



For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

Supporting farming groups to restart agriculture production in Dominica

28 February 2018, Roseau - Representatives from 8 farming groups across Dominica, will today receive farming inputs including fertilisers and weedicides; fencing and irrigation materials and small farm tools and equipment to help restart agriculture production. These materials which have been procured under the CARDI/IICA partnership will be presented by Officer in Charge of the CARDI Dominica Unit, Dorian Etienne to representatives of these groups. The handing over ceremony will take place at the CARDI Office, Valley Road from 10 a.m.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will also receive a cheque for USD 12,000 from CARDI. This will assist in helping the Ministry to pay for some of the emergency relief supplies that were immediately required following the passage of Hurricane Maria in September 2017.

CARDI's Executive Director, Barton Clarke said that it is important that the agriculture sector gets a head start as it is vital to the livelihoods of at least 25% of the population. By helping to restore agricultural productivity on the island, CARDI and IICA will ensure livelihoods are sustained and the dependency on food aid in affected communities is reduced.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) conducted preliminary assessments on the ground following Hurricane Maria in September 2017 and reported total destruction of the agriculture sector. The CDEMA further reported severe damage to farm housing, irrigation, infrastructure, feeder roads, forest reserves, coastal fisheries and widespread loss of poultry.

This is consistent with the findings of the Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) which valued the damage to the agriculture sector at 58 million USD and losses at 125 million USD. According to the FAO, Dominica will need 74 million USD to rebuild its agriculture sector.

This initiative is complementary to activities that CARDI has conducted in Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis after Hurricanes Irma and Maria also wreaked havoc across the islands.

To support long term recovery and resilience of the agriculture sector, CARDI will undertake several initiatives including:

- Boosting the regional store of seeds of commercial varieties and local landraces and expand its germplasm collections for roots and tubers and pasture grasses.

- Launching a regional programme to expand the acreage under roots and tuber cultivation on CARDI Field Stations. Due to their resilience and ability to survive most natural disasters roots and tubers can assist in improving household food and nutrition security post disaster.
- Integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite imagery to assist in assessing and responding to disasters.
- Developing Disaster Risk Management Strategies for all CARDI countries focused on the agriculture sector

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For more information, please contact

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About CARDI

CARDI (www.cardi.org) was established in 1974 to serve the agricultural research and development needs of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARDI is positioned to enhance the socio-economic well-being of the Caribbean people through research for development that improves the competitiveness and sustainability of regional agriculture. The Institute's Headquarters is located at the University Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.