St. Vincent and the Grenadines

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION PATHWAY

2025

St Vincent and the Grenadines Food System 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).

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 St Vincent and the Grenadines 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 St Vincent and the Grenadines 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.

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 St Vincent and the Grenadines 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 (iv) resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks. The Transformative Pathway will be presented based on the analysis of the challenges and the main conclusions will be drawn.

3. Country Context

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a multi-island state consisting of over 30 islands, islets and cays which have a combined land area of 390 km^2. The main island of St Vincent accounts for 89 percent of the total area. The World Bank estimated the population at 110,947 in 2020, up from 107,787 in 2000 and 108, 260 in 2010. Population growth rate between 2000 and 2020 has been negligible – less than 1 %. The rural population has been declining - from 55 % in 2000 to 51 % in 2010 and 47 % in 2020 (See Table 1).

Nestled in the southeastern Caribbean Sea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is a picturesque multi-island state comprising over 30 islands, islets, and cays, collectively spanning 390 km². The main island, Saint Vincent, makes up approximately 89 percent of the total land area, anchoring the country's geography and population.

According to World Bank estimates, SVG had a population of 110,947 in 2020, reflecting only marginal growth from 107,787 in 2000 and 108,260 in 2010. Over the past two decades, the national growth rate has remained below 1 percent, while the rural population has steadily declined from 55% in 2000 to 51% in 2010, and 47% in 2020 (See Table 1). These trends highlight the growing urban shift and the socioeconomic pressures faced by rural communities.

Despite its rich biodiversity and vibrant culture, SVG is one of the most vulnerable island nations, highly exposed to the vagaries of climate change and volcanic activity. Over the past five years, the country has faced a natural disaster every year, which has repeatedly set back development:

- Volcanic eruptions of La Soufrière between December 2020 and April 2021, necessitating the evacuation of around 16,000 residents (1)
- Tropical Storm Elsa in July 2021, which caused widespread flooding, infrastructure damage, and disrupted agriculture (2)
- Tropical Storm Bret in June 2023, delivering heavy rains and damaging homes across SVG (3)
- Hurricane Beryl, a category 5 storm in July 2024, which destroyed up to 98 % of structures on some Grenadines islands and left 20,000 people homeless (4)
- Cyclone Remal in May 2024, which impacted the Windward Islands, including SVG, with damaging winds and rain (5)

Source:

1. 2021 eruption of La Soufrière - Wikipedia
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Elsa?utm_source
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_Storm_Bret_%282023%29?utm_source
4. https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/03/caribbean-hurricane-beryl-storm?utm_source
5. https://reliefweb.int/disasters?advanced-search=%28TY4618%29&list=Tropical+Cyclone+Disasters&utm_source

These recurrent shocks: volcanic, meteorological, and climatic underscore the urgent need for robust resilience measures, climate adaptation strategies, and disaster-prepared agricultural systems in the country. St Vincent and the Grenadines depends significantly on climate-sensitive sectors, notably agriculture and tourism. Agriculture, in particular, serves as a vital source of foreign exchange, employment, and food security, especially in rural areas where it remains the dominant livelihood.

While the agriculture sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has evolved significantly over the past three decades, its role remains foundational to rural livelihoods, food security, and national identity. In 1992, agriculture accounted for approximately 19% of GDP, and though this declined to 5.4% by 2021, it remains a critical sector, employing 13.5% of the national workforce as of 2020 (UNDP). Recent estimates from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB, 2023) indicate that agriculture's contribution to GDP has stabilized around 6%, with renewed attention to diversification and innovation.

The sector continues to produce key staples such as bananas, root crops, fruits, and vegetables, which are central to both local consumption and export. Despite external shocks, farmers have consistently demonstrated adaptability and resourcefulness, embracing new practices, technologies, and value-added opportunities to remain viable and productive.

The fisheries sector, while contributing a smaller share to GDP around 0.5% in 2023 (ECCB) plays a significant role in community nutrition, rural employment, and trade. High-value fish such as tuna are exported fresh to neighbouring islands, supported by recent investment in export infrastructure and cold chain capacity. Although facilities like the government fish market in Kingstown are not yet operating at full potential due to staffing and demand limitations, they represent untapped capacity for future growth.

