



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

Agriculture Ministry presents its operationalisation plans for the 2020 Fire Season!

February 20, 2020:- Recording the highest incidence of fires for 2019, the South Central Forest Conservancy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF), revealed that out of its seventy seven (77) fires reported, the majority of these (29 reports) were malicious in nature with the remaining twenty-five (25) and twenty-three (23) cases being attributed to both unknown causes and agricultural burning, respectively. Cumulatively, these fires contributed to the loss of some 269.5 hectares of grasslands and 255 hectares of teak plantation.

Such were among some of the statistical data deduced by MALF's Forester II (Fire Unit), Mr. Carlos Denoon, in his 2019 overview of the Forestry Division's fire statistics during a presentation of the Ministry's 2020 Fire Season Operationalisation Plan on Wednesday 19th February, 2020, at the auditorium of the San Fernando Natural Landmark (San Fernando Hill).

The presentation - which was attended by the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mr. Ameer Roopnarinesingh as well as representative staff from each of the six (6) conservancies of the Ministry's Forestry Division (North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East and South Central) - involved the identification and assessment of the Ministry's available resources (both human and equipment) and levels of preparedness within its conservancies with the overall aim of reducing the amount of unplanned wildfires and containing the spread of those that may occur in these areas.

In recognition of their role in mitigating the potentially disastrous effects of harsher dry seasons and extremes in weather conditions, Mr. Roopnarinesingh revealed that since the beginning of December 2019, the staff of the Forestry Division have been actively monitoring and recording fires “even on weekends and public holidays”, in order to respond effectively to the existence of any wildfire threats. He said: “Our staff will be present throughout the country in strategic areas to react as quickly as possible to any such occurrences and keep their impact as minimal as possible. The Forestry Division’s human and other resources will be placed in a state of high readiness to deal with any destructive wildfires come March 01 2020 to May 31 2020, a period identified to be the most conducive to fires and where physical patrols are to be more actively engaged.”

He noted too that the Forestry Division will continue to seek strategic collaborations with state agencies and other organisations, as well as embark on a series of educational and outreach initiatives this Fire Season with the view of fostering behavioural changes as it relates to the prevention and / or reduction in the incidence and spread of wildfires.

Also attending the presentation were the Deputy Director, Northern Range Reafforestation Programme (Ag.), Mr. Lutchman Ragoonanan and Assistant Conservator of Forests (Ag.), Mr. Andre Mohan.

Photo Caption-

FIRE 1: Forestry Division Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, listen attentively during a presentation of the Ministry’s 2020 Fire Season Operationalisation Plan on Wednesday 19th February, 2020, at the auditorium of the San Fernando Natural Landmark (San Fernando Hill).

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