

Government of Solomon Islands



NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION POLICY 2010 – 2015

**Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Ministry of Health and Medical Services**

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ABBREVIATIONS

BMI	Body mass index
CLO	Country Liaison Officer
COMBI	Communication for behavior impact
EEZ	Economic exclusion zone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
INFOSAN	FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities' Network
IRH	International Health Regulation
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
NCD	Non-communicable disease
SIDHS	Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

DEFINITIONS USED IN THE POLICY DOCUMENT

Food Security: Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 1996).

Emergency: An emergency means the state or condition having suffered extreme and unexpected natural or man-induced calamity, which is unable to cope with such state or condition through its national reserve and is unable to procure the needed supply through normal trade.

Food accessibility: Access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources).

Food availability: The availability of sufficient quantities of food (at affordable prices) of appropriate quality and safety, supplied through domestic production and/ or imports (including food aid).

Food safety: The assurance that food is free from hazards able to cause harm at all stages of the food chain.

Stability: To be food secure, a population, household or individual must have access to adequate food at all times. They should not risk losing access to food as a consequence of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity). The concept of stability can therefore refer to both the availability and access dimensions of food security.

Utilization: Utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This brings out the importance of non-food inputs in food security.

Body Mass Index: Body mass index is defined as the individual's body weight divided by the square of his or her height. The formulae universally used in medicine produce a unit of measure of kg/m^2 .

Morbidity: A measure of the number of cases of particular diseases in a given population.

Mortality: A measure of the number of deaths in a given population.

Pelagic: Of, relating to, or living in open oceans or seas rather than waters adjacent to land or inland waters.

Primary productive sector: Sectors engaged in primary production including agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Stunting: Having a height-for-age below minus two standard deviations of the National Center for Health Statistics/WHO reference median.

STEPS surveys: Survey methods of measuring criteria of relevance to non-communicable diseases.

Wasting: Having a low weight-for-height compared with a standard.

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Chapter 1 Current Food Security Situation in the Solomon Islands

1.1 Food and Health

The 2006-07 Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey (SIDHS) was carried out by the Solomon Islands Statistics Office from 9 October 2006 to April 2007, using a nationally representative sample of over 4,000 households. The level of under-five mortality was 37 deaths per 1,000 births during the five-year period before the survey, implying that 1 in every 27 children born in Solomon Islands during the period died before reaching their fifth birthday. The infant mortality rate recorded in the survey was 24 deaths per 1,000 live births demonstrating that there are still too many children dying from unnecessary causes in the country. The survey also shows that Solomon Islands is overwhelmingly rural, with only 16-17% of the total population of greater than 520,000 living in urban areas. The survey data also indicate that:

- 32.8% of Solomon Islands children under five years of age are stunted, with 8.5% being severely stunted. Stunting levels increase rapidly with age, peaking at 47% among children age 18-23 months. Stunting levels are higher for rural children than for urban children.
- 4% of Solomon Islands children are wasted, with 1% severely wasted. Wasting levels are highest at ages 9-11 months which is the time the child is being weaned and thus more vulnerable to illness.
- Almost one in eight (11.8%) of Solomon Islands' children are underweight, with 2.4% classified as severely underweight. Peak levels of low weight-for-age are found among children aged 9-11 months. Other groups found to be underweight were girls, rural children and children in the Western Province.
- Almost half (48.5%) of children suffer from anaemia. Over half of these have mild anaemia, and only 0.5% has severe anaemia.
- 44.3% of women 15-49 years of age have anaemia. Mild anaemia predominates among women, and only 8.2% of women have either moderate or severe anaemia.

In terms of interventions that are known to have a significant impact on under-nutrition and food insecurity, breastfeeding, safe complementary feeding and the production, harvesting and provision of adequate and safe food in both rural and urban communities are key approaches. Breastfeeding is very common in Solomon Islands, and the duration of breastfeeding is long. However, only 57.4% of infants are exclusively breastfed for up to 6 months.

