

# Saint Lucia Food Systems Transformation Pathway

## 1. Background

In September 2021, the UN Secretary General hosted the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), which was aimed at transforming global food systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It brought together governments, businesses, civil society, and other stakeholders to discuss and address challenges such as food security, nutrition, and climate change. The summit focused on promoting innovative solutions, enhancing sustainability, and ensuring equitable access to food. It emphasized the importance of collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement to create resilient and inclusive food systems. The outcomes included commitments to action and initiatives designed to foster sustainable practices worldwide.

The National Transformation Pathway is a framework that countries develop as part of the UNFSS process. It outlines strategies and actions to transform national food systems in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Saint Lucia's Medium Term Development Strategy (2021 – 2026)<sup>1</sup> identified 6 Key Result Areas: Agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, citizen security, education and healthcare through which the country will achieve the broad objectives of Accelerated, Resilient, Inclusive, Sustainable and Equitably (A.R.I.S.E.) shared Economic Growth. These six result areas are well aligned with the SDGs. Consequently, the Food Systems approach provides an opportunity and pathway for achieving those results. It is for this reason that the Government of Saint Lucia decided to embark on the National Pathway.

In the lead up to the UNFSS, over 1000 dialogues were organized by national governments, to develop National Transformative Pathways. In the case of the Caribbean, only three countries of the 15 CARICOM countries - Bahamas, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, convened national dialogues to explore country-specific needs and determine practical ideas for transforming their local food systems. In the case of the other Caribbean countries, CARICOM representatives also convened the Caribbean Regional Dialogue on May 28, 2021, to confirm their commitment to food systems changes. The findings of that dialogue provided valuable inputs to the development of national food systems pathways. Parallel to the CARICOM independent dialogue, national and food systems stakeholders, collaborated with the FAO of the UN, European Union (EU), and CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development) to conduct Food System Assessments across the Eastern Caribbean region. These assessments enhanced the dialogue process in alignment with the pathway approach so that the national pathways were more inclusive and sustainable. Thus, the Government of Saint Lucia did not convene a National Dialogue, but the regional and Eastern Caribbean Dialogue provided sufficient inputs for the preparation of their National Transformative Pathway. In addition, the Government of Saint Lucia already has existing policies and strategies which it is currently implementing to address some of the issues. The National Pathway Transformative Pathway, therefore, serves to consolidate these priorities and strategies related to Food Systems so that a more integrated and coordinated approach could be applied.

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<sup>1</sup> National Medium Term Development Strategy 2021 – 2026.

<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/medium-term-development-strategy-2020-2023-st-lucia>

## 2. Purpose and Scope

The National Food Systems Transformative Pathway is aimed at providing countries with the strategies and actions they need to take to transform their national food systems so that they align with the Sustainable Development Goals of sustainability, food security, economic resilience and public health. The purpose of this document is therefore to present the main elements of the National Transformation Pathway for Saint Lucia, based on the findings of the regional dialogue and food system assessments as well as additional available data and information from existing policies and strategies.

The document will, therefore, describe the situation in the country, outlining the main physical, economic, social and environmental issues and challenges being encountered by the country under the broad headings of: (i) food and nutrition security; (ii) equitable livelihoods, (iii) climate smart production and (iii) resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks. The Transformative Pathway will be presented based on the analysis and the main conclusions drawn.

## 3. Country Context

Saint Lucia is an island nation in the eastern Caribbean, part of the Lesser Antilles. The total land area is approximately 617 square kilometres (238 square miles), making it the second largest of the Eastern Caribbean Islands. The Economic and Social Review for 2024 estimates that the population was 183,821 in 2023. Data for 2020 indicated that 81 % of the population live in rural areas (Table 1). The rate of population growth has declined over the past 20 years, from 1.12 % in 2000 to 0.46 % in 2020. The percentage of rural population increased from 72% in 2000 to 82 % in 2010 and has remained relatively steady since then. Urban population growth, which showed a declining trend of -2.97 % in 2010, increased to 0.92 % in 2020.

**Table 1: Key socio-economic indicators of Saint Lucia**

INDICATOR	YEAR	ST. LUCIA
<b>Population*</b>	2000	156 737
	2010	174 092
	2020	183 629
	2023*	183 821
<b>Population growth rate (%)</b>	2000	1.12
	2010	1.08
	2020	0.46
<b>Rural population (%)</b>	2000	72
	2010	82
	2020	81
<b>Urban population growth rate (%)</b>	2000	0.41
	2010	-2.97
	2020	0.92
<b>GDP/capita (USD)**</b>	2020	5950
	2010	8540
	2020	9276
	2023	12886
<b>Poverty rate (%)***</b>	2017	25.0
<b>Indigence rate (%)***</b>	2017	1.3

<b>Unemployment rate (%)****</b>	2019	16.9
	2021	21.3
	2023	14.0
<b>Unemployment rate in Women (%)</b>	2019	23.1
	2021	24.9
	2023	17.2
<b>Unemployment rate in Men (%)</b>	2019	14.9
	2021	21.3
	2023	11.2
<b>Youth unemployment rate (%)</b>	2019	16.9
	2021	23.1
	2023	25.0

