

SOLOMON ISLANDS
AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK SECTOR
POLICY 2015 – 2019

FINAL DRAFT

DRAFT

Table of Contents (draft)

GLOSSARY	i
ABBREVIATIONS	ii
FOREWORD	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	v
Chapter One: Overview	1
I. The Agricultural Sector	1
II Strategic Options for Agricultural Development in Solomon Islands.....	2
III. The National Development Framework.....	2
IV. Expected Outcome and Output.....	3
V. Methodology and Process.....	5
VI. Structure of Document.....	5
Chapter Two: Agriculture Sector Policy.....	6
I. Introduction	6
II. Policy Options for MAL Core Activities	6
a. Agricultural Extension Services.....	6
b. Agricultural Research and Development	7
c. Regulatory Services.....	8
Plant and animal health Protection, Quarantine Services and Biosecurity	9
e. Agricultural Market Information.....	10
f. Market for Farm Inputs Supplies	11
g. Financing of Agricultural and Livestock Services	11
h. Institutional Capacity building	12
i. Large Scale Commercial farming and Plantations	13
j. Cooperative Development Services and Cluster Farming	13
k. Market infrastructures and Marketing.....	14
III. Policy Options for Cross Sectoral Services	15
a. Soil Conservation, Access to Land, Land Use Planning and Land Tenure.....	15
b. Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management.....	17
c. Rural Finance and Credit facilities.....	17
d. International Trade	18
e. Trade Facilitation	19
f. Food Safety	20
g. Agricultural Statistical Services	21
IV. Policy Options: Sub-Sector Specific Policies.....	21
a. Coconut	21
b. Oil Palm.....	22
c. Vanilla.....	22
d. Coffee.....	23
e. Cocoa.....	23
f. Rice.....	24
g. Livestock.....	24

h. Traditional Food Crops and Fruits and Vegetables.....	25
i. Organic and Fair Trade	26
Chapter Three: Summary and Conclusion	28
Annex 1. Existing Legislation, Instruments for Implementing Agricultural.....	29

DRAFT

GLOSSARY

To minimize the misinterpretation and to increase clarity of the meaning of different terms used in the document below, are some definitions of words/terms used:

Agriculture: is defined as that area of human activity involving all aspects of crops and livestock.

Agricultural Services or Agricultural Support Services: are activities that support agricultural production. These include training, research, extension, plant protection, irrigation, farm power, credit, storage, transport, processing, input delivery system, animal health services, etc.

Agriculture Technology: implies knowledge, equipment, inputs and practices embodied in modern agricultural production practice.

Agro-Processing or Agro-Industry: is the term used to depict components of the agriculture sub-sector.

Climate Change: a large scale change, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and higher temperatures due to global warming.

Cluster Farming: farming involving or initiated by groups, associations and organisations.

Credit facilities: a formal or non-formal financial institution which can lend money to support agriculture development.

Extension Service: is defined as the transfer of agriculture technology from experts to farmers. The word "experts" include farmers who are capable of supplying such services to others.

International Trade: Export and imports or exchange of goods and services between countries.

Land use planning: rational planning on the use of available land to optimize benefits

Large Scale commercial farming: Cultivating large unit area, 100 to 1000 hectares of land to maximize production and returns to capital investment

MAL: means Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in charge of portfolio of agriculture and livestock

Market Infrastructures: physical structures and arrangements to support marketing of any products or commodity e.g., roads, wharves, transportation, telecommunication, warehouse, cold storage and etc.

Plantation: cultivated farm unit or estate of coconut, cocoa and coffee (cash crops) planted.

Policy: is defined as a set of instruments aimed at reaching specified objectives.

Policy Instruments: are specific unit actions taken by a competent person/agency to implement a policy e.g. specific tax, law or regulation, etc.

Public Intervention: refers to centralized and decentralized state intervention and non-market intervention institutional arrangement providing public services.

Sector: one five major sectors of Solomon Islands economy is the Agriculture and Livestock Sector which falls under the DCCG policy statement under the productive sector.

Soil Conservation: Sustainable use of soil with practices that would not destroy its physical, chemical and biological components.

Smallholder: Cocoa, coconut or cattle holdings owned and operated by household/family unit of up to 3ha (cocoa up to 3,000 trees, cattle up to 10 herds, coconut up to 1000 trees).

Strategy: the path to be followed to achieve a particular set of objectives.

SWoCK: Strogem Woka lo Community for Kakai, a food security program under national Climate Change program funded by UNDP.

Trade facilitation: a body or organization which coordinates and facilitate export and importation of any products or commodities.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Meaning
AOA	Agriculture Opportunity Area
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CEMA	Commodity Export Marketing Authority
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CNURA	Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement
DCCG	Democratic Coalition for Change Government
DBSI	Development Bank of Solomon Islands
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FICs	Forum Island Countries
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
GPPOL	Guadalcanal Plantation Palm Oil Limited
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
HTFA	High Temperature Force Air Treatment
LMO	Living Modified Organism
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MCILI	Ministry of Commerce, immigration, labour and Industries
MSG	Melanesia Spearhead Group
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NDS	National Development Strategy 2011-2020
NRRDP	National Rural Rice Development Programme
PACER Plus	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
RIPEL	Russell Islands Plantation Estates Limited
SBD	Solomon Islands Bank Dollar
SI	Solomon Islands
SIALSP	Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy
SICUL	Solomon Islands Credit Union Limited
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIPL	Solomon Islands Plantation Limited
SPARTECA	South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPS	Sanitary & Phytosanitary Standards
WTO	World Trade Organization

FOREWORD

To guide government in achieving its mandate as well as other interrelated National Development Objectives, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) needs a set of policy guidelines to serve as a “road map” to meet the target set for a sustainable development of the agricultural sector. A survey of literature and government documents revealed that various policy frameworks for economic development of Solomon Islands exist, however most of these policies are not up-to-date and most of them do not address the needs of the current socio-economic issues.

The aim of the National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy is to guide agricultural development along the lines of the Government development strategy. Specifically this Policy Document will provide a framework to reorient its agricultural production to meet the developmental needs of Solomon Islands. The National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy of the Solomon Islands is thus designed through vast consultative process to facilitate a structured approach towards a socially and culturally acceptable, economically vibrant and ecologically sustainable agricultural sector that will contribute towards poverty alleviation, food security and economic development. This Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy is intended to be for a medium term agenda from 2014, however it also sets the base for a long-term Agriculture and Livestock Development Plan to 2019.

The previous National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2009-2014 is replaced by this policy document more aligned to the present DCCG policy statement goals and objectives. This edition which is the Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 will set a new roadmap and pave the way for sustainable agriculture development in the Solomon Islands for the next 4 years. I believe this policy will continue to build and strengthen linkages and partnerships between MAL, Line ministries, NGO’s, Donor partners, the Private Sector and our rural farmers.

Honorable Duddley Kopu (MP)
Minister
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgement is here accorded the architects of the National Agriculture and Livestock Sector policy 2009 – 2014. Dr. Pita Taufatofua, former FAO policy Consultant for putting together the original document under a FAO TCPF project. To facilitate the consultations and eventual endorsement by Cabinet, the following individuals are also here commended:

Mr. Selwyn Riumana (Former Minister of Agriculture and Livestock)

Mr. Edward Kingmele, [CBE] (Former Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock)

Late Mr. Henry Pika, (Former Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock)

Late Mr. Fred Fono (Former Minister for Rural Development)

The staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, farmers, private sector representatives, and other Government officials who contributed to the original document.

For preparing and putting together the revised edition of the National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019, I would like to thank the Under Secretary (Administration), all Directors and Senior officials from MAL, Director Marketing MCILI, CEMA General Manager, RDP Advisor, UNDP/ SWoCK Project Manager, and others for your valuable contributions. Special thanks to UNDP/SWOCK Project for financing and making the review possible. Finally, give credit to Mr. Titus Sura, National Consultant for facilitating and compiling the revised document. The Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 is a framework and roadmap for achieving the key DCC Government Policy Statement goals and objectives expected to be implemented over a short, medium to long-term plan of the SIG, towards a more sustainable Agriculture and Livestock Sector in the Solomon Islands. Again I sincerely thank you all for your contributions towards the final outcome of the Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019.

Jimi Saelea
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agriculture is the most important sector for the Solomon Islands national economy. It provides for and sustains 85 per cent of the rural population with food crops, cash crops and livestock for their daily livelihoods, food and social security. When Solomon Islands has one of world's highest population growth rates of 3.6 per cent, experiencing land shortage due to high population pressure on available land for food production, facing the challenges of the adverse impacts of extractive industries, and adverse effects of climate change. There is strong need and call to have in place a policy framework to guide and direct much needed resources to the sector. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is enacted by Solomon Islands National Constitution to advance agriculture and Livestock development in the country. MAL is mandated with an overarching responsibility to execute development of Agriculture and Livestock sector and sub-sector. On this front, the Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 is accommodative and a roadmap for MAL to execute its sustainable development programs effectively and efficiently for the next 5 years. The SIALSP 2015-2019 is aligned to the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011-2020, the Democratic Coalition for Change Government (DCCG) policy statement 2014-2020, with reference to the MAL Corporate Plan 2015-2019, and various sub-sector policies in its revision. The Policy recognizes the partnership approach MAL has with all the departments, relevant line ministries, stakeholders including the private sector and individual rural farmers, to make available and consolidate resources for the sustenance of the Agriculture Sector and Livestock subsector. MAL's Vision/Mission and Values are coherent to the DCC Government.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision

A sustainable agriculture and rural development for food sovereignty, economic stability, and improved rural livelihood for Solomon Islanders.

Mission

To lead, collaborate, promote, enhance and improve agriculture development in Solomon Islands to a profitable and environmentally sustainable future by being the premier provider of information, research, extension, education, regulatory and other services to have a robust agriculture sector.

