



GOVERNMENT OF REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY (NFNSP)

June 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Food and Nutritional Security Status

1. Food and nutritional security remains one of the most important pillars to sustainable development and economic growth in all countries and Seychelles is no exception. Government therefore commits itself to ensure a consistent supply of nutritious, affordable and safe foods for all Seychellois.

2. The Republic of Seychelles is a “Small Island Developing State”, all of which share several unique and common characteristics. All are vulnerable to economic, social and environmental challenges. These arise from the interplay of their smallness, remoteness, geographical dispersion, vulnerability to natural disasters, the fragility of their ecosystems, constraints on transport and communication, isolation from markets, vulnerability to exogenous economic and financial shocks, soaring food prices on international markets, a limited internal market, lack of natural resources, growing populations and changing consumption patterns, limited fresh water supplies, heavy dependence on food imports to meet domestic needs and limited commodities, reliance on only one or two economic pillars, depletion of nonrenewable resources, slow progress in developing and deploying science and technology to address development challenges, limited ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale and migration of experienced and skilled professionals. They are also vulnerable to exogenous shocks that may be brought about by regional and global geo-political events and global economic perturbations, all of which can rapidly contribute towards food insecurity.

3. Seychelles is classified as an upper middle income country (World Bank List of Economies 2012), with a GDP of US\$ 1.01 billion and a per capita GDP of US \$25 000 (2011), yet 17% of Seychellois live below the national poverty line which in Seychelles is estimated as 13,554 Seychelles rupees per adult equivalent per year.

According to the FAO definition, food security is understood to “exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern” (World Food Summit 1996).

On the other hand, “Nutrition security is when food security is combined with education, a sanitary environment, adequate health services and proper care and feeding practices to ensure a healthy life for all household members”. (UNSCN 6th Report on the World Nutrition Situation).

4. Seychelles has a population of approximately 90 000 people (mid 2011), with an estimated population growth rate, in 2012, of 0.922 percent (CIA World Factbook 2012). Food and nutritional security in the Seychelles is a growing concern for the majority of its inhabitants. A growing population (albeit slowly) and international factors such as changes and uncertainties in global food systems and volatility in food prices driven by many factors, including climate change, impact heavily on food and nutritional security. Seychelles is highly dependent on food importation and hence increasingly exposed to non-accessibility, brought about by exporting countries limiting or even stopping exports of some food commodities.

5. Food imports in 2011 totaled around \$87.79 million, while food exports amounted to \$40.88 million, of which 91% was attributable to fish and fish products. Production of local vegetables and fruits decreased from 65% in 1995 to 54% in 2011 and 50% in 2012. Local poultry production fell from 80% in 2008 to 20% in 2009/2010, 27% in 2011 and to 10% in 2012. The drastic fall in production of local poultry was a consequence of certain exercises within the economic reform programme on imported foods in 2008 and the subsequent importation of cheaper and / or highly subsidized poultry products from Brazil (74%), France (8.35%), Denmark (6.66%) and UAE 4.28% of Brazilian origin. These factors coupled with inefficiencies in the value chain and high input costs resulted in 14 of the 17 chicken farms that were operational in 2008 going out of business (The Seychelles Broiler Value Chain Analysis 2011).

6. Considering the many limitations and constraints that face the Seychelles, such as its small size, remoteness, and lack of many of the natural resources, which many other countries are blessed with, the country has been doing well in meeting the targets of the MDGs, especially in the fields of health, education, poverty eradication and the environment. The present focus is how to achieve more and to sustain the capacity and the systems to eradicate poverty and to ensure access to nutritious food for all.

7. The universal right to food includes sufficient intake of calories and the right to nutritious food that guarantees health, growth and development at all stages of life of all Seychellois and including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and the special requirements of women and children

8. Changing lifestyles and consumption of mainly imported highly processed foods and other obesogenic factors have resulted in a significant increase in the commonness of non-communicable diseases. The prevalence of overweight (including obesity) in all sex and age categories increased markedly between 1989 and 2004 from 29% to 52% in men and from 50% to 67% in women. The prevalence of obesity increased from 4% to 15% in men and from 23% to 34% in women (Bovet et al. 2008).

9. In 2004, cardio-vascular complications accounted for 40% of all deaths in Seychelles, while diabetes and hypertension rates were at 14% and 40%, respectively (Seychelles Heart Study, 2004). Moreover, the Seychelles Child Development study showed that pregnant mothers were not obtaining their optimum nutritional needs during pregnancy (Bonham, 2009) and that consumption of fruits and vegetables remain considerably below the recommended levels of the Seychelles Dietary Guidelines (Seychelles Heart Study, 2004)

10. It can be concluded from the above that the country is becoming nutritionally insecure. The combination of food and nutrition insecurity is a threat to sustainable social and economic development. The current allocation of the national budget to health care and welfare is high and growing and yet is insufficient to address the prevention and public health needs associated with lifestyle risk factors. Government is concerned about the sustainability of this budget.

11. Government of Seychelles recognizes the risks and consequences of hunger and malnutrition in terms of national ability and capacity to achieve sustainable social and economic development. This is primarily through its impact on productivity through high occurrence of chronic illnesses (NCDs), impact on children's learning abilities, high and unsustainable child and adult health and welfare support, as well as potential disruption of social harmony

12. Government is also mindful of the risks and challenges of sustaining its largely import-based food and nutrition security, international food price volatility, local land and water allocation and use policies, natural disasters (tsunami, storms, volcanic eruptions), piracy at sea, regional conflict and war, and other unforeseen global occurrences like the volcanic ash that disrupted international trade/travel flows in early 2012

Never the less Government recognizes that food imports will continue to provide a substantial portion of foods consumed locally and hence, should not be ignored as a major component in national food and nutrition security until such time as the local agricultural sector is revitalized and develops to reduce the need for some imported foods and that fish continues to provide the major portion of the protein component of the Seychellois diet, currently accounting for some 35-40% of total protein consumed. Thus, the quality of imported foods should be assessed so that the nutritional security of the population is guaranteed.

1.2 Historical and emerging issues for food and nutrition security

13. The global food crisis of 2008-09 brought to the fore issues on food systems, which until then were largely ignored. Some of the key issues in this regard include:

- i. Globalisation of food and food systems made food availability and accessibility at household/community level highly sensitive to changes and decisions in other countries and continents.
- ii. The increased frequency and severity in the adverse effects of weather and climate change on crops, livestock and fisheries production.
- iii. Growing populations and a growing middle class with increased purchasing power to afford more and "better" food. World population reached 7 Billion in 2012, growing at a global average of 1.15 % per annum.
- iv. Growing opportunities and volumes for intra-regional and trans-boundary trade.
- v. Growing pressure on land, water, crops, fisheries and livestock resources and consequently on food security.
- vi. Re-emergence of discussions and debate on national food sovereignty issues.

14. Some of these key issues and factors will impact on Seychelles' outlook and efforts to ensure food and nutritional security for its people. Therefore, Government will continually pay attention to align, strengthen and ensure appropriate policies, international and regional agreements and actions on food and nutrition security for the people of Seychelles.