Overweight, a risk for developing non communicable diseases is also evident in the country. According to the SIDHS, prevalence of high BMI (BMI > 25 kg/m²) among men was 30.8% whereas the overall prevalence of high BMI (>25 kg/m²)

among women was reported at 44% with 29.9% being overweight (25 - 29.9kg/m²).and 14.5% being obese (>30 kg/m²). In general, there is an increase in trend of overweight and obesity since the National Nutrition Survey of 1989. The WHO NCD STEPS survey for Solomon Islands is currently being analyzed which should provide more evidence on the prevalence of the greater NCD risk factors which should form the baseline for targets of the plan.

In the absence of data it is extremely difficult to assess reliably the safety of food consumed in the Solomon Islands. However, it is clear that diarrhoeal diseases continue to be a significant cause of morbidity in the Solomon Islands and the annual incidence rates between 1998 and 2007 have varied from 24.7 per 1000 population (2002) to 56.1 per 1000 population (1998) and most recently were found to be 46.4 per 1000 population (2007). Diarrhoea in infants less than 1 year of age and in young children 1-4 years of age continue to represent a common health problem that has been worsening since 2002. In 2007 infants less than 1 year of age suffered diarrhoea at annual incidence rates close to 250 per 1000 infants and young children 1-4 years of age had an annual incidence rate of approximately 150 per 1000 population. Despite this high incidence rate the public health laboratory only conducted microbiological analyses on 251 samples of water and 22 samples of food in all of 2008. However, the capacity of this laboratory is currently being strengthened. Laboratory quality assurance systems are being introduced and it is anticipated that the laboratory will play an important role in protecting public health in the future.

1.2 Food Production

The economy of Solomon Islands is heavily based on the production of primary products, with this primary productive sector contributing about 40% of GDP and providing the country's top three export commodities timber, fish and copra.

Most Solomon Islanders (83-84% of the population) live in rural areas, and these people derive their livelihoods from a combination of subsistence agriculture, fisheries and small-scale income-generating activities, particularly exported cash crops and marketing of fresh produce.

Sweet potato is the most important locally grown food and accounts for an estimated 65% of locally grown staple foods. Other significant staples are cassava (12%), banana (8%), taro and Xanthosoma taro (7%) and yam (2%)¹. A small proportion of locally grown food is sold, mainly in Honiara and other small urban centres. Locally grown staple foods were valued at SI\$ 411 million (US\$60 million) in 2004. This estimate does not include the value of other garden foods, fruit,

¹ Bourke et al., 2006: Table 8.1

edible nut, meat or fish². Local rice production has been gradually increasing over the past ten years and was estimated at 5,700 tonnes in 2007.

The most important export cash crops are coconut, cocoa and oil palm. Income from the sale of export and domestic cash crops enhances food security as it allows people to buy rice or locally grown staples when their subsistence production fails.

Livestock is also an important component of production, and animals are kept by 75% of rural households. Pigs and chickens are the dominant species. The livestock sub-sector consists of local inbred pigs and chickens which are an integral part of the traditional agricultural systems, as well as some commercial ventures involving cattle, chickens and pigs. Currently the livestock industry in the country is very limited and meat is imported largely from Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu. Given the robust demand for both fresh and processed meat, potential for import substitution is an important issue for the sub-sector. Considerable potential exists for increasing productivity of subsistence pigs and chickens through better husbandry and feeding practices. The government also aims to develop the national beef herd through cattle imports and improved breeds.

Solomon Islands also have a rich and varied marine sector that is vitally important to the people as a major food source and to the economy for its export earnings. Fish is a major component of the protein diet of the people of Solomon Islands with per capita consumption of approximately 38 kilograms per year in 2003³. Whilst extensive reef fisheries exist, maintaining security of village marine food resources through sustainable management is a critically important issue. The commercial fisheries sector is dominated by tuna fishing (both onshore and foreign-owned fishing operations). Sustainable tuna yield is estimated at 120,000 metric tons. There are many vessels licensed to fish in the EEZ, and this raises about US\$12 million annually. A Tuna Management and Development Plan has been developed and adopted but without the necessary regulatory framework and financial resources, it has not been fully implemented. . Beche-de-mer and shells have provided good incomes for rural populations in the past, but there has been over fishing and the beche-de-mer industry has now been closed to prevent over-harvesting and allow stock recovery. While such closures will enable stocks to recover, it has placed severe financial hardship on rural people in the outer islands with limited opportunities to earn cash income. Enhancing skills of fisheries' managers, improving national fisheries institutions, and improving market access through strengthened food safety and quality aspects are priorities for sector development.