Values

In the development and delivery of practical solutions to the national and provincial governments, tribal communities, resource holding groups, women and youth, non-state actors and church groups of the Solomon Islands; the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is committed to provide information, technical advice, transfer of practical skills and knowledge through:

- Consultative, cooperative and partnership development;
- The development and application of innovative yet rigorous scientific techniques;
- The engagement of an active participatory approach to an effective delivery of extension service;
- The recognition of the invaluable role women and youth play in agriculture;
- The facilitation and involvement of private sector in agriculture trade and commodity development;
- The principle of empowerment of resource owners; and a fair, equitable and a timely enforcement of regulatory measures;
- The recognition of the science and application of practical knowledge and skills of climate change in agriculture development; and
- The recognition and application of land use planning strategies in all agriculture planning and rural development initiatives.
- The recognition of intergenerational equity.
- The accurate information is accessible by all.

Goals

The Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 has four (4) clear key goals; to address:

- (i) To achieve food sovereignty
- (ii) To improve livelihoods,
- (iii) To promote agriculture for import substitution, and
- (iv) To increase trade.

Chapter one: Overview

I. The Agricultural Sector

Agricultural sector is the most important sector for the economy. It accounts for approximately 16.2% of the GDP in 2013 (SI statistics, 2015). Agricultural export is a major source of export earnings. In 2014 agricultural export accounted for 24% of the total merchandise export. Total export of copra, cocoa, palm oil and other agriculture products declined by 12.4 million (12.1%) to 90.3 million in first quarter of 2015 compared to 2014. It is the main source of employment and livelihood in the rural areas. Agriculture consists of three sub-sectors: subsistence smallholder farming, a commercial sub-sector, and large plantations. Subsistence agriculture is the predominant occupation of the rural population (80% of the rural population) and in many cases the sole source of livelihood. Many rural communities also depend on forest products such as leafy vegetables, nuts, honey, and fruits, and coastal communities on fish to supplement their food consumption.

The main crops are sweet potato, cassava, yam, taro, banana, pumpkin, and vegetables. Dietary patterns and eating habits have changed and rice now becomes the major source of energy intake and sweet potato and cassava are only second to rice. Coconut, Cocoa and Oil Palm are the main commercial crops, but Coconut and Cocoa are the main cash crops touching majority in the rural households. There are a few commercially oriented farmer-processor-traders. These are mostly involved in processing and value adding, mostly for cocoa, copra and since 2010 there was increasing copra oil and virgin coconut oil processing for value-added products and oil exports.

Vanilla, Cardamons, Chillie, Ginger and Tumeric are categorized as spice crops and currently they are minor cash crops that have generated a lot of interest over the last few years. The world market for spice is a small niche market at around 2500 tons annually. Many parts of the country are suitable for spice production. Spice production is labour intensive and well suited to the Solomon Islands farming household. Many production and processing techniques required specialists processing and is normally carried out in central entities rather than by farmers.

Coffee and Kava are two most promising crops for rural farmers, especially in remote areas of Isabel, Malaita and Guadalcanal Highlands. There is potential and opportunity to increase production and processing of these crops for the local market and international niche market demands.

High value subsistence crops such as slippery cabbage, tomato, pineapple, peanut, ngali-nut, watermelon, sweet potato, cassava, yam and taro play vital food security role in the rural area

as well as urban areas. There is also potential to increase production to sustainably supply these crops for the rural and urban markets for additional household income.

There is so much potential to increase production and export from large-scale plantations like the GPPOL oil palm plantation with the Out growers scheme expanded, the RIPEL Yandina coconut plantation once it is revitalised, and Horokiki with other major cocoa plantations.

The livestock sub-sector consists of local inbred and free-range pigs, backyard chickens, cattle. Pigs (mainly free range) and backyard poultry are kept for protein intake and in the case of pigs, ceremonial purposes, and wealth accumulation. Volume of domestic meat productions do not meet the local consumption, hence Solomon Islands imports meat from Australia, New Zealand, and Vanuatu. Solomon Islands have the potential to increase its meat production through better animal husbandry and feeding practices, and improved breeds.

From the period 2011-2014 agricultural production of the major commodities copra, coconut oil, palm oil, kernel oil and cocoa has gone through a period of unstable market volumes and prices, to be realistic perhaps a slightly declining trend for the past 4 years. This is due to a number of factors including the April 2014 flash floods, volatile prices, high transportation costs and low production due to low yielding plantations, lack of improved production technologies in the farming systems, lack of inputs of production, increasing pest and diseases, soil degradation, lack of production incentives, declining export prices, limited market opportunities, limited access to land and most importantly lack of private and public investment in the sector. Furthermore the instability in political and economic environment has hampered the development of the sector.

According to the 2014 annual report of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands, there has been a significant value increase in both food import and agricultural export. This is due to the recent increases in production and commodity prices. Export receipts from agricultural commodities jumped by 32% against 2013 to \$439 million. Palm oil exports which dominated the agricultural exports increased by 14% to \$239 million driven by an increase in export contract prices and higher export volume in crude palm oil during the first half of 2014.

Copra and coconut oil export receipts increased significantly by 76% to \$100 million and cocoa exports grew by 49% to \$100 million on the back of higher export prices combined with increased production during the year.

Food import payments, represented 22% of total imports, also increased by 7% to \$831 million owing to increased payments for basic food items such as rice, meat, wheat, cooking oil, canned food, and sugar products. Rice import alone constitutes 58% of total food import and was valued at SBD 171million in 2014. Local consumption of rice per head of population is one of the highest in the Pacific at 100 kg per annum.

II. Strategic Options for Agricultural Development in Solomon Islands

In addressing the numerous challenges faced by the Solomon Islands agricultural sector, a well-coordinated set of responses and a proactive strategic approach is required. This will need the support and commitment of all stakeholders, government and private sector. First, the priority of the government must be to mobilize adequate financial and human resources; second, government should implement appropriate policies and enact legislation to provide incentives to enhance agricultural production; third, government and development partners must ensure that appropriate capacity building programme is in place to meet Solomon Islands national commitments and international obligations; and finally government should put in place land use development compatible with its development agenda.

A proactive strategic approach for the Government of Solomon Islands is to follow a twin track approach: (1) to consolidate the sector's strength to enhance and diversify the production of staple foods and climate resilient crops and livestock; and (2) to expand export-base through the development of existing and potential commodities.

In improving production of staple foods, the government can play a major role. The Government of Solomon Islands has a crucial role in establishing a stable economic environment conducive for exploiting the vast and productive natural resources base by the provision of public goods such as research, extension services and transport and communications infrastructure. To meet the National Development objective, the government has redefined the role and target objective of the MAL. MAL is mandated "*to provide extension, education, regulatory services, research and associated activities to improve the agricultural sector's contribution towards increased food production, food security and standards, and economic recovery and development*". Hence MAL should focus on:

- Providing essential infrastructural to support the integration of the rural sector into mainstream of the economy
- Promoting disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaptation
- Promoting agro-processing, value adding, agribusiness and rural credit facility
- Partnering with private sector, NGO's, donor partners (national and international) and other service providers to enhance the productive capacity of the agricultural sector
- Strengthening farmer institutions as well as the research and development capacity to raise productivity of food crops and livestock and of value adding technologies to boost production for both local consumption and export

- Promote and empower women, youth and people with special needs to participate in all agricultural developments and activities.

III. The National Development Framework

The DCC Government assumed political leadership in Solomon Islands on the 9th of December 2014 and unveiled its 16 National Development Objectives (NDO), four (i,k,o and p) of which focus on the agricultural sector. These are:

1. Address the basic needs of the people in the villages and the rural areas where the majority of the people live, and ensure real improvement in their standard of living
2. Work towards food security and poverty alleviation for the nation and ensure a healthy, literate and a contented population
3. Generate jobs and increased employment opportunities for the growing population and achieve high economic growth, wealth and social wellbeing for all Solomon Islanders
4. Ensure the sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources, protection of the environment and successfully combating the adverse effects of climate change

To achieve the National Development Objectives, the government has set the following priority activities and strategies to be undertaken by MAL for the period 2015-2019, these are:

1. Development of Oil Palm Production to target 40,000 ha development over next ten years with priority to Guadalcanal Province (GPPOL), Waisisi and Auluta projects in Malaita Province, Western Province (Vangunu) and later to other provinces like Choiseul, Isabel and Makira
2. Establishment of 400 ha commercial Rice Production Projects
3. Continue the rehabilitation and value-added product developments of coconut and cocoa
4. Improve production and sustainability of small livestock projects.
5. Revival of the cattle industry
6. Pursue Development of Exotic and Indigenous Fruits
7. Improve production and processing of staple food crops and spices for domestic and overseas markets

IV. Expected Outcomes and Outputs

The following six priority outcomes are expected following the intervention of the proposed policies in the medium term. These are:

1. Poverty alleviation, enhanced food security and rural livelihood

2. Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment
3. Farm sector readjustment and restructuring
4. Investment in agricultural research and development
5. Food safety and quality improvement
6. Reduced dependency of food imports and increased agricultural exports

Based on priority outcome, the expected major outputs are listed below; this will provide the basis for monitoring and evaluation of policy

Major Output for: Poverty Alleviation, Enhanced Food Security and Rural Livelihood

- a. Food security, livelihoods self-sufficiency and community sufficiency in rural areas improved through targeted multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial interventions in rural area
- b. Farm productivity increased through capacity development and appropriate technology transfer and local marketing network enhanced for small farmers
- c. Reduced dependency of food imports and increased agricultural exports
- d. Reduced crop and livestock loss due to exotic pests and diseases and increase export
- e. Agricultural production system diversified and agri-business and other alternative activities promoted for income generation in rural communities including promotion of organic farming
- f. Pro-poor policies and strategies strengthened and rural institutions and agricultural services promoted to support small scale farmers
- g. Agricultural strategic plan developed.