\*Population statistics before 2023 was the World Bank Database. For 2023 it was the Saint Lucia (2024) Economic and Social Review

\*\* GDP per capita before 2023 – Saint Lucia Economic and Social Review

\*\*\* Poverty and Indigent rates: OECS Commission/United Nations Children’s Fund Child Poverty in the Eastern Caribbean Area, Final Report

\*\*\*\* Unemployment data before 2023, ILO Database, for 2023: Saint Lucia Central Statistical Office Website

The main pillars of the economy are tourism, agriculture, services, manufacturing and off-shore banking. Tourism is the dominant sector, contributing 65 % of GDP. The manufacturing sector includes food processing, beverages, and light industries, which contribute to local employment and exports. Agriculture, though less prominent remains important. Banana production traditionally dominated the agricultural sector; however, free trade agreements and removal of preferential arrangements for the island’s banana exports in the 1990s have resulted in drastic declines in exports from (140,000 tonnes in 1990 to 17,000 tonnes 2018)<sup>2</sup>. This has prompted the government to diversify the agriculture sector.

In a study of agro-tourism demand in the OECS, conducted by the World Bank in 2015<sup>3</sup>, it was estimated that hotel tourist demand represented about 4.4% of total food demand in St. Lucia. At the time of the study, there were 93 hotels on the island – 11 of which were large hotels. In addition to the hotel sector, cruise ships, yachts and local restaurants also account for agro-tourism demand for food. At the time of the study, it was estimated that there were 338,158 visitors to the island. More recent statistics indicate that the number of tourists arrivals increased to 1.2 million in 2024 with stay-over arrivals and visitor expenditure at XCD 3.6 billion. Food and beverage expenses were 16.5 % of total stay-over and visitor expenditure.<sup>4</sup> Although the specific percentage of food imports going to the tourism sector isn't readily available, the country’s high reliance on tourism means a significant portion of imported food is likely destined for hotels, resorts, and restaurants to meet visitor demand.

Poverty estimates for Saint Lucia for 2016 showed that 20.3 percent of Saint Lucia's population was poor (or lived below \$5.50 dollars a day); public census reports indicate that poverty tends to be concentrated in rural areas and among the youth population (i.e., persons under the age of

<sup>2</sup> FAO, 2021, FAOSTAT Database: Trade: In FAO. Rome. Feb 2022 <https://www.fao.org/faostat/em/data>

<sup>3</sup> Jenson, H., Stern, A and Weiss, E, 2015. Linking farmers and agro-processors to the Tourism Industry in the Eastern Caribbean. World Bank,

<sup>4</sup>Government of Saint Lucia Budget data 2025/26

20).<sup>5</sup> In 2017 the poverty rate was 25 % and the indigence rate 1.3 %. Poverty rates among children (0 – 9 years) and adolescents (10 – 19) were 34.5 and 33.3 %, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the poverty situation mainly because of movement restrictions, job losses, and supply chain disruptions.

Among the causes for poverty are **(1)** a decline in earnings from the banana Industry, **(2)** limitations of the existing safety net because of the inadequacy of resources, and **(3)** limitations in physical infrastructure.

Unemployment has also increased as a result of the pandemic. Between 2019 and 2021, the unemployment rate rose from 16.9 % to 21.3 %, respectively. Rates were higher among women (23.1 to 24.9 %), compared with men (14.9 to 21.3 %) over the same time period. Unemployment rates among the youth also increased from 16.9 % to 23.1 %. Post COVID - between 2021 and 2023 total unemployment fell from 21.3 to 14 %. For men, unemployment fell from 21.3 to 11.2 % while for women it fell from 24.9 to 17.2 %. However, unemployment among youth increased from 23.1 to 25 % over the same time period. Youth unemployment therefore, continues to be an area of concern.

Approximately 10.4 % of the total workforce was employed in the agriculture sector in 2023. This represents a slight decline from the previous year. The average employment in the sector was (15.8 %) between 1991 and 2023, with a high of 27.4 % in 1994 and a low of 9.3% in 2020<sup>6</sup>. The government has implemented programs, such as the Unleashing the Blue Economy in the Caribbean (UBEC) Farm Labor Program, to provide training in modern farming techniques and safety practices to help with labour shortages. The Student Summer Employment Programme also provides students with practical experience in agriculture. About 15% of Saint Lucia's land is classified as arable, suitable for agriculture and 34 % is forest. At the National Dialogue which was held on October 25, participants expressed concern about the transformation of agricultural land to non-agriculture uses, particularly for tourism and the construction of hotels. Data from FAOSTAT (2025) indicate that the percentage arable land fell from 2.9 % in 1990 to 2.67 % in 2020. Land under permanent crops fell from 16 % to 6.7 % and permanent meadows and pastures declined from 2 % to 0.67 % over the same time period.

The main climate challenges are extreme weather events (hurricanes, floods, droughts), sea level rise, coastal erosion. St. Lucia ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among small developing states at risk for natural disasters,<sup>7</sup> its vulnerability to climate change threatens economic diversification.