15. The specific in-country issues and trends that will be key in considering food and nutrition security policy and programs include:

- i. The growing collective and widespread acknowledgement that responsibility for food and nutrition security in the Seychelles cuts across various Ministries, departments, parastatals and the private sector, each of which has specific and defined roles. Government has the responsibility to provide the necessary leadership and mechanisms to strengthen and align collaboration and alliances to enhance coordination, coherence, synergies and complementarities to enhance the individual and collective ability to deliver on the country's food and nutritional security needs. To achieve this, Government acknowledges the need to support and facilitate inclusive and cross-sectoral consultations and dialogue, driven by a shared vision, common policy goals and objectives and collective responsibility.
- ii. The growing urge within state and non-state players to enhance and streamline effectiveness and efficiency in the use of Government and national resources in addressing the food and nutritional security priorities and agenda.
- iii. Seychelles' recently adopted Sustainable Development Strategy has identified five focus areas to reduce the country's vulnerability to external shocks and to build resilience in the national economy. These are:
 - a) Climate change, renewable energy and water
 - b) Human resource development
 - c) Economic infrastructure, including transport and ICT
 - d) Food security, Trade and Diversification
 - e) Development of National Statistics

16. The economic importance of the agricultural sector has diminished over the past three decades. The fisheries sector is based principally on industrial tuna fishing activity and canned tuna exports and remains one of the main pillars of the economy.

17. With the collapse of the plantation economy, agriculture has been stigmatized as a job for the uneducated and the poor. The vast majority of parents would not encourage their children to take up agriculture as a career. There is no preferential treatment for farmers to access finance, either from the Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS) or the commercial banks, high interest rates, high input costs and the level of risk makes it difficult to attract investment to the sector. The 2008 policy on the liberalization of imports for meat and meat products has struck a hard blow to the livestock sector and many producers have been pushed out of business. Hence, there is the strong need to remodel the perception of agriculture and make it attractive to our youth. There is also a need to encourage the food producing entrepreneurs through better loan schemes and other financial support

18. The land tenure issue is regarded as one of the major constraints to serious investment in agriculture. Leases should ideally be for minimum of 40 years, but which can be repealed on the basis of non-performance. The DBS is of the view that food Security in Seychelles is a unique problem and slightly different to what is normally the case in African countries and that this means that special instruments must be found to support Agriculture and Fisheries.

1.3 Past and current food security and nutrition related policies and initiatives in Seychelles

19. As mentioned above, the recently adopted National Sustainable Development Strategy identified five focus areas. These five areas will influence and impact directly on policies and efforts to realise food and nutrition security in the Seychelles

20. Policies and other relevant documents which related directly and/or indirectly to issues of food and nutrition security include:

- i. The Agricultural Development Strategy (2007-2011) launched in November 2007.
- ii. The Food Security Strategy 2008-2011 launched May 2008 that was developed in response to the global food and economic crisis coupled with the IMF imposed economic restructuring program for Seychelles.
- iii. The Seychelles Biosecurity Policy (draft) is being developed through an international project on Biosecurity with the UNDP/GEF.
- iv. The National Medium Term priority Framework was developed with FAO support to identify priority areas where FAO can support the Seychelles Agricultural sector
- v. A National School Nutrition Policy providing a framework for strategies and initiatives to utilize schools as sites for improving the nutritional well-being of school-going children
- vi. The 2005 Fisheries Policy (being revised and updated and expected to be ready in May 2013). The new policy reflects the CAADP principles and values
- vii. Seychelles Dietary Guidelines 2008 which forms the basis of healthy eating education and targets the whole population of 2 years and above.
- viii. The Hospital infant Feeding Policy (draft) which aims to promote, protect and support optimal infant feeding from birth to 2 years . It targets the staff of Ministry of Health and the families using the health services.

21. Seychelles has a number of designated national and parastatal institutions that are charged with responsibilities related to delivering on the country's food and nutrition security agenda. Government recognizes that several of these institutions will need to be strengthened to execute the new policy in an efficient manner.

22. Seychelles also has a number of private sector enterprises that play an important role in agri- and fisheries processing and provision of services (food importation, bulk food storage, abattoir, and manufacturing of animal feed, poultry hatchery and cold storage) that contribute significantly towards the national food and nutrition security agenda. Government recognizes the pivotal role of the private sector and will promote dialogue and opportunities for closer collaboration.

23. Because of the demand from other sectors there has been an unprecedented loss of agricultural land during the last two decades. More recently, the land allocated for intensive agriculture decreased from 600 ha in 2007 to 350 ha in 2012. However, recognizing the important role of agriculture for national food security the new policies and the pending State Land Bill are both geared towards reversing this trend and to seek additional land for efficient crop and livestock production

1.4 Need for a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy

24. The Seychelles Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP) is specially developed to align and strengthen the country's capacity and ability to deliver on its food and nutrition security objectives and targets in a manner that ensures efficiency and sustainability in resource use, able institutions and human capacity and resilience in the face of internal and external shocks as well as progressive change in key parameters such as population size.

25. The need for a NFNSP is exemplified by the fact that 72% of food consumed in 2011 was imported, whereas the country has the potential for increased production of safe, healthy and nutritious food. This is further exemplified by the fact that 60% Seychellois are overweight with 25% of this group being obese. A variety of food products imported are high in salt, sugar and fat with little or no nutritional benefits.

26. Specifically, the policy will enable Seychelles Government to provide leadership with regard to:

- i. ensuring program and investment interventions that are consistent and supportive of short and long term development and growth priorities, goals and objectives
- ii. ensuring coordination, coherence and comprehensiveness in strategies and programs on food and nutritional security
- iii. strengthening resilience and capability within Seychelles' internal systems to anticipate and respond to internal and external shocks and changes in the food systems, including weather and climate change extremes, price volatility, etc...
- iv. strengthening accountability in food and nutrition security support and facilitation systems including inclusive decision making and reinforcement of collective responsibility among the various players and stakeholders

27. The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy is an essential and integral part of the Seychelles Government/WHO strategy "Health for All". Food Security and Nutrition policies are necessary to ensure that the population has access to adequate, safe and healthy foods and to maintain optimal nutritional status of the population. It is therefore pivotal that Seychelles has its own food and nutrition policy, which reflects the local culture and economic climate.

28. The National Food Security and Nutrition Policy will be the key instrument in helping and guiding Government to translate its constitutional obligations to support and facilitate right to food for its people. The NFNSP will demonstrate the Government's renewed commitment to zero hunger and health through nutritious food in Seychelles

29. The National Food Security and Nutrition Policy is not meant to replace specific sectoral policies, but instead bring additional value in terms of defining and making the realization of synergies and complementarities possible and ensure more coherent and systematic implementation of existing national and sectoral policies and strategies to effectively address issues of food insecurity and malnutrition in Seychelles.

30. A multi-sector policy alignment and a common vision in regard to food security and nutrition was set in motion at a high level Ministerial Food Security retreat in November 2012 that was attended by the Ministers of Finance, Education, Natural Resources and Industry, Social Affairs, Community Development and Sports, Land and Housing, Environment and Energy, Labour and Human Resources Development, Foreign Affairs and Health. At this retreat the Ministers committed themselves to the reorientation and revitalization of agriculture in Seychelles as part of the country's food and nutritional security agenda

1.5 Context of the NFNSP

31. Addressing food and nutrition security is inherently multi-sectoral, dealing with complex and not necessarily aligned interfaces. It is therefore, understandable that a large number of Acts, policies and

strategies, all of which impact directly or indirectly on food and nutrition security, must be carefully considered in the translation and implementation of this policy.

32. Internally, the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles commits the Government to --“develop a democratic system which will ensure the creation of an adequate and progressive social order guaranteeing food, clothing, shelter, education, health and a steadily rising standard of living for all Seychellois”, and in Part 1, Article 29 the Constitution guarantees the right to the protection of health, and Article 37 guarantees the right to a decent and dignified existence and that citizens are not left without any support

33. Within the context of limited available land, Government is keen to re-examine the opportunities and potential in the agricultural sector, including fisheries and aquaculture and forestry. This policy will galvanize the necessary dialogue and consultations to reposition agriculture in addressing food and nutrition security even when, understandably, food imports are likely to remain a significant component of the country’s ability to meet its food requirements.