Major Output for: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment

- a. Farmers shielded from impacts of natural disasters and climate change through disaster and risk management and climate change mitigation
- b. Soil conservation and management enhanced
- c. Increased land fertility and productivity
- d. Land use planning and policies in place
- e. Appropriate regulatory framework in place and enforced

Major Output for: Farm Readjustment and Restructuring

- a. Farm management improved through cluster farm, and cooperatives and Farmers' Associations
- b. Farmers' competitiveness strengthened through enhanced skills and capacity

Major Output for: Investment in Agricultural Research and Development

- a. Capacity in policy analysis and strategy formulation enhanced, in particular agricultural policy analysis
- b. Farm management improved through cluster farm cooperatives and Association
- c. Prevention and control system for emerging plant and animal disease strengthened
- d. System on Agricultural Research and Development strengthened

- e. Increased number of new crop cultivars, new animal breeds, and new food product development

Major Output for: Food Safety and Quality Improvement

- a. Quality & standards of agricultural products improved by means of a certification and traceability system
- b. Certification and traceability system strengthened
- c. Enhance technology transfer and capacity building in food safety and quality improvement, and food chain integration promoted
- d. Enhancing capacity of farmers in agricultural and export
- e. Human resource developed in biosafety and biosecurity diagnostics

Major Output for: Reduced Dependency of Food Imports and Increased Agricultural Exports

- a. Quality standards set for processing and marketing of agricultural produce and products as well as other standards required by international agreements
- b. Increased promotion and understanding that fresh local food is nutritionally superior to imported processed foods
- c. Setup National Seed Committee to control matters related to seeds including developing seed policies and regulations
Provide coordination, monitor seed production, quality control and seed certification,
- etc. d. Increased production level

V. Methodology and Process

To guide the policy formulation process a Policy Steering Committee was established. With support and direction of the Steering Committee, a series of broad public consultations were conducted with various stakeholders, following a participatory approach. Stakeholder consultations were conducted in Western, Malaita and Isabel Provinces as well as in Honiara to compile stakeholders' views/opinion and identify priority areas of focus relevant to agricultural development to be addressed. A desk assessment of national policies, reports and previous studies were carried out to establish the context and scope of the policy framework as well as to identify existing legislation. A draft version was first presented at a stakeholders meeting for further discussion and to create stakeholder consensus. Based on the discussions the policies statement/focus activities were redefined as required, to reflect the opinions and observations of the stakeholders. Hence the preparation of the Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy is a partnership between Solomon Islands Government, private sector, farmers' groups and FAO.

The revised Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 took one full day of consultation with selected stakeholders in Honiara at the Livestock department conference room. The review consultation meeting went through the previous policy document section by section and suggested to the Facilitator/National Consultant relevant sections which required revising and changes to be done. After the changes were made, a second consultation meeting was conducted to produce a first draft of the revised policy document. Much of the changes to the document are updating of facts and figures, and aligning the document to the

DCC government's policy statement and policy National development objectives. The revised policy document is now called '**Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019**'. The first draft was sent to SPC policy office in Suva for their final input before a final draft is ready for printing in preparation for cabinet's approval and gazetting. Hence the review of the policy document is a partnership between Solomon Islands Government, private sector, farmers groups and UNDP. The review exercises with printing were made possible with financial assistance from UNDP under the SWoCK project.

VI. Structure of Document

This Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2015-2019 document consists of five parts. The first five pages included the glossary, abbreviations, foreword, acknowledgement, executive summary with the policy's vision and mission. Chapter I present an overview of the agricultural sector, the introduction, a brief discussion of **Strategic options for agricultural development in Solomon Islands, the national development framework which set the basis for the formulation of the agricultural and livestock sector policy and the expected outcome/output from the implementation of the proposed agricultural and livestock sector policy**. Chapter II discusses the Agricultural Policy options; first the policy strategies will have a sectoral focus, followed by cross sectoral and specific crop sub-sector focus. Chapter III provides the summary and conclusion. There is one annex, providing information on existing legislation, instruments for implementing the agricultural policy.

Chapter Two: Agriculture Sector Policy

I. Introduction

Although the number and nature of guidelines that constitute an agricultural policy are vast and complex, the ultimate goal of this policy is the improvement of the wellbeing of the population whose principal occupation and way of life is based on agriculture. Due to the current poor state of the economy, the choice of appropriate policy instruments is limited; hence the policy statement/focused activities are confined within a practical and a pragmatic framework. This policy framework document by its own admission is both a statement of principles and one that identifies focused strategies/activities to promote agricultural development and national development objectives. First the policy strategies will have a sectoral focus, followed by cross sectoral and specific crop sub-sector focus. A twin track approach is adopted with specific policies for small farmer, large-scale commercial farmers and plantations.

II. Policy Options for MAL Core Activities

a. Agricultural Extension Services

Agricultural extension service is defined as the transfer of agricultural technology from experts to farmers, livestock keepers, and other stakeholders. The experts are the link between the farmer, livestock keepers and research where agricultural technologies are developed, tested and modified. Generally, the experts have three roles; first and foremost the transfer of readily usable technologies; secondly to simplify technologies which cannot be transferred in the form produced by the research institutions; and thirdly to identify and transfer farmers/livestock keepers problems to research institutions. The evolution of extension services in Solomon Islands has a long history. However due to recent economic crises and insignificance of Agriculture Budgetary Provisions the extension services are virtually weak.

Objective: To strengthen the linkage between research - extension - farmer and livestock keeper and to convert the extension services into an instrument of agricultural growth, as well as to provide a framework to interpret research findings and advice farmers on improved technology to stimulate sustainable agricultural growth.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Provide delivery of extension services in a cost effective and sustainable manner. The approaches and methods will involve regular visits to farmers/livestock keepers and groups, regular training of extension staff and frequent interaction between researchers and extension staff
2. Revitalize and strengthen the extension services with more qualified staff and budgetary resources to enhance its effectiveness in delivery of the required services
3. Extension services will develop programs to enhance women and youth involvement in agricultural production
4. Extension services will be demand driven and will address farmers and other beneficiaries' needs

5. Provide periodical training for extension staff in order to acquaint and increase their knowledge base with new technological changes
6. Extension services will encourage and support farmers; livestock keepers, traders and processors to establish groups, associations, and cooperatives for participatory and collective action
7. Integrated pest management measures, safe handling and use of agrochemical and other plant protection inputs will be promoted by extension services
8. Extension services will promote commercialization of crops and livestock enterprises. This will include appropriate mechanisms for minimization of production risks
9. In collaboration with the Health Authorities will promote utilization of local staples and sub-staples through appropriate post-harvest technologies, to maximize the nutritional value of local food product
10. In collaboration with the Republic of China - Taiwan technical mission activities will promote new technologies in production of rice, vegetables and livestock to increase production and maximize the nutritional value of local food product
11. Integrate the cooperative advantages of each of the areas.
12. Facilitate community based trainings in the provinces with NGO's, RTC's, CBO's etc. will promote technologies related to different enterprises

b. Agricultural Research for Development

The main aim of agricultural research development is to promote sustainable food and agricultural production system through the development and dissemination of appropriate and environmentally friendly technology packages. An efficient Agricultural Research and Development system need to be put in place urgently to support the development of agriculture to meet the demands of population. A lack of clear research priorities has undermined the efficient use of both government and donor funds. Hence, a National Research Master Plan needs to be a major priority for the government, which will provide appropriate scientific and technical knowhow compatible to local conditions. More importantly agricultural research should be demand driven and client oriented. It should take into consideration the lengthy accumulation of experience of the agricultural community and indigenous knowledge. There should be a common platform, which can link the agricultural research with extension, training, non-government organization (NGO), and other national institutions involved in agricultural technology development and transfer. A similar approach should be adapted to link national agricultural research with regional as well as international agricultural centres.

With the current pressure on natural resources, efforts will have to be made to efficiently utilize the available resources. Research will also pay particular attention to natural and biological methods of pest control, which can be applied by farmers and livestock keepers, and to the development of improved post harvest and storage methods. Agrochemicals will have to be assessed for economy, effectiveness, and safety in use and disposal with special concern that some common technologies can undermine sustainability of island agricultural production.

Objective: Strengthening research and Development effort to raise productivity of food crops and livestock and o value adding technologies to boost production for local consumption and export.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Increase investments in research on a sustainable basis
2. Strengthen capacity and increase financial resources of the MAL, to conduct R & D
3. Develop new production technologies taking into account indigenous knowledge
4. Ensure that the technologies developed are appropriate to farmers, assessment should be carried regularly to identify beneficiary's impact, constraints and opportunities
5. Ensure a continuous supply of improved livestock breeds, crops and vegetable varieties through research and breeding programmes
6. Support establishment of gene banks in collaboration with international agencies and ratify plant genetic resources treaties such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol.
7. To ensure that research emphasis is given to exploit the synergy of integration of crop and livestock production.
8. Where feasible, will involve relevant NGOs and the private sector to participate in research and development particularly in the areas of testing agrochemicals, development of special technologies, seed and processing.
9. Strengthen information and documentation services, information management and technology, publications and dissemination of research information and networking in information services with internal and external institutions, including national extension services.
10. Conduct research on control management options for existing and emerging pest and disease problems
11. Provide research facilities (Plant health diagnostic laboratories , food processing laboratory, soil and plant nutrition laboratory, plant tissue culture laboratory, molecular laboratories etc..) through the establishment of a National Agriculture Research Centre and rehabilitation of existing Field Experimental Stations

c. Regulatory Services

For a modern agricultural and food sector there are many regulatory requirements. For example:

1. Food Safety regulations, standards, testing for contaminants and chemical residues
2. Protection of natural/environmental and sustainable management of land use
3. Biosafety regulations with respect to genetically modified (GM) plants, animals and GM food
4. Biosecurity Regulation with respect to pest and disease control and appropriate quarantine border control measures

5. Verification and certification of seeds and plant propagation materials and registration and regulation of agrochemical use.
6. Inspection services and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary standard (SPS) certificates and verification and certification that products satisfy relevant standards and quality and labeling requirements. These requirements must comply with the established national, regional and international agreements in order to protect the interest of all stakeholders who are in one way or other dependent on agricultural sector for their livelihood.

