

## **The way forward- some ideas**

- We have come to the end of a very productive and historic event.
- This marks a significant milestone in the process of Transforming Caribbean agriculture driven by the “Jagdeo Initiative” – this is the overall framework for overcoming constraints and identifying programmes for the Transformation of Caribbean agriculture.
- The end of this event is the beginning of another stage as we deepen the partnership between our governments, donors, international and regional agencies and the range of technical personnel from within CARICOM and beyond.
- This partnership has consolidated its commitment to a new, Transformed CARICOM Agriculture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that will ensure food security in the context of sustainable development, systematically attack rural poverty with competitive and diversified agro- enterprises.
- The participation on the discussions on the 4 thematic thrusts has been vigorous, critical and extremely pertinent in consolidating the coherent and dynamic approach that is covered by what has become known as “the Jagdeo Initiative”.
- The participation at this Conference also gives a strong signal of the deep commitment now shared within CARICOM, multilateral agencies, technical support agencies and donors that the agricultural and rural sector will occupy a prominent place in the CSME. This reflects the political will, driven (directed) by the Heads of the Region, and changing attitude to agriculture by the population in the region.

- Broad-based collaboration at all levels should be a critical dimension of the way forward – particularly with direct involvement of the productive stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- Follow-up should be phased with an emphasis on action and results – including –
  - (i) a first phase of direct follow-up on projects ready to be funded;
  - (ii) categorization of projects to complete feasibility to go to donors within three months; and
  - (iii) preparation of projects still at the idea stage.
- My thoughts on the WAY FORWARD would suggest actions at 5 levels:
- These are:
  - (i) Immediate follow-up
  - (ii) the continuation of a small Regional Task Force;
  - (iii) coordination by the CARICOM Secretariat;
  - (iv) the formation of flexible Programme Implementation Teams with multidisciplinary and intersectoral representation; and
  - (v) the convening of an Investment Forum;
- Let me briefly outline how I see these five actions operating
- In the first instance, there will be immediate follow-up with donors and technical support agencies on decisions coming out of today's discussions, this will be done by the CARICOM Secretariat

- Secondly will be the continuation of the small Task Force which coordinated this Conference. This Task Force will be responsible for the monitoring and oversight of the implementation of the programme to transform CARICOM Agriculture. It will refine and operationalise the conclusions and recommendations from the Rapporteurs' reports on our deliberations into ACTION PLANS for the 4 Thematic Areas. The Task Force should work with the Unit in the Secretariat to ensure coherence at the national and regional levels.
- Thirdly, an expanded and upgraded Unit in the Secretariat will be responsible for co-ordination. The operations of this Unit will be critical to ensure delivery of the Region's Transformed Agriculture.
- Fourthly, Programme Implementation Teams with lead agencies for the thematic areas already in place under the Jagdeo Initiative will use a matrix management approach that allows for cross-cutting and multidisciplinary activities, in which a core institution is identified for lead responsibility. Technical expertise can be drawn from across organizations and agencies with specific set programme targets in determined periods with identified resources. Then they are disbanded or reformulated for other strategic objectives.
- Finally, but running concurrently with the practical steps outlined before, is the Planning and Convening of the Investment Forum. Ensuring public/ private partnerships and private/ private partnerships are essential. Therefore we propose an Investment Forum that will allow this to take place.
- This Investment Forum will bring together all the sector's stakeholders- private sector, farmers' organizations, regional and national financing

institutions, with every actor that plays a part in the commodity chain- from research and innovation, production, processing through marketing to sales and final consumption as well as impact on health and nutrition. Safe, healthy, and nutritious food therefore have to be part of our food security.

- The Forum should aim to have as one of its main outcomes indications of the level of financial contributions and the specific sector or cluster of issues and projects to which in principle, GOVERNMENTS, DONORS and INVESTORS will commit resources. By this stage a matching of needs and resources would have been accomplished. Continuing lobbying efforts will be undertaken and the strongest possible advocacy to secure pledges of additional resources.
  
- This 5-pronged sequencing will hopefully carry us forward to our overall goal of Transformed Agriculture of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and ensures that there is tangible and measurable outcome.
  
- I want to assure you that the Task Force will continue to provide the Heads of Government of the CARICOM Region with timely, periodic updates, as mandated by our Heads who consider this an important Regional priority
  
- My thanks must go out to the Donors, Technical Support Agencies and Member States present here today, all the hard work of the Planning Committee and the many others .....etc etc