34. Seychelles is in this regard also highly committed to international agreements and declarations, to which it is a signatory, to end hunger and extreme poverty, including at the World Food Summit of 1996, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the expected post-2015 MDG related agreements and commitments as well as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) endorsed by the AU Heads of State and Government in Maputo in 2003

35. The NFNSP has been developed such that it is consistent with the national vision for sustainable development. It serves as an overarching policy to integrate food and nutrition security issues and initiatives across sectors and disciplines.

36. Food security in the Seychelles is considered to be a pivotal pillar of sustained economic and social progress and development and this is the principal *raison d’être* for the formulation of a new National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This policy replaces the National Food Security Policy of 2008.

1.6 Overall Goal and Objectives of the NFNSP

37. Recognizing present and future opportunities and challenges, the goal of the Food Security and Nutrition Policy is to guarantee the right to safe, healthy and adequate food at all times and to satisfy the nutritional needs for optimal health for all persons living in Seychelles.

38. Specifically, the policy aims to:

- i. To ensure food security for all Seychellois through efficient and effective agricultural production, sustainable fisheries and balanced by importation of healthy and nutritious food
- ii. To improve and optimize the nutritional status, health and wellbeing of all Seychellois
- iii. Strengthen and align institutional resilience and capacity to effectively and appropriately respond to changes and shocks in food and nutrition security needs including an adequate and responsive knowledge and science base

39. Other salient objectives of the policy to enhance food and nutrition security are to reduce foreign exchange leakage, enhance farm income, improve livelihoods and create national wealth for

investment in other sectors, such as mariculture, optimize the use of scarce national resources such as land, labour, capital, technology, management, enhancing the agriculture sector's contribution to job creation and the development and implementation of a dynamic, sustained and determined awareness campaign on the benefits of healthy eating and wellbeing.

1.7 Scope of the NFNSP

40. The NFNSP has a broad scope, thereby supporting the articulation of a comprehensive and integrated inter-sectorial and inter-disciplinary agenda. It covers all key aspects of food and nutrition including articulating the correlations and linkages between advances on food and nutrition, economic growth and poverty eradication. The overall national development plan provides the overarching scope and framework for the NFNSP.

41. The NFNSP outlines the range of priority areas and principles for Government interventions to ensure the right and access to safe and nutritious food by all Seychellois. It is formulated with a purposefully broad scope at a level that provides the basis for seeking resources, advocating priority interventions and developing operational and management strategies. These in turn are expected to allow action and intervention plans to not only be innovative and technically strong, but also to establish and maintain necessary linkages across sectors and with the private sector, to ensure effective and cost-efficient implementation

42. The NFNSP puts into practice Government's resolve and commitment to create a dynamic policy framework that is responsive to the country needs and is reviewed and adjusted on a periodic basis in line with changing circumstances and new/emerging pressures on the national and global food systems. The policy is sufficiently broad in scope yet specific in addressing challenges posed by globalization, regional market integration, demographic change and increasing pressure on and demand for natural resources

43. To ensure national food and nutrition security, the policy will galvanize dialogue and consultations as well as the necessary action and programs on among other the following issues and aspects - the reorientation and revitalization of the agriculture sector and industry including market and trade incentives; efficient management and diversification of the artisanal and semi-industrial fisheries; facilitation of necessary education and public awareness on healthy eating; support and facilitation of appropriate food safety net interventions; promoting locally produced food; clearly defining and facilitating the risk sharing role of government in partnerships with food producers/ago-processors; galvanizing dialogue and consultations on national food sovereignty and to negotiate these under WTO rules and regulations; enhance investments in demand based applied and adaptive agricultural and fisheries research, ensuring biosecurity and food safety; encouraging the expansion of household and school gardens; assessing the short, medium and long term agricultural land requirements to ensure food security of all Seychellois juxtaposed with current agricultural production efficiencies, appropriate budgeting and resource allocation and managing the dependence and risks associated to having a significant portion of food needs acquired through imports; a politically and technically sound strategic food reserves strategy and programme

1.8 Organizational structure of the NFNSP Document

2. SECURING FOOD AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE SEYCHELLES

2.1 Securing national sovereignty in food and nutritional needs

44. In setting the goals for and addressing the problems of food security in the Seychelles, the government further supports (as far as this is possible for a small and remote island state) and commits itself to the policy framework of food sovereignty and the six principles that guide the framework.

Food sovereignty in this policy is defined as *“the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems”* (Declaration of Nyéléni – Forum for Food Sovereignty 2007)

45. Seychelles commits itself to the Principles of food sovereignty and will facilitate appropriate and informed consultations and dialogue on best practice and practical experiences to embrace the principles in the national food and nutrition security strategies and programs. The following Principles of food sovereignty are noted:

- i. **Focuses on Food for People:** Food sovereignty puts the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals at the centre of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies.
- ii. **Values Food Providers:** Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights of farmers, fishers and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food. Policies that undermine and threaten their livelihoods are rejected.
- iii. **Localises Food Systems:** Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together and puts them at the centre of decision-making on food issues. It protects providers from the dumping of food in local markets and consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food. Governance structures, agreements and practices that promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade are rejected.
- iv. **Puts Control Locally:** Food sovereignty places control over land, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations into the hands of local food providers and respects their rights.
- v. **Builds Knowledge and Skills:** Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organisations that conserve develop and manage localised food production and harvesting systems and develop appropriate research systems to support this. Technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these are rejected.
- vi. **Works with Nature:** Food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agro-ecological production and fish harvesting methods that maximise the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change. Food production methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions and which damage the environment and contribute to global warming are rejected.

2.2 Strengthening agriculture and fisheries as key players in food and nutrition security

46. Government recognizes that Agriculture and Fisheries are the two cornerstones of the country's quest for food and nutrition security and will provide an enabling environment in which both sectors can develop and grow sustainably.

47. Seychelles is following through with its resolve and commitment to the CAADP Compact to allocate to agriculture and fisheries the necessary resources for improved performance and productivity— from commercial intensive production systems through to home gardening and across the whole value chain. This will include aquaculture and possible production of exotic high value products such as mushroom and flowers

48. Government and all concerned players and stakeholders will strive to ensure the necessary coherent legislation as well as scaling-up investments in appropriate technologies, awareness and capacity development to ensure that the use of the land, water, forests, other ecosystems and natural resources is consistent with the basic requirements for sustainable use, maintaining resilience and biodiversity conservation. Degradation of the natural resource base will undermine efforts to achieve viable and sustainable food and nutrition security for the people of Seychelles.

49. A higher status of food and nutrition security in the Seychelles will be possible through a sober approach to food sovereignty by modernizing and developing the crop and livestock sectors, developing a mariculture sector and through responsible and sustainable management of the fisheries resources, exploitation of the competitive advantages offered by some of the outer Islands, and balanced by the judicious importation of healthy and nutritious food

2.2.1 Promoting the agricultural value chain

50. The major challenges facing the agriculture sector include issues related to the trade policy on imports, usurpation of agricultural land and land allocation policies, water insecurity, climate change, pests and diseases, sub-optimal supply of quality farm inputs, skills shortage, research and development, access to finance and post harvest losses. Having recognized these challenges Government has resolved to address these issues in the following ways -

- i. Recognising the effects of liberalisation on the local agricultural sector Government has developed its new agriculture trade policy, which is designed to complement the agricultural policy and strongly favours local agriculture, where the latter aims at increasing local food security, resulting in reducing our dependence on food imports and increasing the contribution of agriculture to GDP through increased employment, farm income and local economic activity related to marketing of agricultural products.
- ii. Recognizing that land is a scarce and limited resource Government through the new State Land Bill 2012 will ensure that sufficient acreage of suitable land is allocated to agriculture and food production to ensure that the sector remains viable and that all state agricultural land is protected by law for the purpose of agriculture and that it is fully optimized. Government also recognizes the need to re-examine the land lease policy such that future leases provide greater security for farmers and that promotes investment.