The Solomon Islands is a member of various international bodies, whereby standards need to be adhered to and enforced by regulations and or by legislations. The most appropriate institution to carry out these regulatory services is the Government (The Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock and the Attorney General Chambers). In this context the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock will have to retain under jurisdiction all regulatory functions and will establish a legal mechanism for their enforcement under the overall supervision of the Attorney General.

Policy Statement/ Focused Activities

1. Develop or amend legislation and appropriate regulations to support implementation of its mandate and activities. For example, it will develop pesticides acts and regulations to control the manufacture, import, sale, use and disposal of agricultural chemicals
2. Formulate control mechanisms such as for licensing and permits for imports
3. Collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services; Ministry of Environment, Climate Change , meteorology, disaster management & Conservation and other relevant institutions to ensure that agricultural inputs and outputs will not endanger the health of people, farm livestock and the environment
4. Work with Public Prosecutor's office to bring regulatory measures in line with the constitutional resolutions
5. Formulate legislation to protect and conserve the biodiversity (of each of the provinces) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology (MECDM). For example, MECDM will develop a National Policy on Plant Genetic Resources.
6. Work with Public Prosecutor's office to take action against offenders
7. Provide regulatory support to the enforcement of all legal framework and instruments related to agriculture and food

d. Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI)

Biosecurity Solomon Islands is a department under MAL that is empowered by legislations to collaborate with other partners- (other Government ministries and departments, stakeholders, industries, farmers, communities) to perform its functions. The new Biosecurity Act (.3) 2013 is an act to:

1. prevent the entry of animal and plant pests and diseases into Solomon Islands;
2. control their establishment and spread in Solomon Islands;
3. regulate the movement of animal and plant pests and diseases and of animals and plants and their products;
4. facilitate international cooperation in respect of animal and plant diseases and related matters.

BSI key roles:

1. Maintaining effective Quarantine services to protect the country from pest and diseases incursion
2. Controlling pests and diseases that may enter the country.
3. Negotiating market access requirements for agricultural goods being exported
4. Pre border, Border, and Post Border (internal) Biosecurity activities
5. Facilitating trade in compliance with international standards

The Biosecurity enforcement (powers under the legislation):

1. To prohibit both import and export unless prescribed conditions are met
2. For discretionary issue of certificates to meet specific importing country authority requirements
3. To enter and inspect registered premises to determine whether biosecurity standards and requirement and compliance agreements are met.
4. To sample and assess export consignments with authority to reject export and to seize and detain if product non-compliant
5. Provides for inspection services for prescribed goods
6. Requires records to be kept and made available to inspectors
7. Maintain a Post Entry control and Inspection service

The quarantine and inspection service is responsible for the protection of the island agricultural resources against exotic pests and diseases. The Plant Protection services will include diagnosis, forecasting and preventing pest outbreaks; inspection, phytosanitary services and quarantine services. More importantly, the plant protection, animal health and quarantine services conform to the obligations of regional and international standards such as World Trade Organization (WTO), Sanitary Phytosanitary rules and movement of GMOs and Live Modified Organisms (LMOs). The MAL will continue to take measures aimed at improving and strengthening plant protection, animal health and quarantine services.

Objective: To prevent and/or minimise crop and livestock losses due to pest disease infestations and incursions.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Implement and enforce the new Biosecurity Act and Regulations
2. Improve border protection strategies, such as passenger clearance at point of entry and clearance of imported plant and animal produce to ensure freedom from exotic pests, diseases and to destroy quarantine risk material
3. Improve capacity to monitor and control pests and animal disease through training and equipment
4. Cooperate with neighbouring countries through bilateral, regional and international arrangements on pest and disease prevention/protection whenever necessary.
5. Improve phytosanitary and plant inspectorate services to prevent both the spread of existing plant diseases and introduction of new pests and diseases through importation of plant materials and animal products
6. Develop import protocol using recognized risk analysis methods and issue permits containing specifications to meet the national and international regulations
7. Promote veterinary services and establish an effective regulation and control system for import and marketing of veterinary products
8. Strengthen the field-reporting system and establish an epidemiology unit for monitoring and surveillance
9. Set up inspection facilities, build post-entry quarantine house. Such facilities will improve the ability/capacity to import improved crop varieties, increase food security and control potential pest and diseases
10. Design systems for operation of facilities such as the quarantine greenhouse to follow a user-pays approach, but with the option of rebates for small farmer groups. Another approach can be “build operate and transfer” and hence private/public partnership can be sought for such ventures
11. Develop means to control introduction of GMOs and LMOs
12. Prevent and control human diseases transmitted by food of animal origin. Measures to be taken will include inspection of food premises, products quality control, abattoir, hygiene, meat inspection, prevention and control of chemical residues in food including veterinary drug residues and inspection of food imports and exports
13. Develop and maintain Solomon Islands capacity to meet overseas Sanitary and Phytosanitary requirements and conform to regional and international market standards and trade agreement requirements

e. Agricultural Market Information

A common concern raised throughout the stakeholder consultations was the lack of information thus constraining potential suppliers from entering both domestic and international market. In urban market demand for agricultural product may exist in urban areas, suppliers from rural areas may not be aware of them and similar situation holds for international markets. Hence there is a need to disseminate market-related information to both producer and

buyer. A proactive trade and market information system should be developed and funded adequately.

The government should facilitate data collection at national, regional, provincial and constituency levels; coordinate information services within the MAL and with other statutory bodies; and will analyse, interpret and widely disseminate such information. Market data will need to be continuous to suppliers and sellers and will also be used for policy analysis and development.

Objective: To provide effective agricultural market information to enhance agricultural productivity and profitability.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Improve the capacity of the Agriculture Information Unit with competent staff and appropriate equipment to prepare and distribute extension materials and mass media programs – linking research to farmers
2. Strengthen the collection, dissemination and monitoring of information at national, regional and international levels
3. Ensure that data analysed is disseminated regularly through various means of communication
4. Provide timely market information via different existing communication media. Information will include supply and prices of the major staples, fruits and vegetables, and betel nut at the main local centres
5. Trained Extension Officers and NGO field workers in collection, interpretation and timely transfer of market information to farmers in an accurate and understandable form
6. Link with other relevant ministries, such as Trade and with the Commodities Export Marketing Authority (CEMA) to establish effective market information systems for inputs and outputs, in order to make markets transparent and inform traders and farmers about supply, shortage, availability and prices
7. Establish linkages with both inter-island and overseas shippers for schedules and other relevant information such as freight costs, space and types, etc. as part of market information

f. Market for Farm Inputs Supplies

Since marketing systems for inputs are almost non-existent, the government needs to provide market information and monitor market performance. Timely availability of agricultural inputs is a major problem in remote areas and islands. In many cases the farm input supplies are not readily available and if available are very expensive hence unaffordable.

Objective: To enhance accessibility of farmers to inputs of production.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Continue to encourage and promote the private sector into supply channels, which should fulfil effective demand from farmers at reasonable prices
2. Consider fiscal incentives for farmers' associations to get involve in input supply business and exempt farm inputs from import tariffs
3. Create an Inputs Trust Fund to facilitate availability of soft loans for local distribution of inputs to farmers
4. Promote credit lines from commercial banks and other financial institutions societies for farmers and traders to finance, input supply to farmers
5. Continue to improve the supply of agricultural inputs of production which should be compliant with the framework of all international and regional agreements to which Solomon Islands is signatory
6. Advocate for reduction of numbers and levels of taxes and levies to agricultural inputs in order to enhance competitiveness and incentives in the industry

g. Financing of Agricultural and Livestock Services

For the public investments to be effective, it is essential to develop an enabling environment for pro-poor agricultural growth. In general governments are called upon to provide public goods and establish supporting legal, administrative, and regulatory systems to correct for market failures, facilitate efficient operation of the private sector, and protect the interests of the disadvantaged.

The need for sustainable development in the Solomon Islands are manifold, however capacity and resources are limited and will remain so in the medium-term. Strict priorities and hard choices have to be made to focus development efforts especially in rural areas. Despite the importance of agriculture and livestock sub-sectors to food security, poverty alleviation and national economy at large, funding for key public agricultural and livestock services has been declining in real terms for a decade. Information available indicates that central government expenditure on agriculture and natural resources has remained below 2 percent of Gross Domestic Products (CBSI Annual Report, 2007). This is clearly inadequate especially in light of the importance of agriculture to the economy. Low recurrent budget (SBD15.6 million) from the central government for MAL is a major constraint to provide effectively and efficiently essential services to rural population.

Objective: For MAL to effectively and efficiently execute its core responsibilities in a timely manner.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Allocate budget resources to Increase public investment
2. Advocate for a policy that saving arising from rationalization of its functions and services be retained by MAL to strengthen priority core functions
3. Increase MAL annual budget over 10 per cent to reflect the importance and contribution of agriculture sector to agriculture development and Solomon Islands GDP and national economy.

h. Institutional Capacity Building

Investments in institutional capacity are critical to ensure that the public sector can effectively carry out its functions, which include coordination, participatory development of sector strategies, policy formulation, research and development and allocation and monitoring of public investment in agriculture. MAL over the years have faced numerous setbacks due to number of reasons, the most common one being limited budgetary allocation. The “tension” crippled the economy of the country including the agriculture sector. The Research Institution at Dodo Creek was destroyed. The impact of the current economic status of the country has severely handicapped MAL with a significant reduction in number of staff and particularly in the extension service. Capacity building across the whole ministry is essential for effective impact of its services.

