture, livestock and fisheries production systems	4.2.1. Support use and conservation of traditional food crops genetic material that are resilient to pests and climate change impact	Ministry of Agriculture
		4.2.2 Build capacity of small holder farmers to identify, analyse and implement cost-effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change and other natural disasters	Ministry of Agriculture Meteo Services - Climate Change Unit
	4.3 Enhanced processing and value adding of agricultural and fisheries products	4.3.1 Support research and development of appropriate value adding technologies for local foods, including identifying local foods that are appropriate for processing.	Ministry of Trade and Industry

		4.3.2 Hold annual local food expos to promote income generating opportunities for innovative value adding technologies and ideas	Ministry of Trade and Industry Ministry of Agriculture
	4.4 Increased and improve domestic market access and trading of agriculture, livestock and fisheries products	4.4.1 Advocate for resources to upgrade and maintain the market facilities in Port Vila and rural centres.	Municipalities Ministry of Trade and industry

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency
		4.4.2 Strengthen domestic transportation infrastructure including domestic shipping rates, routes and ports	Ministry of Infrastructure
		4.4.3 Conduct regular market surveys to gather information on local food promotions and consumer behaviour	Department of Industry
5. To strengthen regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance activities and public-private sector collaborations	5.1 Relevant legislations reviewed and amended in accordance with national needs and international trade agreements	5.1.1 Finalise the draft food (Control) regulations and submit to government for approval and endorsement	CODEX Ministry of Health
		5.1.2 Train food inspectors, enforcement officers and other relevant people on the requirements and provisions of the food act and regulations	CODEX Ministry of Health
		5.1.3 Communicate requirements and provisions of the food (Control) act and regulations to all stakeholders and the general public.	CODEX Media
	5.2 Improved private sector capacity to promote and supply healthy food options	5.2.1 Develop formal agreements between food industry partners and private sector to achieve gradual reduction in the supply of high salt, fat and sugar foods	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
		5.2.2 Work with private sector partners (including food retailers and importers) who implement voluntary measures to reduce salt, sugar and fat in processed food	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency
6. To protect infants and vulnerable populations	6.1 Strengthened infant and young child nutrition programmes especially exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate weaning practices	6.1.1 Increase number of hospitals and rural health centres participating in the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative	Ministry of Health
		6.1.2 Provide healthy eating and safe motherhood practices education to young mothers	Ministry of Health
		6.1.3 Raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding and healthy eating guidelines for young children	Ministry of Health
		6.1.4 Train health workers to monitor infant and child growth using standard WHO growth monitoring tools	Ministry of Health
	6.2 School based nutrition programmes implemented and monitored	6.2.1 support implementation of Health Promoting Schools Programmes especially the promotion of health eating activities including curriculum based activities	Ministries of Education and Health
		6.2.2 Review health, nutrition and agriculture curriculum to incorporate food security	Ministry of Education CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
		6.2.3 Train teachers to use revised curriculum	Ministry of Education
		6.2.4 Establish demonstration school gardens to teach children agricultural food production skills	Ministry of Education

Key Objective Areas	Expected Outcomes	Activities	Lead/Responsible Agency
	6.3 Improved targeting of food security actions to reach most at risk population groups	6.3.1 Work with other agencies such as Red Cross and Save the Children to improve resilience of at risk population groups to negative impacts of natural disasters	NGOs
		6.3.2 Form partnerships between government departments and other agencies to share information on what and what does not work at community level	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office NGOs
		6.3.3 Increase access of community groups to grants and technical support for establishing home and community gardens	CODEX & Food Security Coordinating Office
		6.3.4 Provide pest and climate change resistant seedlings and livestock to support community based and home gardening projects	Ministry of Agriculture

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Monitoring and evaluation are key components of any plan to help determine whether expected results are achieved as planned as well as to provide accountability for progress.

The timeframe for finalising this plan did not allow for the development of the M&E framework. It will need to be one of the key tasks of the national coordinating body once its established. It is important that key stakeholders are involved in the process.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for the Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Coordinating Council.