### **3.1 Food and Nutrition Security**

There is a dearth of data on food security indicators for the country. Information on stunting and wasting in children and number and prevalence of undernourishment is not available.

Table 2 below summarizes the main food security indicators of hunger, malnutrition and food affordability. The prevalence of moderate or severe undernourishment was 23 % in 2022, which compares favourably with the global average of 29.6 % and 60.6 % for the Caribbean, but suggests that the country still has some work to do in alleviating hunger by 2030. Moreover, the

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<sup>5</sup> [https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext\\_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/SM2020/Global\\_POVEQ\\_LCA.pdf](https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/SM2020/Global_POVEQ_LCA.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> TheGlobalEconomy.com.

<sup>7</sup> <file:///C:/Users/Fosterestwick/Downloads/cr18181.pdf> ST. LUCIA CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY ASSESSMENT

COVID 19 pandemic would have eroded some of the gains made in alleviating hunger. The Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey (Aug 2023) found that among respondents 41% of households ran out of food; 65% were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food and 51 % were worried they would not have enough food to eat.

**Table 2: Key Food security and nutrition indicators**

Indicator		World	Caribbean	Saint Lucia
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population <sup>1</sup>	2020	29.4	65.4	NA
	2021	29.6	59.5	NA
	2022	29.6	60.6	23.0
Cost of a healthy diet (USD) <sup>2</sup>		3.54	4.23	4.45
Percentage of population which could not afford a healthy diet <sup>2</sup>	2020	42	52	20
Prevalence of obesity in adults aged 18 years and over <sup>3</sup>	2000	17.2		
	2020	31.9		
Levels of obesity in adults aged 18 + (2016) (%) <sup>3</sup>	Male			12
	Female			27
	Total			20
Childhood obesity 5 - 19 years (2016) (%) <sup>3</sup>	5 - 9 years			26.1
	10 - 19 years			22.3
	5 - 19 years	18		23.4
Probability of dying between 30 and 70 years due to NCDs (%) <sup>4</sup>	2016			18.8
Proportion of deaths due to NCDs (%) <sup>4</sup>	2016			82

<sup>1</sup> FAOSTAT Database. Demographics. <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/189>

<sup>2</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060>

<sup>3</sup> Healthy Caribbean Coalition. 2019. Childhood Obesity Factsheets, December 2019. Based on WHO 2016 estimates. <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/obesity-fact-sheets>

<sup>4</sup> <https://hia.paho.org/en/countries-22/saint-lucia-country-profile>

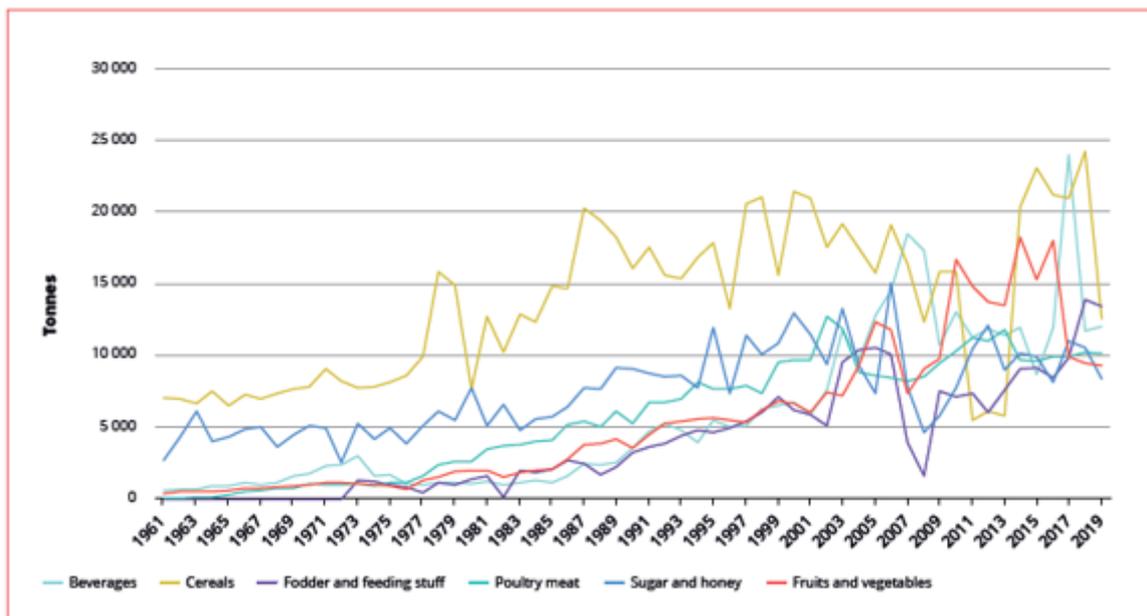
While some progress is being made in eliminating hunger, the issue of obesity and overweight is cause for concern. Between 2000 and 2020, obesity among adults 18 years and over rose from 17.2 % to 32.7 %<sup>8</sup>. In 2016, obesity levels in women were more than twice that of males at 27 and 12 %, respectively. Obesity among children and adolescents in 2016 stood at 26.1 % for ages 5 – 9 years and 22.3 % for 10 – 19 years, respectively. Linked with the incidence of obesity and overweight is the prevalence of chronic Non Communicable diseases (NCDs). For Saint Lucia the Global Health Estimates report that the age-adjusted mortality rate from non-communicable diseases was 520.0 per 100 000 population (622.6 per 100 000 in men and 423.4 per 100 000 in women); with approximately 82% of deaths attributable to NCDs.<sup>9</sup> This places an economic burden on the country's health system.