Aquaculture of inshore resources offers opportunities to create new livelihoods and export commodities. Where inshore and offshore resources are limited,

² Bourke et al., 2004: Table 8.3

³ FAOSTAT

freshwater aquaculture can supply fish for food. Aquaculture therefore has the potential to boost fish production in Solomon Islands. Additionally, the development of aquaculture should be able to take pressure off heavily exploited wild inshore fish stocks. However, at this stage aquaculture is still at its infant stages. With the development and adoption of the Aquaculture Development Plan (2009 – 2014) it is envisaged that aquaculture will contribute more to the food security and livelihood of Solomon Islanders.

Constraints for food production and food security include limited access of farmers to planting material and lack of production support systems for traditional staple crops and animals, absence of subsidies for primary production inputs and access to credit facilities at the rural level is very limited. There is virtually no lending to the primary productive sector — for either investment or working capital. Financial services in rural areas are extremely limited and mainly located in provincial centres. While lack of credit is a lesser constraint to production for most rural villagers, access to credit is a significant limiting factor for those who wish to undertake production on a larger scale or adopt some technical innovations.

1.3 Livelihoods and Food Security

Subsistence food production has been the traditional way of life in the Solomon Islands and is still critical for the livelihood and food security of rural populations. However, subsistence food production can sometimes fail, because of factors such as extreme weather, interruptions to planting cycles, and disease and pest outbreaks, or because of pressures associated with an increasing population.

The food supply situation at national and household levels is undergoing change. Traditionally, a high level of self sufficiency in food production at the household level has been an important aspect of the traditional way of life in the Solomon Islands. There is concern that the high rate of population growth (2.8% annually), combined with the allocation of substantial areas of land to cash crops, is threatening the sustainability of the traditional subsistence farming system. The rapidly increasing population has led to considerable intensification of land use in recent decades. Extended cropping periods and consequent reduction in fallow periods have also reduced crop yields. This is now becoming a major problem in some locations, and is particularly acute on north Malaita and many of the small islands⁴.

Fisheries resources are also susceptible to over-exploitation as a result of the increasing population growth. Other factors such as pollution, climate change and the use of over-effective fishing methods are also expected to contribute towards stock declines. Inshore fisheries production has been declining over the years and without proper management measures put in place now there is likely that over-

⁴ AusAID 2006

exploitation of certain species will occur. Alternative management measures must be identified and established urgently to avoid such a situation. Such measures has to take into account the nature of inshore fisheries by ensuring that rural communities participate fully in the resource management process.

Fisheries development must therefore focus on: (i) securing current catches and restoring degraded or collapsed fisheries (e.g. Beche de Mer and Trochus), (ii) increasing the flow of benefits (\$ and/or food) from what is caught, and (iii) increasing the capacity of communities to adapt to change, including external forces such as climate change. MFMR believes that coastal communities are the best managers of their fisheries and marine resources. It is part of our role to guarantee that coastal communities' experiences and knowledge are incorporated into the daily management of fisheries and marine resources. This requires MFM to provide a range of tools that facilitate active participation. This is across all levels of local, provincial and national management. Collectively we can successfully reduce poverty, ensure food security, increase livelihood opportunities, implement sound environmental practices and promote sustainable economic development for the benefit of all Solomon Islanders.

