



## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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From Eriko Hibi



Coming closely on the heels of the Pacific Week of Agriculture in Vanuatu, in which Pacific Ministers of Agriculture debated issues of climate change preparation and resilience within the context of food security and nutrition, and ahead of **COP23** in Bonn, Pacific leaders gathered in Rome to discuss issues threatening food systems and food security in the Pacific Islands at a meeting chaired by FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

The impacts of climate change in the region was high on the agenda at the meeting, and culminated in the leaders signing a joint statement – a call for action that they took to COP23.

Concerns were raised about the surge in noncommunicable diseases in the Pacific region which account for a disproportionately number of high deaths among adults.

The Director-General reaffirmed FAO's commitment to support Pacific Islands and to improve the lives of rural and coastal populations.

Enjoy the read

**Eriko Hibi**

FAO Subregional Coordinator for the Pacific Islands

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## Pacific leaders alarmed over climate change's negative impact on food systems and food security

At High-level meeting at FAO, Pacific leaders issue joint statement as a “call to action” to COP23

Climate change poses an alarming threat to food systems and food security in the Pacific islands, warned leaders of nine small island developing states (SIDS), representatives of regional development bodies, New Zealand and Australia at a meeting chaired by FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva on November 11.



The meeting took place ahead of the Pacific leaders' participation at the UN Climate Conference COP23 in Bonn, and culminated in the leaders signing a joint statement – a call for action that they will take to COP23.

In the statement, the Pacific leaders called upon all countries to “exceed previous commitments and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C as above pre-industrial levels, to reduce the adverse impacts on food security and nutrition, coastal habitats and the livelihoods of those depending on oceans.”

The 1.5 degrees limit will allow “for a greater change at maintaining resilient livelihoods and promote partnerships for sustainable development in the Pacific Islands,” the statement read.

### **Noncommunicable Diseases surge in the Pacific region**

The group also raised concerns about the negative impacts of malnutrition evidenced by the growing incidence of Noncommunicable Diseases, which account for 75 percent of adult deaths in the Pacific, and called for “more proactive and integrated actions to promote policies to tackle food insecurity challenges, especially on issues related to obesity, stunting, wasting and NCDs.”

The group acknowledged the importance of FAO and partners' Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS, which recommends action at global, regional, national and local level to accelerate food security and nutrition, calling for its endorsement and immediate implementation.

With Pacific island states highly dependent on the oceans for their livelihoods and food security, leaders reiterated their anxiety about ecosystem degradation, and called upon the international community to assist in maximizing the sustainable utilization of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the benefit of small island developing states.

The Pacific islands are among the most environmentally vulnerable nations in the world. Drought, extreme high tides, violent winds, and storm surges pose major risks to small island nations, and their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

For many islands, the impact of climate change represents the gravest of threats to their survival and viability, including, for some, through the loss of territory.

### **FAO committed to support Pacific Islands and improve rural and coastal populations' lives**

In his opening remarks, Graziano da Silva shared the Pacific leaders' concerns about the negative impact

of climate change on food security and nutrition and its role in exacerbating the burden of malnutrition as well as the alarming overweight and obesity levels.

“You are suffering from things that you didn’t cause, from things you are not responsible for – the impact of climate change,” said the FAO Director-General said.

“This is what FAO offers – support so that you can face climate change; scale up growing local products as we see you import more and more food. Obesity is a big problem. It is an epidemic that we need to address. Together with partners such as WHO, we promote the uptake of healthy, fresh food – fruits, vegetable and fish instead of processed food. We promote local products – bread fruit, for which we have a pilot programme in the Marshal Islands, Samoa, Nauru, and which we want to scale up and multiply,” he added.

With Oceans Day events at COP23 underway today, Graziano da Silva also highlighted the importance of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), “today’s main tool in the hands of the international community to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing”. He urged all Pacific Island states to adhere to the agreement.

“You are countries with more water and natural resources to preserve than any other countries. This is why the Port State Measures Agreement is important. FAO is committed to support you to implement and monitor your PSMA process. We can provide assistance for your national legislations, training and funding to put the agreement in place. We will not be able to safeguard our ocean environment if we don’t combat illegal fishing,” said Graziano da Silva.

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## Regional Fiji meeting on world programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) contributes to sustainable development goals

Highlighting the importance of reliable statistics and data for policy development, including national agricultural censuses, a week-long FAO workshop for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to food and agriculture, and the last in the series of regional roundtables on World Census of Agriculture 2020, was held recently in Nadi, Fiji.



For FAO, assisting governments to produce accurate statistics for informed decision-making, and the agricultural census that is a key pillar in national statistical systems and an important data source for both users and producers of statistics, has become critical to the Organization’s work in support of its member countries.

