



Message on the occasion of CARDI Day 2021

CARDI Day 2021 like most other celebrations this year, will be quiet and understated. For the second year running the COVID -19 pandemic has forced us to scale back our activities and consider virtual events in place of our usual face to face interactions.

Over the last 20 months we have seen the Region's food supply chains and agriculture industries buckle under the ravages of COVID-19. A situation further exacerbated by occurrence of several natural disasters across member states – droughts in Belize, the eruption of La Soufriere in St Vincent and the Grenadines, floods in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago and the earthquake in Haiti. Collectively these crises continue to threaten the lives and livelihoods of people in the Region and push already vulnerable families further into poverty. The latest Food Security and Nutrition Report¹ published by the FAO earlier this year reports that the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity was 71.3 % in 2020 for the Caribbean² 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.

Agriculture can reverse these worrying trends, and on the occasion of our 47th Anniversary we wish to reaffirm our commitment to the regional community on changing the trajectory of regional agriculture. CARDI is committed to providing the science based solutions to lead this transformation and repositioning of the sector. The Institute will continue to leverage the breadth of our expertise and extensive partnerships to build a climate smart, dynamic, sustainable and productive agriculture sector. Together with the right innovations and investments we will position the Caribbean's agriculture sector to be an engine for food and nutrition security, sustainable growth, employment and resilience. Together we can build back better and stronger!

So, as we look towards the future, CARDI in 2022 will continue to spotlight, introduce and validate innovative practices, new tools and emerging technologies which can transform agriculture into an important economic pillar for the region. Some of priority areas of focus will be renewable energy, climate smart agriculture, agrobiodiversity conservation, value chain and agribusiness development. We know that youth engagement and integrating information and communication technologies (ICTs) in agriculture will be real game changers and so we'll continue to expand these programmes.

2021 has been beset with challenges, but we've weathered the storms. We wish to thank the Board of Governors and Board of Directors, all partners, donors and collaborators for their steadfast support.

¹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. Rome, FAO. Available online <http://www.fao.org/3/cb4474en/cb4474en.pdf>

² Note that for the Caribbean the data quoted was obtained from the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.



To all staff – the people who work every day to build a better institute, thank you for your commitment and selfless service.

Happy CARDI Day 2021.