Whilst the traditional farming system still provides a relatively high level of food security in Solomon Islands, inspite of rapid urban population growth and an increasing reliance on imported cereals⁵. In 2007 the Solomon Islands imported around 36, 000 tonnes of rice and 14, 000 tonnes of flour valued at \$SI 197 million⁶. Cereal imports represented 85% of total food imports (worth \$231 million) and 11% of total imports (worth \$SI 1,836 million). FAO Food Balance Sheets estimated the annual per capita consumption at 66.3 kg of rice and 17.5 kg of wheat in 2003, figures which would be expected to have further increased since then. It is noteworthy that in 1990, consumption of rice and flour was as low as 30kg and 7.9kg respectively. This nutritional transition threatens food security and is having negative impacts on health and well-being. An estimated 41% of household income is spent on cereal and cereal products, 10% on bread and biscuits and 5% on confectionary compared to 10% on fruit and vegetables⁷. Surprisingly, the consumption pattern shows that the rural areas spent almost twice the amount spent by urban areas on cereals and cereal products. The nutritional composition of imported food in particular can have significantly negative impacts on health (contributing to the ever increasing problems of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases) and nutritional status (e.g. iron deficiency anaemia). There is a need to improve the links among Agriculture, Fisheries and Health Ministries as well as all key stakeholders; to increase public awareness on the importance of traditional foods in maintaining healthy lifestyles; and to improve readiness and responsiveness to emerging zoonotic diseases.

⁵ FAOSTAT

⁶ Central Bank 2008

⁷ HIES 2005/6

1.4 Food Imports and Exports

The previous sections have already alluded to the fact that, like many other Pacific Island Countries, the food supply situation in the Solomon Islands is undergoing rapid change. The change relates to an increase in food imports, both in terms of value and in volume. Since 2002, the value of food imports has more than doubled from SI\$ 108,840,000 to SI\$ 231,381,000 in 2007. Cereals alone (36, 000 tonnes of rice and 14, 000 tonnes of wheat) made up 85% of total food imports in 2007. If food imports are considered as a percentage of total imports, these were as high as 25% in 2002, but have since dropped significantly to 13% in 2007. This level of food imports is relatively low when compared with other Small Island Developing States.

The Solomon Islands benefited from strong agricultural commodity exports performance during the last decade, with palm oil leading the way and small holder based copra and cocoa industries also performing well, distributing cash through the rural community and thus enhancing food security. Due to the political/ethnic “tension”, agricultural exports came to an almost complete standstill in the early 2000s. Since then, agricultural exports have recovered well and helped to reduce the Solomon Islands food security vulnerability through renewed foreign revenue earnings. In 2007, the Solomon Islands copra industry was producing close to 30,000 tonnes annually. The oil palm industry has also been reinvigorated and in 2007, 21,900 tonnes of oil palm products were exported. The approach now being promoted is based on a nucleus estate and large numbers of relatively small block-holding out-growers supplying a central processing facility, which is leading to a wider distribution of income and food security benefits. The third most important export crop, cocoa, has also returned to pre-tension levels, with production reaching 5, 000 tonnes in 2005.

Chapter 2 Existing Policies, Plans and Regulatory Frameworks in the Solomon Islands

The Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy 2010-2015 is introduced into an environment of existing policies, plans and regulatory frameworks in order to provide the platform for integrated action required to ensure food security in the Solomon Islands in a future subject to climate change. It recognizes and complements these existing policies, plans and regulatory frameworks and focuses on a few key strategies to enhance productivity, to achieve food security and to reduce the burden of over- and under-nutrition. These existing policies, plans and regulatory frameworks include:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Corporate Plan 2009-2010
- The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Corporate Plan 2008-2011
- The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013
- Solomon Islands Aquaculture Development Plan 2009 - 2014
- The National Food Safety Programme and associated Regulatory Framework
- The National Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Plan 2007-2017

The Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock (MAL) has formulated a Corporate Plan for 2009-2010, which is a summary of the Agriculture & Livestock Department's policy-based initiatives to be implemented over the 2009 – 2010 period. The Corporate Plan is a rolling plan, which would be updated annually in pursuit of the Ministry's vision which is to ensure that agriculture plays an important role in the Solomon Islands to achieve a sustainable national and rural development sustainable agriculture development in the country for food sovereignty and a better living environment. In relation to food security the MAL Corporate Plan identifies the need for:

- Provision of an environment suitable for the private sector to flourish and grow. In particular the provision of technical support services and information for sustainable development of agriculture and livestock industry especially in the rural areas.
- Rebuilding and strengthening supporting market infrastructures to enable farmers sell their produce on a regular basis and at fair prices. This marketing infrastructure will be backed by the active service of a Market Information Services Unit.
- Developing a comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy which will clearly outline short-term and long-term goals, the implementation of which will ensure there is development is economically and environmentally sustainable.
- Restructuring, decentralization and devolving governance, improvement of the national use and management of natural resources', and need for enhancing research and development coupled by an effective extension service.

- Promotion of a balanced regional socio-economic development throughout the nine provinces not forgetting the most remote communities.
- Ensuring that 80% of the rural inhabitants become owners of food sovereignty to prevent hunger and malnutrition nationally.
- Developing and Implementation of a Partnership Policy to promote active participation in agriculture and rural development by resource owners.
- Revisiting and promoting subsidy schemes to move cocoa, copra, rice development in rural areas.
- Giving recognition of resource owners rights to active participating in national rural development programmes.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources has also developed and adopted a Corporate Plan, a Strategic Plan and an Aquaculture Development Plan, which also addresses food security issues through a focus on:

- Increased opportunities for rural fishers to improve their standard of living by establishing fish aggregating devices to increase the catch in areas where overfishing has reduced fish availability; and by establishing on shore fish processing facilities.
- Increased potential value of fisheries and marine products by setting up two tuna loin processing plants in the country and considering how to optimize value adding to such operations.
- Monitoring systems being put in place that provide accurate and timely information on commercial and sustainable fisheries for all stakeholders including regional agencies.
- Providing equipment and facilities to small-scale fishermen or fishing communities so as to allow them to actively participate in in-shore fisheries activities
- Identifying and prioritizing the development and marketing of aquaculture commodities required to meet the national need for food and livelihood in a world increasingly subject to climate change.

In relation to food safety aspects of food security, the legal framework for food control in the Solomon Islands comprises:

1. The Pure Food Act 1996;
2. The Public Health Ordinance of 1970 (parts on food which have not been repealed so it becomes a regulation);
3. The Pure Food (Fish & Fishery Products) Regulation 2005;
4. The Draft Pure Food (Food Control) Regulation 2009 (yet to be gazetted);
5. Consumer Protection Act 1995 (for Product Recall);
6. Pesticides Regulations 1982 under the Safety at work Act 1982;
7. Poisons Act 1941;
8. Agricultural Quarantine Act 1982;
9. Agricultural Quarantine Regulations 1986;

10. Agriculture and Livestock Act 1935;
11. Fisheries Act 1998; and
12. Environmental Health Act 1996 revised.

Also impacting on food security and actions permitted to be taken to enhance food security, including food safety, are the international obligations of the Solomon Islands as a Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Trade Organization (WTO). For the WTO, the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Enquiry Point is the Director of Solomon Islands Agriculture Quarantine Services of MAL. The Codex Contact Point is the Director of Environmental Health, Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS). The MHMS is also the competent authority with responsibility for food safety in the Solomon Islands. In addition, the MHMS has developed a National Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Plan 2007-2017 that needs to be well integrated with the National Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition policy. The objectives of the National Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Plan are to reduce current and future NCDs and malnutrition through: (i) Nutrition & healthy lifestyle organization; (ii) A supportive national environment; (iii) Strengthening community action; (iv) Improving individual skills and management of end-point disease; and (v) Monitoring, evaluation & surveillance.

Chapter 3 National Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy 2010-2015

3.1 Vision

Achieving food security for all through long term, sustainable collaboration and engagement by all key stakeholders.

3.2 Goal

The goal of the national food security, food safety and nutrition policy is to ensure long-term food security and to improve the livelihoods of food producers, consumers and rural and urban communities in the Solomon Islands.