Organized by the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands, and involving over 40 participants from countries across the Pacific as well as regional and international organizations, the workshop aimed to improve awareness about the 21 SDG indicators for which FAO is a custodian agency, and in developing a harmonized approach to collecting and using agricultural and rural statistics in the Pacific.

One of the most important elements of FAO’s statistical work is the development and promotion of the decennial World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA). Since the founding of FAO in 1945, it

has supported countries to carry out their national agricultural censuses using standard international concepts, definitions and methodologies. Every ten years, FAO reviews the country experiences, revises and publishes a new set of census guidelines.

“The census of agriculture is the only data collection instrument that produces national statistical information on farms at the lowest administrative level and is therefore an essential source of information for decision makers in member countries”, said Jairo Castano, Leader of the FAO Agricultural Censuses and Surveys Team Statistics Division

Castano emphasized that the census of agriculture is crucial for governments to implement evidence-based policies and programmes for agricultural and rural development, access to land, food security and reduction of the adverse environmental impacts of agricultural activities. Agricultural census data are also essential for the private sector to make informed decisions that guide their investments in agri-business activities.

“The growing demand for data of better quality, the fast growing digital and mobile technology and at the same time the scarcity of resources for census-taking create new challenges for ensuring that the census of agriculture is conducted in the most cost-effective way within an integrated agricultural statistics system”, he added.

“During the 2010 census round, which covered the period 2006 - 2015, 131 countries and territories conducted censuses of agriculture, out of which 11 in Pacific. That is a new worldwide record surpassing the earlier 2000 census round record of 115 countries”, noted Rasmiyya Aliyeva, FAO Subregional Statistician for the Pacific. The number of Pacific countries which participated in the 2010 census round increased by two in comparison with the 2000 census round.

This eighth and last meeting on the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 in the Pacific, part of a series of similar meetings being held in different regions of the world to launch and advocate the new World Programme for the Census of Agriculture. The other meetings were held between 2016 and 2017 in Kenya, Hungary, Jordan, Senegal, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

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## FAO supports breadfruit industry in the region

FAO emphasized its support for the breadfruit industry at the Pacific and Global Breadfruit Summit which was recently held in Samoa. The two-day Summit brought together Professors, Scientists, Food analysts, Economists and Farmers in Samoa and was co-funded by FAO.

The Subregional Coordinator of FAO, Eriko Hibi, spoke about the importance of the summit.



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“It is significant that the Government of Samoa has chosen this occasion, at the time of the international commemoration of World Food Day, to remind us of the significance of a crop that has its roots in the history of the Pacific and is potentially a key to future food security and nutrition of people in the Pacific and beyond.

Because of the potential it offers, breadfruit is seen as a symbol of what FAO aims to pursue in the next

five years in the Pacific.

First, it is a locally produced plentifully grown food crop with huge potential for domestic consumption. It can facilitate import substitution, which would result in an improved trade balance and reduced vulnerability to external shocks such as price fluctuations.

Secondly, breadfruit can help in the fight against non-communicable disease (NCDs) through improved nutrition. It is a safe whole food, supplying key vitamins and minerals, complex carbohydrates, while offering moderate energy free of gluten. In the fight against NCDs, breadfruit and taro and other traditional local crops have a significant role to play in improving nutrition in Samoa and in many other countries.

Thirdly, it is also a cash crop with huge potential for export, as flour or in other forms. The future for developing niche export markets should not be underestimated as globally, consumers are looking towards products that are nutritious and readily available.

Fourthly, promotion of agricultural crops such as breadfruit can be key to increasing job opportunities, reinvigorating the agriculture production and processing sectors, which would lead to increased livelihood opportunities for the youth.

With so much potential to offer, breadfruit is a symbol of hope for improved food security and nutrition in Samoa and beyond. That is why F.A.O has supported the work with the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa and the organization of this important Summit. I wish to raise a toast to the future of this amazing crop!”

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Lopao’o Natanielu Mua said the meeting was about sharing the benefits of the breadfruit.

“In terms of value adding, there has been considerable interest and drive in Hawaii, Caribbean and Pacific Islands to develop the most efficient economical way to process the fruit into flour and appropriate products made from the flour and to package breadfruit tips and frozen breadfruits chunks and slices.

He said in Samoa the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries continued to assist with the mass production of breadfruit planting material and dissemination of information regarding the production and maintenance of the crop.

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## Contract Farming: Training workshop held in Tonga

The Government of Tonga and FAO are furthering their partnership to promote contract farming as a means to coordinate links between farmers and agribusiness firms.

A Contract Farming training workshop on – planning and implementing Contract Farming operations in Tonga – was held in September in Nuku’alofa, Tonga. The training included a half day field visit.



A total of 23 participants (including 10 from outer islands) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Forests, Ministry of Ministry of Commerce, Consumer, Trade, Innovation and Labor, private sector actors,

farmers and farmers' group organization actively participated in this training workshop.