Objective: To strengthen the delivery capacity of MAL.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Strengthen MAL with trained, competent and motivated staff
2. Prioritize and align activities of MAL to available resources especially human and allotted budget
3. Develop and implement a Human Resource Development Plan for MAL
4. Undertake an audit of existing staff capacity for key areas to standardize level of technical proficiency. Appropriate training should be devised to bridge skills gaps
5. Improve monitoring of staff performance to assess training needs and effectiveness of current training programs
6. Improve morale of staff through incentives and rewards on performance based

i. Large Scale Commercial Farming and Plantations

The large-scale plantation sector has been negatively affected by social unrest, land disputes and the recent civil unrest. These events have forced the closure of many plantations; including the Russell Islands Plantation Estate Limited (RIPEL), RCSymes Plantations in Isabel and Baunani Plantations in Malaita.

The successful restoration of these plantations and the future expansion of the sector will depend on the resolution of sensitive social and land issues and a stable macroeconomic environment as well as a business friendly environment to create confidence in investors.

Objective: To increase production, export, export earnings, employment and encourage agricultural diversification.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Encourage and strengthen involvement of the private sector in agriculture development through appropriate policies, tax incentives and other incentives
2. Maintain a cohesive and consistent policy commitment on private sector led growth and reduction of barriers faced by the industries

3. Encourage and facilitate the involvement of smallholder groups or cooperatives in commercial agriculture including plantation out-growers schemes
4. Reassess the functions of the Commodities Export Marketing Authority (CEMA) and strengthen its pivotal role in the development, regulating and marketing of agriculture commodities
5. Redevelop and consolidate estate plantations (crops/livestock) linked to out-grower schemes particularly on alienated land and registered land, with new allocations of arable
Land for estate type projects not precluding the expansion or resettlement of smallholder farmers
6. Provide secure land tenure by resolving sensitive social, cultural and land issues

j. Cooperative Development Services and Cluster Farming

Cooperative development functions include promotion, registration and deregistration of cooperatives, inspection and mobilization of rural savings and credits. Encourage more commercially oriented smallholder farmers particularly those within easy access to urban centre maximizing market opportunities by producing vegetables, fruits and needs of urban markets.

Objective: To empower small farmers in rural communities for adoption of appropriate production technologies and maximize market opportunities.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Promote and strengthen the Cooperative movement in the sector as an important rural institution to serve farmers interests and provide support services and enabling environment
2. Take the lead in facilitating the formation and growth of democratic producer and marketing organizations, which together with individual businessmen and private companies will endeavor to serve the farming and livestock keeping communities to the best of their ability. This includes encouragement and support for the formation of sub-sector associations for specific crops
3. Strengthen the existing Cooperative Society Act to meet the current challenges
4. Provide fiscal incentive for agricultural cooperatives to their endeavor to modernize small farmer's production system
5. Pursue Enactment of Farmers Association Legislation

k. Market Infrastructures and Marketing

A common concern raised throughout the stakeholder consultations was the lack of opportunities to sell agricultural produce for much needed cash. The Solomon Islands must increase trade and facilitate sustainable economic growth to improve the welfare of its people. Agriculture offers the major opportunity and in many cases the only opportunity to make sustainable improvement in the wellbeing of the majority of the population living in rural areas. Trade in agricultural produce both in domestic and export markets are an important means of

improving the socio-economic status, particularly of rural communities, and subsequently the economy of the country.

Objective: To link producers to the market.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Support and build market and improve market facilities in the provinces and strategic areas where farmers can trade
2. Develop logistic programme to minimize transport cost for both domestic and export market
3. Establish a network to provide market information on existing and potential of local and export overseas
4. Conduct aggressive trade fair in both domestic and export market and matchmaking and seller of SI Agricultural and food product
5. Ensure obligations and conditions of regional and international trade agreements to which Solomon Islands is signatory are met
6. Establish a database and disseminate information on high value resources and market requirements to producers
7. Develop value chain studies (commodity pathways and competitiveness enhancing strategies) for potential export crops
8. Identify and exploit opportunities to increase supply and varieties of quality fruits and vegetables for the local retail and tourist markets
9. Develop Solomon Islands product branding
10. Develop market product profile for each potential marketable product
11. Review and analysis of current situation regarding trade and marketing information availability; and base line surveys/studies

I. Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Evaluation and Implementation

Policy formulation, implementation and management should be one of the core functions of the MAL. Implementation of the formulated policy is crucial to achieving the stated vision and target objectives and outcomes. Following the endorsement of the policy by Solomon Islands Government, plans and programs must be developed and implemented. The MAL should be the key policy implementation agency for agricultural development and should lead the preparation of a programme for implementation. For cross-sector issues MAL should work in collaboration with other ministries, for policy formulation, evaluation, management and implementation.

Objective: Strengthened policy framework for sustainable agricultural development.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Utilize the information gained through monitoring evaluation and impact assessments for policy development, review and refinement
2. Responsibly articulate the sector priorities within the National Policy framework, macro-policy decisions into sector specific special actions and monitor the impact of sector policy reforms and rural development

3. In order to effectively carry out this important function the Ministry will undertake efforts to enhance its capacity in sector policy analysis and monitoring, evaluation and impact assessments
4. Establishing various expert task groups as the need arises and to collaborate with other established committees in Government, private sector and civil societies in order to operate in an action-orientated environment for policy formulation
5. Set quantitative benchmarks for the achievement of targets and accountability for implementation of policy

DRAFT

III. Policy Options for Cross Sectoral Services

The agricultural sector is inextricably intertwined with the rest of the economy. Measures to improve performance in the sector have implications at macroeconomic level and for other sectors. The MAL will strive to strengthen linkages and coordination with other Ministries which deal with issues which directly or indirectly affect sector development. Priority Areas include: Environment, Climate change, Land use, Credit availability and food safety.

a. Soil Conservation, Access to Land, Land Use Planning and Land Tenure

Agriculture involves the use of natural resources. High on the agenda is land. Land has to be managed in such a way that agricultural production is sustainable and that negative environmental externalities are avoided or at least kept to a minimum. Nutrients extracted from the soils should be replaced, forests replanted, soil degradation and overgrazing reversed.

Patterns of land utilization are determined largely by the customary land tenure system, which controls about 85 per cent of the total land area in Solomon Islands. The current traditional system of land ownership provides a welfare safety net for the vast majority of Solomon Islanders. Customary land tenure also supports the country's robust village-based subsistence farming. At the same time, customary ownership is a major constraint that hampers economic development and integrated land use management and planning. Mobilizing land for large-scale economic projects is especially problematic, costly and fraught with uncertainty due to the inevitable and often multiple disputes that arise between owners and developers, or different landowner groups. The preferred method for gaining the rights to use land is through lease arrangements. However, even legally binding leases and contracts do not ensure that the terms of the agreement will be honoured.

Solomon Islands now do have a coherent rural land Use policy. This policy must be regularly consulted and make reference to because is invaluable roadmap, directing towards more effective solutions to land issues affecting agriculture development, such as land disputes and land use planning (zoning). Similarly, the legal framework for land management needs to be reviewed. Land matters are covered under the Lands and Titles Act of 1970. This Act is regarded as being inadequate, outdated, and is in need of thorough overhaul as it does not meet the additional burden population growth and globalisation has put on the land.

Objective: Sustainable land use and management to increase soil fertility and productivity

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. In collaboration with other relevant Ministries provide community based land use training for rural and resources owners
2. Develop land tenure rights to minimize the long-drawn out procedure of acquisition of land and secure land titles for agricultural development

3. Careful considerations of challenges posed by the complexities of customary land tenure, and determine viable mechanisms for a more integrated and effective system of land use and management
4. Protection of Agriculture Opportunity Areas (AOA) from other indiscriminate and competing commercial interests: and easy access to land for agricultural development
5. Support the establishment of a Land Reform Commission under the Ministry of Lands, to draw up appropriate legislation to ensure that all new leases are signed with special conditions attached to protect agriculture leases against competing interests
6. Facilitate the customary landowner's engagement in dialogues with other stakeholders from government, the private sector, and the civil society, to develop workable partnerships in land use
7. Promote crop and livestock husbandry practices that conserve natural resources, enhance soil fertility and sustain production
8. In collaboration with other relevant institution will assess land potential for zoning and prepare land use plans as well as land capability and carrying capacity in various areas will be determined to prevent land degradation, soil erosion, depletion of water resources, and encroachment on forests
9. Increase productivity through use of improved technology to lessen pressure on land.
10. Develop soil and land use database utilizing GIS

b. Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management

The Solomon Islands is located in a high disaster prone area. In recent years, there have been cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic activities, floods, droughts and tsunami causing substantial damage to agriculture. Soil degradation, contamination and erosion have become increasingly important issues in agriculture. The traditional practice of shifting cultivation that allowed for regeneration through fallowing for extended periods is no longer possible due in most areas to increasing population pressure on land. In order to reduce losses to Agriculture sector from what is stated above, the ministry is integrating risk reduction activities to enhance sustainability and resiliency of the ministry and the farmers.