In the Grenadines, the sector thrives on traditional and resilient practices, such as salting and drying unsold catches, ensuring food is preserved and utilized efficiently. The islands also lead in the national production of queen conch, a valuable marine resource that has sparked important dialogues around sustainable fisheries management and marine protected areas highlighting the community's engagement in balancing conservation with livelihood protection.

Importantly, over the past two decades, SVG has faced a series of natural hazards including volcanic eruptions, tropical storms, hurricanes, and droughts that have tested national infrastructure and food systems. Yet, each time, the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines have responded with remarkable resilience, creativity, and solidarity rebuilding stronger, adapting with innovation, and drawing on cultural strength to "build back better."

This enduring spirit, combined with strategic policy support and regional collaboration, continues to position SVG as a model for climate-smart, community-led resilience in the Caribbean.

Table 1: Socio-economic indicators of St Vincent and the Grenadines

INDICATOR	YEAR	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Population	2000	107787
	2010	108260

	2020	110947
Population growth rate (%)	2000	0.02
	2010	-0.03
	2020	0.32
Rural population (%)	2020	55
	2010	51
	2020	47
GDP/capita (USD)	2000	3,676
	2010	6,292
	2020	7,298
Population below the poverty line (%)	2008	30.2
Unemployment rate Total (%)	2008	18.3
	2017	25.8
Youth (15 – 24) unemployment rate (%)	2008	39.6
	2017	40.3

Source:2. OECS Commission/United Nations Children's Fund, Child Poverty in the Eastern Caribbean Area, Final Report, OECS Commission/UNICEF, Castries, Saint Lucia, 2017

3: State of Food Insecurity in CARICOM Caribbean: Meeting the 2015 Hunger targets, Taking stock of uneven progress, FAO 2015

4: **FAO**. 2021. Report of Catalysing the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems "Country Profile – St. Kitts and Nevis". FAO internal document. Rome.

While poverty and unemployment remain ongoing development challenges in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the country continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and progress through targeted policy actions, innovation, and community-driven solutions.

According to **UNICEF (2021)**, approximately **38% of children** and **37% of adolescents** were living below the poverty line, while the **national poverty rate** was estimated at **30%**, slightly above the regional average (6). UNICEF, St. Vincent Times). Unemployment, though still elevated, has shown signs of gradual improvement declining to **18.7% in 2023.**

Yet beyond the numbers, there is a growing wave of **youth creativity and entrepreneurship**. Many young Vincentians are forging their own paths, starting small businesses in technology, agro-processing, design, barbering, tailoring, and digital services, often using limited resources and online platforms to generate income and empower peers.

At the same time, the **construction sector has seen a significant rise**, fuelled by both public infrastructure projects and private development. This growth has created strong demand for **skilled tradesmen**, particularly in **electricity, carpentry, masonry, and plumbing** fields where young men and women are increasingly finding gainful, dignified employment. Technical and vocational training programs have become important pathways to opportunity, bridging gaps in education and workforce readiness.

Source:

6.https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=6d2e1bcb61b00bbd&rlz=1C1UEAD_enVC1150VC1150&sxsrf=AE3TifOMAzmvSPVIrwOYTDtV1aMQosSLWw:1752131650923&q=borgen+project.org%2B1stats.gov.vc%2B1borgenproject.org%2B14stvincenttimes.com%2B14stats.gov.vc&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjLtZyF37GOAxXgEVkFHQNqMDIQBSgAegQICxAB

Together, these trends reflect a country in transition, where resilience, innovation, and hands-on skills are creating new forms of employment, reshaping the local economy, and laying the foundation for more inclusive growth.

3.1 Food Security and Nutrition

Table 2 summarizes the Food Security and Nutrition Indicators for St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Table 2: Food Security and Nutrition Indicators for St Vincent and the Grenadines

Indicator	Period/ Gender	World	Caribbean	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Prevalence of undernourishment (%) 3-year average	2019 - 21			13.8
	2020 - 22			5.7
	2021 - 23			5.8
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population (%) 3-year average[1]	2019 - 21	29.4	65.4	33.3
	2020 - 22	29.6	59.5	33.3
	2021 - 23	29.6	60.6	33.3
Cost of a healthy diet (USD)[2]		3.54	4.23	3.59
Levels of obesity in adults aged 18 + (2016) (%)[3]	2000			18.7
	2010			25.3
	2020			31.8
Levels of obesity in adults 18+ (2016)	M	11		17
	F	15		31
	Total	18.2		24.0
Childhood and adolescent overweight and obesity years (2016) (%)[4]	5 – 9 years			31.9
	10 – 19 years			27.5
	5 – 19 years			28.9
Probability of dying between 30 and 70 years due to NCDs	2016			23.2
Proportion of deaths due to NCDs (%)				81.0

