



Ministerial Meeting on Food Security and Climate Adaptation in Small Island Developing States Milan, Italy, 14-16 October 2015

Session 6: Trade and access to food

Small island developing states (SIDS) face trade challenges due to their geographical remoteness and to their small economies, populations and area. Inadequate port and storage facilities, lack of capacity in meeting various international standards, and other non-tariff barriers also undermine their competitiveness in the global markets. And because SIDS are sea-locked countries, their participation in the global trade requires access to reliable and cost-effective transport services, particularly maritime transport, as well as inter-island domestic transport services. Since most SIDS are net food importers, all of these trade related challenges have a direct impact on access to food. Higher international food prices and excessive volatility of recent years have made this situation worse. Despite the fall in prices since 2011, food prices still remain significantly higher than the pre 2006-2008 level.

The SAMOA Pathway called for capacity building to help SIDS “effectively participate in the multilateral trading system, including with respect to explaining trade rules and disciplines, negotiating and implementing trade agreements and administering coherent trade policies.” The international community also pledged support to SIDS efforts to “assess the implications and mitigate the impact of non-tariff barriers to their market access opportunities through, *inter alia*, appropriate technical assistance and the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization.”

In addition, the SAMOA Pathway called for partnerships “to enhance the participation of SIDS in international trade in goods and services, build their productive capacities and address their supply side constraints.” These partnerships will be critical to address the severe trade deficits that SIDS face as their food and agricultural imports have increased over time while their exports declined.

Clearly, SIDS are part of a broader trade landscape defined by policies that favour large markets over small. With Agenda 2030, the international community has pledged to address some of the relevant structural issues. Sustainable Development Goal 2, on food security, includes as target 2.b: “Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.”

Questions for discussion:

1. What concrete actions can we take to enhance resilience in relation to trade in SIDS, particularly for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDG 2.b?
2. What are the effective ways for SIDS to be competitive in the global market while ensuring cost-effective transport services and infrastructure, and protection of marine resources?