Objective: To reduce the impact of climate, disaster and environmental risks and enhance sustainability and resiliency within MAL staff and farmers

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Support the review and implementation of the Solomon Islands Disaster Risk Management Plan, promoting disaster risk management as a sustainable development issue with strong linkages to agriculture development
2. Work in collaboration with relevant regional and international agency through the Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster management and Meteorology in implementing the climate change policy.
3. Encourage use of conservation farming techniques such as agro-forestry, fallow, cover crops, intercrop and contour planting
4. Develop and implement a Contingency Plan for speedy recovery of food production following a disaster
5. Promote traditional ways to protect crops from natural hazards and methods to preserve food and seed stocks

6. Promote agro-forestry with the use of intercropping to reduce vulnerability to natural disaster, soil degradation and erosion and improve farm productivity
7. Discourage slash and burn methods that lead to soil and environment degradation
8. Develop crops that are resilient to natural disasters
9. Develop a crop insurance schemes where possible
10. Mainstream climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction into national policies, strategies and programs related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries
11. Develop community-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction
12. Provision of disaster fund for the disaster response and recovery in the agriculture sector
13. Implement smart Agriculture practices
14. Coordinate appropriate, timely and effective livelihood and food security humanitarian and recovery responses (short, medium and Long-term) to the impacts of hazards
15. Implement capacity building programs in MAL and communities on climate, environment and disaster risk Management in order to Understand risks as vital to sustainable development, responsible for agricultural losses and accountable to sectors vulnerability and seek to reduce risks

c. Rural Finance and Credit facilities

Financial services in rural areas are extremely limited and where existent are mainly located in provincial centres. Hence Credit facilities for rural area are non-existent, which implies no investment or working capital. Although a Credit Union Act was enacted in 1986, which regulated the operation of Credit Unions in Solomon Islands, many Credit Unions have ceased their operations. Out of 180 only 20 is currently functioning. Even microfinance schemes have not been successful. Thus many rural farmers do not have much in terms of formal savings for investment.

Objective: Credit availability to meet the needs of farmers and livestock producers.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Collaborate with the financial and monetary authority to devise ways to provide access to financial services to rural areas
2. Provide initiatives designed to promote rural financial institutions to be owned and run by farmers and NGO's
3. Encourage Rural Credit and Savings schemes and other formal and informal lending schemes with incentives in order to promote agricultural growth, agricultural trade and rural agro-processing activities
4. Establish an Agricultural Micro Credit system to support rural lending for long-term developmental agribusinesses
5. Encourage financial institutions such as Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI), Solomon Islands Credit Union Limited (SICUL) and Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) to establish credit facilities to provide loan funding to smallholders and agro- business ventures

6. Revive the Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI) as development priority of the DCC Government to provide credit facility for rural smallholders and agro-business ventures

d. International Trade

The Solomon Islands, is a de facto General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) contracting party since 1978. In July 1996, SI acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO) as an original member. Solomon Islands is not a signatory to any of the Plurilateral Trade Agreements. SI is a signatory member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and provides tariff preference under the MSG Trade Agreement of 1996 for selected products to other members of the MSG.

As a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement, the Solomon Islands, together with some other Pacific Island Countries are currently negotiating the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU. The Solomon Islands belong to the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA). SPARTECA is a non-reciprocal preferential agreement covering the Forum island countries (FICs) with an aim to achieve duty-free and unrestricted access for FIC exports including agricultural products to Australia and New Zealand. SI is also a member of Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement and Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER plus).

The Solomon Islands must increase trade and facilitate sustainable economic growth to improve the welfare of its people. Agriculture offers the major opportunity and in many cases the only opportunity to make sustainable improvement in the wellbeing of the majority of the population living in rural areas.

Trade in agricultural produce, both in domestic and export markets are an important means of improving the socio-economic status, particularly of rural communities, and subsequently the economy of the country

Objective: To enhance agricultural trade and increase the contribution of agricultural export in total merchandise export

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Improve the profile of Solomon Islands' agricultural products in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations through awareness of means and strong negotiation skills
2. Promote development policy space for agricultural by provided targeted tariffs structure
3. Ensure the commitment on tariff reduction do not jeopardize agricultural sector develop
4. Coordinate all agricultural trade interventions aimed at increasing production and build links to general trade policy

5. Develop a national trade policy based in collaboration with MAL. This policy should strengthen the export potential by developing the supply side and address the supply side constraint. It should also include agricultural SPS standards.

e. Trade Facilitation

Given the importance of the agricultural sector to the livelihoods of the majority of rural population of Solomon Islands, improvements in the physical setting to facilitate trade activities is critical in obtaining and maintaining market access for its exports, vis-à-vis other traditional barriers to trade. In this context agricultural standards will have a major impact.

Objective: To enhance Solomon Islands export potential.

Policy Statement/Focused Activities

1. Revamp the National Trade Facilitation Committee with the active participation of MAL
2. Create systems for the development, promotion, monitoring and certification of a range of agricultural produce standards
3. Provide essential infrastructure to support commercial and export growth
4. Establish an enabling environment for dialogue with stakeholders on trade issues
5. Consultations on trade issues at regular intervals with an inter-institutional focus with all interested parties in domestic and international trade to identify and resolve their respective trade facilitation
6. SPS Architecture and Capacity to issue SPS certificates, conduct SPS market research, and negotiation of protocols
7. Cost of importing and exporting goods seems to be high suggesting a more in-depth review of the area to determine the driving factor for such high costs
8. High costs of transport, storage and wharfage make Solomon Island less competitive, hence initiatives should focus on reducing these costs
9. Increase the accessibility to timely shipping facility
10. Upgrade port and wharf facilities
11. Revitalize the capacity of the High Temperature Force Air Treatment (HTFA) plant to handle volumes requiring pre export treatment
12. Update current customs-related legislation, in particular the outdated Import of Goods Control Act, to address gaps and bring it into line with modern trade practices

f. Food Safety

The Solomon Islands is a member of World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The basic food law for food safety in the Solomon Islands consists of the Pure Food Act of 1996. The Act is relatively unique in that it makes provision for collaboration between agricultural quarantine inspectors and health inspectors, covering both food imports and exports. The Act also regulates the slaughter of animals for human consumption and the obtaining, processing, storage and transportation of milk and dairy products. The act is supported by food regulations, which were revised in 2007 (with FAO assistance) through an extensive stakeholder process order to allow their finalisation

for gazetting. Additionally, Pure Food (Fishery Products) Regulations 2005 were developed by the Environmental Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, with EU assistance, to reflect current best practices. They were introduced over a 12 months period and are in line with European Union (EU) requirements to facilitate exports to the EU. The Solomon Islands has a National Public Health Laboratory, which has recently been reconstructed and equipped. Covering a broad spectrum of agricultural food commodities, the food legislative framework is an essential foundation for the development of the agriculture sector and food security in the Solomon Islands.

Objective: To provide a framework to boost agricultural sector development and food security.

Policy Considerations:

1. Given the cross-sectoral nature of the Solomon Islands Food Regulatory framework, and the fact that the Ministry of Health is the competent authority for the certification of food manufacturers and food exports including fish, it is crucial to foster collaboration, coordination/exchange and capacity building between the MAL, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Health
2. While analytical facilities have recently been revamped, there is a need to obtain international accreditation and conduct related capacity building to strengthen its recognition by competent authorities of trading partners
3. The development of the agriculture export sector, in particular value adding / food processing businesses needs to give attention to good manufacturing practices (GMP) and the hazard analysis critical control point system (HACCP) or its equivalent to assure the safety of food produced/exported
4. From a food safety policy perspective, there are currently different levels of protection for the domestic market and the export market. As industry in the Solomon Islands develops, consideration should be given to ensuring equal protection for both domestically consumed food and food for export by introducing a requirement for all food to be handled under GMP and HACCP principles

g. Agricultural Statistical Services

To allow better policy formulation to meet the goal of national agricultural development, the quality and timeliness of relevant data is needed. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has not been able to have any quality and reliable data since 1980's when the last agriculture census was conducted. There were several attempts to conduct a census but were not possible because lack of budgetary support. Currently, SPC/FAO regional offices had initial consultations with MAL department of planning for a possible project and they show some interest to facilitate for a possible survey, and the National Statistical Office to conduct the survey, the problem is the ministry (SIG) has to commit certain financial contribution which it does not have as there was no approved budget provision, and there is no fixed timeline at this stage. MAL needs to make strong collaboration with the National Statistical Office so it could assist in areas needing improvement in its role as data provider.

Objective: To provide support to policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Policy Statement/ Focused Activities

1. Provide greater powers and sufficient resources to collect information on agricultural sectors and to produce timely analysis of issues of interest to the public
2. Collaborate with National Statistical Office to conduct a timely agricultural census/survey in 2016/2017
3. Develop capacity to collect and compile agricultural data
4. Draft legislation for Agricultural Statistics
5. Coordinate and facilitate an agricultural census/survey in collaboration with National Statistical Office which is relevant authority to provide data and information

IV. Policy Options: Sub-Sector Specific Policies

a. Coconut

Coconut is an important food crop, which is exported as whole nuts, copra, copra oil, and coconut virgin oil. Coconut provides a small but relatively reliable source of cash income for rural household scattered throughout the country that have few other sources of income. Copra is the most widely spread cash crop and supporting the copra industry has the potential to increase the cash income of more rural people than any other single activity. Coconut not only provides cash income but also make an important contribution to the people's daily diet. Despite its importance, coconut has been neglected, that is there has not been any proper replanting for more than 25 years, and thus a high percentage of palms are old and in the declining phase of production. The copra industry went through a period of upheaval over the last 25 years as it has moved from a monopoly marketing arrangement to deregulation and private sector marketing. The closure of the RIPEL operation has had significant negative impacts on the industry and on the country as a whole, and including the negative view of potential foreign investors.

Objective: To enhance the economic contribution of coconut in livelihood system.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Review the coconut sector and develop a focused strategy to support its development
2. Financial support on a cost recovery basis the construction of copra dryers in strategic location in rural areas
3. The Government will provide seeding financial support for copra buyers in remote areas of the country
4. The Provincial as well as National governments should support shipping of copra from remote areas
5. The Government should speed up the reopening of RIPEL
6. Program a major coconut replanting scheme
7. Restore /increase commercial viability of the crop/commodity introducing downstream processing and value adding of copra of copra into copra oil, fresh coconut into VCO, and diversifying into other product lines from the coconut fruit.