<sup>8</sup> FAOSTAT database

<sup>9</sup> <https://hia.paho.org/en/countries-22/saint-lucia-country-profile>

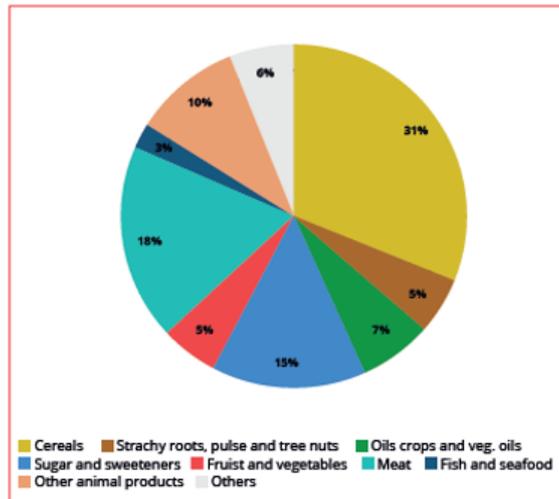
The increasing incidence of NCDs is also linked with the country’s reliance on imported processed food of lower nutritional quality. Figure 1 shows the trends in imports for Saint Lucia between 1961 and 2019. For all food groups there is a general increase in imports, with the exception of 2007 – 2008, when there was the global food crisis. Figure 2 shows that the food consumed primarily comprised processed carbohydrates and foods that are high in sugar and fat. This importation of foods that are low in nutritional value is driven by the wholesalers and distributors, hotels and restaurants and grocery retailers (small and large supermarkets) and fast food chains. The advertising campaigns of these groups also influence the tastes and preferences of local consumers. Of particular concern is the high consumption and importation of meat and meat products which constitute 18 % of the food consumed (Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1. Trends in food imports to Saint Lucia from 1961 to 2019**



Source: FAO. 2021. FAOSTAT Database: Trade. In: FAO. Rome. February 2022 <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

**Figure 2: Consumption Pattern of Saint Lucia**



Another important aspect of food access is food affordability. For Saint Lucia, the cost of a healthy diet was USD 4.45 which is higher than the world average of USD 3.54 as well as the average for the Caribbean ( USD 4.23). The FAO also found that 20 % of Saint Lucians could not afford a healthy diet. This compares favourably with the World average of 42 % and 52 % for the Caribbean. In fact, among all Caribbean countries, Saint Lucia had the second lowest percentage of persons who could not afford a healthy diet. The findings suggest that despite relatively high unemployment and poverty figures, most Saint Lucians can afford a healthy diet. This is probably due to remittances. Between 2019 and 2020, Saint Lucia had the highest increase in remittances compared with the other islands (30.5 %) <sup>10</sup>. This increase may have contributed to increased incomes and hence, persons being able to afford food during the COVID 19 pandemic. Wong (2017) <sup>11</sup> noted that remittances act as an important buffer for the economy, helping to smooth out fluctuations in private consumption and providing a stable source of external financing, especially as other capital flows have declined. They are a vital source of income for many households and have been shown to reduce poverty and inequality. In a region highly vulnerable to natural disasters, emigrants tend to send more money home to support their families in the aftermath of a disaster, which helps with recovery. Remittances strengthen the capacity of individuals to repay loans, which supports financial sector stability. They also contribute to government revenues through taxation on the spending of remittances. Beyond consumption, a portion of remittances is used for investments in education, healthcare, savings, and starting businesses. But, the findings on food affordability also beg the question about the quality of the data collected across countries and whether they are truly comparable. There is therefore, need for further research and analysis of the data collection methods, variables and parameters used.

Also associated with food affordability is the fact that imported food which is lower in nutritional value, is cheaper than locally produced, healthier food, primarily because of the higher cost of production and economies of scale of local produce.

<sup>10</sup> Stanberry, D. and Fletcher-Paul, L., 2024. Food Security in the Caribbean: Historical Perspectives, Current Challenges, and Sustainable Solutions. Palgrave MacMillian

<sup>11</sup> Wong, J. 2017. Emigration and Remittances in the Caribbean, in Unleashing Growth and Strengthening Resilience in the Caribbean. IMF, Editors: Mr. Trevor Serge Coleridge Alleyne, Ms. Inci Ötker, Ms. Uma Ramakrishnan, and Mr. Krishna Srinivasan

## Challenges:

The main challenges are therefore:

- Increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults, adolescents and children
- Concomitant increase in NCDs which account for 80 % of deaths in the country
- NCDs also place a burden on the cost of health care in the country
- Obesity and NCDs linked to the consumption of foods which are of low nutritional value
- Increased importation of these foods is therefore also linked to NCDs
- Increase importation (and hence availability), wide scale advertising and lower cost of these imported foods influence consumer preference and tastes
- Lack of data and quality of the data for assessments
- Shortage of labour in the agriculture sector
- Reduced availability of land for agriculture due to the conversion to non-agricultural uses
- Poor nutrition education

