

**Free trade, food security, safety, sovereignty and Pacific small islands developing states (SIDS): A legal analysis****Sunita Bois Singh**

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Small islands developing states (SIDS) of the South Pacific rely on imported food for food security due to modest local food industries. Global free trade has exposed local markets to increased foreign products resulting in 'food dumping of agricultural by-products such as turkey tails and lamb flaps' and adulterated processed food. Traditional diets consisted of root crops, meat, seafood, vegetables and fruits which were high in nutrition. Imported food such as noodles, rice, biscuits, canned products and sweet snacks are cheaper but energy-dense and nutritionally poor. Change in food habits from traditional staple food to imported food is linked to increased conditions of overweight and obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in SIDS. To protect public health, imported food labels need to be comprehensible in local languages (at least in English), provide correct information regarding food composition, ingredients and nutritive value and expiry dates. In the absence of robust food laws and food regulatory systems, SIDS such as Vanuatu are experiencing lack of a uniform evaluation system regarding the nutritive value of food and compliance to international food standards such as the Codex Alimentarius. This presentation explores the role of law in addressing the above issues and how effectively SIDS such as Vanuatu can introduce laws and regulatory mechanisms as World Trade Organization (WTO) member states. It also identifies components of an appropriate legal and food regulatory framework to promote food and nutrition security, food sovereignty and the right to health post trade liberalization in Vanuatu.

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