



Industry Partners for a Food Secure Pacific

Meeting Report

Tanoa Waterfront Hotel, Lautoka

February 3rd, 2011

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Overview

The Food Industry has a vital role to play in achieving a Food Secure Pacific. In April 2010, 170 delegates from around the world came together to address food security issues at the Pacific Food Summit. In attendance were Ministers and Director Generals from the vital sectors of Health, Agriculture and Trade from 22 Pacific Island Countries; senior-level representatives from a number of regional agencies as well as key representatives from the Food Industry in Australia and the Pacific Islands.

Recommendations made at the Food Summit were incorporated into a *Framework for Action for Food Security in the Pacific (FA)* which identified the Food Industry as a key partner in achieving a number of multi-sectoral goals. Following the Pacific Food Summit, the FA was endorsed and adopted by heads of government at the Pacific Island Forum as a regional and national policy guideline to be implemented through the Pacific Plan.

A second Meeting of Industry Partners was conducted on February 3rd at the Tanoa Waterfront Hotel, Lautoka in response to a regional commitment to improving food security and health security in the region. The objective of this meeting was to explore opportunities and create a roadmap for the implementation of the FA.

The meeting was attended by industry representatives from the Pacific Islands who recognize the important role that the private sector has in formulating policy and delivering better quality, more nutritious food to Pacific populations.

The format of the meeting was an open forum which facilitated participant dialogue around each of the 7 themes of the FA. Short presentations were delivered by a number of participants which engaged each theme, and then provided opportunity for questions and group discussion.

Mr Jack Bagriansky, a consultant from Atlanta Georgia provided a brief presentation which outlined the proceedings of a government represented Cost-Benefit workshop which had taken place over 3 days prior. Mr Bagriansky described the economic impacts of non-communicable chronic disease and micronutrient malnutrition, emphasising the contribution of nutrition-related disease to lowered productivity. Mr Bagriansky asserted that public policy is the key to creating an enabling market environment to improve health without impeding the goals of industry. Finally, the requirements for the goals of the Cost Benefit Workshop to be realised were outlined, these include:

- Government Action including taxes and food regulations
- Multi-Sectoral Collaboration that achieves the goals of government and industry
- Capacity Building of Food control systems, including quality assurance and a level playing field for the food industry
- Regional guidelines for enforcement capacity building, production and trade

Meeting Chairs:

- **Dr Jimmie Rodgers**, Director-General, SPC
- **Professor Glen Maberly**, Director, Centre for Health Innovation and Partnership
- **Ms Mereia Volavola**, CEO, PIPSO
- **Mr Rakesh Sharma**, General Manager, Punja & Sons Ltd

The meeting provided an opportunity to establish an interim working group, as well as an interim Chairman – Mr Rakesh Sharma, General Manager, Punja & Sons Ltd. A small executive team was also agreed to help guide the work (see annex). Group objectives were discussed around achieving the implementation of the FA. In the final session, measurable priority actions were developed as a summary of the meeting dialogue; these actions have been outlined in the following report.

The vision of the *Industry Partners for Food Security* is to make a contribution to achieving a Food Secure Pacific, and particularly identifies with the goals of the FA that require Industry partnership and innovation to move forward.

The goals of the working group are to strengthen and improve:

1. **Availability of Food.** Is there sufficient food to eat?
2. **Access to Food.** Can healthy food be purchased or grown?
3. **Stability of Food Systems.** Are there risks of economic (price surges) and environmental (climate vulnerability) shocks that jeopardize healthy food availability and access all the time?

Mereia Volavola, CEO, PIPSO was present to provide a background of the structure and role of PIPSO in coordinating with Private Sector Groups.

PIPISO's Key Roles

- Facilitate Private Sector Development
- Administer/Facilitate Assistance to Business at National Level
- Facilitate Private-Public Sector Dialogue
- Advocate Private Sector interest at National & Regional Level

PIPISO will not drive the agenda of the working group but rather act as a resource for building an effective network of partners.

The group agreed to be linked under umbrella of PIPSO, an action which has the full support of SPC and GHI. The working group has developed a unique agenda and will now create a Terms of Reference document that outlines the purpose and structure of the group. Individuals to lead the progress of each item need to be identified.