### **3.2 Equitable livelihoods**

The loss of the preferential markets for bananas in Saint Lucia in the 1990s has also affected the livelihoods of persons, particularly in the rural milieu. The number of banana farmers fell from (10,000 in 1993 to 1600 in 2003<sup>12</sup>). As indicated previously, 20.3 percent of Saint Lucia's population was poor (or lived below \$5.50 dollars a day) and that poverty is concentrated in rural areas, particularly among the women and youth. Unemployment rates are also higher in women and youth.

Agriculture plays a key role in employment and development of the rural sector. The sector is characterized by having a large number of small farmers and an aging farming population. In Saint Lucia more than 80 % of farmers have holdings of less than 2 ha<sup>13</sup>. These farmers produce a wide range of fresh produce, mainly for the domestic market. Because of the small scale of production, the farmers are unable to compete with the cheap food imports which are brought in by large companies. Moreover, the agriculture sector is plagued by weak infrastructure, poor market linkages and information, few and weak farmers' organizations, limited access to credit, information, research and extension services. Women play a crucial role in agriculture and rural economies. Female farmers are mainly involved in marketing of crops and agro-processing. There is little disaggregated data on their role in fishing value chains. Saint Lucian women are very active in entrepreneurship, the majority of business in the country is owned by women, but these businesses are very small and have limited growth prospects<sup>14</sup> Saint Lucian men earn on average 27.4 percent more than women. Women often have limited access to essential resources and services, such as land, finance, training, inputs, and equipment. Additionally, their domestic and

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<sup>12</sup> Hamrick, D., Couto, V. and Fernandez-Stark, K. 2018. Saint Lucia in the Banana Global Value Chain. Duke Value Chain Centre, Duke University

<sup>13</sup> Lowdeer, S.K., Skoet, J. and Raney, T., 2016. The number, size and distribution of farms, smallholder farms and family farms worldwide. World Development, 87: 16 – 29. 2019. Cited in FAO and CDB, 2019. Study on the State of Agriculture in the Caribbean, Rome.

<sup>14</sup> Breaking barriers to women's economic inclusion in Saint Lucia Saint Lucia, World Bank <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099609103292337340/pdf/IDU0b1cdde56070e304ded0aff0973edf26d7be.pdf>

care-giving responsibilities, limit their ability to engage in leadership and decision-making roles<sup>15</sup>.

With respect to youth, the field of Agriculture is not thought to be attractive because it is considered to be too labour intensive and high risk and often seen as linked to slavery.

The COVID 19 pandemic has further negatively impacted livelihoods especially among persons involved in the tourism industry.

Challenges:

- Increased poverty and unemployment in the rural sector as caused by the decline in the banana industry in the 1990 as a result of the loss of the preferential market and trade liberalization
- The agriculture sector is plagued by weak infrastructure, poor market linkages and information, few and weak farmers' organizations, limited access to credit, information and extension services
- Women and youth more adversely affected
- Women have limited access to essential resources and services, such as land, finance, training, inputs, and equipment and they have limited ability to engage in leadership and decision-making roles because of their other domestic duties
- Youth involvement in agriculture is limited because it is not seen as an attractive sector for employment.
- The COVID 19 pandemic has negatively impacted livelihoods and exacerbated food access particularly by vulnerable groups.

### **3.3 Climate Smart Production**

Since the 1990s, St. Lucia has experienced the largest decline in the gross value of agricultural production in the Eastern Caribbean, falling from 90 million dollars to 25 million dollars between 1990 and 2019 (at constant 2014 – 2016).<sup>16</sup> The share of Agriculture value added declined from 8.5 % in 1990 to 2.0 % in 2000 and 2.6 % in 2020 (FAOSTAT) and food exports are less than 1 % of domestic production. In addition, food import dependency increased from 0.53 to 0.83 between 1995 and 2011. These imported foods are high in processed carbohydrates, sugar, salt and fats – all of which contribute to the increasing the levels of obesity and NCDs in the country. The food imports are largely dictated by the demands from the hotels, restaurants and fast food outlets and heavily influence the food tastes of the consumers.

There is therefore, need for diversification of the agriculture sector so that it produces healthier, nutritious food, not only for domestic consumption but also to supply the hotels and restaurants in the tourism sector. In addition, local production must be done sustainably to ensure that the country's natural resources are not depleted or destroyed. In this regard, emphasis must be placed on the use of Climate Smart technologies which improve productivity, conserve biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gases in agriculture. To accomplish this, farmers need to improve the quality, quantity and reliability of food supply through the use of improved

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<sup>15</sup> Gender Analysis and Action Plan, Valuing Nature and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Blue and Green Pathways for the Tourism, Food and Urban Sectors in Saint Lucia

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc3142en/cc3142en.pdf>

technologies. Moreover, local foods need to be produced at a cost which makes them competitive with imported foods.

