

Vanuatu's Roadmap for Food Systems Transformation by 2030

Draft for the Global Food Systems Summit, New York 23 September 2021

Overview

The Republic of Vanuatu is an archipelago of around 83 islands with a total land area of just over 12,000 Km² and an Exclusive Economic Zone of over 660,000 Km². The geographical spread of the islands presents logistical challenges for implementing national plans and delivering basic services to the country's population of 301,695 people¹. Most of the population (78%) live in rural areas while the bulk of urban residents (16%) live in the capital city of Port Vila².

Vanuatu has consistently been ranked³ as the most vulnerable country in the world due to its high exposure to natural hazards or potential phenomena of climate change. This is best illustrated by the compound disasters faced in 2020 with Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold which impacted the northern provinces of the country (the second Cat 5 cyclone experience by Vanuatu within five years), volcanic ashfall affecting Tanna Island in southern Vanuatu, and flooding in central and northern parts of the country. The projected increase in global impacts of climate change is likely to lead to Vanuatu experiencing more extreme climate related events in the future⁴.

The people of the Republic of Vanuatu also face multiple threats to their food and nutritional security, including micronutrient deficiencies, rising rates of obesity and non-communicable diseases – especially in the urban and peri-urban areas – and prevalent food safety concerns stemming from poor safety and hygiene practices. A 2013 Demographic Health Survey⁵ found worrying incidents of wasting (4.4%), stunting (28.5%), and underweight (10.7%) amongst children under five years old. More recent studies show that 20.9% of ni-Vanuatu (61,700 people) experienced moderate levels of food insecurity and 2.4% (7,000+ people) were exposed severe levels of food security in 2019⁶.

This Roadmap is the product of three dialogue events engaging over 60 key stakeholders in July and August 2021. The Dialogues were conducted under the leadership of the two National Convenors" Mr. Amos Moses, Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Mr. Antoine Ravo, Director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development with the support of their technical staff and UN Agencies operating in Vanuatu.

This Roadmap is a living document which will continue to be shaped as consultations continue with stakeholders throughout the country about how Vanuatu's Food System can be transformed by 2030.

Vision and Strategy for sustainable food systems for Vanuatu by 2030

The design of the 2021 Global Food System Summit fits well with Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan; 2030 The People's Plan, and Vanuatu's national vision: *A Stable, Sustainable and*

¹ 2020 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, June 2021

² *Ibid*

³ World Risk Report 2020, Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and Ruhr University Bochum – Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), 2020

⁴ Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, 2021

⁵ Vanuatu Demographic and Health Survey 2013, Secretariate of the Pacific Community, November 2014

⁶ Food Security in Vanuatu, 2019-2020 NSDP Baseline Survey, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2021

Prosperous Vanuatu. It also aligns with Vanuatu's Gudfala Kakae (Good Food) Policy 2020-30 (GKP 2030) vision: *A healthy, wealthy, food secure Vanuatu that enjoys a high quality of life*.

The main objectives of the GKP 2030 are to:

- (1) Improve access to affordable, nutritious diet through a sustained increase in the production of aelan kakae (local food)
- (2) Promote aelan kakae as a key part of a sustainable and nutritionally balanced diet
- (3) Improved access to nutritious, convenient aelan kakae through increased access to appropriate technology, knowledge and skills in food production, preservation, and storage
- (4) Facilitate a reduction in consumption of food imports contributing to poor health outcomes
- (5) Improve the resilience of agricultural production systems through the adoption of sustainable and climate smart agricultural practices
- (6) Improved multi-sector co-ordination, implementation, and monitoring of action to address food and nutrition security, and food safety

This policy brings together the objectives of Codex, the Slow Food Movement and food sovereignty together with national priorities on food production, safety, and nutrition, to improve coordination of national action. It represents the shared commitment of six focus Ministries (Agriculture, Health, Trade, Internal affairs, Education and Land and Natural Resources), the private sector, Civil Society Organisations, and other Government agencies and partners⁷.

Vanuatu regards the Global Food System Summit as an opportunity to convene key stakeholders at all levels across the country to collaborate in new and transformative partnerships to build a more robust, inclusive, and sustainable Food System for Vanuatu by 2030.