FAO Agribusiness Consultant, Shukrullah Sherzard said. "Contract farming is one of the proven mechanisms that can be promoted to improve efficiency and inclusiveness in transforming food and agriculture systems."

In simple terms, contract farming is an agreement which establishes conditions between a buyer and farmers for the production and marketing of a farm product or products.

Under contract farming, producers commit to the future delivery of farm products to a buyer under agreed specifications that can include prices, production technologies, quality characteristics and production delivery dates, among other mutually agreed conditions.

In theory, the agreement should be mutually beneficial to a buyers and farmers. It should promote agricultural production and guarantee a secure market for the products, thereby allowing farmers to earn increased revenue and buyers to obtain a return on their investments.

Sherzard further explained. "Through FAO projects we aim to improve the capacity of farmers to market a consistent supply of safe, quality food. One of the outputs of this project is to facilitate improved farmer linkages to market though the adoption of service contracts".

A half day field visit was organized to papaya plantations on the last day of the workshop. Members of GroFed and stakeholders involved in Contract Farming with GroFed shared experiences and a case study of papaya Contract Farming from the field with participants.

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### FAO visits agricultural facilities at the University of the South Pacific by the Institute of Research, Extension & Training in Agriculture

FAO SAP Coordinator for the Pacific Islands, Ms. Eriko Hibi and a team of FAO technical staff visited the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) and the Institute of Research, Extension & Training in Agriculture (IRETA) Farm at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Samoa.



The main purpose of their visit was an opportunity for FAOSAP technical staff to look at the SAFT facilities and programs as well as to identify possible areas of partnership. The FAO team visited different sections of SAFT (Food Technology Laboratory, Crop Protection Section, Crop Production Section and Soil Science Section) led by the Head of School, Assoc. Prof. Mohammed Umar.

The Coordinators of each section had a chance to clarify what they are teaching, their ongoing researches as well as pointing out the support that FAO could offer to improve each section or program.

This extensive visit concluded with the Assoc. Prof. Umar taking the team to the IRETA Farm. They looked at the different systems used at the Poultry, Piggery & Goat/Sheep Units and some of the activities such as eggs grading, packaging and labelling.

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## FAO Publication: Improving food and nutrition knowledge to enhance the diets of Nauru's population.

An important contribution to both the FAO Side Event at Pacific Week of Agriculture on the *Global Action Programme for Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States* and as background reading for the Ministerial meeting is the new publication from FAO's Subregional Office entitled *Improving food and nutrition knowledge to enhance the diets of Nauru's population*.

Empowering populations in Pacific Island countries to eat more nutritious foods, and where possible fresh and local produce and food products, can help reduce the growing problems of obesity and non-communicable diseases that are having a devastating effect on human health, life expectancy and livelihoods in many Pacific Islands.

This report is based on an FAO field mission to Nauru by international nutrition specialist Dr. Jimaima Lako aimed at raising awareness about the importance of nutrition to improve health and wellbeing. Participants at the training workshops included secondary school students, school food caterers, community representatives and, acting as champions to encourage uptake by the wider population, parliamentarians' wives.

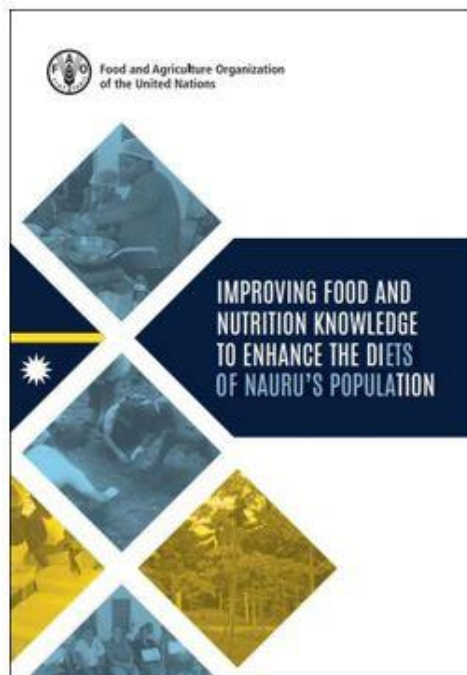
During the mission, in addition to general presentations about food and nutrition, much of the information provided by Dr Lako involved hands-on demonstrations that included the participants using sample menus together with a wide selection of recipes, all of which have been included in the publication. The menus and recipes are based on foods that are generally available or could be grown or found locally to enhance nutrition knowledge and improve eating habits. The lectures covered subjects such as food choices, balanced meals and portion-servicing sizes; food safety; post-harvest losses; and budgeting and time management.

The training programme was carried out in Nauru and the approaches and materials used could be applied in other Pacific Island countries facing similar challenges in raising awareness about food and nutrition.

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