[1] Source: FAOStat database https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/55

2 Source: FAO, IFAD, UNICED, 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/dio.org/10.4060

3 Source: FAO, 2015. State of Food Insecurity in the CARICOM Caribbean – Meeting the 2015 Hunger targets: Taking stock of uneven progress. FAO, Bridgetown, Barbados. https://reliefweb.int/files/resources/a-i51313.pdf

[4] Source: Healthy Caribbean Coalition, 2019. Childhood Obesity Factsheets, December 2019. Based on WHO 2016 estimates. https//www.healthycaribbean.org/obesity-fact-sheets

The 3 year average prevalence of undernourishment fell by more than 50 % between 2019 – 21 and 2020 – 22, from 13.8 to 5.7 %, demonstrating an 81% decrease and remained at that level in 2021 – 23. The period 2019 to 2021 encompasses the time of the COVID 19 pandemic as well as the eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano in the country. This was a particularly traumatic period with many persons displaced and the destruction of agricultural lands which would normally have provided food for domestic consumption. This may have accounted for the higher levels of undernourishment at that time. By contrast from 2022 onwards, the recovery of the tourism industry, and the increased access to emergency supplies from donors may have contributed to reduced hunger at in the ensuing periods.

The prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity remained steady at 33.3 % between 2019 to 2023. This food insecurity rate is slightly above the global rates of 29.4, 29.6 and 29.6 %, respectively, but lower that the rates for the Caribbean (65.4, 59.5 and 60.6 %, respectively). The Caribbean rates are heavily weighted by the data from Haiti.

Across St. Vincent and the Grenadines, access to food continues to be shaped by underlying economic realities and the remarkable resilience of our communities. According to UNICEF (2022), approximately 37.5% of children live in monetary poverty, slightly above the Eastern Caribbean average of 33% (7). National data indicate that around 30% of all households experience poverty, with 4–5% in deep poverty, and 41% of adolescents in female-headed households are affected (8).While these statistics highlight ongoing challenges, they also underscore the real strides being made through community solidarity, targeted support, and adaptive strategies.

Importantly: Many families facing limited income have found innovative ways to enhance food access, including backyard farming, shared garden plots, and community markets.

Local NGOs, faith groups, and school-based programmes have stepped in to support youth and female-headed households, providing meals, skill-building workshops, and nutrition education.

Through regional and donor-funded projects, key infrastructure like school feeding initiatives, agricultural training, and social safety nets have extended lifelines to vulnerable groups.

These combined efforts reflect a growing recognition that access to food is about more than income—it's about community capacity, shared resources, and hope in action. As we continue to build resilience and expand opportunities, the focus remains on ensuring every Vincentian can access nourishing food while contributing meaningfully to their families and society.

Data on food affordability show that the cost of a healthy diet in St Vincent and the Grenadines was USD 3.59. This value was slightly higher that the global average of USD 3.54 but lower than the average for the Caribbean (USD 4.23). The situation with food access was further exacerbated during the COVID 19 pandemic and continues to be impacted by the Ukraine war. There is need for additional research on food affordability in the Caribbean to better understand the situation and provide improved ways to reduce the cost of healthy, nutritious food in the region.

