



Enhancing resilience for food and nutrition security in small-island economies

High-level panel organised by the CTA and the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

In the context of [the IFPRI/2020 conference](#):
“Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security”

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15th May 2014
8h30-10h00, Room Lalibela 3C

Recognising specific vulnerabilities of SIDS and building resilience

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are more vulnerable to economic shocks and natural hazards compared to other countries or regions.

Although SIDS have significant differences in terms of size, population, socio-economic conditions, infrastructure and standards of living, there are many disadvantages that derive from their small size. This include a narrow range of resources, excessive dependence on international trade, high transport and communication costs, high population density, and so on. Due to their small size, isolation and the fragility of island ecosystems, their renowned biological diversity is among the most threatened in the world. Natural disasters are of special concern to small islands because of their dependence on agriculture and tourism which are particularly vulnerable to natural and environmental degradation.

Food security is also of concern due to the vulnerability and limited scale of agriculture, already facing uncertain impacts from temperature and precipitation changes. Agriculture has been the mainstay for survival and economic development in many SIDS. Many islands are highly dependent on imported food and agricultural products, and very susceptible to changes in world food prices. Such prices may spike upwards as climate change exacerbates droughts and floods in the world's major agricultural producing regions. There is usually great competition for land resources from tourism, agriculture and other land activities, and the various uses should be carefully planned.

In islands where tourism is the dominant activity, most, if not all, foods and beverages are imported, leaving their economies susceptible to changes in world food prices. Such prices may spike upwards as climate change exacerbates weather conditions in the world's major agricultural-producing regions. Promoting local supply linkages in agriculture will therefore have a two-fold benefit; improving food and nutrition security, and enhancing value added for domestic and regional agricultural products.

Enhancing economic and trade resilience: policy implications and transformative partnerships

Changes in global markets and loss of preferential market access for traditional products - such as sugar, bananas, rice - have led to the further marginalisation of many SIDS, putting them under increased pressure. New opportunities have arisen in value-added goods and services and niche markets at local, regional and international levels. In order to benefit from these, it is necessary to ensure that producers receive the right incentives, and that governments make strategic investments targeting institutions and infrastructure that will bolster the potential of the sector and assist with its transformation.

Building resilience against increasing volatility and external shocks requires appropriate agricultural and trade policies to reduce import dependence and boost local production.

Developing the capacities of SIDS to diversify production, enhance productivity and add value through quality niche products requires an optimisation of the use of indigenous capacities and resources. In order for this objective to be achieved sustainably, SIDS will have to innovate, develop new technologies, and transform their adaptation and mitigation techniques.

To move from a position of vulnerability and dependence to one of resilience, small island economies must also explore new areas of economic development and strengthen diversification strategies. Sound policies focused on broadening the “options” for small island economies should be designed to exploit the inter-linkages between sectors like agriculture, tourism, industry, ICTs, finance etc. The services sector, and in particular agro-tourism, represent a genuine opportunity to link local producers to agribusiness.

Public private partnerships (PPPs) are key to addressing the main challenges of small islands in terms of regional trade, infrastructure, transport and communication and access to capital.



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High-Level Panel

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Bringing together experts from SIDS and ACP countries, this high-level panel will feed into the [Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States](#) (Samoa, September 2014) on food and nutrition opportunities for island developing states. Areas to be discussed include: (i) the policies and strategies to boost production and trade of nutritious and healthy food; (ii) sharing best practices in linking agriculture, health and tourism to create employment, reduce food imports and add value to local and regional trade; (iii) the enhancement of smart public-private partnerships in agribusiness.

Chair: Michael Hailu, Director, CTA

Panelists:

- Developing resilience through better understanding of vulnerability
Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
- Building resilience through trade and green growth
Ambassador Edwin Laurent, Senior Advisor, The Caribbean Green Economy Initiative
- Farm to table: opportunities and connections that farms have with tourism industry
Mereia Volavola, CEO, Pacific Island Private Sector Organization (PIPSO)
- Linking small farmers with agribusiness chains to strengthen local production
Adimaimalaga Fanny Tafunai, Women in Business in Development, Samoa
- Perspective of Caribbean farmers to resilience in food production and trade
Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator, Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN)
- Expanding economic opportunities of women's farmers and entrepreneurs
Carmen Nurse, President, Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP)
- Main drivers to build a food resilient Pacific
Gibson Susumu, Food security expert, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- New opportunities for linking agriculture and health resilience through organic production
Sant Kumar, President, Fiji Organic Producers Association, Foundation Member, Pacific Organic Producers Association (FOPA)

Communicating SIDS agenda through e-discussions and social media reporting

CTA, IFPRI and Farming First will facilitate inclusive e-consultations around the key areas discussed at the high-level panel and will facilitate wide dissemination through social reporting.