8. Market research, identification and facilitation through relevant sectoral approach
9. Adoption of appropriate technology.
10. Establish marketing infrastructure and linkage with buying points established at strategic locations.
11. Review and revive Market network including (transport) eg. CEMA former marketing network
12. Cross sectoral market research /identification

b. Oil Palm

Palm Oil was the country's most successful agricultural industry before the "tensions", exporting 36,900 tons of palm oil products in 1998. The closure of the Solomon Islands Plantation Limited (SIPL) factory in 2000 had devastating effects on the export of this product and hence the economy and foreign exchange generation of the country. However, the company reopened under a new management [Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited (GPPOL)] in 2006 and production increased markedly to 21,979 tons of oil palm products in 2007. GPPOL in 2007 employed 2,000 workers and engaged about 100 households in an 'out-grower' scheme managing an estimated area of 500 hectares with potential to expand production and acreage. After nearly 10 years past, the overall oil palm development scenario has improved, in 2014, Guadalcanal has 7,200 hectares of oil palm planted, GPPOL owns 6,000 and Outgrowers Association comprising of 275 households owns 1,200 hectares with assistance received from MAL. The 2014 Oil palm production is 34,000 metric tons which is SBD\$350 Million worth of exports. The production and export figures are expected to increase further around 15 months after the April 2014 flash floods.

Objective: To enhance the economic contribution of oil palm sector in livelihood system.

Policy Statements

1. Review the Oil Palm sub-sector and develop a focused strategy to support its development
2. MAL will facilitate oil palm development on Guadalcanal Province (GPPOL) Western Province (Vangunu & Shortland), Malaita Province (Auluta and Waisisi) Choiseul Province and later to other Provinces of Isabel and Makira/Ulawa
3. The MAL extension service will support 'out-grower' schemes working together with nucleus plantations
4. Investigate the feasibility and introduce smallholder oil processing machines suitable for smallholder oil palm plantations
5. MAL departments of Research and Agriculture planning must support Oil Palm division with implementation of the program
6. MAL collaborate with MID and MCILI establish formal cross-sectoral approach to address infrastructural and market needs of the program to attract both more local and foreign investors to the industry

c. Spices

Vanilla, Cardamons, Chillie, Ginger and Tumeric are categorized as spice crops and currently they are minor cash crops that have generated a lot of interest over the last few years. The world market for spice is a small niche market at around 2500 tons annually. Many parts of the country are suitable for spice production. Spice production is labour intensive and well suited to the Solomon Islands farming household. Many production and processing techniques required specialists processing and is normally carried out in central entities rather than by farmers.

Objective: To enhance spice production and increase farmers' ability for income generation.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Review the status the spices sub-sector and design a focus strategy for its development
2. Considering the climatic requirements of the spice crops, identify agro-ecological zone for farmers where the crop could be successfully grown
3. Develop a "how to grow each of these crops" pamphlets and provide training to farmers on how vanilla should be grown and cured
4. Provide support for stocking and propagating spices planting materials in potential production areas
5. Regulate harvesting, processing and marketing of all spices to maintain quality standards essential for export to niche market
6. Facilitate and coordinate market fact finding mission to establish niche market for SI spices within the region or overseas.

d. Coffee

The import market for coffee in the SI is 150 tons annually. The country has areas that could produce high quality Arabica coffee such as high elevation locations in Central Malaita. Robusta coffee could be grown in lowland areas where cocoa is currently grown although return for coffee will be significantly lower than that for cocoa. In the volatile world coffee market, small new entrants to the world market like the Solomon Islands have little chance succeeding. However, there is opportunity for a small coffee industry in niche market and import substitution.

Objective: To enhance coffee production and increase farmers' ability for income generation.

Policy Statements

1. Review the status the coffee sub-sector and design a focus strategy for its development
2. Considering the climatic requirements of the 2 different types coffee (Arabica and Robusta), identify agro-ecological zone for farmers where the crop could be successfully grown
3. Develop a "how to grow each variety of coffee" pamphlets and provide training to farmers on how coffee should be grown and processed

4. Provide support for stocking and propagating coffee planting materials in potential production areas
5. Regulate harvesting, processing and marketing of all coffee to maintain quality standards essential for export to niche market
6. Facilitate and coordinate market fact finding mission to establish niche market for SI coffee within the region or overseas.
7. Encourage and support development of the Coffee industry for import substitution
8. Conduct trainings on how to process and dry coffee beans
9. Support and research development of and export marketing of a specialty differentiated Solomon Islands coffee in collaboration with MCILI, Private sector and coffee associations
10. MAL in partnership with coffee associations promote on-station and on-farm research
11. Improve farmer/Association support assistance for farm inputs, labour subsidy to increase production

e. Cocoa

Cocoa has been the third most important export crop in the Solomon Islands. Exports in 2013 were SBD67.1 million and increased to SBD95.1million in 2014 (Int. Trade statistics, 2015). The increase in 2014 stemmed largely from improved production and higher export prices. The industry is almost entirely smallholder based. Cocoa production is widely distributed throughout Solomon Islands, grown in all provinces except Rennel/Belona which makes cocoa the second most important cash crop after coconut. The high rainfall in production areas led to severe outbreaks of the Black-pod disease having devastating effects on production.

Objective: To enhance the economic contribution of the cocoa sector in improving livelihoods.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Support and improve construction of cocoa dryers so that it achieve smokeless dried cocoa beans targeting special markets and premium prices
2. Provide seeding financial support for cocoa buyers in remote areas of the country
3. The Provincial as well as National governments should support shipping of cocoa from remote areas
4. Promote and facilitate the marketing of cocoa as an organic product in partnership with NGOs and other stakeholders e.g. Kastom Gaden and POETCom. to obtain premium price
5. Conduct trainings on post-harvest processing especially on fermentation at farmer level
6. Support construction and registration of processing units as regulatory measure to facilitate quality and traceability of Solomon Islands Cocoa
7. Support development of Solomon Islands Cocoa superior materials by introducing new varieties, developed superior local varieties, and increasing production using IPDM through scientific and on-farm investigations
8. Establish protocol to stop incursion of Cocoa Pod Borer from neighboring Papua New Guinea

f. Rice

Rice consumption per capita (100 kg) in the Solomon Islands is the second highest among the Pacific Islands. Increasing import and the rising cost of rice and the burden it places on the import bill (valued at SBD 170 million in 2014) prompted the Government to embark on rice development and import substitution programs over the years, however this continues on a very small scale. The failure of large-scale rice plantation style operations between the 1960s and 1980s compelled government to shift its renewed rice development focus towards village-level production. However, the National Rural Rice Development Programme (NRRDP) is planning to start two commercial rice farms in 2009/2010. Local rice production in 2013 and 2014 fell compared to previous years due to unsustainable rice developments and declining support from MAL rice program.

Objective: To decrease the dependency on imported rice.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Review the status of rice sub-sector and design a more focus development strategy for improving production
2. Introduce appropriate varieties suitable for Solomon Islands farmers' context
3. The MAL will bulk up seeds of appropriate varieties making it available for farmers at affordable price
4. Provide the necessary rice processing facilities at strategic locations where farmers could process their own grown rice at affordable price
5. Expedite the development of the planned commercial rice production program to be undertaken by the private sector
6. Provide farmer-training programs on rice production while at the same time emphasize to farmers the superior nutritional value of their traditional food crops
7. Revisit rice trade regime and provide appropriate support to enhance rice production, in terms of tariffs
8. Provide tariffs rebates on rice development equipments
9. Provide technological support to promote efficient production scheme
10. Develop a rice workable model suitable for smallholder farmers, determining its scale of operation, its requirements in terms of type of inputs, level of technology, with a marketing strategy

g. Livestock

The livestock subsector has a vision and mission;

Vision

Working together for a robust, productive and sustainable livestock sector, food security, improving livelihoods and economic stability to meet the needs of all people of Solomon Islands.

Mission

To empower communities, smallholders and commercial livestock enterprises for livestock development in an environmentally friendly way, strengthen partnerships, and deliver quality livestock and veterinary services.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

- i. **Livestock Technical Service and Information (LTSI):** Provide technical support and services to all clients and farmer at all levels of farming – subsistence to commercial scale, in animal health, production, processing and marketing.
- ii. **Animal health and welfare (AHW):** Provide animal health and Welfare services, including disease surveillance for national animal health and disease status and early detection of zoonosis, and promote production practices and standards for animal welfare.
- iii. **Livestock industry development (LID):** Promote an enabling environment and facilitate for industry strengthening and private sector investments in commercial livestock developments, small-holder production, slaughter, processing, and marketing facilities and access developments
- iv. **Livestock Research and development (LRD):** Research into systems and technologies which increase production, improve productive performance and providing such information to MAL extension services and stakeholders.
- v. **Policy and regulations (P&R):** Provide clear cut policies for operations and subsector support, strategies for livestock development and uphold and update existing regulations of livestock and veterinary services.

Subsectors

- i. **Pig industry development:** Augment the capacity of farmers at all level of production, marketers and processors to increase pork production and improve product quality.
- ii. **Poultry industry development:** Stimulate increased production at all levels, Intensify meat and egg production from village strains and exotic breeds, improve product quality and value adding.
- iii. **Honey bee industry development:** Support recovery amongst major honey producing apiaries and new apiaries in all provinces to increase production and improve process for quality assurance.

- iv. **Cattle industry development:** Support the revitalization of large scale commercial beef cattle production and marketing in a province specific approach and development of smallholder farms around the economic radius of commercial farms.
- v. **Diversification (Goat, sheep etc.): Promote and support** diversification and broadening opportunities for enhancing rural livelihoods and economic development through diversification of livestock species.
- vi. **Livestock slaughter and process:** Support development of slaughter and processing facilities for ensuring quality assurance and food safety of local meat and meat products.
- vii. **Market development and improvements:** Support existing market outlets in Honiara and provincial centers improve capacities to trade meat and meat products, and strengthen alliances and linkages between farmers and buyers or market outlets.
- viii. **Animal Genetic Resources development:** Support the protection, development and conservation of AnGR of social, cultural, and economic significance for national and rural benefit realization.

h. Traditional Food Crops and Fruits and Vegetables

Many rural communities depend on forest products such as leafy vegetables, nuts, honey, and fruits, and coastal communities on fish to supplement the food consumption. The most important occupation of majority of the rural population is subsistence food production and small-scale income-generating activities. The farming system commonly practiced in food production in the rural area is a mixed-relay system. Major traditional food crops of the Solomon Islands consist of root and tuber crops, bananas and fruits normally cultivated under subsistence system, and nuts and leafy vegetables usually harvested from the wild. The country has a rich biodiversity of food plants. Traditional food crops, fruits and vegetables have an important contribution in alleviating food shortages and hunger.