The transformative collaboration and partnerships will center around three key priorities which emerged from the Dialogue events held in the leadup to the Global Food System Summit:

- **Leadership and Governance:** The Vanuatu Government commits to lead and coordinate an inclusive, multi-stakeholder effort to transform the country's Food System by 2030. Leadership and Governance mechanisms will be developed to ensure inclusive, effective, and respectful engagement of all stakeholders, including the most vulnerable groups in society.
- **Improved Diets and Food Environment:** Vanuatu will build on current initiatives to sustainably increase its local production capacity and improve its food environment to ensure our people have access to more healthy and nutritious diets.
- **Resilient Food System and Livelihoods:** Vanuatu will promote and implement initiatives such as climate smart techniques and proven traditional practices in food production, processing, and distribution which strengthen resilience and enable productive work and decent livelihoods along the food system value chain.

Priorities for Vanuatu - 2030 implementation

1. [Leadership and Governance](#)

⁷ Gudfala Kakae Policy 2020-2030, Government of Vanuatu, 2020

Vanuatu is committed to developing an effective governance mechanism which will lead and coordinate a multi-sectoral, multi-scalar, and multi-pronged approach to food system policy formulation and implementation of priority action plans.

- a. **Reference to Gudfala Kakae Policy 2020-30:** Policy Objective 6 – *Improved multi-sector coordination, implementation, and monitoring of action to address food and nutrition security, and food safety.*
- b. **Game changers:** (i) **establishment of a national committee** to oversee and coordinate nutrition and food system efforts, (ii) **review and update of the GKP 2030** to incorporate food system concept and resilience issues in light of COVID-19 and compounding disasters of 2020, (iii) **communication and awareness with key stakeholders** (government, civil society, development partners, private sector, consumers’ organizations, and farmers’ organizations) about GKP 2030 / Food System priorities and action plans, in appropriate language and formats, (iv) **active engagement and collaboration** with private sector, civil society, and provincial/local level governments to ensure local ownership and drive to implement GKP 2030 / Food System priorities and action plans.
- c. **Milestone 2025:** The national food and nutrition council is established and functioning effectively. The review and update of the GKP 2030 incorporating the food systems concept is completed. The GKP 2030 priorities and action plans have been communicated to key stakeholders in Vanuatu, including key ministries/departments, provincial/local governments, private sector, civil society, and local communities.
- d. **Milestone 2030:** Well-informed and committed leaders from political, public service, private sector and civil society sectors leading Food System policy formulation and implementation of priority actions plans.

2. Improved Food Environment and Diets

Vanuatu will build on current initiatives to promote and increase production, and improve access to local food, and reduce consumption of cheap, unhealthy foods. These will be achieved through close collaboration with private sector, civil society, development partners, retailers and wholesalers, consumers’ organizations, and farmers’ organizations

- a. **Reference to Gudfala Kakae Policy 2020-30:** Policy Objective 1 – *Improve access to affordable, nutritious diet through a sustained increase in the production of aelan kakae (local food).* Policy Objective 2 – *Promote aelan kakae as a key part of a sustainable and nutritionally balanced diet.* Policy Objective 3 – *Improved access to nutritious, convenient aelan kakae through increased access to appropriate technology, knowledge and skills in food production, preservation, and storage.* Policy Objective 4 – *Facilitate a reduction in consumption of food imports contributing to poor health outcomes*
- b. **Game changers:** (i) **facilitate, promote, and support the use of technology and innovative techniques** across the food supply chain: food production, processing, and distribution. This will build on current initiatives, knowledge, and experience, including from local, traditional sources, (ii) **ensure proper data management systems are in place** to establish baselines, measure progress of policy objectives, and to *know what is available where*. Effective communication of this information to key stakeholders will ensure it is used in planning and implementing action plans, (iii) **introduce regulations/policies to reduce supply and consumption of unhealthy foods and improve supply of healthy food.** This includes ensuring imported food staples are fortified with

essential micro-nutrients. (iv) **review seasonal calendar of crops** and coordination of farmers/producers to improve availability and variety of foods and ensure sales for farmers/producers.

- c. **Milestone 2025:** Demonstrable increase in stakeholders using technology and innovative techniques in food production, processing, and distribution. Establishment/strengthening of data management system and communication channels to inform key stakeholders of data trends/findings. Local food environment shows signs of improvement through: policies/regulations on supply of healthy and unhealthy foods; and improved seasonal calendar of crops.
- d. **Milestone 2030:** Consumers have access to safe, nutritious food throughout Vanuatu and are empowered to make informed, healthy, safe, and sustainable decisions regarding their diet.