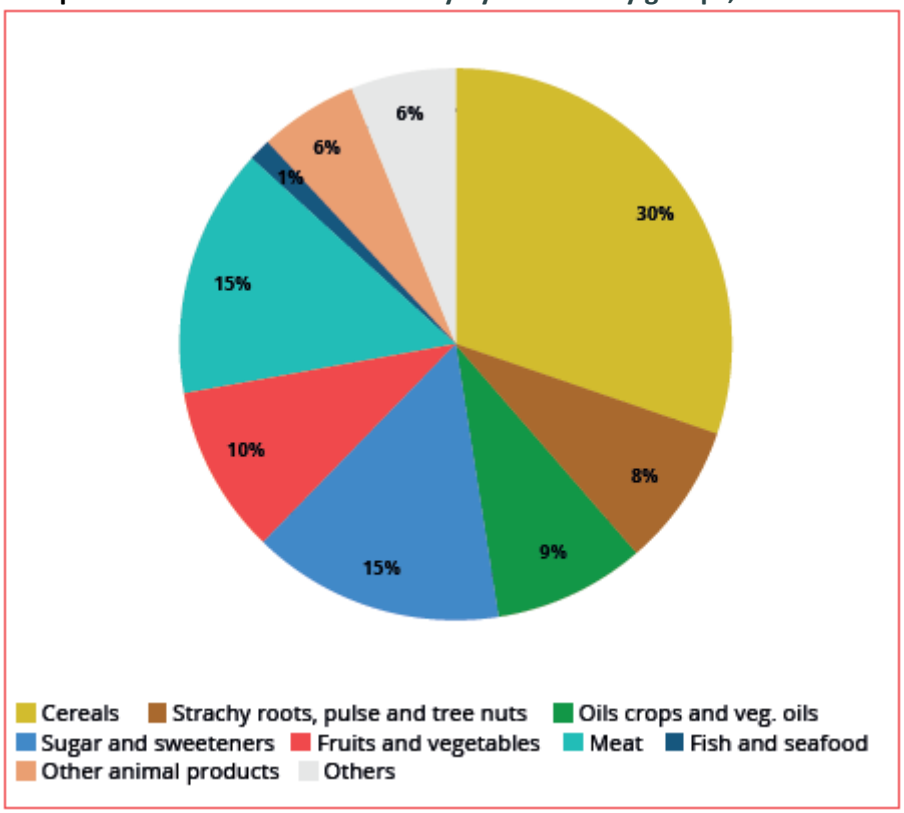
Source:

7.https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/4781/file/Saint%20Vincent%20&%20the%20Grenadines.pdf

According to the World Health Organization (2022), obesity affects approximately 34.6% of adult women and 19.5% of adult men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, placing the country above regional averages for women (≈30.7%) and in line for men (≈22.8%) (8). Among children and adolescents (ages 5–19), the obesity rate stands at 18.5% (9) .

These trends contribute significantly to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which are now the leading health challenge—estimated to cause nearly 80% of all healthy life years lost (10). In 2021, 8% of adults were living with diabetes—a prevalence comparable to global averages. Reflecting the community's resilience and efforts to promote healthier lifestyles, these outcomes underscore the importance of continued investment in nutrition education, local food environments, and preventative healthcare to reduce the burden of overweight-related illness and support a sustainable, healthy future for all Vincentians.

Figure 1: Consumption Patterns - Food availability by commodity groups, share of calories



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

In recent years, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made encouraging strides toward improving food security and promoting healthier diets, with a growing emphasis on local production, nutrition education, and sustainable food choices.

There has been a notable increase in backyard gardening, with households and communities cultivating vegetables, herbs, and fruits strengthening food access and fostering a culture of self-reliance.

Source: 8. https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean/saint-vincent-and-grenadines/?utm_source
9. https://data.who.int/countries/670?utm_source
10. https://hia.paho.org/en/country-profiles/saint-vincent-and-the-grenadines?utm_source=

The country's updated Food-Based Dietary Guidelines now include messaging specifically tailored for youth and children, reinforcing healthy eating habits from an early age. A national shift is gaining momentum under the mantra: "Eat what we grow and grow what we eat. "This approach supports not only nutrition but also food sovereignty, as Vincentians become more conscious of their food sources and the value of locally grown produce.

The country is largely self-sufficient in the production of fresh pork, beef, and eggs, a testament to the strength of its livestock sector. However, the absence of a fully operational abattoir limits access to processed or specialty cuts, which currently need to be imported. Addressing this gap could reduce dependence on imported meats and expand the value chain for local producers.

Similarly, while there is an abundance of locally grown fruits, the absence of a fruit processing facility continues to limit the development of healthy, value-added juice options. This presents a promising opportunity for private-sector investment in agro-processing that could reduce waste, create jobs, and diversify the national food basket.

These efforts reflect the resilience and creativity of Vincentians, and with continued policy support, education, and targeted investment, the country is well on its way to strengthening its food systems and ensuring that every citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and locally produced food.

3.2 Equitable Livelihoods

The agricultural sector of St Vincent and the Grenadines is characterized by a number of smallholder producers, more than 70 % of the producers' farm are on holdings of less than 1 ha[11]. These small farmers grow a wide range of crops for both the domestic and regional markets. The majority of the farms (7353) are individually owned while few are corporation owned[12]. The Agriculture census conducted in 2000, revealed that 66 % of the farmers are between the ages of 35 and 65 years and 15 % are over 65.