The traditional food crops form the basis of both the subsistence and cash economies but are being replaced by imported foods. The rural population representing 84% of the total population relies mainly on subsistence production of mainly sweet potato, cassava, bananas and other roots crops such as taro and yams. Some fruits and nuts are cultivated while others are collected from the wild. The increased domestic production of traditional food crops will reduce dependence on imported food.

The MAL has few activities aimed at supporting subsistence food production. In part it is a result of a chronic lack of capacity. Also traditionally, the focus was mainly on cash crops, which has resulted on comparatively little resources being directed towards subsistence production given its size and critical importance to the vast majority of the population.

Problems in subsistence farming and food production are related to factors such as the reduced yield, increased pests and diseases and lack of improved variety, poor planting materials, but

most importantly, the lack of outlets or market opportunities for their produce. The low yield and increased pest and diseases could be directly related to reduced fallow period and thus low soil fertility.

Objective: Enhance food security and rural livelihood.

Policy Statements/Focused Activities

1. Review the traditional food, fruits and vegetable sector and develop a strategic development plan for these traditional food crops
2. Develop appropriate technology to improve productivity and increase production of local food crops
3. Introduce improved technology such as high yielding and disease resistant food crop varieties for evaluation by Solomon Islands farmers
4. In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry develop a plan to protect the rich biodiversity of food plants in the country
5. In collaboration with Health and Education authorities promote increase utilization of wholesome local foods for better nutrition as compared to imported processed foods
6. Promote organic production of traditional food, fruits and vegetable sector
7. Development plan for process and value adding
8. Promote and support the Lokol Kaikai program in MAL giving assistance to individuals, groups and institutions contributing to the program.

i. Organic and Fair Trade

The Solomon Islands has a comparative advantage in agricultural organic products, as most of the local food production is without added fertilizers or pesticides. All “push foods” including leafy greens, fruits and nuts are collected from the wild could be certified organic. The country could not effectively compete by selling high volumes at world commodity prices, except perhaps with one or two commodities. However, there are opportunities in accessing niche markets of high-value products such as native nuts and “organic” products. Cocoa production in SI is almost totally organic; therefore could over a period of time, be easily steered towards organic certification and marketing. The company Kokonut Pacific SI Ltd is successfully exporting NASAA – certified organic virgin coconut oil. Cocoa is another crop with potential as organic product for export.

Objective: To increase income generation capacity through diversification.

Policy Statements and Focus Activities

1. Promote organic farming as means of income generation and poverty strategies for rural communities
2. Build alliance with partners in the region to develop organic farming systems.
3. Evaluate food plants including those in the wild, having potential to export as organic products
4. Engage an organic certification process with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to develop certification procedure for SI produce and develop legislation to adopt SPC organic certification

5. Develop SI into a reputable producer of numerous certified organic product brands recognized internationally
6. Provide support to develop organic inputs of production

DRAFT

Chapter Three: Summary and Conclusions

The suggested policy options are anchored in a set of values which define the societal goals and a set of beliefs about the best ways to achieve the developmental goals as in the National Development Objectives of the DCC Government. As stated earlier, the proposed policy interventions are expected to generate the following six priority outcomes in the medium term, viz; (1). Poverty alleviation, enhanced food security and rural livelihood; (2). Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment; (3). Farm sector readjustment and restructuring; (4). Investment in agricultural research and development; (5). Food safety and quality improvement and (6) Reduced dependency on food imports and increased agricultural exports. However, two important elements of poverty reduction namely, increasing food security and livelihood systems involve the creation of an investment climate conducive to pro-poor and rural growth as well; as the need to empower the poor to share the equitably benefits of that growth. Hence, strong institutional bodies are required both in MAL and the Ministry of Rural Development. Since institutions provide the rules for enforcement and organization to support market transactions. Institutions also help transmit information, enforce legislations and contracts; provide a mechanism to prevent market failure; and provide incentives to engage in fruitful economic activities. Together, policy and institutions can create the enabling environment, where markets can guide the allocation of resources for efficient outcomes. Hence, investment in policy and institutional capacity are critical to ensuring that the public sector can effectively carry out its core functions, including: coordination; participatory development of sectoral strategies; and policy formulation, allocation and monitoring of public investment in agriculture.

Although specific policies relevant to various subsectors within agricultural sector and cross-sectoral are addressed in this policy document, the means to promote growth goes beyond. First and foremost, it is critical to establish macroeconomic conditions, which will ensure undistorted exchange rate policies; minimal market barriers; macroeconomic stability; and more importantly government credibility through the rule of law. Furthermore, it should be reinforced here that macroeconomic stability is a precondition for the success of any developmental policy, agricultural and rural development policies are no exception.

The key challenge and a precondition to success will be to create stakeholder consensus around the implementation strategy and the identification of realistic objectives and sequencing of policy implementation. It is critical to design an implementation plan and agricultural sector plan as a companion to the sectoral policy.

Finally, the government needs to devise and establish an action plan for implementation taking into consideration the socioeconomic setting and environment and natural resources, thereby establishing a sustainable agricultural development plan with target aimed at increasing both food security and welfare of the people of the Solomon Islands.

Annexes

Annex 1. Existing Legislation, Instruments for Implementing Agricultural Policy.

a) The Constitution:

The Constitution is known as the Solomon Islands Independence Order of 1978 (LN. No.43). It is the supreme law of the land protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual citizen of the country. The Constitution states, that the natural resources of the country including the land are vested in its people and government. Landowners are empowered through national legislation, to act as decision-makers for natural resources and environmental management practices on their land. It is therefore presumed to be the resource-owners' responsibility to manage natural resources wisely for benefit of present and future generations. The Constitution recognizes the defector rights vested by customary law of ownership.

b) Trade Facilitation and Revenue Collection:

The Custom Act (Cap. 121) 1960; various amendments during 1963-1987:

It also regulates and collects taxes and duties imposed on dutiable goods. Custom Act plays an important role in the control of levels of imports of goods. There is need for revision of this Act to consider current needs of international trade agreements such as WTO.

c) Cooperative Society Act (Cap.164) 1953 amendments 1987:

The act provides for the formation and to regulate the operation of cooperative societies.

d) Plant/Animal Pests and Diseases:

The Diseases of Animal Act (Cap. 37) amendments-1972; the Agriculture and Livestock Order (Cap. 80) 1978; the Agriculture Quarantine Act 1982; the Quarantine Order (Cap 34) 1986 and the Handling of Container Rules 1994. All these instruments make provisions for the purpose of preventing the introduction into and spread of plant/animal pest or disease. It prohibits, regulates and controls the importation and movement of plant/animal and products.

e) Livestock Development

Livestock Development Authority (Cap.41) 1977: covers all aspects of livestock production and commercial development of its products. It also promotes development of the livestock industry in Solomon Islands. This act needs revision to cater for the planned cattle rehabilitation and small livestock development programs.

f) Export Promotion and Export Marketing

The Commodity Export Marketing Authority (CEMA) (Cap. 36) 1985. is to promote the export of commodities, assist and develop commodities industries with a view to secure efficient marketing of nominated/regulated products such as coconut and coconut products (green or dried), copra, cocoa, palm oil, palm kernel, palm based products, spices/chillies and other products. CEMA played an important role in facilitation of and enhanced export trade of agricultural commodities.

Failures of CEMA were due to a number of factors including: the crash of the world price of coconut oil in 1999/2000, over expansion in its commercial undertakings such as Real estate development and shipping services; and the involvement of politics and politicians in its management.

g) Credit Union Act (Cap.165) 1986:

It regulates the operation of Credit Unions in SI. To provide for matters connected to CUs and to promote thrift and create a source of Credit at fair and responsible rate of interest primarily for productive purposes. It also covers the savings of members either as payments, shares or deposits.

h) Bee Industry Act (Cap. 173) 1996:

Protects the Bee Industry and makes provisions for the purpose of preventing the introduction and spread of pests or diseases affecting bees. It prohibits and regulates the importation or movement of bees, comb, bee products, hives, containers or other appliances used in connection with bee keeping.

i) Environment Act 1998:

It protects the environment and natural resources including land. The Act was introduced to facilitate major developments including in agriculture, which set the rules for conducting Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), however the Act as it stands falls short in regulations and enforcement.

j) Wildlife Protection and Management - Draft Bill 1998:

Protects and regulates any trade in wildlife. This is essential in compliance to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) international obligations especially for protection of indigenous wild life and conservation of local biodiversity.

k) Pure Food Act 1996 and Pure Food (Fishery Products) Regulations 2005:

Control safe use and trade of food products. Regulations are needed to cater for new developments such as roadside preparation and sale of cooked food. Act is essential in agriculture sector development in terms of chemical residues including pesticide and herbicide residues in processed, cooked and fresh produce.

l) Consumer Protection Act (Cap.63) 1995:

Guides safety and quality standards for good food (e.g., GMO free). The Act makes provisions for the protection of the consumers for the establishment of Trade Practices.

m) The Biosecurity Act 2013:

The Biosecurity Act has the objectives of preventing the entry and spread of animal and plant

pests and diseases into and throughout the country; to control their establishment and spread. It also caters for global changes that are occurring and in compliance with international trade and relevant obligations such as WTO, SPS Rules and movements of GMOs and LMOs.

DRAFT