3.3 Specific Aims

Within this policy context and the objectives of the current Government, the National Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy aims to:

1. Protect the health and nutritional status of the population of the Solomon islands with particular attention to reducing:
 - a. the prevalence of under-nutrition, stunting and wasting among infants and young children;
 - b. iron-deficiency anaemia among children and women;
 - c. the prevalence of overweight among predominantly urban adults and children; and
 - d. the prevalence of non-communicable diseases in adults and children.
2. Promote and use sustainable agricultural and fisheries production as core elements for assuring both food security and economic development in the Solomon Islands.
3. Facilitate trade in safe and healthy food.
4. Increase the capacity for the Solomon Islands to respond in a timely manner to emergencies that adversely affect food security, food safety and nutrition.

3.4 Key Principles of the Policy

In addressing food safety, nutrition and food security within the Solomon Islands it is essential for all Solomon Islands policy makers, government officers, consumers and business people to adhere to a number of key principles when identifying what strategies and actions are necessary to enhance food safety, nutrition and food security in the Solomon Islands including:

1. Access to adequate, affordable, safe and healthy food to reduce the incidence of malnutrition and foodborne disease is the right of every individual.
2. Actions should have a positive impact on the health of all but particularly vulnerable sub-populations such as women and children and populations in remote areas and atolls.
3. The primary productive sector should be considered the key vehicle to drive both rural development and national economic recovery.
4. Rural populations should be part of the country's economic development through sustainable primary production.
5. The private sector, consumers and government have a shared responsibility for the safety and suitability of food.
6. Actions to enhance food security, food safety and nutrition should be compliant with international agreements and employ sound, scientific and validated data to guide risk management decision-making.

3.5 Strategies

The strategies that will give effect to the policy and allow the population of the Solomon Islands to have a food secure country by 2015 include:

1. Sustaining integration of food security, food safety and nutrition;
2. Increasing agricultural and fisheries productivity in a changing climate;
3. Adding health value to food produced and processed within the Solomon Islands and imported into the Solomon Islands;
4. Adopting, enforcing and monitoring food standards that are harmonized with standards of other Pacific island countries and with the Codex Alimentarius;
5. Scaling up efforts for better nutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable populations;
6. Strengthening social marketing and awareness raising to increase the number of consumers making safer and healthier food choices;
7. Strengthening research and appropriate technology development in primary production
8. Increasing emergency preparedness and responsiveness

Chapter 4 Strategies and Associated Actions for Enhanced Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition

4.1 Sustaining Integration of Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition

1. The MAL, MFMR, MHMS and other key stakeholders shall establish a mechanism for ensuring the sustainability of an integrated approach to food security, food safety and nutrition. Such a mechanism should make use of existing integration mechanisms where they exist and are appropriate.
2. The MAL, MFMR, MHMS shall work with each other and other relevant authorities (e.g. Meteorological Services, Education, Commerce, and Trade) on a regular basis to implement specific food production, food safety and nutrition programmes, making more effective use of agricultural extension, schools, pricing control (e.g. market prices, subsidized freights, farmer association pricing) and taxation, where appropriate.

4.2 Increasing Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity in a Changing Climate

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, through its Corporate Plan for 2009-2010, shall ensure that increased agricultural productivity plays an integral role in sustainable food security for the population of the Solomon Islands by:
 - a. Pursuing Integrated Agricultural Development that:
 - i. Conserves and rehabilitates the environment to support agriculture and food production;
 - ii. Applies proper land use planning strategies.
 - b. Promoting:
 - i. Farming practices that apply environmentally friendly and organic farming principles;
 - ii. The development of sup sup gardens;
 - iii. The planting by farmers, of export oriented crops and value-added products as an alternative to the export of forestry products;
 - iv. And implementing a nation-wide cocoa/coconut rehabilitation programme;
 - v. The planting of rice with a target of developing 3100 hectares committed to rice plantations to meet the national need for rice which is currently averaging 100 kg per person/year;