- iii. Despite an annual average rainfall of 3000mm the agricultural sector is water insecure. Government will ensure that sufficient water resources are allocated to the agricultural sector and that the necessary infrastructure and management capacity is readily available to make agricultural water accessible and affordable to all agricultural producers.
- iv. The agricultural sector will most likely be significantly affected by changing weather and climate patterns. Government will ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation techniques and instruments are mainstreamed into agricultural production. Good agricultural practices, which will include climate smart agricultural practices such as integrated pest management, integrated crop management, sustainable land use and organic farming shall be promoted.
- v. The most critical farm inputs include seed, fertilizer and improving the genetics of livestock and knowledge. Government recognizes that the sector cannot advance without these inputs and will facilitate access and availability to improved genetic stock, seed and fertilizers and the national agricultural extension services shall be modernized, and given enhanced ability to respond to the demands as well as requirements of modern commercial farming practices to ensure greater national food output and better farm income.
- vi. An ageing cohort of farmers, reluctance by young Seychellois to take up farming as a career and very few young entrepreneurs characterize the agriculture sector. Sustainable modern agriculture requires new and innovative technologies supported by skilled and qualified human resources. Government will enhance human capacity development at SAA, revitalize the extension services and also provide opportunities for young Seychellois to study climate smart agriculture technologies And align the curriculum of the school of agriculture to meet the demands on the labor market.
- vii. Government recognizes that the demand for local fresh food will most likely not be met in future and therefore commits itself to seek greater regional and international collaboration in research to develop and adapt new technologies and scientific knowhow to intensify production, to maintain the genetic resources of the Seychelles, increase farm income, and enhance national food and nutrition security.
- viii. Small farmers are unable to secure capital at a preferential interest rate for farm expansion and consolidation, hence stagnating farm development. Larger, more enterprising farmers, to whom only loans at high commercial rates are available could also benefit from competitively priced loans. Agricultural under utilization of scarce land resources limits national food production and farm income, impacts negatively on national food output and food and nutrition security. Government commits itself to addressing these problems and to develop appropriate solutions.
- ix. Considerable quantities of seasonally fresh local produce such as fruit and tomatoes is lost and not valorized into value added products, with substantial economic losses. March to October (SE Monsoon season) is the most productive farming season. The rest of the year has far less production, but as a consequence of the poor and inadequate storage and agro-processing, post-harvest losses are high during the season of plenty. Minimizing the gap between the two seasons remains a challenge. Government recognizes the opportunities that are lost and will support innovative initiatives by the private sector to process the excess produce.

- x. Facilitate widespread access to market information at all levels of the value chain and to establish an early warning system to alert of failure in the system: Establishing a system to provide marketing information at all levels of the value chain will ensure that reliable information is available for the marketing of specific agricultural produce.

51. The national agriculture and food security investment plan, pursued by Seychelles within the context of the CAADP implementation process, will provide the base and framework to trigger necessary policy reforms, expand investments and improve/modernise the technological base for increased agricultural production, agro-processing and storage, including an extended base for investment financing for the development of the sector at all levels.

52. Government will also ensure that the country CAADP implementation process and the associated investment plans will help to formulate agriculture and fisheries development policies, which are consistent and supportive of the food and nutrition security agenda. The investment plans will include evidence-based identification of viable agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture development investment priorities, key aspects through which agriculture could contribute to a national growth strategy including identification of strategic commodities, which Seychelles could produce competitively.

53. Currently the agriculture sector produces around 100% and 10% of the demand for eggs and poultry respectively and just about 50% of the demand for fresh fruits and vegetables. Commercial farming of pork is also at low ebb. The Government will examine the constraints impeding growth and formulate an enabling environment to achieve 100% local production of eggs, fresh pork and fresh broiler poultry and a minimum of 80% of fruit and vegetables, using modern and efficient production technologies.

54. Government will encourage and facilitate and support the expansion of high-tech intensive production systems for high value crops. This will include ensuring appropriate provisions to enable investments in high-tech systems, such as green houses and fertigation systems. Handling and packaging of local produce will also be improved to ensure healthy products and to enhance competitiveness.

55. Given the land restrictions, agriculture will be forced to become more intensive, and increase productivity through adopting, adapting and developing new and efficient technologies. To achieve this goal, financial risk will have to be shared with the public sector by way of innovative financing structures and tools and the imposition of trade tariffs to protect farmers such that they can produce the food the country needs, at a profit

56. Government will provide an enabling environment for the establishment of a central wholesale market to improve the marketing of local product and to encourage the hospitality industry to utilize more locally grown agricultural produce.

2.2.2 Home gardens and peri-urban farming

57. Government recognizes that home gardening and smallholder farming on small plots in peri-urban areas are important with great potential to contribute to both food security and nutrition objectives in the national food and nutrition strategy. Government, within the overall agriculture development strategy will ensure such systems are able to access appropriate technologies including seed and fertilizers, some training and access to information. Majority of the householders doing some farming in their backyards are also selling excess in the local markets extending the catchment of households and population that benefit from this entrepreneurship both in terms of food as well as nutrition

58. Government recognizes the need to promote awareness and provide education and training opportunities for the widely dispersed members of the farming communities. The SAA will take the lead and will focus on adoption and adaption of new best practices related to climate smart agriculture. The short video and radio feature programmes on specific agricultural topics and issues, made in the past with the assistance of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), will be re-vitalized and supported.

2.2.3 Enhancing the fisheries value chain

59. The fisheries sector (consisting of the industrial large-pelagic fishery, the semi-industrial fishery and the artisanal fishery) is one of the two most important pillars of the country's economy and fish play a hugely important role in the nutrition of the people, comprising 35-40% of all protein consumed in the Seychelles and with per capita consumption of ca. 65 kg per annum.

60. Fish for local consumption is obtained from the semi-industrial and the artisanal fisheries. The semi-industrial fishery has a large-pelagic longline and a demersal linefish component. Most of the fish from this fishery, except for a small tonnage of linefish and tuna, is exported. The artisanal fishery targets a diverse array of species ranging from hook and line caught demersal and semi-pelagic fish, small semi-pelagic fish caught in nets, small demersal fish caught in traps, and lobsters, octopus and sea cucumbers caught by divers. The artisanal fisheries provide the bulk of all fish consumed locally.

61. In 2010 there were between 400 and 450 fishing vessels and ca. 1550 artisanal fishermen. Between 2008 and 2010 the artisanal catch declined from 4777 to 2595 tons, equating to an 84% drop in fish availability. Stock assessments undertaken by SFA in 2007/2008 revealed that all rock lobsters were fully to over exploited, inshore shark stocks were depleted, while offshore pelagic sharks were fully to over exploited, all demersal linefish stocks were either fully to over exploited, the semi-pelagic line fish stocks and gill net stocks were moderately exploited, while all inshore trap fish stocks were either fully or over exploited. Unless the stocks are managed sustainably the artisanal fishery will not be able to satisfy future demand.

