The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) was happy to join the global community to celebrate World Food Day, 2020. This year’s theme “Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together. Our Actions are Our Future,” puts into focus the need for collective actions, to ensure all people have access to safe and nutritious food at all times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed very clearly that although the world is producing enough food to feed all 7 billion+ of us, widening inequality gaps are threatening the most vulnerable with hunger and malnutrition. In May, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that the number of people experiencing severe food insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean, will increase from 3.4 million to 13.7 million throughout 2020.

COVID-19 has placed the Region’s food insecurity in the spotlight. As countries slowly embark on post-COVID-19 recovery plans, we must be mindful and fiercely guard against a hunger pandemic. As rebuilding efforts continue, it is important that plans are grounded in improving productivity, access and availability to safe, nutritious food, climate proofing the sector and preventing food wastage.

During the pandemic, the Institute continued to leverage our extensive network of regional and national partners to ensure the agriculture sector is productive, resilient and sustainable. We continue to be supportive of Governments initiatives which target vulnerable households to expand and improve emergency food assistance and social protection programmes.

The Institute ramped up the production of planting material for commodities such as sweet potato, cassava, corn and grain legumes. These were made available to farmers and farming communities across the Region.

CARDI recognises that availability and affordability to nutritious food must be a pillar in all countries developmental plans. In Belize, yield trials are ongoing to identify and select the most adaptable biofortified beans. These beans will be useful in delivering much-needed micro-nutrients to lower-income families, where nutritional needs are largely unmet across the Caribbean.

Our vision is to have a food secure region. We view this “as a shared responsibility and CARDI remains committed to working with all stakeholders to improve the Region’s self-sufficiency whilst, exploiting our full production potential in a sustainable manner,” says Executive Director, Barton Clarke.
CARDI bids farewell to Dr Greg Robin

After more than 30 years of devoted service, it is with mixed emotions that CARDI announces the retirement of Dr Gregory Robin. Dr Robin was the recent Manager, Science, Technology and Innovation and CARDI Country Representative in Jamaica. Before that, he headed the CARDI offices in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Holding a PhD in Molecular Pathology and an MPhil in Agronomy/Crop Production from UWI, Cavehill and St Augustine, respectively, Dr Robin started his journey at CARDI in 1981 as a graduate assistant on the USAID Small Farm Multiple Cropping Systems Research project, in Dominica.

Dr Robin’s career has been a remarkable one. He has worked extensively in the development of the regional roots and tubers industry. With his unparalleled expertise, he led the development of a commercially sustainable/year-round production system for taro in Dominica and the OECS; analysed the key factors causing yam anthracnose in Dominica, made recommendations for the control of the disease and conducted assessments on the impact of variety, time of planting and agro-ecological zones on sweet potato productivity, in the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). A key aspect of his most recent work was investigating the impact of drought on sweet potato production in Jamaica. Dr Robin has earned years of experience in technical and administrative aspects of agricultural research and development in the Caribbean.

He was also the Caribbean’s representative on the board of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC). As the author of over 20 publications, inclusive of manuals, Dr Robin has credited his success to his passion and dedication to agriculture and root and tuber crops as a priority commodity in the region. Away from his professional life, Dr Robin is also an active farmer in his native country of Dominica and an avid sports fan.

At a virtual farewell hosted in his honour on 30th October 2020, Executive Director Barton Clarke thanked Dr Robin for his years of service and loyalty to the Institute. He praised his work in the development of the roots and tubers sub-sector, in particular, noting that it laid the foundation for countries to build and propel this industry.

CARDI feels fortunate to have worked with Dr Robin and vice versa and wishes him good health and happiness.

CARDI joins the #IamCARICOM Campaign

The ‘I AM CARICOM’ Campaign is a Caribbean Community publicity initiative aimed at increasing the visibility and understanding of CARICOM among citizens of the Community. As one of the 23 regional institutions, CARDI will be participating in this campaign through the implementation of a series of activities. Among those planned is the launch of the ‘I AM CARICOM’ photo frame for social media, interviews with staff on what CARICOM means to them and a series of promotional and interactive activities designed to showcase CARDI’s contribution to the regional development agenda. Also, the Institute will continue to support the development of the Community’s results-focused Strategic Plan 2020+. Development of the plan is ongoing, with consultations being held across the community with a range of stakeholders.

Targeting a wide range of stakeholders, the campaign aims to assist citizens of the Community and beyond, to locate themselves within the CARICOM construct; institutions, governance structure, policies and plans and to take ownership and participate fully in the regional integration development agenda.

CARDI is the only regional agricultural research organisation identified in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. The Institute was established on December 5th 1974 by the governments of 12 member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to. It is headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago and now has representation in 14 countries including the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas, who became members in 2014 and 2016 respectively. CARDI currently serves a collective population of just over 6.2 million.

You can get updates on the #IamCARICOM Campaign @ https://today.caricom.org/tag/iamcaricom/