Background

The Government of Vanuatu has a vision for an educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu. Ensuring a food secure Vanuatu can contribute significantly towards achieving this vision. This needs to be supported by a stable and consistent policy environment, appropriate rules and regulations and adequate funding of programmes to support and promote development.

However, in recent years, changes in Government and consequent lack of political stability has led to frequent policy shifts and inconsistency in policy formulation, analysis and application, contributing to lack of progress towards achieving the vision of an educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu. Lack of clear leadership has also contributed to lack of progress in addressing food security. Although food security was not explicitly identified as a Government priority in the Governments' Priority for Action Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015, it was nonetheless acknowledged that there was considerable scope for strengthening the primary production sector through increasing domestic market to strengthen national food security and reduce dependence on food imports.

Leadership and coordination was identified as a priority area for action during the 2009 National Food Summit to address food security and ensure a food secure Vanuatu. The coordinating efforts of government sectors are an essential component of implementation of policies.

The Vanuatu Codex Committee (VCC) was established in 2000 as a requirement of Vanuatu being a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an international body established jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) to develop food codes and standards that promote fair trade and protect the health of consumers. These codes are internationally recognized food standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to food quality and safety. Codex Standards cover all foods whether processed, semi processed or raw. They are recognized by WTO as international reference standards for resolving disputes concerning food quality, safety and consumer protection.

In the capacity as a national entity dealing with foods, it was recommended at the 2009 National Food Summit that the Vanuatu Codex Committee's terms of references be amended to include food security and thus to become the Vanuatu National Codex and Food Security Coordinating Council supported by a standalone office to be known as Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Secretariat and staffed by one full time equivalent

position of Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator who will also serve as the National Codex Contact Person.

This paper outlines the purpose, objectives, organisational structure and operational guidelines for the Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Council, Secretariat and the Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator.

Purpose

The Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Council shall be charged with overseeing and coordinating not only Codex activities but also to facilitate and coordinate the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the national food security policy and action plan.

The Vanuatu Codex and Food Security Secretariat is to serve as a standalone office providing administrative support for the Vanuatu National Codex and Food Security Council.

The Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator shall serve as the National Codex Contact Point in country as well as be responsible for maintaining the day to day running of the Secretariat.

Location

The Codex Alimentarius is a joint programme between WHO and FAO so the National Codex Committee is usually hosted by the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Agriculture. However it may also be hosted by other Ministries such as the Ministry of Trade or the Prime Minister's Office for the reasons of neutrality and hosting at the highest government level. The Vanuatu National Codex Committee is currently located within the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Commerce and Tourism and to ensure continued stability, the new coordinating Office will continue to be located within the Ministry of Trade.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Codex and Food Security Council and Secretariat are:

1. To efficiently and effectively engage in the work of Codex and to coordinate Codex activities in Vanuatu with the purpose of protecting consumers and promoting trade facilitation between Vanuatu and its trading partners
2. To provide leadership and coordination for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the Vanuatu Food and Nutrition Security Policy and plan of action.
3. To ensure a stable and consistent environment for the formulation, analysis and application of government policies and programmes in the area of food security.

Key Tasks

The Council shall:

- Advise the Government on all matters relating to Codex and food and nutrition security, specifically as regards Codex standards and their implementation as well as formulation of policies and Government priority programmes to ensure a food secure Vanuatu.
- Develop, implement and monitor a food and nutrition security policy and action plan with a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for assessing progress, including updating the plan every 3-5 years.
- Coordinate and develop collaborative relationships at all levels to address food and nutrition security and find solutions including organising national forums on food and nutrition security
- Review and discuss all key communications from the Codex Commission and develop appropriate responses in accordance with Government recommendations.
- Propose relevant parties to represent the country at various Codex meetings and appoint such technical sub-committees as may be necessary for Vanuatu's effective participation in Codex.
- Conduct or commission research and analysis of significant issues concerning Vanuatu's food system (which covers all aspect of the food supply chain from primary production through to consumption) and its consumers in order to develop sound and coordinated policies and programmes
- Submit the Secretariat's annual operation and budget plans for Government endorsement
- Approve regular quarterly progress reports before submission to Government of the activities of the Secretariat against its objectives
- Approve final annual financial and programmatic coordinating reports before submission to Government of the activities of the Secretariat
- Appoint chairs and members from among the Council members into each of the technical subcommittees ensuring good representation mix from relevant stakeholders, technical capabilities and skills mix.
- As a representative of all interested stakeholders on all aspects of the food system at national level, therefore the role of the Council is to:
 - Function as a national forum for promoting true partnership in the formulation and implementation of national Codex and food security actions and programmes.
 - All members should be treated as equal partners in the mechanism, with full rights to participation, expression and involvement in the decision making process in line with their areas of expertise.
 - Ensure linkages and consistency between Government and Development partners' assistance in support of national Codex and Food & Nutrition Security activities.

- Ensure that all relevant actors are involved in the process and provide transparency to the Government and the general public. As such it is responsible for ensuring that all information related to Codex and Food & Nutrition Security including financial reports is disseminated widely to all interested parties in the country.
- Coordinate and monitor the Codex and Food & Nutrition Security policy and activities.
- Evaluate the performance of the policy and activities and advocate for continued funding support

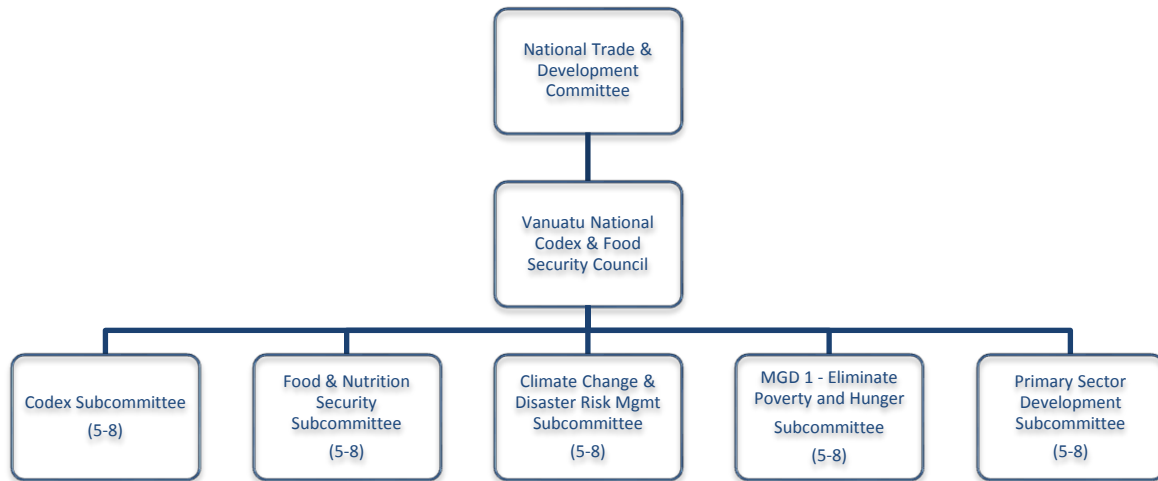
The Secretariat shall provide all the administrative support as required for the Council to fulfil all the tasks as identified above.

The Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator in addition to being the Codex Contact Person in country shall:

- Coordinate and facilitate the monitoring the implementation progress of the Vanuatu National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and action plan and prepare and present regular update reports and recommendations to the Council.
- Coordinate and facilitate the updating of the Food & Nutrition Security policy and action plan every 3-5 years and prepare and present final reports to the Council.
- Distribute all Codex communications from the Commission to all relevant stakeholders and draft responses as required and according to Council directives
- Maintain a library of Codex standards, Codes of Practice, Guidelines and any other documents and publications relating to Codex activities
- Organise regular Council meetings and prepare all meeting documents including agenda and minutes of meetings and distribute to all members prior to the meeting
- Coordinate, organise and facilitate the various technical subcommittee meetings including meeting agenda and meeting minutes in close consultation with subcommittee chairs who will present meeting outcomes to the Council on behalf of the subcommittees.
- Prepare and present quarterly progress reports to the Council on the work of the Secretariat
- Prepare and present annual reports to the Council for approval before submitting to the National Trade and Development Committee
- Maintain the day to day running of the Secretariat and respond to queries as required
- Undertake other duties relating to food security according to the Government and Council directive

Structure

The proposed structure is based on an integrated approach to addressing food security that is focused and aligned with Government priorities to ensure food security issues are addressed properly and receive due attention.



