



For immediate release

MEDIA STATEMENT

YOUTH TOLD CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE

[CWA 2012, St John's, Antigua – 16 October, 2012] - Young people in the Caribbean should take advantage of opportunities in agriculture. Ms Jean Lowry, Barbados representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), said agriculture is an economically viable career move, as she addressed the opening ceremony of the Regional Policy Forum on Youth and Rural Modernization in Antigua during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture.

She said that there is a crisis developing in agriculture, citing the aging of the farmer's population in the Caribbean. "Young people are part of ensuring food security and economic development, and agriculture is very much about food security and economic growth in the Caribbean," according to Ms Lowry.

Thirty young men and women from the region are discussing the challenges Caribbean youth face in entering into agriculture and will develop a number of policy recommendations on Youth and Rural Modernization as well as a road-map that will be presented to the region's Ministers of Agriculture meeting later this week.

The Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN) Chief Coordinator, Mr. Jethro Greene said, "food imports contribute to fifty per cent of the region's debt and agriculture is the solution to reducing this debt. We all must get involved in agriculture. Young people need to change the image of agriculture, it is a business and a profession and success is what you look towards to build a sustainable environment for food security".

The Director of the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Mr Michael Hailu encouraged the young people to do their part in reducing poverty and unemployment in the region. He said, "agriculture will continue to be dominant on the global agenda as food prices will remain high in the foreseeable future. Given that seventy-five per cent of poor people in developing countries live in rural areas, advancing agriculture is a sure way of tackling poverty". He further noted, "within the Caribbean, seventy-two per cent of young people live below two dollars a day".

CTA has been actively supporting youth and agriculture in the Caribbean by raising awareness through media and competitions, providing ICT training as well as advocacy.

Recommendations include an integrated programme to support young people who want to get into agriculture, as a means of succession planning for the industry. The forum is the fourth pillar of the Caribbean Community Agricultural Policy (CCAP), which is supported by the CTA. The three-day forum is coordinated by the CaFAN in collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Policy Network (CARAPN) and the Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth (CAFY).

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The CWA events takes place in St John's, Antigua between 12 and 19 October 2012 with a theme **“Celebrating Gender and Youth in the Caribbean: *Each Endeavoring, All Achieving*”**.

You can follow the events live on the following:

<http://www.ustream.tv/user/ctaantigua>

Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/CTACWA

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/ctacwa>
@ctacwa

About CTA

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is a joint ACP-EU institution active in agricultural and rural development in ACP countries. Its mission is to advance food and nutritional security, increase prosperity and encourage sound natural resource management in ACP countries. It does this by providing access to information and knowledge and strengthening the capacity of agricultural and rural development institutions and communities in ACP countries. CTA also facilitates multi-stakeholder engagements and dialogue in agriculture and rural development, thereby providing an enabling environment for knowledge sharing, consensus building and learning, to inform policies and decision making processes and improve rural livelihoods. CTA puts priority on enhancing value chain governance and competitiveness across ACP regions to improve agricultural productivity and reduce poverty. For more information on CTA visit, www.cta.int.