August 18, 2014:- Value chains are fast becoming a critical part of the agricultural landscape, as countries seek to develop a competitive sector by linking farmers with end markets. While there are a number of Guides for analysing value chains, research for the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ACP-EU (CTA) has concluded that the existing methodologies are set at too high a level to be used by those stakeholders who actually operate in a value chain. To address this issue for value chain participants in the Region, a Project, titled ‘Developing capacity to analyse and strengthen root and tuber value chains in the Caribbean region, for improved food security’, was developed through a joint effort between CARDI and CTA.

The overall objective of the Project is to contribute to improved value chains for roots and tubers and their processed products, leading to increased domestic consumption of these products and, where possible, additional exports which can increase farmer incomes and promote food security.

Under this Project, it is proposed to produce a Methodology for assessing root and tuber value chains in the Caribbean, to pilot this in six countries (Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago) and to ensure that the results are widely distributed. It is envisaged that the approach adopted will make considerable use of ‘multi-stakeholder’ techniques to both gather information and identify solutions to value chain problems. It will also identify opportunities for enhancement of livelihoods of the stakeholders along the value chains.

To activate this Project, a series of activities has since been held, namely,

- Regional workshop to introduce project to the national coordinators from each of the six pilot countries
- Draft methodology produced
- Data collection amongst the six chains in each country using the draft methodology. This information is analysed and presented to stakeholders at national validation workshops in the beneficiary countries
The first of four in-country Workshops was held in Trinidad earlier in July, 2014. The national coordinators were Mrs Omaira Avila- Rostant and Mrs Mynie Ramlal-Ousman, both members of the Ministry of Food Production Cassava and Sweet Potato Commodities Team, Staples.

The others to be held are **St Kitts & Nevis on September 1st, Barbados on September 3rd** and **St Vincent & the Grenadines on September 9th**.

Following which, the next step is finalisation of the Reports to be presented at a **Regional Validation Workshop**, on **September 23rd and 24th** in Trinidad. It is expected that at this Regional Validation Workshop, each country coordinator will present their Reports. With these individual country feedback, the **methodology** will be refined and finalized, and will then be distributed for use within the Region, along with the African and Pacific countries linked to the CTA.

The world over, development of agriculture value chains is actively promoted as an answer to problems of low producer incomes, poor market access and even food security.

CARDI ... presenting the ‘facts on agriculture and research for development’.
Photo caption:
Cassava Bread Value Chain National Forum- NAMDEVCO Packinghouse, Piarco in July, 2014

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