- vi. The production of crops that will play a significant role in imported product substitution;
 - vii. The conservation, domestication and further commercialization of indigenous animals and plants;
 - viii. Plant biodiversity;
 - ix. Commercial farming as means to controlling price;
 - x. The use of fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, agricultural tools through provision of subsidies associated with their use.
- c. Providing technical and other resource support to enhance:
 - i. Development of oil palm plantations on existing potential sites such as Guadalcanal plains, Malaita Province, Western Province, Vangunu and other provinces with geographical potentials;
 - ii. The introduction of out-grower schemes to provide resource owner participation in the development process particularly in relation to palm oil production
 - iii. Downstream-processing of crude palm oil into value-added products;
 - iv. Diverse livestock production to increase the range of products produced locally including honey, eggs, and meat;
 - d. Developing and maintaining a pool of trained agriculturists available to meet the changing national demands in the formal, private and non-formal sectors.
 - e. Improving decision making:
 - i. through the provision and sharing of information by having an active Agriculture Information Unit;
 - ii. by having an active Marketing Information Service;
 - iii. by strengthening the Agriculture and Land Use planning unit; and
 - iv. by coupling planning decisions with a strong community-based development planning model.
 - f. Providing incentives for young people to participate in agriculture, forestry and fisheries developments
2. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources shall ensure that increased fisheries productivity plays an integral role in sustainable food security for the population of the Solomon Islands and increased livelihoods for rural fishers and others employed in the fisheries resources sector by:
- a. Establishing of, and the more effective enforcement of, marine protected areas to increase the sustainability of the sector;
 - b. Introducing appropriate aquaculture species and providing technical and other resource support to develop aquaculture opportunities;
 - c. Identifying suitable vessels and fishing techniques for rural fishermen; and

- d. Ensuring access to industrial fishing infrastructure for community-based fishermen.
3. Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries authorities shall enhance agricultural and fisheries productivity in a changing climate by:
 - a. Reforming, restructuring and building capacity within their respective areas of responsibility to better meet the needs of food producers and fishermen;
 - b. Collaborating with development partners and donors to conduct a study to identify possible impacts of climate change on food security in the country and region and to identify measures to mitigate/ adapt to impacts of climate change on food security.

4.3 Adding Health Value to Food Produced and Processed within and Imported into the Solomon Islands

1. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services, provincial and local health authorities shall work with importers, producers and processors to encourage an increased attention to adding health value to food produced and processed within and imported into the Solomon Islands;
2. Importers, processors and traders shall ensure iodized salt and fortified flour is imported into and used mandatorily in the Solomon Islands in accordance with regulatory requirements;
3. Food producers and processors shall ensure good agricultural and good hygienic practices are applied with food under their control.
4. Food processors will be encouraged and supported to commit resources to product development with a focus on adding health value.

4.4 Food Standards that are harmonized with Standards of other Pacific Island Countries and with the Codex Alimentarius

1. The Government of the Solomon Islands shall:
 - a. Develop and endorse transparent food control regulations and standards based where appropriate on guidance by the Codex Alimentarius and harmonized where appropriate with other Pacific island countries;
 - b. Develop and apply food standards for high, medium, and low fat, salt and sugar foods;

- c. Intensify enforcement to better protect the safety and suitability of locally produced and processed food;
 - d. Strengthen the risk-based nature of food control in the Solomon Islands through the development and application of risk-based imported food control guidelines;
 - e. Identify, assess and introduce appropriate actions for streamlining import and export procedures;
 - f. Enhance the collection and sharing of information on food contamination and foodborne diseases to better inform risk management practices; and
2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and Provincial and local authorities shall
 - a. Together with health authorities, develop and enforce primary production regulations and standards based where appropriate on guidance by the Codex Alimentarius and harmonized where appropriate with other Pacific island countries;
 - b. Enhance enforcement to better protect the safety of locally produced food;
 - c. Enhance the collection and sharing of information on the use of pesticides, antibiotics and animal hormones to better inform risk management practices; and
 - d. Promote the development of a farmers' association as a means for controlling pricing.