According to the World Bank (2020)[13], in 2019, women in the agriculture sector represented 4.7% of total female employment, while men accounted for 15% of total male employment in agriculture, which includes forestry, livestock, and fisheries subsectors. Women are mainly involved in field crop maintenance, production for home consumption, post harvesting and marketing of cash crops. Women have comparatively little or no involvement in the policy development of agricultural organizations. Some women own their own land with their husband, but it is quite rare for an unmarried woman to own her own land (IWRAW, 2016)[14]

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11. Lowder, 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, 2016, Cited in FAO and CDB, 2019. Study of the State of Agriculture in the Caribbean. Rome.
12. IICA 2017, Cited in CDB, 2019. Study of the State of Agriculture in the Caribbean. Rome.
13. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099044007042222639/pdf/IDU1603bb8a814dad14b20189381731dd5437acd.pdf

14. IWRAW. 2016. Country reports. St. Vincent and the Grenadines. International Women's Rights Action Watch

3.3 Climate Smart Agriculture

Climate projections for the country show an increase in both atmospheric and sea surface temperatures, an overall decrease in precipitation, sea level rise, and the potential for tropical storms to be more intense (15). With per capita Gross Domestic Product amongst the lowest in the Caribbean, severe weather events caused by anthropogenic climate change will continue to restrict economic development (16).

Fisherfolk in St. Vincent and the Grenadines continue to navigate challenges such as sargassum seaweed influxes, shifting fish migration patterns, and rising sea temperatures, all of which impact catch consistency and marine ecosystem health. Inshore fisheries remain under pressure due to pollution from land-based activities, unsustainable harvesting practices, and the need for improved safety and quality assurance systems to meet export market standards.

Despite these challenges, the sector is being strengthened by a new generation of young professionals trained in ecosystem-based fisheries management, marine spatial planning, and high seas monitoring and surveillance. Their expertise is critical to advancing sustainable practices and resource conservation.

Furthermore, the introduction of the new Draft Fisheries and Aquaculture Act marks a significant step toward updating the institutional, policy, legal, and technical frameworks that govern the sector. This modernized legislation is expected to enhance compliance, boost fisheries sustainability, and expand opportunities in aquaculture, positioning SVG to better manage its marine resources in a changing climate.

In response, national priorities for climate change mitigation are improving physical infrastructure, preserving the environment and building resilience to climate change.

Climate smart agriculture practices are therefore, needed to increase production and productivity as well as to adapt to the changes being experienced and forecast for the future.

The main challenges are:

- Increase in surface temperatures and decrease in precipitation which severely affect crop yields, especially for water-intensive crops like vegetables and fruits and increase competition for water resources among the various sectors. Warmer temperatures can also lead to an increase in pest populations and the spread of crop diseases.
- Increase in sea temperatures which causes coral bleaching and affect fisheries
- Vulnerability to hurricanes, which cause physical destruction of crops, infrastructure, and soil erosion resulting in loss of income for farmers and increased costs for rebuilding and recovery.
- Coastal agricultural lands risk salinization due to rising sea levels, impacting soil health and crop viability. Sea level rise also results in a loss of already limited arable land and reduced agricultural output.

- Weak research and extension services to develop and disseminate technological innovations to improve production and productivity and build capacity of farmers and fisherfolk in Climate Smart agriculture techniques

Source: 15. https://repositorio.iica.int/404
16. https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/stv191690.pdf

3.4 Resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks

The geography, geology and socio-economic circumstances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines make it extremely vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. Since 2010, the island has been affected by several major weather events (such as hurricanes, floods and droughts), resulting in loss and damage in excess of US$700 million (17). The most recent catastrophic natural disasters were the eruption of La Soufriere volcano, which occurred simultaneously with a severe dengue fever outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic (18). Sectors most affected by the eruption in terms of losses were the agriculture, livestock and forestry (19). A total of 4,151 acres of crops were totally destroyed or damaged, this comprised of tree crops (3,045 acres, roots and tubers (693 acres) and fruits and vegetables (413 acres) (20). In terms of percentages, OCHA (2022) (21). 100 per cent of vegetable crops, 90 per cent of tree crops, 75 per cent of agricultural production was destroyed. Soon after the volcanic eruption, Hurricane Elsa hit the country and more recently Hurricane Beryl in July 2024. A series of climate-related catastrophes preceded the multiple hazards of 2021 – Hurricane Tomas in 2010 that destroyed livestock and crops, a huge influx of sargassum seaweed in 2018 that blanketed beaches, harming fisheries, disrupting tourism and threatening people's health as well as severe droughts in 2010 and 2020 that led to water rationing and disruptions in agriculture (22) .