62. While the semi-industrial fishery has been modernised in recent times and is attracting young entrepreneurs, the artisanal fishery has remained stagnant in terms of development, diversification and technological advancement and is characterised by an ageing fleet of vessels, declining catches, few young entrepreneurs and a large proportion of ageing fishermen with low entrepreneurial skills, many uncontrolled and unsanitary points of sale, the absence of value addition and post harvest losses. From an institutional perspective the sector is characterized by limited scientific capacity in fisheries biology, stock assessment and management, limited national research funding, limited research on resource management. In recognition of these challenges, Government undertakes to develop and empower the fisheries sector, including the aquaculture sub-sector to achieve optimum fish production that will improve national food output, increase the sectors contribution to GDP and to the food and nutrition security status of the country in the following ways –

- a. The role of scientific research. Government recognises the pivotal role played by research in the management of marine living resources. To address the scientific skills shortage, particularly in the fields of fisheries biology, stock assessment, management and climate change at SFA, Government will promote and support the training of young Seychellois in marine and mathematical sciences
- b. Given the current status of the stocks it is unlikely that the artisanal fishery has the capacity to increase output to meet future demand. Government, through the SFA, recognizes that the demersal stocks therefore have to be rebuilt through appropriate input and output control measures to sustain current catch rates. Moreover, climate change may also affect future fish availability as a consequence of possible spatial and temporal shifts and / or changes in migratory patterns. The future deficit will have to be made up through imports, diversification and aquaculture.
- c. Recognizing the status of the inshore and offshore demersal stocks Government encourages further diversification and modernization of the semi-industrial fishery to move further offshore and to target new un-fished or underexploited deep water resources. To achieve this goal Government will facilitate access to affordable loans to fishermen to upgrade their vessels and gear to exploit such stocks and will promote fish processing to optimize the use of the resources. Secondly, Government will support initiatives and investigations to develop the fisheries of the outer islands.
- d. Recognizing the age structure of present artisanal and semi-industrial fishermen and how this may jeopardize future fish supply, Government, through the Maritime Training Centre, shall provide more support for training of young people in modern fishing techniques and gear to take up fishing as a career.
- e. Post harvest losses are known to occur but there are no quantitative data with which to assess the magnitude of the problem. In many instances spoilage is related negatively to unsanitary points of sale where fish are exposed to heat and flies and the lack of iceboxes on smaller fishing vessels. Government views this as a needless waste of food and income and will cooperate with local fishing communities to provide better sanitary conditions including concrete tables, water, drainage and shade.

2.3 Mariculture: Opportunities for a new industrial sector

63. Aquaculture in Seychelles is under-developed. Through a scoping study undertaken on its behalf, Government recognizes the potential for high technology cage culture production and ranching of marine species and that the sector can develop into a significant pillar of the economy, through the creation of jobs and wealth. To promote and facilitate the progress of the sector, Government and international partners are supporting the development of a sector plan (including a regulatory framework, application procedures, identification of suitable sites for cages and land based hatcheries) to ensure that the sector develops sustainably according to the Ecosystems Approach to Aquaculture and on international best management practices, in keeping with the environmental consciousness of the Seychelles. Government will promote and support the development of sustainable small, medium and large-scale mariculture operations to increase the supply of fish on the local market.

2.4 Food imports

64. It is recognized that food imports remains an important food and nutrition security strategy for Seychelles and it is also expected to provide a considerable portion of the food consumed in Seychelles in future. However, smart and appropriate interventions and initiatives will need to be put in place to ensure that the food import industry and associated provisions are consistent with local food sovereignty objectives and provide sufficient protection against risks and shocks in global and regional food supply systems

65. In 2011 Seychelles had a food import bill in excess of US\$87.79 million. Seventy two percent of the food consumed in Seychelles is imported. This is a high-risk situation and is unsustainable. While imports of food and agriculture products would remain significant for Seychelles, due to a number of limitations and constraints inherently in the natural and location of the island, Government is committed to increase and optimize on local production of agriculture and food.

66. In recent years import trends have shown annual increases for chicken and beef despite an effective 40% protection (GST and levy) on chicken and 15% GST on beef. With the introduction of VAT, the safeguard afforded to imported meat products has decreased (due to VAT exemption) on most meat except for Poultry, Pork and Goats, whereby a 15% Import Duty has been introduced to mitigate the VAT exemption on the afore-mentioned 3 products. While safeguarding local farmers is deemed necessary, consumer welfare is also considered as there is a need to ensure the continuous availability of affordable food. The increase in demand for meat provides opportunities for local producers to enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

67. Review of the food import legislation and related factors should also take into account alignment and harmonization of the country's trade and national food security and nutrition policies. Imported foods need to be adequately nutritious for the population and hence the need for screening of imported foods. The current trade policy aims at eliminating impediments to trade, in order to allow for sustainable growth and development, poverty reduction and the successful integration of Seychelles into the regional as well as global trading system. This will allow Seychelles to develop and create competitiveness in niche markets

2.5 Access to food

2.5.1 Job creation and poverty alleviation: Incomes and food prices

68. Job creation and generation of wealth are two of the fundamental solutions to food insecurity. Investment in agriculture and aquaculture would create substantial direct employment opportunities and trigger the establishment of dynamic linkages, resulting in further job and wealth creation in the subsidiary service sectors.

69. At the center of access to food is its affordability. The Employment Act specifically takes into account the relationship between wages and the objectives of securing food and good nutrition. To ensure sustainable affordability of food Government will monitor basic food prices in relation to the minimum wage as prescribed by the Act. Where imbalances occur Government will implement appropriate mechanisms to enable continued food affordability.

70. Seychelles has an impressive Human Development Index (HDI). Strategies and associated initiatives as defined in the Medium Term National Development Strategy will serve to further improve the HDI, reduce poverty and guarantee access to affordable and nutritious food for the people of Seychelles.

2.5.2 Access for the vulnerable sections of the population

71. There are sections of the community who for various reasons, and not necessarily and always emergencies, require special support to ensure continued access to food. Most critical and highly vulnerable groups include pregnant women, under five year old babies, school going children especially in the earlier years of schooling and the elderly.

72. Therefore, within the context of safety nets and other strategies, the Government will review existing legislation, initiatives and programs to ensure that all the likely vulnerable groups have got fallback arrangements for continued food and nutrition security. This will also relate to health and medical support provisions and initiatives. Food and nutritional aspects related to people living with chronic conditions such as HIV/Aids, diabetes and cancer and those on ARVs will be reviewed as some of these people may not be able to afford desired levels of nutrition.

3. NUTRITION SECURITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF SEYCHELLES

3.1 Understanding and providing for nutritional security in Seychelles

73. The 2006/2007 household expenditure survey revealed that 18% of Seychellois households are not able to meet basic caloric requirements (2100Kcals per day) and at the same time there is the presence of over nutrition where more than half the population is overweight due to poor eating habits. In Seychelles, 21% of household income is spent on food as compared to 45% in Kenya, 28% in Mauritius and 25% in Brazil.

74. The Food and Nutrition Policy for Seychelles has to ensure that optimum health of the population is achieved through appropriate diet, taking into consideration local food production capacity, the need for food importation and local economic issues

75. Hunger and malnutrition undermines health and people's ability to study and work. It leeches away enterprise, intelligence and energy. It has its most devastating effect on children, stunting their potential as adults and making it more likely that their own offspring will have to endure the same lifelong cycle of deprivation and poverty. Therefore, Seychelles is determined that food and nutrition security is an integral and important component of the country's sustainable development and economic growth agenda

3.2 Nutrition and Health Care

76. Nutrition is the intake of food in relation to the body's dietary needs. Good nutrition through an adequate well balanced diet combined with other healthy lifestyle behaviour is the cornerstone of good health. Poor nutrition can lead to reduced immunity, increased susceptibility to disease, impaired physical and mental development and reduced productivity. Human nutritional needs change with physiological states and life cycle stages.

77. The lifecycle approach focuses on the health needs of individuals through the six stages of the human lifecycle, namely, pre-conception and newborn, early childhood, late childhood, adolescence, adulthood and the elderly. The lifecycle approach ensures that nutritional needs of different age groups and stages of life are addressed appropriately.

