



Harnessing Agricultural Trade
for Sustainable Development

Vanuatu

cocoa and coconut





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Executive summary

This study is part of a series of UNCTAD publications that focus on upgrading and diversifying specific agricultural sectors of rural economies in developing countries, with a view to raising living standards among small-scale farmers in a context of sustainable development, female empowerment and food security.

The study analyses two agricultural sectors in Vanuatu - cocoa and coconut - in terms of trade-led opportunities, including crop cultivation for biofuel and the development and marketing of cocoa and coconut-based handicrafts and niche/boutique items. It builds on information and recommendations contained in UNCTAD's Vanuatu's National Green Export Review (NGER), which highlighted the country's export competitiveness in the coconut and cocoa sectors.

Vanuatu is at a critical juncture in its rural development pathway. On the one hand, the country faces a pressing need to dynamise its traditional rural economy. On the other hand, there is a need to preserve the existing family-type farming system and its fundamental food security and ecological roles.

According to the study, the challenge is not just to expand the existing traditional farming system, but also to engender a pattern of structural rural transformation. This entails raising

Chapter 1 (Country overview) singles out the key socio-economic vulnerabilities and environmental issues. Chapter 2 (Commodity chain overview) maps the core processes in the value chain and the main actors involved, assessing governance structures and gender aspects. Chapter 3 (Upgrading trajectories) considers opportunities and challenges for value-addition and diversification. Chapter 4 (Sustainability outcomes) captures the social and environmental impacts of expanded, upgraded and diversified coconut and cocoa chains.

Chapter 5 concludes by highlighting key areas of policy intervention to integrate a socially-inclusive, ecologically-based agronomic model into sectoral trade arrangements and policies. These focus on the need to:

- strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and policy coherence, both vertically and horizontally in order to create consensus and mainstream sustainability into the agricultural trade with a mix of incentives and command and control regulation;
- articulate a locally-adapted ecologically-based agronomic model, agreed and defined by stakeholders, with a focus on sustainability and social equity;
- preserve customary tenure arrangements, within the

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