The additional impact of COVID-19 pushed many households into more vulnerable food and nutrition situations, with recovery posing major challenges due to pre-existing joblessness (23).

Recognising the impact of climate and other natural disasters as well as the economic shocks on domestic food production, bolstering agricultural production is one of the island's strategic interventions to address the food insecurity.

The main challenges are, therefore:

- Limited disaster recovery mechanisms in the areas of supply chain continuity, finance and insurance
- Inadequate infrastructure to address climate related hazards, particularly with respect to transportation and logistics to ensure the country and affected communities have access to food in the wake of a disaster
- Inadequate data infrastructure for agriculture research and development to examine the prevention and control of agricultural pests and diseases
- Inadequate data for decision making all aspects of Disaster Risk Management
- Praedial larceny which is considered the biggest disincentive to agricultural production

Source: 17. https://www.adaptation-undp.org/sites/default/files/resources/nap-gsp_saint-vincent_countrybrief.pdf
18. https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/national-economic-and-social-development-plan-2013-2025-saint-vincent-and-grenadines
19. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bb/1cad078ada65303d588df7604475571ff8facad095f9164a787bc1eb67172a24.pdf
20.https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bb/1cad078ada65303d588df7604475571ff8facad095f9164a787bc1eb67172a24.pdf
21. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bb/1cad078ada65303d588df7604475571ff8facad095f9164a787bc1eb67172a24.pdf
22. 1OCHA St Vincent and the Grenadines: Country Profile (as of May 2022) https://reliefweb.int/report/saint-vincent-and-grenadines/saint-vincent-grenadines-country-profile-may-2022#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20due%20to%20the,cent%20of%20agricultural%20production%20destroyed.
23. https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/12/statement-united-nations-special-rapporteur-david-r-boyd-conclusion-his-mission
24. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9409604/

4. Transformation Pathway

In response to the challenges faced in the agriculture sector, the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has begun to implement a number of policies and has taken actions to address the issues. The country's National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025) is the main policy instrument which guides the government's strategic actions. The Plan and rests on the principle of putting people at the centre of its development in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (24). There are also other ongoing national processes that directly contribute to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (25).

The **National Food Systems Transformation Pathway** of St. Vincent and the Grenadines provides that framework for the reform of the country's food systems and makes recommendations policies and strategies which the government should address to achieve the SDGs. It is anchored in a comprehensive **10-Point Food Security Action Plan**, which outlines strategic interventions to enhance agricultural productivity, improve nutrition, strengthen supply chains, and build climate resilience. This action plan serves as the foundation for the country's food systems agenda, aligning national priorities with regional and global commitments such as the **CELAC FSN Plan 2030**, **OECS FAST**, and **CARICOM 25×25+5**. Through this integrated framework, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is advancing a people-centered, environmentally sustainable, and innovation-driven transformation of its food systems.

The proposed policies and actions are outlined below under the main dimensions of food systems

Source:
24. https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/26194SaintVG_Main_Messages_of_the_VNR_St_Vincent_and_the_Grenadines_May_7_715.pdf
25. https://www.gov.vc/index.php/government-initiatives

4.1. Enhance Agricultural Productivity

- Invest in research and development for crop varieties resilient to climate change and pests.
- Provide training and resources to local farmers on sustainable farming practices.
- Explore new and innovative farming techniques to maximise yields to the acre (vertical Agriculture, Aquaponics, etc)
- introduction of new technology to maximise productive efficiency.
- Develop new and emerging commodities within the agriculture sector (breeding of exotic birds, tissue culture propagation of ornamental plants, rearing of freshwater fish and crustaceans (Tilapias, shrimp), etc.
- Establishment of a Land Use Policy, with a national land bank as instrument to facilitate access to land by youth and landless farmers.
- Combat praedial larceny through the implementation of modern monitoring systems, including the use of drones, RFID-GPS hybrid tags, and other advanced technologies.

