CARDI joins the fight against childhood obesity

Executive Director, Barton Clarke attended the Regional High Level Meeting to Develop a Roadmap to prevent childhood obesity through improved Food and Nutrition Security in Barbados. According to Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) childhood obesity is a serious public health concern with 1 in every 5 children in the Region being classified as obese. Being obese places a child at a high risk for developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular diseases later in life.

CARDI joined with at least 6 other CARICOM organisations to develop a work plan to support multi-sectoral collaboration at the country level for the implementation of a 6 point policy package over 4-years. The policy actions being targeted are food labelling, nutrition standards and guidelines for schools and other institutions, food marketing, nutritional quality of food supply, trade and fiscal policies and food chain incentives.

The Meeting was jointly hosted by CARPHA, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Caribbean Development Bank from 8-10 February 2017.
Improving the supply of planting material to farmers in Trinidad and Tobago

Dr John Alleyne, delivered the feature address which focused on the critical issues players in the sector must urgently address to improve the availability of quality planting material. Photo courtesy Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

The CARDI Trinidad and Tobago Unit in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries hosted a workshop on “Achieving Food Security through the Provision of adequate planting material to farmers” on 15th February 2017 at the Sugar Feeds Centre, Trinidad. The feature address was delivered by visiting agronomist Dr. John Alleyne, who said that the availability of planting material can be improved by focusing on technology, germplasm conservation, retrofitting nurseries, developing human capacity, research and biosecurity. Participants to the workshop developed an Action Plan for Increased Capacity to Provide Planting Materials to farmers. Attention was focused on strategies to increase the supply of high value crops such as coconuts, citrus, breadfruit and avocado. The intent of the organisers is that this approach can be adopted for other agricultural commodities.

Strengthening coconut processor groups in Guyana

Small scale processors involved in the development of coconut based value added products, in Guyana benefitted from a 2 day training workshop on group strengthening. The workshop which took place on 20-21 February 2017 was a repeat of workshops previously held in Belize, Jamaica, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. Participants were exposed to group strengthening activities such as trust and governance, marketing opportunities and financial management. The goal of these workshops is to strengthen small scale processor groups so as to increase their competitiveness, which will ultimately lead to the development of an export oriented agri-processing sector in their respective countries. This workshop is part of the ongoing project “Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean” financed by the European and jointly implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI).

Better organised small scale processors can capitalise on the huge potential that exists for coconut value added products

Project Management training for CARDI staff

Project management is a key component in creating the “CARDI: the future we want” and implementing the CARDI Medium Term Plan 2017-2019. Hence, on 6-9 February 2017, CARDI held a Project Management Workshop for CARDI Country Representatives, scientists and technical staff at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. Dr Ruel Ellis of the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, UWI, facilitated the workshop. Participants were introduced to the project management system and Microsoft Project software. Lively discussions at the workshop highlighted CARDI’s project management strengths and areas for improvement. At the end of the workshop, CARDI staff had a greater awareness of the skills and tools required for project success, transparency and accountability.