78. The NFNSP strives to:

- i. Improve women's nutrition throughout their lifecycle;
- ii. Protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding and safe complementary feeding for infants and young children
- iii. Promote appropriate nutrition for school children and adolescents;
- iv. Promote healthy lifestyles across the population and to specific vulnerable groups;
- v. Improve nutrition care and support for the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable.

79. Associated **interventions** to be initiated include:

- i. Promote the consumption of local, diverse and healthy food across the Lifecycle.

- ii. Promote local healthy food businesses.
- iii. Develop and upgrade food labeling requirements and regulations for both local as well as imported foods.
- iv. Strengthen monitoring of maternal nutritional status.
- v. Test, develop standards and regulate marketing of breast milk substitutes.
- vi. Develop and implement a national communication strategy on infant and young child feeding.
- vii. Institutionalize routine assessment and monitoring of the nutritional status of infants, young children, school children and adolescents and create awareness on healthy diets.
- viii. Strengthen and support community based nutrition programs for the elderly, sick and vulnerable.
- ix. Implement the National School Nutrition Policy which will coordinate all aspects of school nutrition including the curriculum, the school tuck shop, provision of school meals ,training of school personnel and establishing linkages with families and school personnel.

80. Non-communicable diseases are the single most important cause of morbidity and death in the Seychelles. Poor diets and eating habits contribute importantly to obesity at all ages, heart diseases, hypertension and diabetes. These translate into personal suffering, ill health, loss of productivity, loss of income, medical expenses and national economic losses. For these reasons, this policy focuses on the development and implementation of multi-dimensional action plans to promote healthy eating and well-being.

3.3 Education and public awareness on Food Nutrition

3.3.1 Nutritional education in schools

81. Government of Seychelles recognizes that schools including day cares and pre-school, provide the best platform to improve the nutritional well-being of all children. Here students can receive continued and reinforced nutrition messages that can be carried through all life cycle stages. Moreover, the school environment is known to powerfully influence attitudes, preferences and behaviours at a critical age of development during which lifestyles, including eating patterns, are developed. Schools will therefore be used to promote healthy eating and well- being.

82. Through social interactions between students, teachers, parents and others, schools including day cares and pre-school, also provide excellent opportunities to spread the message of healthy food / healthy minds into all communities.

83. No other settings than schools including day cares and pre-school, offer these opportunities. Government will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to maximise these opportunities.

3.3.2 Nutrition and public awareness

84. There is inadequate knowledge and awareness among the general public about good nutrition required to lead healthy and active lives. Therefore there is a need to initiate awareness campaigns, using a multimedia approach to reach all Seychellois, to influence informed decision-making and behavioural lifestyle changes. Mechanisms to counter the advertising campaigns of food of low nutritional value will be initiated by the Government and civil society.

85. Government therefore supports the undertaking of an integrated and holistic nutrition security approach. The sectoral ministries and agencies will be supported in their efforts to gather and manage appropriate data and information.

3.3.3 Nutrition and local cultures and social systems

86. Investing in agriculture and mariculture, coupled with increased food and nutrition awareness will increase consumption of local and wholesome food and ultimately lead to lower demands on the health care sector

87. Changing eating habits and lifestyles have resulted in a significant change in the health status of Seychellois (see paragraph 11). Government therefore promotes the production, promotion, processing, marketing and consumption of indigenous fruits and vegetables, e.g. bread fruit, starfruit, bananas, etc and in particular the use of healthy local ingredients for infant nutrition.

88. Government will support the promotion, marketing and celebration of local food, such as local food and fish expo's or local food days at schools.

4. FOOD SAFETY, STANDARDS AND QUALITY CONTROL

4.1 Food safety and public health

89. The Islands of the Seychelles are blessed with clean and healthy terrestrial and marine environments and clean water, attributes that must be reflected in the food that is produced and consumed in the country. The Government will ensure this by setting and enforcing appropriate guidelines, codes of practice and food standards and by way of public education and awareness programmes.

90. Food Safety in the country is governed by the Food Act of 1987, which is administered by the Ministry of Health with input from other stakeholders such as environmental health, the pollution control unit and others. The act reflects the international norms and standards as outlined in the *Codex Alimentarius*. Other associated acts are the Plant Protection Act, 1996, the Pesticide Control Act, 1996, the Animals (Diseases and Imports) Act, 1991, the Environment Protection Act, 1994 and the Seychelles Bureau of Standards Act of 1987.

91. Food quality and safety in all stages of the food chain are important goals of the NFNSP and must be actively embraced at all levels of food production, processing, marketing and home preparation and in the handling chain by all those involved in the production, provision and supply of food and by the consumers. Government will enhance the capacity of the Seychelles Bureau of Standards and will support civil society initiatives to promote and ensure greater awareness of the importance of food quality and safety. It is expected that this initiative will lead to new employment opportunities along the value chains.

92. The food industry is responsible for developing and managing systems to ensure that the food supplied complies with the requirements set by the competent authorities. The food business operator has primary responsibility for food safety. Government will ensure that minimum standards for food safety are set and monitored by the responsible authorities

93. The level of contaminants (pesticide residue, disease causing organisms, antibiotics and other additives and contaminants or even radioactive substances) along with live organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, protozoa myco-plasma etc. in foods produced locally and imported is a cause for concern for the health of humans, livestock, plants and the environment. In response, Government has developed a Biosecurity Policy that addresses these issues.

94. Government, through the Seychelles Bureau of Standards, Veterinary Services and Department of Health, will provide a range of goods and services as well as establish and adhere to quality standards for improved national food output and hence achieve a better national food and nutrition security status. To achieve this goal it is necessary to clearly identify the role of all available laboratory services and to harmonize service delivery. Government will seek to secure the necessary equipment and skills to ensure that the food standards are maintained and enforced.

4.2 Quality Management and Certification Services

95. The Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS), which includes the Fish Inspection and Quality Control Unit, is responsible for inspection and setting of standards. The SBS administers the *Codex Alimentarius* measures and adheres to the SADC Regional Guidelines for Food and Safety Management. The SBS uses ISO as well as the harmonized SADC standards, is responsible for drafting standards for Seychelles. The SBS has the facilities for the examination and testing of commodities, provides certification of compliance with local and regional standards (SADC, COMESA, EAC) and maintains bilateral scientific and standards interactions and collaboration and maintains a national information centre, provides training in setting up quality management systems and certification under ISO 9001 (2008). The Fish Inspection and Quality Control Unit is authorized to certify fishery products from Seychelles and undertakes factory HACCP audits and spot check inspections of approved establishments and fishing vessels to ensure compliance with the Seychelles Export of Fishery Products Act and other relevant EU regulations. Government recognises that the SBS is restricted by human capacity and commits to enhance and increase capacity at the institution such that it can undertake its mandate in a highly professional and effective manner.

96. Moreover, taking due regard of the cost to consumers the Government will improve its inspection and certification systems on the basis of objective risk assessment appropriate to the circumstances including issues related to international dumping and monitoring.

4.3 Enhanced Food Management and Control Systems

97. Given the shared responsibilities for food safety management the Government will establish a Food Safety Management Committee comprising all competent authorities, which will have the fundamental responsibility to verify and provide assurances as to the conformity of food safety standards and the associated production systems. The Food Safety Management Committee will liaise on all pertinent scientific matters with the SADC Food Safety Scientific Committee, whose function it is to provide scientific advice and scientific and technical support for the Region's legislation and policies in all fields which have a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety.