This action plan will be disseminated by PIPSO at a national and regional level through National Private Sector Organisations (NPSOs). Smaller manufacturers, who may not have been present, need to be engaged and will require the technical advice of an established and well connected network. The working group will coordinate with PIPSO to make use of the readily available private-sector network and expand to include other industry groups in the region.

Priority Actions

Theme 1: Leadership and Cooperation *How can the private sector support the development of strong Leadership and effective multi-sectoral coordination for Food Security regionally and nationally?*

- Leadership is vital to provide the Private Sector with a strong voice and achieve active participation in developing the Food Security agenda for the Pacific.
- Strong coordination is required to work alongside government bodies at a national and regional level.

Mr Rakesh Sharma, General Manager, Punja & Sons Ltd highlighted the need for a working group to drive the agenda of the Private Sector's engagement with Food Security issues. Mr Sharma commented on the necessity of developing coordinated strategies that will support the goals of the Food Secure Pacific Working group as well as to benefit industry partners.

An operation model for the interim working group was developed:

- Mr Rakesh Sharma was nominated as the Chair person for the interim working group of the *Industry Partners for Food Security*.
- An executive "Regional Action Group" was established to support the agenda of the interim working group:
 - **Richard Beyer**, Food Scientist
 - **Edgar Cocker**, Managing Director, Cocker Enterprises Ltd
 - **Dijana Green**, Managing Director, Elevating Food Safety Ltd
 - **Rimal Kumar**, Quality Regulations and Regulatory Manager, Nestle
 - **Brij Lal**, CEO, Food Processors (Fiji) LTC
 - **Ritesh Nandan**, Quality Assurance Supervisor, Biscuit Company Fiji Limited
 - **Elisala Pita**, CEO, Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation (TNPSO)
- Mr Edgar Cocker has agreed to develop quality guidelines and a Terms of Reference for the interim working group. A timeframe for this should be identified.
- Two categories of membership were discussed. Member of the Food Industry will coordinate the work whilst regional agencies will act as an advisory body as required.

Theme 2: Regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance and public - private sector collaboration *How can the private sector support the strengthening of food regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance capacities and public private sector collaboration?*

- An economic cost-benefit analysis was applied to 7 interventions by government representatives in a 3 day workshop prior to this meeting.
The modeled interventions were:
 - Tax on sale of high fat meats
 - Ban on sale of high fat meats
 - Tax on sale of sugar, confectionary and sugary drinks
 - Salt reduction strategy
 - Fortification of flour with
 - Fortification of rice with
 - Fortification of oil with Vitamin A
 - Iodisation of salt
- Regulatory frameworks such as these may work to enhance or undermine the food industry.

- Industry should build mechanisms to consult and collaborate with governments to provide a realistic perspective of what is achievable and then work with governments to enhance national goals and minimise impediments to the private sector.
- There is currently an active, government coordinated food security network with which industry may wish to engage in Fiji.

Contact:

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Theme 3: Enhanced and sustainable production, processing, marketing, trading and use of safe and nutritious local food. *How can the private sector support the development of improved production, processing and trade of safe and nutritious local food?*

- There is a need for an increase in government driven research and development.
- Private Industry can drive the research agenda by focusing government attention on markets that have room to grow. For example, developing local production by using locally grown, raw materials (i.e. cassava and dalo chips).
- Industry can strengthen production and importation to ensure that food supply is consistently maintained and build the capacity of farmers through improved agricultural sustainability.

Theme 4: Protect infants and vulnerable groups. *How can the private sector support an increase in well-being, reduced illnesses, disabilities and premature deaths associated with food insecurity?*

- The private sector can work to improve health by identifying all populations vulnerable to a lack of food security and supporting their nutritional needs.
- Industry can contribute to the reduction of obesity and the management of NCDs through the marketing of products that are high quality and promote good nutrition.

Theme 5: Consumer empowerment and mobilizing partners. *How can the private sector support individuals, communities, producers and governments to be empowered with information about food security and the skills to make informed decisions and healthy choices?*

- The possibility to recruit nutritionists to advise on industry production was well received.
- Large industry groups with the capacity to support candidates could collaborate with universities to develop secondments that will strengthen training and up-skill local health workers.