Because of the economies of scale, for Caribbean farmers to compete there must be regional aggregation of similarly produced commodities. With respect to trade, there is need for quality and standards, shipping infrastructure and services and improved integration into international value chains.

Challenges:

- The agriculture sector was not adequately diversified
- Low agriculture productivity, weak policy environment, inadequate investment, infrastructure (including transport infrastructure) and technology, and limited research and weak extension services
- Weak linkages between agriculture and tourism
- Weak marketing systems
- Limited intraregional coordination
- Heavy reliance on imported inputs

### **3.4 Resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks**

Saint Lucia faces several challenges that threaten its resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks and thereby hinder the achievement of its development goals and climate change responses. According to the World Bank Group's latest Country Climate and Development Report<sup>17</sup>, as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), it is particularly vulnerable to external shocks and natural hazards, which impact land, assets, and populations. (St. Lucia ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among small developing states at risk for natural disasters,<sup>18</sup>). Slow-onset impacts of climate change such as, inter alia, rising temperatures, sea level rise and ocean acidification, salinization of groundwater and reduced rainfall, can have dire consequences for agriculture, fisheries and tourism.

Its exposure to macroeconomic shocks negatively impacts livelihoods particularly of the poor and vulnerable as well as complicates disaster management. For example, the war in Ukraine has affected the price of inputs such as fertilizers and disrupted supply chains, leading to increased prices of some commodities. Moreover, overly expansive fiscal policies have led to high public debt and limited economic buffers. Additionally, high poverty rates can increase the population's vulnerability. Gaps in human capital development, exacerbated by the pandemic, further threaten the country's resilience to climate change, which may intensify existing physical, economic, and social vulnerabilities.

Making food systems more resilient requires policies which help to ensure that food supplies are available during times of crisis, especially to vulnerable communities. In this regard, as part of the country's adaptation process, the Government of Saint Lucia has identified 8 priority sectors/areas **(1)** water i.e., water supply systems, wastewater management, **(2)** agriculture, **(3)** fisheries, **(4)** infrastructure and spatial planning i.e., roadways, bridges etc. **(5)** natural resource management (terrestrial, coastal and marine), **(6)** education, **(7)** health and **(8)** tourism. Moreover, the country has also emphasized enhancing disaster risk reduction and management,

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<sup>17</sup> Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines Country Climate Development Report, October 2024, World Bank Group

<sup>18</sup> <file:///C:/Users/Fosterestwick/Downloads/cr18181.pdf> ST. LUCIA CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY ASSESSMENT

social protection, and gender integration, and addressing loss and damage related to climate change.

Challenges:

Some areas of weakness still exist. They are as follows:

- the legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks for climate action is still being articulated. The country does not have a long-term strategy (LTS) to 2050 and it lacks a comprehensive climate change framework law, relying instead on various executive strategies and plans from different agencies.
- Lack of coordination mechanisms or stakeholder consultation mechanisms. To address these issues, National Climate Change Committees (NCCCs) need to be bolstered to improve coordination across ministries, and regular consultation and communication with stakeholders needs to be integral to policy formation.
- Insufficient investment in agriculture and the blue economy to ensure food security
- Transportation and logistics – both nationally and intra regionally to meet the shortfall of local supplies especially during times of crisis
- Germplasm storage to supply farmers with planting material to restore production soon after the disaster
- Duplication of roles and responsibilities by national institutions and siloed approach to governance,
- policy silos across critical sectors such as health, education, transport and finance which reduce the ability to create or scale up safety net programmes for rural persons in response to natural disasters or offer incentives for agricultural activities
- Lack of accurate and timely data and information for decision-making

#### **4. Transformation Pathway**

In response to these challenges, the Government of Saint Lucia has begun to implement a number of policies and taken actions to address the issues. The main policy instruments are: The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2018 – 2028), the National Infrastructure Financing Strategy, the Saint Lucia Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) (2021 – 2026), the National Strategic Plan for Bee City Honey Cluster, the Agriculture and Fisheries Bill (2014), the National Export Strategy (2020 – 2024) the Education Act (2005) and the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan (2014 – 2024).

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned policies, a strategic framework is required to improve the country's food system to better address the issues and challenges in a more holistic manner. The National Transformation pathway provides that framework and makes recommendations policies and strategies which the government should address to achieve the SDGs. The proposed policies and actions are outlined below under the main dimensions of food systems.

##### **4.1 Food and nutrition security**

- Development of targeted health and nutrition education programmes, including innovative campaigns to promote healthy diets and lifestyles, building on existing systems (e.g. School Feeding, Back Yard Gardening)

- Promoting agricultural diversification through the promotion of viable value chains for healthy, nutritious local foods (particularly fruits and vegetables and foods that have a low glycemic index)
- Improvement of agricultural production and productivity and agro-processing through innovation and improved technologies by strengthening the research and extension capabilities in the country
- Promotion of linkages and contracts between local farmers and fisherfolk and the tourism industry (e.g. with hotels, restaurants) as well as with supermarkets, fast food chains and street food vendors
- Promoting public purchasing where local producers and agro-processors provide local healthy food for public institutions such as hospitals, jails, school feeding programs etc.
- Policy support to reduce the availability and affordability of unhealthy imported foods (e.g. ban on transfats)
- Imposing Front-of-package labelling requirements for all foods
- Encourage research to better understand the psychology of consumer food preferences which would inform more effective programmes to promote behaviour change.
- Promoting public-private investment for innovation into new agri-food products which are healthy and nutritious
- Strengthening of standards and regulations to ensure the consumption of safe food

#### **4.2 *Equitable livelihoods***

- Improving availability and accessibility of finance to support investment by small farmers, women and youth
- Provision of social safety nets such as school feeding programmes, cash for work schemes, inter alia to support poor and vulnerable communities
- Promoting agribusiness models that encourage/support leadership and involvement of women and youth to build resilient agricultural livelihoods and value chains
- Targeted infrastructure development particularly in rural areas to support economic development, food security and better nutrition (e.g. roads, farmers' markets, storage facilities)
- Strengthening logistics which support intra-regional trade to encourage aggregation of produce across the islands
- Investment in human capital at all levels of the agri-food system to strengthen governance capacities e.g. of farmers groups and cooperatives
- Strengthening data collection, analysis and dissemination for improved decision-making, In this regard, science, academia and academic institutions have an important role in to play.

#### **4.3 *Climate smart production***

- Build capacity for climate-smart and ecosystem-based approaches to agriculture and fisheries

- Promote resilient and sustainable agriculture and fisheries practices which increase productivity and reduce losses and environmental degradation etc
- Support innovation and technology to increase agricultural productivity (irrigation, water use efficiency, precision agriculture, use of drones and other technologies), reduce losses and waste.
- Targeted infrastructure improvements to promote rainwater harvesting, defence against sea level rise, salt water intrusion, and provision of training in watershed management, sustainable land management, water reuse and recycling and other sustainable practices
- Improve governance in land tenure and administration
- Provision of incentives to encourage appropriate use of Climate Smart technologies, sustainable land and water management practices and sustainable agriculture and fisheries
- Support the development of a digital platforms for information sharing and foster digital inclusion activities
- Promote Innovative financial mechanisms e.g. debt swaps, public-private partnerships with credit institutions

#### **4.4 Resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks**

- Development of Disaster Risk Management Plans, promotion of Early Warning Systems, development of Crop Insurance schemes for small farmers and fisherfolk, and promotion of the One-Health system
- Strengthen partnerships through improved interministerial and intersectoral collaboration to break silos and promote integrated policy implementation
- Support for intraregional trade - logistics, warehouses, shipping so that supplies could be readily transported in times of disaster
- Development of comprehensive programmes and plans to address praedial larceny
- Support public-private partnerships in DRM
- Strengthening data collection, analysis and dissemination systems. In this regard, science, academia and academic institutions have an important role in to play.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Food systems are important because they ensure a stable supply of safe and nutritious food to help prevent hunger and malnutrition. They help to influence dietary choices to improve the health and wellbeing of a country's population, thereby reducing the incidence of NCDs and by extension, health care costs. They also contribute significantly to local and national economies, providing jobs in agriculture, processing, and distribution. Well-managed food systems can promote sustainable agricultural practices to reduce losses and waste and protect natural resources. Diverse and adaptive food systems can also better withstand shocks from climate change, economic fluctuations, and global crises, ensuring that communities can thrive. It is for these reasons that National Food System Transformation Pathways are recommended as the framework of achieving the SDGs.

However, for the recommended policies and strategic actions outlined under the framework of the National Transformation Pathway to have the desired impact, there must be equitable

participation and collaboration by stakeholders across all sectors. Timely and reliable data must be available for sound decision making and institutions must be strengthened to provide the enabling environment for implementation.

# Annexes

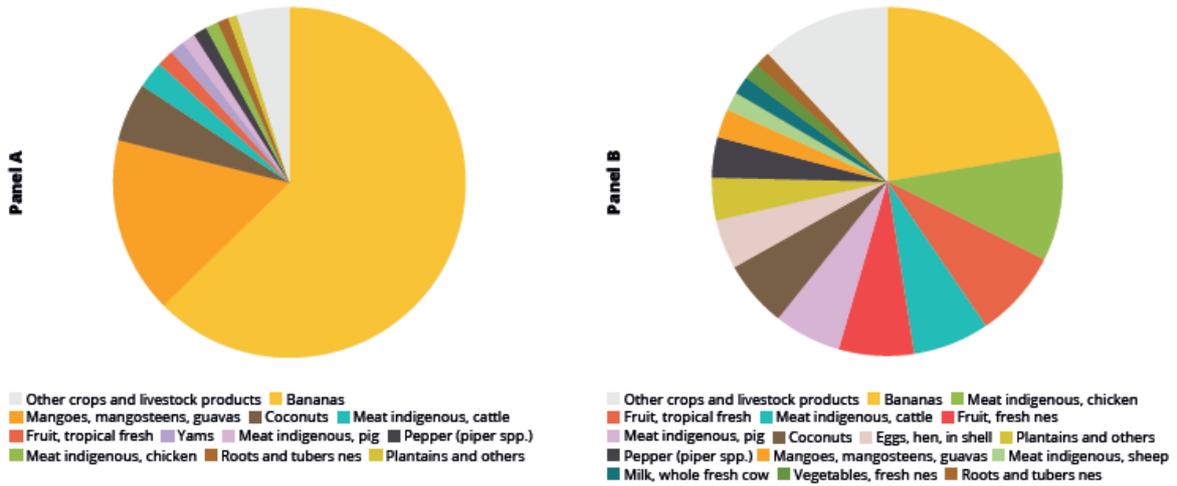
## Annex 1: Structure of Production (1990 and 2019)

Source: FAO. 2021. FAOSTAT Database: Production. In: FAO. Rome. February 2022 <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

### 6. Saint Lucia

1990

2019

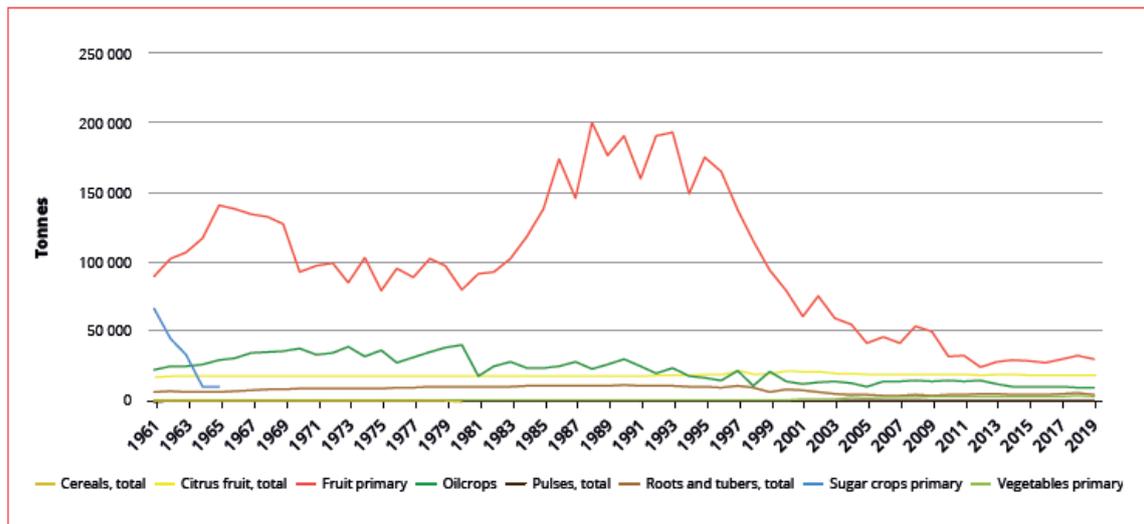


## Annex 2: Trends in production of key crop and livestock products

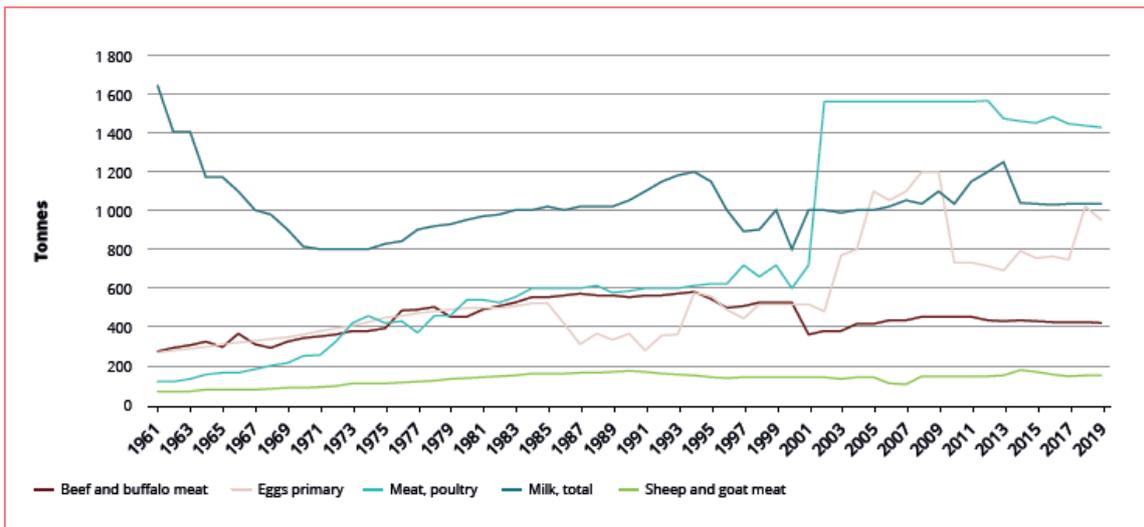
Source: FAO. 2021. FAOSTAT Database: Production. In: FAO. Rome. February 2022 <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

### 6. Saint Lucia

#### Panel A: Crop products



Panel B: Livestock products



## Annex 3: Export trends

Source: FAO. 2021. FAOSTAT Database: Trade. In: FAO. Rome. February 2022 <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

### Saint Lucia

