

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Existing Legislation, Instruments for Implementing Agricultural Policy.

a) The Constitution:

The Constitution is known as the Solomon Islands Independence Order of 1978 (LN. No.43). It is the supreme law of the land protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual citizen of the country. The Constitution states, that the natural resources of the country including the land are vested in its people and government. Landowners are empowered through national legislation, to act as decision-makers for natural resources and environmental management practices on their land. It is therefore presumed to be the resource-owners' responsibility to manage natural resources wisely for benefit of present and future generations. The Constitution recognizes the defector rights vested by customary law of ownership.

b) Trade Facilitation and Revenue Collection:

The Custom Act (Cap. 121) 1960; various amendments during 1963-1987:

It also regulates and collects taxes and duties imposed on dutiable goods. Custom Act plays an important role in the control of levels of imports of goods. There is need for revision of this Act to consider current needs of international trade agreements such as WTO.

c) Cooperative Society Act (Cap.164) 1953 amendments 1987:

The act provides for the formation and to regulate the operation of cooperative societies.

d) Plant/Animal Pests and Diseases:

The Diseases of Animal Act (Cap. 37) amendments-1972; the Agriculture and Livestock Order (Cap. 80) 1978; the Agriculture Quarantine Act 1982; the Quarantine Order (Cap 34) 1986 and the Handling of Container Rules 1994. All these instruments make provisions for the purpose of preventing the introduction into and spread of plant/animal pest or disease. It prohibits, regulates and controls the importation and movement of plant/animal and products.

e) Livestock Development

Livestock Development Authority (Cap.41) 1977: covers all aspects of livestock production and commercial development of its products. It also promotes development of the livestock industry in Solomon Islands. This act needs revision to cater for the planned cattle rehabilitation and small livestock development programs.

f) Export Promotion and Export Marketing

The Commodity Export Marketing Authority (CEMA)(Cap. 36) 1985 is to promote the export of commodities, assist and develop commodities industries with a view to secure efficient marketing of nominated/regulated products such as coconut and coconut products (green or dried), copra, cocoa, palm oil, palm kernel, palm based products, spices/chillies and other products. CEMA played an important role in facilitation of and enhanced export trade of agricultural commodities.

g) Credit Union Act (Cap.165) 1986:

It regulates the operation of Credit Unions in SI. To provide for matters connected to CUs and to promote thrift and create a source of Credit at fair and responsible rate of interest primarily for productive purposes. It also covers the savings of members either as payments, shares or deposits.

h) Bee Industry Act (Cap. 173) 1996:

Protects the Bee Industry and makes provisions for the purpose of preventing the introduction and spread of pests or diseases affecting bees. It prohibits and regulates the importation or movement of bees, comb, bee products, hives, containers or other appliances used in connection with bee keeping.

i) Environment Act 1998:

It protects the environment and natural resources including land. The Act was introduced to facilitate major developments including in agriculture, which set the rules for conducting Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), however the Act as it stands falls short in regulations and enforcement.

j) Wildlife Protection and Management - Draft Bill 1998:

Protects and regulates any trade in wildlife. This is essential in compliance to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) international obligations especially for protection of indigenous wild life and conservation of local biodiversity.

k) Pure Food Act 1996 and Pure Food (Fishery Products) Regulations 2005:

Control safe use and trade of food products. Regulations are needed to cater for new developments such as roadside preparation and sale of cooked food. Act is essential in agriculture sector development in terms of chemical residues including pesticide and herbicide residues in processed, cooked and fresh produce.

l) Consumer Protection Act (Cap.63) 1995:

Guides safety and quality standards for good food (e.g., GMO free). The Act makes provisions for the protection of the consumers for the establishment of Trade Practices.

m) The Biosecurity, Draft Bill 2008:

The Biosecurity Bill has the objectives of preventing the entry and spread of animal and plant pests and diseases into and throughout the country; to control their establishment and spread. It also caters for global changes that are occurring and in compliance with international trade and relevant obligations such as WTO, SPS Rules and movements of GMOs and LMOs.