3. **Resilient Food System and Livelihoods**

Vanuatu will strengthen the resilience of its food system and the livelihoods of all stakeholders along the food system value chain – including women, children, and youth – by focusing on inclusive, sustainable, climate smart investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and technological systems and practices.

- a. **Reference to Gudfala Kakae Policy 2020-30:** Policy Objective 5 – Improve resilience of agricultural production systems through the adoption of sustainable and climate smart agricultural practices.
- b. **Game changers:** (i) increase research and development of resilient crops and livestock using both modern and traditional sources, (ii) promote agroforestry practices and intercropping of trees, food crops, and vegetables, (iii) promote silviculture practices involving trees and livestock/aquaculture, (iv) develop sustainable and resilient approaches to localized disaster response and recovery, including intercropping and agroforestry, (v) engage and utilize private sector, civil society, and local community expertise in strengthening food production, processing, and distribution processes to supply domestic and international markets (vi) increase investments in more resilient transportation, energy, and technological infrastructure.
- c. **Milestone 2025:** Increased knowledge and use of more resilient crops, livestock and sustainable, climate smart food production, processing, and distribution practices. Established localized disaster response and recover strategies. Stronger partnerships developed with private sector, civil society, and communities in food production, processing, and distribution.
- d. **Milestone 2030:** A resilient food system better able to respond to shocks and stresses induced by environmental, economic, or social events; meet people’s demand for healthy, nutritious food while protecting nature; and support decent livelihoods for stakeholders, particularly vulnerable groups, along the food value chain.

Changes in coming two to three years to accelerate progress toward Vanuatu’s 2030 Food System Vision

In response to recent natural disasters and global phenomena (including, volcanic eruptions, destructive tropical cyclones, flooding, flooding, and the COVID-19 pandemic), Vanuatu has set seven national policy priorities⁸ to guide the national budget allocations for 2020 and 2021. The specific policy priority outcomes and objectives which will contribute most to Vanuatu’s 2030 Food System Vision are:

⁸ 2022 Government Policy Priorities, Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Vanuatu, 2021

Priority Outcome 1. Enhanced business opportunities and investment environment

- Sustainable increase of primary production and productivity
- Improving the management of land leases and customary land
- Increase value-addition, Infrastructure facilities, agro-processing, and quality control

Priority Outcome 2. Improved Resilient Infrastructure

- Improving Airport infrastructure
- Rehabilitating and improving maintenance of high priority rural infrastructure
- Expanding access, and reducing costs of telecommunication and energy

Priority Outcome 3. Improved education quality, accessibility and training outcomes for children and young people

- Improving the quality of education
- Increasing higher education opportunities
- Improving opportunities for employability and entrepreneurial skills development

Priority Outcome 4. Improved quality health care

- Reducing the incidence of communicable diseases and Non-Communicable Diseases
- Development and improvement of clinical services in health facilities

Priority Outcome 5. Improved service delivery

- Increase labour mobility nationally and internationally
- Enhance partnership with donors, community-based organisations, and nongovernmental organisations

Priority Outcome 6. Improved resilience and natural resource management

- Improving climate change adaptation and disaster risk management governance
- Increasing equitable, accessible, and affordable water supply and sanitation
- Strengthening institutions and governance that protect our environment and natural resources
- Increasing resilience in the productive sector
- Improving Waste Management
- Strengthening the enforcement of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Priority Outcome 7. Social inclusion, security, peace, and justice

- Implementing gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes
- Establishing Anti-Corruption Institution

Concluding statement

Vanuatu has a well-established policy environment to guide the vision of transforming its Food System 2030. The success of this transformation depends on the effectiveness of the leadership and governance mechanisms, the commitment of national and local leaders in all sectors, and the involvement and engagement of key stakeholders throughout the Food System.

The National Dialogue Convenors recognize that more dialogue and consultations are required with stakeholders throughout Vanuatu, particularly, in the provinces and rural areas and across private sector, civil society, academia and development partners. Further consultations will, therefore, be organized following the Global Summit to ensure key stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing development of this Pathway Document.