

“Prospects of transformation of the Caribbean regional agriculture: how CIRAD and the French agricultural research organizations of the French departments of America could support the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Research System and CARICOM initiatives?”

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Slide 1 Tittle

Honourable President Bharrat JAGDEO,
Mr Secretary General of CARICOM, Edwin CARRINGTON
Honourable Delegates of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM),
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Representatives of regional and national institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Managing Director of CIRAD, I would like to thank you for having invited Cirad to take part in this very important meeting for the sustainability of agriculture and rural life development in the Caribbean.

Unfortunately Dr Gerard Matheron is unable to join you today. Due to extremely important commitments related to the appointment of the new French Government, he will not be leaving France for a while. However, the issues debated during this Conference are a priority for Cirad and French Research partners and we would like to express our very appreciation at having this opportunity to present our views of the prospects for transformation of the region's agriculture sector. I shall explain how CIRAD and the French agricultural research organizations of the French Overseas Territories could support the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Research System and CARICOM initiatives.

Slide 2 *Map regional strategies*

Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana are not Caricom countries but French overseas territories, located in the Caribbean, bordering CARICOM countries and increasingly being integrated into CARICOM strategies. These French departments are also European-Caribbean regions by their Ultraperipheral Areas status (RUP) in the Caribbean area.

Four French agricultural institutions are involved in the Caribbean region (CEMAGREF, CIRAD, INRA and IRD) with more than 100 researchers working on agriculture and rural development. At the national level, more than 4000 researchers are involved in agricultural research. In excess of 800 researchers are working in CIRAD on the tropical and subtropical countries. By contracting with one of our

researchers you are in contact with our international network. CIRAD is working in more than 50 countries.

Slide 3 *Jean Paul DUMONT, CARICOM French Ambassador*

New political tools for cooperation and regional integration: the concept of territorial cooperation

Recently, France and Europe have demonstrated their specific and very high interest in the Caribbean and CARICOM countries (i) by nominating Mr Jean Paul DUMONT as French ambassador to CARICOM and French coordinator delegate for the Caribbean region, (ii) by voting a new law (Loi de l'orientation pour l'Outre Mer) which gave the territorial collectivities of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana the possibilities to contract and sign on behalf of the French government different kinds of agreement with regional states, (iii) by defining a special status, the Outermost region, for Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, Réunion, Canaries, Madère and Açores Islands and (iv) by supporting regional trans-national and trans-border integration at the Caribbean level, through a special cooperation scheme called "INTERREG Espace Caraïbe".

Slide 4 *RPTA, Jagdeo, IICA CARDI,...*

Through the Regional Program of Transformation of Agriculture, reinforced by the JAGDEO initiative, IICA, FAO, CARDI and CARICOM countries have defined their priorities in terms of research and development.

The French Government has identified priority areas of cooperation with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), such as support for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Both of the latter points are very important to our research and development institutions and allow me to explain how we are currently working with the CARICOM Countries in the interest of the Caribbean region in a process of Regional co-operation and integration.

Slide 5 *Cirad strategies*

In terms of Research and Development, the CIRAD strategy and programming of activities in the French West Indies are very similar to those of CARICOM :

- Ecological intensification of agricultural production
- Understanding the complex biological system
- Sanitary risks
- Food security
- Public policies and alleviation of inequalities

Slide 6 *The institutions*

CIRAD and other French organizations have been working in the Caribbean region for a long time, but during the last ten years we have been strengthening our cooperation. We now act more closely and in a more integrated way with all the

regional institutions (IICA, CARDI, FAO, UWI, others and more recently with UNDP through the TAPARD project as well as through different activities with ministries of agriculture of many of the CARICOM and CARIFORUM countries). We are involved in a process of regional integration in the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Research System with the support of (i) the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its network of French embassies based throughout the Caribbean (Sainte Lucie for OECS, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Haïti and Cuba), (ii) a Regional Cooperation Fund from different French ministries, (iii) funds from respective regional councils of Guadeloupe and Martinique, from the UNDP (TAPARD) and European funds (FEDER).

Slide 7 *The 3 pillars of the process of integration of our organisms*

In relation with our strategies we have proposed to the different ministries or CARICOM partner countries an approach for better regional integration and cooperation in the Caribbean Agricultural Research System based on three pillar networks, regional research programs, Pole of excellence, the unit supplied with an offers/demands commodity matrix by country.

Slide 8 *40 missions of quick diagnostics of needs (with ECS Ministries of Agriculture / commodities)*

Slide 9 *Applied research program with some Caribbean research institutions / commodities*

Slide 10 *ECS consortium initiative*

A new initiative for the creation of an Agricultural R&D CONSORTIUM for ECS countries. ECS sub-regional dialogue on agriculture and rural life is a process managed by IICA and ministries of agriculture for ECS organisation in collaboration with the regional research institution (CARDI, UWI, CIRAD, INRA, IRD, CEMAGREF) and regional institution as FAO, UNDP and others. The main output of this dialog is an initiative to create a Consortium to work on an integrated program which will create synergies among all actors in the R&D process.

Slide 11 *CARIBVET a Veterinary network*

Caribvet is an excellent example of a new organisation with an integrated process linked to our institution by networking, exchange of information, training, data bases and so on (www.caribvet.net).

CRISIS – CISSIP is also a very appropriate example of a project presented to this meeting. It is very important in safeguarding the Caribbean region against Invasive Species and to finance multidisciplinary (transversal) programs and activities.

Donors, funds and necessary counterpart

Slide 12 *Map activities and funds*

As you may know, CIRAD is not a Donor Institution, but through our activities and specific status as an Industrial and Commercial Public Establishment (EPIC in French), we are partly private sector. In order to develop projects we need to find with our different partners a variable percentage of funds to develop your/our projects and activities. So even though CIRAD is in close contact with the different French and European donors for competitive funds, in reality we need your help and your active participation.

Most of the time, we need to secure co-funding from the foreign partner. A very good example of the difficulties we encounter is afforded by the "INTERREG Espace Caraïbe" or "Regional Caribbean INTERREG" fund project. This is a special European fund to develop cooperation with the Caribbean countries. It is allocated to the regional council of Guadeloupe and Martinique. To allow a proposed project to be accepted, we need to identify counterpart funds from the foreign partner. I would like to emphasise that it is impossible to work together and present many projects if we cannot demonstrate real country, ministry and partner involvement. This participation could be in kind nature, or a financial grant, or through funds from complementary projects. EDF funds by example could be excellent counterpart funds accepted in the INTERREG project. But though very difficult at the National Initiative Program level, it is possible with the Regional Initiative Program. This type of mechanism (with counterpart funds) is more and more present and mandatory in the making of the financial components of a project. To facilitate the integration process, representatives from the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and from the Forum of ACP Caribbean states (CARIFORUM) are integrated in the technical secretariat of Caribbean INTERREG and the same applies to French representatives in the Caribbean regional institutions.

Slide 13 *Conclusion*

So analyzing the different CARICOM Donor Conference documents, it is obvious CIRAD and French research agricultural partners with other European partners could participate very actively in the different programs (for CIRAD : 10 projects on 14 regional projects, and 17 on 53 total projects). It is possible to undertake alliances, based on the necessary agreements and MOUs. We only have to know how to find counterpart financial support in CARICOM.

I wish you a fruitful meeting. The CARICOM countries, France with Guadeloupe and Martinique regions are in the same boat and we are very happy to participate with you in this very important phase of regional integration in the interest of the farmers, rural life and agriculture sector of Caricom and Caribbean Countries. And now Mr President, we are very confident about the future in the light of resurgence of interest in agriculture by the different donors.

Thank you for your attention