98. Presently the Seychelles does not have any sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations that apply to importation on frozen or chilled poultry for the domestic market and does not have the capacity to test imported foods. Consequently, it is not clear that the cold-chain has remained intact; what the level of pathogens are, whether there are growth hormones and antibiotics in the meat, whether food additives have been used, what the brine content.

99. To achieve desirable food safety standards and given the paucity of current food and feed standards (microbiological, residue levels and contaminants) the Food Safety Management Committee will, in collaboration with all stakeholders, formulate, develop and promote a new set of national food and feed safety standards, which will include locally produced and imported food and animal feed and feed ingredients and with particular regard to the use of GMO foods, and hormonal and anti-biotic residues.

100. The Food Safety Management Committee will, in collaboration with all stakeholders, define a list of imported food products that will be subjected to regular inspection and testing for hormonal and antibiotic residues of frozen imported meat and nutritional composition, particularly of infant food and food for lactating mothers. To protect the health of our people, and our children in particular, Seychelles has decided to apply the present EU regulations as guidelines and these will be reviewed from time to time.

101. The Food Safety Management Committee will develop a food safety management system and implement it to ensure uniform application by the competent authorities, including provisions for their effective collaboration. The Food Safety Management System as described in the SADC Regional Guidelines for Food Safety Management will form the basis of the Seychelles Food Safety Management System. Essential elements of the food safety management system will include a science-based approach to food safety management, food safety management infrastructure, food safety management legislation, inspection and enforcement services, a well-staffed food laboratory, ICT, product traceability, management of food safety crises, systems for food safety management assurance, education on food safety management, safety of imported and exported foods, novel foods and technologies and participation in international food safety management forums. The Government will ensure that the competent authorities have the ability, resources and human capacity to adhere to, develop and undertake the essential elements

4.4 Promoting Quality Food Production, Storage, Handling and Processing Practices along the value chains

102. Poor hygiene and inappropriate food (including livestock feed) handling and storage contributes to spoilage and post-harvest losses. Consumption of poor quality or spoiled foods poses serious health risks (aflotoxicosis, food poisoning and diarrhoea). Moreover, food safety standards have been implicated (rightly or wrongly) as one of the factors why local produce has not found its way into the hospitality value chain.

103. To improve food safety and quality control within the context of the NFNSP the Government will

- a) Promote safe practices in food production (crop, livestock and fisheries).
- b) Update, review and harmonize the regulatory and institutional framework to improve guidelines, standards, coordination, testing and enforcement, and food labelling.
- c) Promote proper storage and handling to control incidents of food-related or animal feed-related disease outbreaks.

104. The Food Safety Management System will ensure the safety of food for human consumption through adherence to good animal feeding practice at the farm level and best manufacturing practices (BMPs) during the procurement, handling, storage, processing and distribution of animal feed and feed ingredients for food producing animals.

105. Water is used at various stages of the food (crops, fish and livestock) production continuum. To ensure food safety, the Government will ensure an adequate supply of safe, clean water for registered food producers and processors.

106. In circumstances where a risk to life or health exists but where there is scientific uncertainty, the precautionary principle will provide the mechanism for determine risk management measures or other actions in order to ensure health protection and allow the free movement of food and feed.

5 ALIGNMENT AND HARMONISATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY POLICIES, STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS

107. With the recent emergence of global and national issues related to escalating food prices and other food security issues, government will have to re-look at present agricultural policies through a wider consensus process with partners and stakeholders including regional and international funding partners

108. To further the goals of food security and nutrition the Seychelles Government will continue to engage with international cooperating partners to seek collaboration and partnerships including technical assistance to improve efficiency in the agricultural sector and to address difficulties such as lack of land, as well as assistance to develop niche markets.

109. To accession the WTO Seychelles is in the process of reviewing and re-aligning various Acts relating to Food Safety and Quality to achieve a greater degree of harmonization with regional and international protocols. These are the Public Health Act, Food Act, Pesticide Act, SBS Act, Fish and Fishery Product Act and various regulations made there under as well as the National Biosafety Framework. In particular the SBS Act of 1987 will be better aligned with the SADC Food Safety Guidelines. Government will ensure that the revised acts will clearly define the role and responsibilities of key role players. This is necessary to avoid conflict of interests, multiple inspections, investigations and duplication of testing and to avoid gaps in the production to consumption continuum.

110. Seychelles is also in the process of reviewing and re-aligning various Acts relating to Food Safety and Quality to achieve a greater degree of harmonization with regional and international protocols. These are the Public Health Act, Food Act, Pesticide Act, SBS Act, Fish and Fishery Product Act and various regulations made there under as well as the National Biosafety Framework. In particular the SBS Act of 1987 will be better aligned with the SADC Food Safety Guidelines.

111. The Government recognizes that framework conditions change over time and that the country will face an altered suite of challenges, posed by amongst others, climate change, globalization, regional market integration, demographic change and increasing pressure, on and demand for, natural resources. The NFNSP will therefore have to be reviewed every 5 years for it to remain relevant

112. The RECs, such as SADC, IOC and COMESA, with regional economic integration as their goals, offer opportunities in regards to the new markets. It may be necessary for Seychelles to choose economic sectors that would give it a competitive edge and allow others to go through a natural process of decline, if they cannot stand up to competition with the integrated economic zones.

113. Similarly the two main contributing sectors to food security, viz agriculture and fisheries, have many links to international conventions and treaties to which Seychelles is a signatory, e.g. CBD, Convention on Climate Change, IOC, IOTC, Convention on the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries etc. These are important instruments to ensure the sustainable utilization of natural resources (land, water and marine resources), including food security. For example, crop production and fisheries production have to be in conformity with the exigencies of existing international protocols to which Seychelles is a signatory, if development plans are

to remain within the precinct of sustainable development protocols. The Government will therefore adhere strictly to the internationally protocols to which the country is a signatory.

6. PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGING RISK AND UNCERTAINTY

6.1 Food and Nutrition Security Information

114. Government will produce mechanisms to provide food security and nutrition information and create awareness. The objective of this is to ensure the availability of quality and timely food security and nutrition data and information for better management of integrated food security and nutrition programmes and actions.

115. Effective quality management depends on knowledge and information exchange between the various links of a production chain. It improves productivity; leads to better production and consumer care and reduce risks. The sectoral ministries, public and private sector agencies will be supported in their efforts to gather and manage crucial data and information, which will also be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy.

6.1.1 National Data and Information Systems

116. Information about markets, products and services is important for firms as well as farmers to plan their investment and input sources. Access to information on what to grow for which market, and how much it will fetch in the target markets is crucial and empowers the planning and production process. Such information improves income through better targeting, negotiation and more efficient and market-oriented production

117. The Government, through the Statistics Department, will ensure that the following statistical information is continuously collected, analysed, updated and disseminated;

- a) statistics on production, trade and consumption;
- b) knowledge of operators at various stages of the food chain;
- c) typical and atypical use of products, raw materials and by-products;
- d) structure of production and supply chains; and
- e) production technologies, processes and practices.
- f) Population nutrition surveys

6.1.2 Research and analytical capacity on food systems and nutrition

118. Research and analytical capacity in all Seychelles institutions implicated in food systems and nutrition is limited by human capacity, research equipment and funding.

119. Seychelles Government recognizes the need to address these shortcomings to cope with the scientific requirements for natural resources management and agriculture development, in the face of climate change.

120. Scientific capacity and infrastructure at SAA, SFA and the SBS will be strengthened to ensure future research and analytical capacity.

121. The SAA, SFA, national health authority and the SBS will be strengthened to ensure future research and analytical capacity for sustainable development, sustainable use and exploitation of resources.

