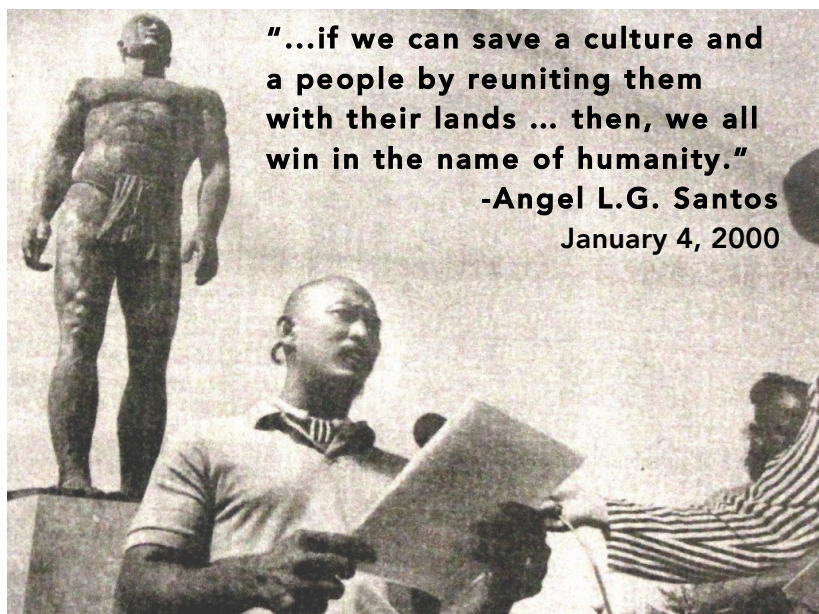


Hita La'mon: Food Sovereignty

An Independent Guåhan has the potential to maximize our resources through significant investment in sustainable farming and fishing in an effort to achieve food sovereignty. Such a commitment serves to both grow our economy and lead our community away from dependency on economically impractical and unhealthy imported foods.



"...if we can save a culture and a people by reuniting them with their lands ... then, we all win in the name of humanity."

**-Angel L.G. Santos
January 4, 2000**

Food Sovereignty:

The right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.

All people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources.

All people are able to sustain themselves and their societies.

The primacy of people's and community's rights to food and food production, over trade concerns.

Why we cannot ignore the importance of food sovereignty in Guåhan

For most of our history, we produced our own food. It has only been in the last 70 years that Guåhan has not done this.

"Practically every Chamorro family has its own ranch, no matter whether the members of the family are otherwise employed. Their actual needs are few. On the ranch they can produce practically everything necessary to sustain life ... Generally, there exists a degree of content, goodwill and pride of homeland."

-1940-1941 Annual Report, Governor George J. McMillin

"[Today] imports constitute approximately 90 percent of the food in Guam ... Despite high food import figures, a pilot study found that grocery stores in Guam lacked nutritious products. Based on the US Department of Agriculture's Thrifty Food Plan, a majority of stores lacked an average of 5 of 12 categories of nutritious foods ..."

-Christie Nicolson, Positive Peace and Food Security in Guam, pp. 9-10 (November 2016)

"The [Pacific Agribusiness] Forum has shown the huge potential there is to lift the whole economy through micro and medium enterprises ... we will never be a major industrial region but I see that is a good thing – we don't have the pollution that goes with it, and we can become advocates for a green Pacific."

-Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) Chairman Howard Politini on the Pacific Agribusiness Forum

"Many Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are ideally placed to take advantage of agritourism based on organic production systems, especially given their extensive and largely unspoiled coastal and marine resources. However, to date, linkages between tourism and agriculture have been constrained by a focus on cheap imported food in much of the region and failure to match supply and demand between small-scale producers and hotels, restaurants and retail outlets."

-Pacific Community Agritourism

"70% of people in the [pacific] region do not consume the recommended daily servings of fruit and vegetables, and obesity and diabetes rates have risen to some of the highest in the world."

-Western Pacific Region, World Health Organization, "Pacific Food Summit," Meeting Report, p. 4

Republic of Vanuatu

Location: Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific

Total Area: 12,189 sq km; more than 80 islands, about 65 inhabited (slightly larger than Connecticut)

Population: 277, 554 (July 2016 est.)

Agricultural land: 15.3% (arable: 1.6%; permanent crops: 10.3%; permanent pasture: 3.4%)

Natural hazards: typhoons and significant volcanic activity

Government: Parliamentary republic

Independence: July 30, 1980 (from France and UK)

Economy: based primarily on small-scale agriculture, which provides a living for about two-thirds of the population. Fishing, offshore financial services, and tourism, with nearly 197,000 visitors in 2008, are other mainstays of the economy.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$686 million (2015 est.)

-CIA World Factbook



“Prior to 1900s, Pacific Island nations had very little contact with the outside world. With colonization, the opening of these economies was rapid with both increased trade in goods and much more exposure to other cultures. Further global economic integration occurred post-World War II, with six Pacific Island countries now being members of the World Trade Organization (WTO): Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Accompanying this economic integration has been a steady deterioration in traditional food systems and decline in the production of traditional crops. This initiated an ongoing shift in dietary patterns that is associated with a high chronic disease risk, namely: reduced consumption of starchy roots and fruits (such as breadfruit and taro) as staple foods; increased consumption of refined cereals (such as white rice and flour); increased consumption of meat and oils; and increased consumption of processed and packaged foods.”

As a result, “The Chamber of Commerce in Vanuatu which supports local businesses in the country stressed the need for investment in training local farmers in food storage facilities as well as food processing plants. The Chamber also emphasized the need to improve the bargaining power of local farmers through developing strong cooperatives. The Chamber expressed strong concerns about increasing dependency on imported food staples both because of the recent surge in the prices of these products, but also because of the negative impacts they have had and continue to have on the health of local people.”

-Case study on Food Sovereignty coordinated by Dr. David Sanders, University of Western Cape, Cape Town

The Food Security & Agriculture Cluster

In response to one its most significant natural disasters, Cyclone Pam, and the realities of climate change, the Government of Vanuatu committed to a long-term goal of food security in cooperation with NGOs, international agencies, development partners, the private sector, researchers, church groups and the like, to form the “Food Security & Agriculture Cluster”.

“The Food Security & Agriculture Cluster seeks to restore and enhance the affected population’s capacity to meet its own food and livelihood needs as soon as possible, and to rebuild our nation’s productive sector in a way that is stronger, more resilient and sustainable ...”

-Food Security & Agriculture Cluster Press Release, April 4, 2013.



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