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For Immediate Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Road Mapping Workshops for the Coconut industry development set to continue**

The second phase of the Road Mapping workshops for the European Union (EU) funded “Coconut Industry development in the Caribbean” project is set to continue later this month. Project partners the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Geneva based International Trade Centre (ITC) will engage with industry stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Belize and Suriname to formulate road maps for market led development of the coconut and coconut products sectors. Utilising a participatory approach stakeholders across the coconut value chain in each of the project countries will come up with road maps to address critical areas such as market options, production and productivity, support services and the policy environment among other areas. Specialists from within and outside the Region will also present on current market dynamics, performance requirements, plant material availability, new technologies and discuss with participants current Caribbean coconut supply dynamics. Development banks and potential financing partners will also be invited to participate, as they are key players in the industry’s growth and development.

Within recent years the demand for fresh coconut produce and coconut based health and beauty products have skyrocketed on both the regional and world markets. Unfortunately many of the Caribbean countries that once had a booming coconut subsector have been unable to satisfy this growing demand. From the 1980s onward production began to decline sharply as a result of loss of international markets for traditional products, ageing populations, loss of consumer confidence and growing pest and disease problems. CARDI Executive Director (Ag.) Bruce Lauckner is pleased for the support to revitalise the coconut industry in the Caribbean because of its “significant potential to contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in the benefitting countries.”

The “Coconut Industry development in the Caribbean” project is valued at 3.5 million Euros and is aiming to; enhance the competitiveness of small scale coconut farmers, through the identification of market opportunities and value chain development plans, develop better synergies between national and regional programmes, improve access to advisory services for improved production, processing, commercialisation, financing and improve access to risk management instruments. This project is financed by the European Union under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and will be implemented in the CARIFORUM countries of Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Below are the scheduled meetings for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana and Belize:

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Venue</b>
19-20 May 2015	Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname	Regent Star Hotel, Piarco, Trinidad
21-22 May 2015	Guyana	Grand Coastal, East Coast Demerara, Guyana
27-28 May 2015	Belize	George Price Centre, Belmopan, Belize

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