



For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

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CARDI joins international community in celebrating World Food Day 2021

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is pleased to join the global community to celebrate World Food Day, 2021. Unsustainable production practices, unacceptable levels of food loss and waste and high levels of hunger and malnutrition signal the need for all countries to transform their food systems. This is further underscored by the theme of this year's World Food Day celebrations 'Our Actions Our Future'.

In spite of the Caribbean having large areas of arable lands in some territories, warm temperatures, year-round sunshine, a rich and diverse agro-biodiversity, agriculture production continues to trend downwards. Over the last 18 months, the Region's food supply chains and agriculture industries have buckled under the ravages of COVID-19 and a number of natural disasters. These have threatened the lives and livelihoods of people in the Region and push already vulnerable families further into poverty. The Food Security and Nutrition Report published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reports that the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity was 71.3 % in 2020 for the Caribbean, nearly three-quarters of the population. Of those, more than half faced severe food insecurity – 39% of the population. The report also notes that a healthy diet is out of reach for millions living in Latin America and the Caribbean.

COVID-19 has magnified and increased the challenges our food systems face and has highlighted its fragility. As we move towards recovery, we must challenge ourselves to find new and innovative ways to rebuild the



sector. Emphasis must be placed on improving productivity, access and availability to safe nutritious food, climate proofing, preventing food wastage, harnessing digital technologies and value-added product development amongst other areas. According to the Chairman, CARDI, Board of Directors Ignatius Jean “A significant part of transforming the Caribbean food systems must be the increased engagement of youth in agriculture and the promotion of agriculture as a prosperous and profitable enterprise. More people, especially our Caribbean youth, must become attracted to and engaged in agriculture.”

On the occasion of World Food Day, we at CARDI reaffirms our commitment to providing science-based solutions to lead transformation of the Region’s food systems as we strive to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the regional target of reducing its food import bill by 25% by 2025.

All hands must be on deck to build back better and stronger. Partnerships are critical and we’ll continue to build alliances aimed at transforming our food systems. Transformed food systems will support the production and supply of nutritious, safe and affordable food to all Caribbean people, be resilient to shocks and environmentally sustainable. It will also help us to address the growing concerns of hunger and the exponential and worrying increase in non-communicable diseases.

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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.