4.5 Scaling up Efforts for Better Nutrition, Particularly Among the Most Vulnerable Populations

1. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Provincial and local health authorities shall promote good infant and young child feeding practices, based on exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age and beyond, with adequate, safe and nutritious complementary foods, from 6 months by:
 - a. Training of health staff (including a particular focus on all staff who work in delivery rooms; Maternal and Child Health care centers and pediatric clinics) on breastfeeding with updated WHO materials;
 - b. Assessing hospitals' capacities for and application of the baby friendly hospital initiative and re-launch the initiative;
 - c. Incorporating aspects of the Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes into mandatory standards;
 - d. Developing of a national plan on the Code implementation

- e. Conducting national and local level training on Code and Code implementation for both health staff and other key stakeholders including consumer associations;
 - f. Establishing a community-based model targeting access to the poor and to remote islands;
 - g. Focusing advocacy on women's groups to increase their advocacy for exclusive breastfeeding; and
 - h. Engaging mass media.
2. The MHMS, Provincial and local health authorities shall consider weekly iron (and other vitamin/minerals) supplements as a possible alternative approach depending on progress with fortification;
 3. The MHMS shall examine the feasibility of providing healthy food to schools in remote areas;
 4. The MHMS will assess nutritional composition of foods derived from crops and share the information with all key stakeholders including MAL.

4.6 Strengthening Social Marketing and Awareness Raising to Increase the Number of Consumers Making Safer and Healthier Food Choices

1. The MHMS, Provincial and local health authorities, and women's groups shall:
 - a. Promote healthy diets based on increasing availability and access to local foods;
 - b. Promote fortified foods to improve the imported food supply, particularly staples such as wheat, rice, salt, and oil;
 - c. Conduct information dissemination campaigns in relation to standards developed to better address non-communicable diseases and associated labeling requirements;
 - d. Strengthen food safety education for producers, consumers in general and school children;
 - e. Introduce a locally-adapted programme to achieve behavioural change through the WHO Communication for Behavioral Impact (COMBI) approach to increase the extent to which exclusive breastfeeding is practiced.

4.7 Strengthening Research and Appropriate Technology Development in Primary Production

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock will undertake research:
 - a. That focuses on farming systems and active on-farm participatory research that responds to day-to-day problems encountered by farmers;
 - b. Testing, importing, bulking, and distributing improved crop varieties;
 - c. That aims to minimize post-harvest losses of the main food products;
 - d. To promote alternative approaches and practices for sustainable food security; and
 - e. To consider the establishment of diagnostic analytical capacity

4.8 Increasing Emergency Preparedness and Responsiveness

1. To ensure that government, industry and consumers are able to be adequately prepared for, and able to apply in a timely manner the actions necessary for responding to, emergencies that affect food security, food safety and nutrition, all relevant Government Departments shall undertake integrated work to:
 - a. Strengthen integrated food security information systems to effectively forecast, plan and monitor supplies and utilization for basic food commodities;
 - b. Establishment of integrated food security information unit
 - c. Conduct a food security assessment and identify underlying causes of food insecurity;
 - d. Collect and periodically update and share information on supply and demand/ utilization for main food commodities;
 - e. Develop an early warning, monitoring and surveillance information systems as a basis for sound development planning and policy decision to address food security, including sharp rise of food prices and natural disasters.
2. To ensure that government, industry and consumers are able to be adequately prepared for, and able to apply in a timely manner the actions necessary for responding to, emergencies that affect food safety, the MHMS, MAL and MFMR shall:
 - a. Strengthen procedures, including tracing and recall systems in conjunction with industry and the Ministry of Commerce, to rapidly identify, investigate and control food safety incidents;
 - b. Strengthen the national INFOSAN network; and

- c. Advise WHO of those incidents that fall under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005).

Chapter 5 Implementing the Policy

In order to implement the policy, a joint plan of action will be prepared by the 3 Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Health and Medical Services. The plan of action will be drafted using a working group derived from the 3 Ministries and other key stakeholders. The plan of action will address each of the prescribed strategies and will be for the 6 year period covered by the policy. The plan will prescribe who is responsible for each particular action and how the achievements can be monitored and assessed. The latter will be achieved by setting SMART indicators that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.