Members

The Codex and Food Security Coordinating Council may consist of up to 20-25 members and shall include representatives from all aspects of the food system with a mix representation from government sectors and agencies whose policies, programmes and actions have significant impact on the food supply system, NGOs, consumers and training and tertiary institutions. A greater diversity of sectors brings together more perspectives and often skill sets and resources which can be beneficial for the work of the Coordinating Office. It should be recognized that many perspectives within each sector for instance in production, the owners and regulators are likely to have differing opinions on issues. Therefore, diversity in perspectives within each sector is desirable.

The composition of the Council may consist of up to 20-25 members as follows:

- One Government Minister having jurisdiction over Agriculture or Health or Trade, who will also serve as the Chair of the Council and maybe rotated on a two yearly basis to ensure stability and consistency and subject to Government directive.
- One representative from each of the following government and non-government institutions:
 - Agriculture
 - Fisheries
 - Livestock
 - Quarantine
 - Farmers Support Association
 - Public Health

- Environmental Health Unit
- Nutrition Unit
- Finance
- Customs
- Inland Revenue
- Trade
- Industry
- Food Technology Development and Analytical Centre
- Chamber of Commerce
- Meteorological Services
- Local Governments
- Lands
- Education
- Council of Women
- Council of Churches
- Academia
- VANGO

The Secretariat is further encouraged to engage a broad base of experts, advocacy stakeholder groups, governmental and NGO entities as appropriate through subcommittees, working groups and through other ad hoc task forces as required.

Terms of appointment.

The Ministerial representative on the Council will be appointed by the Government and one who has jurisdiction over Agriculture or Health or Trade and maybe rotated on a two yearly basis to ensure stability and consistency and subject to Government directive.

Other Council representatives will be from the above list of Government and Non-Government institutions. They will be selected and appointed by their respective institutions based documented transparent processes highlighting professional expertise and their role within their respective institutions on food systems and policies. To ensure greater stability and consistency, appointed representatives must be able to serve on the Council for at least 2-3 years.

The Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator will be appointed by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Commerce and Tourism where the Office will be located in close consultation with the Ministries of Health and Agriculture.

All Subcommittees and chairs of these subcommittees will be selected by the Council from the membership representatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council shall meet once a quarter but can also convene extra ordinary sessions for urgent matters as advised by Government. The Council will be chaired by the Ministerial representative who has jurisdiction over Agriculture or Health or Trade. The chair will also present progress reports of Council and Secretariat activities to the National Trade and Development Committee and Council of Ministers.

The subcommittee chairs will report subcommittee activities to the Council with assistance from the Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator.

The Codex and Food Security Secretariat Coordinator will serve as the Codex Contact Person as well as providing the secretarial and administrative support to the Council and the Subcommittees. This person will also be responsible for the day to day running of the Secretariat.

Meeting and attendance

If a member of the Council or Subcommittee fails to notify the chairs about absence from a meeting for more than 2 consecutive meetings, the Council will notify the institution to request a replacement.

Quorum & actions

A quorum of 50% is required for any meeting to convene. An affirmative vote of the majority of members present at a meeting is required for any action.

Staff assistance

The Office shall be staffed by one full time equivalent position who will serve as the Codex Contact Person as well as the secretarial services for the Council and the Subcommittees. The Council may also request for more staff assistance as required and depending on funding availability.

Funding

The secretariat should be funded at least at a level to provide one full time equivalent so that the work of the secretariat can be effectively carried out. The Secretariat reports directly to the agency designated by the COM – in this case it would be to the National Trade & Development Committee

Additional funding will also be required to provide office space and refurbish it adequately to allow the staff to effectively undertake the duties of the Secretariat.

Reimbursement, mileage

Representatives are not entitled to reimbursements for travel and other expenses for attendance at meetings unless approved by the Government and depending on funding availability. It is expected that all representative will be compensated appropriately by their employers according to Government approved processes as it is expected that the representatives will be representing their institution as part of their role and responsibilities.