6.2 Strategic food reserves, early warning, safety nets and emergency management

122. Increasing development and the trends of global climate change coupled with the constraints and vulnerabilities inherent in being an isolated, small island archipelago dictate that the building of resilience to disaster at community, district and national level in Seychelles is an important component of the national pursuit of sustainable development.

123. The Seychelles does not have a dedicated strategic food reserve. The Seychelles Trading Company which is a parastatal company holds a strategic reserve of certain foods only.

124. Risk and disaster management in Seychelles falls under the National Disaster Act and is managed by the Divisions of Risk and Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

125. Government of Seychelles recognises that building of resilience to disaster is an on-going process and also recognises the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and its “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015” as providing a sound framework to build resilience to disasters and mitigate risk.

126. The Disaster Management Policy, which underlies the Act, provides strong institutional support for the implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction at local and national levels; identifies, assesses and monitors disaster risks and provides early warning; has contributed towards developing a culture of safety and resilience at all levels through the targeted and effective dissemination of information; has reduced underlying risk factors and has enabled effective response capacities at all levels.

127. Government of Seychelles recognizes the risks associated with food security and will revise its food security management plan, with respect to reserves, storage, global and regional threats and strategic regional alliances (SADC, COMESA)

128. Government recognizes the need to revise mitigating measures towards volatility in food prices and availability to ensure food security for the people of Seychelles.

6.3 Insurance and risk management

129. The lack of collateral, has been a big barrier to access financial services particularly by small producers. Moreover, banks consider agriculture as a high risk sector. To overcome this challenge, other countries like Rwanda have established an agricultural guarantee fund where the government intervenes and compensates losses made by the banks. However, experiences in the past have shown that most of the benefits go to the banks who don't take any risk. To better share the risk, the government of Rwanda in partnership with insurance companies have developed a joint scheme referred to as the crop and livestock insurance program. The government will negotiate a premium for selected crops and animals based on government vision of agriculture and animal development. Insurance companies will then compensate crop and animal losses.

130. Based on the Rwandan experience, the government of Seychelles will mobilize insurance companies to establish a joint crop and livestock insurance to compensate for the losses by the producers. The government will promote national priority crops and animal products through an enabling policy environment and through investment in research, improved water harvesting and storage, irrigation, pest and disease management.

6.4 Food security and climate change

131. In order to reduce the vulnerability of farmers to drought and climate change there is need to put in place effective coping mechanisms through:

- a) Enhanced use of the early warning information in agricultural systems through dissemination of weather/drought information;
- b) Increased role of science and technology in helping livestock agriculture adapt to climate change, and in better understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change.

132. It is expected that the Seychelles agricultural sector will be greatly affected by changing climate and weather patterns. In developing its Agricultural Policy, Government has ensured that climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and instruments are mainstreamed into agricultural production.

6.5 The role of gender in food and nutrition security

133. Due to the role of women in breastfeeding infants, they ensure that breastfed infants are a nutritionally secure group in the population. Women play a key role in food production, decisions about food and the preparation of nutritious meals. The policy will address this unique role player by women to enhance food and nutrition security within the household.

7. INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND FINANCING

7.1 Institutional and legal framework for implementation

134. Government recognizes that increasing food production and better nutrition in Seychelles can only succeed through a coherent and dynamic partnership between the State, the food producers and processors, food importers and civil society

135. To implement the policy Government will muster the participation and cooperation of multiple sectors, from within government, civil society and the private sector, that are active in one way or another in Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock, Food, Food Safety, Food importation, Food Processing, Health, Land and Water Supply, Planning, Finance and Trade, Industry, Education, Information and Social Welfare. Cooperation at high level was set in motion at the Ministerial Food Security retreat in November 2012 that was attended by the Ministers of Finance, Education, Natural Resources Management and Industry, Social Affairs, Land, Foreign Affairs, Health.

136. To ensure the effective implementation of the policy it is necessary to put in place institutional structures and arrangements and to create an enabling environment to facilitate the full participation of the private sector, civil society and communities. These include:

- a) Establishing a National Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee,
- b) Establishing a functional institutional arrangement for joint operations by lead ministries and collaborative stakeholders.
- c) Establishing and activating effective district committees on food and nutrition on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue..

137. The Government will ensure that institutional and legal frameworks and international treaties are upheld and strengthened, where necessary, for the successful implementation of the NFNSP.

138. Government recognises that greater multi-sectoral cooperation and dialogue will prevent that mistakes made in the past will not be repeated in the future

139. Given the multi-sectoral, cross-cutting nature of national food security and nutrition Government will mainstream the policy into all institutional frameworks and operational plans, where appropriate.

140. During the implementation of the policy, gaps in existing Acts and regulations will become apparent. Where necessary existing legislation and regulations may have to be amended.

7.1.1. The National Food Security Steering Committee

141. A multi-sectoral arrangement would coordinate and monitor the implementation of the NFSNS. Since many departments will be involved, a National Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee (NFNSSC) will coordinate the participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of food and

nutrition security programs in the country. This would help ensure appropriate linkages among diverse sectors so that each would contribute to achieving immediate and longer-term strategic objectives.

142. The Steering Committee will meet on a regular basis, chaired by the PS in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Industry, and co-chaired by the representative of the development partner. The participants will include elected members from the private sector, NGOs and international organization and civil society.

143. The mandate of the Steering Committee will be to:

- i. Promote broad, multi-sectoral coordinating mechanisms and response to food security and nutrition issues.
- ii. Ensure the integration of the response to emergency food insecurity problems with response to chronic food insecurity.
- iii. Oversee national plans, programs and projects that promote food security and nutrition.
- iv. Guide an effective and efficient mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the NFNSP, ensuring a two-way (bottom-up and top-down) free flow of information.
- v. Serve as an advisory body to the government on issues relating to food and nutrition and how to meet its international commitments.
- vi. Provide guidelines for planning, implementing and evaluating the National Food and Nutrition Action Plan.
- vii. Undertake coordination with stakeholders and provide all the necessary information to stakeholders.
- viii. Receive and review monitoring reports of food security programs and projects.
- ix. Create and manage a databank on food security and nutrition interventions.
- x. Prepares quarterly reports on progress on the implementation of the NFNSP
- xi. Prepares a report annually that will be submitted for debate to Parliament, on the progress made in fulfilling the Government's local and international obligations ensuring food and nutrition security and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

7.2.1. Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability and tracking policy implementation and review

144. Monitoring helps to improve program design and delivery and to provide a basis for timely corrective interventions in case of program failures. An effective and independent M&E system for food security and nutrition will be established by the Steering Committee. This will allow for active participation of all stakeholders to ensure transparency.

145. It has been observed that there are inadequate linkages between policy and implementation in food and nutrition matters. Likewise, there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation to check on the implementation of sectoral plans and activities. Hence there is a need to develop and agree on priorities and measurable targets for food security and nutrition. The priorities and measurable targets will be developed by the Steering Committee.

146. The Government also recognizes that framework conditions change over time and that the country will face an altered suite of challenges, posed by amongst others, climate change, globalization, regional market integration, demographic change and increasing pressure, on and demand for, natural resources.

The NFNSP will be reviewed every 5 years for it to remain relevant.

7.3. Financing

147. The Government and the Development Partners will commit financial resources to the National Food and Nutrition Security Committee to support its activities in meeting the goals of the NFNSP and in particular to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the efficient implementation of the policy. The Island Food Security Committees will submit their annual budget to the Steering Committee focusing on priority areas as identified in the NFNSP and operationalize their respective action plans. Effective implementation of the NFNSP will depend on the active involvement of the private sector including commercial and backyard farmers and fishermen , food importers, and food processors, food wholesalers and retailers.

148. To promote and increase production from backyard farming, the Government will seek assistance from development partners.