**Tuvalu Food Systems Pathway**

The 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Tuvalu acknowledges the importance of laying clear pathways towards the achievements of the 17 SDGs in which Food Systems Pathways of the countries party to the FSSD process impinge directly on these 17 SDGs. However, we would like to state from the outset that our first and foremost responsibility is to achieve our National Vision –” *A Peaceful, Resilient and Prosperous Tuvalu”*. We are proud to advocate that the matching target years for the SDGs and Our National Vision is 2030. Recognising too that most of the challenges we are facing relating to our food systems pathway are human induced caused by others. Nonetheless, Tuvalu shall remain determined to pursue its food systems pathway with utmost dedication, hard work and extensive partnerships within our own institutions and overseas committed partners.

Our National Vision: *“A Peaceful, Resilient and Prosperous Tuvalu”*

Te Kete 2021-2030 (Our National Sustainable Development Strategy)

To achieve our National Vision, we will pursue five (5) Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs). There are twenty (20) National Outcomes (NOs) altogether to be achieved by the year 2030. It is certainly not a coincidence that the planning period of the ‘Te Kete’ ends in 2030 the same year set globally for achieving the 17 SDGs. Tuvalu is proud to have matching years between our ‘Te Kete’ and the target year for the SDGs. Table 1 below show our SPAs and corresponding National Outcomes:

**Table 1**

**Our Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs)-Te Kete**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SPA 1: Enabling Environment | SPA 2: Economic Development | SPA 3:  Social Development | SPA 4: Island & Culture Development | SPA 5: Infrastructure Development |
| NO 2: Strengthening Partnerships  NO 3: Good Governance Strengthened  NO 4: Climate Change and Disaster Resilience  NO 5: Environment, Meteorology, Land and Waste Management Strengthened | NO 7: Fisheries contribution to Socio-economic development and quality of life increased  NO 8: Agricultural Productivity increased  NO 9: Develop, improve and strengthen private sector | NO 10: Health and well-being improved  NO 11: Quality education for sustainable living improved for all | NO 13: Capacity and Resilience of Falekaupule Increased  NO 15: Culture and Traditional Knowledge Enhanced  NO 16: Traditional economic model of reciprocity and distribution of wealth Strengthened | NO 18: Improve Shipping, Networking and Harbour Facilities  NO 19: Quality and Affordable Energy Supply  NO 20: Access to (Clean) Water and Sanitation |

**Our Vision for Our Food Systems Pathway**

Following our first dialogue from 12-13 August 2021, we do now recognise the need to work holistically in the transformation of our food systems from production to consumption. Our vision therefore is to foster national food systems for Tuvalu that reduce the importation of unhealthy food, promotes increased local food production, enhanced food safety, nutrition and healthy diets, improved income generating opportunities from food systems to enhance sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation of our coconut woodland and longstanding traditional pulaka pits farming systems and greater resilience to shocks and stress. We seek to transform our food systems through strong education and healthy streams, partnerships with our traditional institutions, island and national government stakeholders, using a sustainable and healthy diet-centred lens.

The Challenges we must address

Our beloved nation of Tuvalu, having been one of the only 5 Atoll Nations in the world, faces unusual challenges that are different from most other countries. Our key challenges are:

* Small landmass
* Poor porous atoll soil
* Limited flora and fauna
* Expensive imported unqualified food supply
* Low unsustainable quantity of local food supply
* We feed our pigs and chickens with trash from the kitchen and coconuts and import the bulk of livestock feed
* But even if there is local food available it is time consuming to prepare them for the dining table albeit its nutritional value and taste
* Climate Change-Rising Sea level and temperature
* Lack of credits to farmers and fisherman to support developing agribusinesses
* Absolute inadequate water supply for agricultural and fisheries purposes
* Absence ‘food governance’ manifested by the lack of consistent holistic coordination of development activities relating to food

Our Approach for Tuvalu’s Food Systems Transformation

From our First Dialogue 6 overarching goals came up that imperative to achieve food systems transformation. All these goals are aligned well with the UNFSS 5 Action Tracks BUT also our own 5 Strategic Priority Areas listed under Table 1:

1. Increase local food production
2. Strengthened partnerships
3. Change and shifting of diets
4. Eat safe and nutritious food
5. Governance and finance strengthened
6. Coalition with other Atoll Nations

Of the 20 national outcomes envisioned by Te Kete, 15 of them listed under each SPA in Table 1 above are directly relevant towards the 5 Action Tracks and our food systems pathway. Since the adoption of our NSDS Te Kete 2021-2030 in December 2020, a number of these 15 national outcomes are being pursued, may be not wholistically, but certainly in their own individual merits manifested in the various game-changing transformation initiatives by a number of different stakeholders at the national level to address our food systems e.g.:

* *Concrete ‘pulaka’ pits* – our traditional farming system from our ancestors where pits are dug to reach groundwater levels, sometimes reaching depths of 10 meters below ground level had been inundated by seawater making our staple food crop – ‘pulaka – the giant swamp taro’ to die. In an effort to help families cultivate pulaka again, these pits are now built with concrete so farmers can have access to sustainable supply of pulaka for their daily feed
* *Live and Learn farming systems* using tubs distributed to households in all the islands of Tuvalu is allowing families to increase cultivation of food crops such as taro, pawpaw, vegetables and sweet potatoes.
* *A Healthy National Food Strategy (HNFS)* was recently launched by the Ministry of Finance recently to help our people eat healthy and safe food – this is leading to building food banks throughout the nation, agricultural market outlets on each island and the capital Funafuti and last but not the least credit facility to help increase the supply of local nutritious food
* *Increased local food production*:the Department of Agriculture following the endorsement by the Government will launch in early 2022 a nationwide scheme in partnership with all islands through their respective Falekaupule (traditional Island Local Government) where land will be leased for agricultural purposes to increase the production of local food
* *Integrated Coconut Rehabilitation Programme*: an EU supported Coconut Rehabilitation programme is now in its final planning stages ready for implementation and one good lesson learnt (and which is also advocated in the FSSD process) is the need to strengthen *coordination* and *partnerships* among ll relevant stakeholders
* *Healthy and safe food*: public health at the Ministry of Health is undertaking a strong advocacy programme promoting heathy food and to eat nutritious food.
* *“I te Kamataga (From the start)” –* Tuvalu Association of Non-government Organisations (TANGO) through the Tuvalu climate Action Network (TuCAN) launched a local food recipe cook book last August

From the brief account above, I am proud to say that we in Tuvalu are already implementing one way or another a number of the game-changing transformation initiatives right now. The framework of our national priorities provided by our National Strategy for Sustainable Development – Te Kete – is indeed compatible and conducive to the goals aspired by the FSSD 5 Action Tracks.

Our challenge now is to carefully map their inter-connectedness so they are seen and addressed from a ‘holistic’ perspective enabling all stakeholders to collaborate and work side by side as we join together in their implementation.

Our work will not end here at the Summit. It will continue for the next 9 years. Immediately after this Summit, Tuvalu will undertake face to face bilateral meetings with our national stakeholders including those in the island communities and our overseas partners. From these bilateral meetings we will map out clear roles and contributions of each stakeholder and the overall implementation framework of our food systems pathway.

At this very point in time, we are proud to say that the planning and formulation of our Healthy National Food Strategy (HNFS) is already advance and as we map out its Implementation Framework it now appears that the most appropriate way to go for our small nation is build on this HNFS to integrate appropriate dimensions for towards achieving our Food Systems Pathway’s Vision, instead of reinventing the wheel altogether.