



For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

CARDI and WorldVeg sign MOU to strengthen fruit and vegetable value chains in the Caribbean

14th May 2021

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in collaboration with the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) also known as the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC), has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to diversify the Caribbean's food systems by sustainably developing the fruit and vegetable value chains. To achieve this, both institutions will undertake joint research and development projects, capacity building initiatives and the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and technological advances.

Fruits and vegetables are a good source of dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), individuals need approximately 400 grams or five pieces of fruits and vegetables daily. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in fat, sugars and salt contributes to overall health and well-being of individuals. While we in the Caribbean have a wide variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the year, consumption across all countries is under the recommended rate of 104 grams daily per person (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2020). Access and availability are two major factors impacting the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The signing of this MOU is timely, as 2021 has been designated the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV) by the United Nations. This collaboration between CARDI and WorldVeg will not only strengthen the production and supply chains for fruits and vegetables but will also raise awareness on the importance of both to the food and nutrition security of Caribbean peoples.

Both institutions have begun discussions towards implementing joint projects in plant genetics, breeding, evaluation and germplasm conservation in selected CARICOM countries.



Immediate focus is on participating in a project in Belize which seeks to promote vegetable diversity for more resilient livelihoods and healthier diets in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Region. This will involve field evaluation and promotion of new, improved vegetable varieties for domestic and export markets. Crops of interest are Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), sweet and chilli peppers (*Capsicum annuum*) and Pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata*). Capacity building in the areas of trial management and vegetable breeding are also included.

This partnership with WorldVeg will assist with development and introduction of new, improved varieties which meet production and market requirements leading to farmers achieving improved production, productivity, efficiency and economic returns.

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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 contribute to the sustainable development of the Caribbean by the co-generation, diffusion and application of knowledge, through agricultural research for development. The Institute's Headquarters is located at the University Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