4.2. Diversify Crop Production

- Encourage farmers to diversify their crops to reduce dependency on a few staple foods, thus enhancing resilience against price fluctuations and climate shocks.
- Utilize integrated production practices (Agro-pastoral approaches in livestock, use of nitrogen fixing crops as alternative intercropping commodities to improve soils, etc)

4.3. Strengthen Local Supply Chains

- Foster partnerships between local farmers and supermarkets/restaurants to create a reliable local market that supports sustainable food sourcing.
- Enhance spaces that function as marketing depots to enable better food distribution between primary providers and the rest of the market chain.
- Establish policies to lessen food waste and incentivize agro-processing.
- Create structures that would monitor and inform pricing systems and cost of production for Agricultural commodities (functioning National Management Information system, establishment of a Marketing unit within the Ministry of agriculture, etc;

4.4. Invest in Agro-ecology and Sustainable Practices

- Support adoption of agro-ecological methods to maintain soil health, conserve water, and reduce chemical inputs.
- Strengthen the National Pesticide Board

- Create with the deployment of drones Maps across the different zones which would facilitate monitoring of plants, soil, rivers and waterways. This especially during droughts, or after a major disaster event.

- Capacity building exercises to strengthen knowledge base right across the sector as it pertains to conservation and natural resources management.

4.5. Implement Policy Frameworks

- Develop food security policies aligned with the CELAC plan 2030/OECS FAST and CARICOM 25x25+5, focusing on access, availability, and utilization of food.

- Develop and establish a National School Feeding Policy, a National Nutrition Policy.

- Ensure the revision of the Food Base Dietary Guidelines and Agricultural Census at least once every 10-15 years.

- Continue to support the ZHT

- Continue active participation as a united Parliamentary Front Against Hunger.

4.6. Promote Food Education and Awareness

- Launch public campaigns to raise awareness about nutrition, local foods, and the importance of supporting domestic agriculture.

- implementation of higher customs tariffs on unhealthy foods (sugary beverages, salty snacks with high sodium content, etc)

4.7. Expand Access to Technology

- Facilitate access to technology such as mobile apps for market information, soil health monitoring, and weather predictions to assist farmers in making informed decisions. - Promote Climate Smart Agricultural practices (use of protected structures, etc)

4.8. Encourage Investment in Infrastructure

- Improve agricultural infrastructure (roads, storage, and processing facilities) to reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access.

4.9. Strengthen Disaster Preparedness

- Create and implement a comprehensive National disaster risk management plan to safeguard food production systems against natural disasters.

- Assign a unit with the role of coordinating activities of the Ministry of Agriculture, etc and who would work directly with the NEMO and be responsible for liaising with funding agencies on a continuous basis with the aim of ensuring an efficient and rapid recuperation process post disaster.

- Establish a drone unit responsible for the monitoring and upkeep of digital data that would facilitate efficient monitoring and surveillance imagery.

4.10. Foster Regional Collaboration

- Engage in regional cooperation initiatives with CELAC, the OECS and CARICOM neighbouring countries to share best practices, resources, and data related to food security and agriculture.

The National Food Systems Transformation Pathway for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is accompanied by a detailed 10-Point Food Security Action Plan, which outlines the specific priorities, actions, and implementation mechanisms necessary to achieve the country's food systems goals. This action plan provides further clarity on the strategic interventions proposed and serves as a guiding framework for stakeholders committed to building a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food system.

5. CONCLUSION

The National Food Systems Transformation Pathway for St. Vincent and the Grenadines represents a strategic and inclusive roadmap toward achieving a resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system. Grounded in national priorities and aligned with regional and global frameworks, this pathway addresses the urgent challenges facing agriculture, food security, and nutrition in the face of climate change, economic vulnerability, and social disparities. It calls for coordinated action across sectors and stakeholders, leveraging innovation, investment, and traditional knowledge to transform the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed. Through the implementation of the accompanying 10-Point Food Security Action Plan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that every citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and locally produced food—now and for future generations.

The National Food Systems Transformation Pathway for St. Vincent and the Grenadines reflects the resilience, creativity and determination of its people in the face of persistent challenges, including climate change, economic shocks, and food insecurity. It outlines a bold vision for a more sustainable and inclusive food system, grounded in local realities and national priorities. With the support of the 10-Point Food Security Action Plan, this pathway charts a course toward greater self-reliance, improved nutrition, and strengthened livelihoods for all Vincentians.