Theme 6: Food security information system. *How can the private sector build a comprehensive food security information system that documents progress, identifies vulnerabilities, spreads innovation and provides evidence for appropriate implementation of programmes?*

- The Food industry knows the indicators for food consumption and food security.
- Industry can build the technical capital of countries by providing appropriate data.
- SPC will work with industry to develop a regional information network that can be released into the public domain. The network will provide the minimum indicators for policy makers to make informed decisions about food control systems.
- The potential result is an information system that serves both industry and the consumer

Theme 7: Enhanced land tenure systems and land use policies, energy, transport, education and communication systems to underpin food security. *How can the private sector support effective land use, energy, transport, communication and education support for food security?*

- In very small nations such as Niue, all food is imported, power supply is limited and irregular flights make the population extremely isolated.
- Energy, transport and education are highly critical constraints which make a shared communication system vital for the food industry to service clients in remote areas.

Appendix 1: Program

Time	Session	Facilitator/Presenter
8.30 - 9.00am	Welcome Introduction to Participants and Meeting Objectives	Prof. Glen Maberly
9.00 - 9.30am	Food Security in the Pacific Opportunities for the Food Industry to support the Framework for Action for Food Security	Dr. Jimmie Rodgers
9.30 - 10.00am	Theme 1: How can the private sector support the development of strong leadership and effective multi-sectoral coordination for food security regionally and nationally?	Mereia Volavola
10.00 - 10.30am	Morning Tea	
10.30-11.15am	Theme 2: How can the private sector support the strengthening of food regulatory frameworks, enforcement and compliance capacities and public-private sector collaboration?	Dijana Green
11.15 - 12.00pm	Theme 3: How can the private sector support the development of improved production, processing and trade of safe and nutritious local food?	Ritesh Nandan Brij Lal
12.00 - 12.45pm	Theme 4: How can the private sector support an increase in well-being, reduced illnesses, disabilities and premature deaths associated with food insecurity?	Timoci Namela Seini Kurusiga
12.45 - 1.30pm	Lunch	
1.30 - 2.15pm	Theme 5: How can the private sector support individuals, communities, producers and governments to be empowered with information about food security and the skills to make informed decisions and healthy choices?	Nabeelah Khan Edgar Cocker
2.15 - 3.30pm	Theme 6: How can the private sector build a comprehensive food security information system that documents progress, identifies vulnerabilities, spreads innovation and provides evidence for appropriate implementation of programmes?	Richard Beyer Penny Small
3.30 – 4.00	Afternoon Tea	
4.00 – 4.45pm	Theme 7: How can the private sector support effective land use, energy, transport, communication and education support for food security?	Patricia Hunter
4.45 – 5.30pm	Moving Forward Discussion	Prof. Glen Maberly Dr. Jimmie Rodgers Rakesh Sharma

Appendix 2: Participant List

Richard Elliott, Consultant, Punjas and Sons, millingconsulting@yahoo.com

Dijana Green, Managing Director, Elevating Food Safety Ltd, dijana.green@elevatingfoodsafety.com

Jimaima Lako, University of the South Pacific's Institute of Applied Science, lako_ji@usp.ac.fj

Michael Lal, Process Improvement Manager, Goodman Fielder, Michael.lal@goodmanfielder.com.au

Deepa Lal, Group Quality Assurance Manager, FMF Group of Companies, deepal@fmf.com.fj

Glen Maberly, Director, Centre for Health Innovation and Partnership

Ritesh Nandan, Quality Assurance Supervisor, Biscuit Company Fiji Limited, RiteshN@fmf.com.fj

Jimmie Rodgers, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Rakesh Sharma, Corporate General Manager, Punjas Flour, rakeshs@punjas.com.fj

Timoci Namela, Rewa Dairy Co. Ltd Fiji

Sharon Lata, Rewa Dairy Co. Ltd Fiji

Penny Small, Head of Corporate Nutrition, Nestle Oceania, Penelope.small@au.nestle.com

Eddie Wilson, Managing Director, Wilex – Samoa Packaging Solutions

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Richard Beyer, Food Scientist, beyer@connect.com.fj

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Seini Kurusiga, Pacific Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF