



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

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MEDIA RELEASE

National Seed Initiative Launched

9th May, 2020: Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF), Clarence Rambharat earlier today launched the Grow Trinbago Seed Initiative, #plantsomething at the First People Heritage Site off Blanchisseuse Road, Arima.

The initiative objectives will be to encourage households to get more involved into home gardening and “Plant Something”. Over 50, 000 seeds are expected to be distributed in the coming weeks to the national community via their respective Member of Parliament (MP) and Local Government Councillor.

Speaking at the event, the Agriculture Minister said, that the reason for selecting the proposed site of First People Heritage Village for the launch of this programme, was due to the fact that they were the first farmers in the country, and that their the group have maintained the tradition of farming during their existence. He added, that the First People were also the first Agro-Processors in this part of the world, having taken their primary produce and made value added produce for production. If ever there was a model for farming, they are an excellent example, the Minister said.

Also present were, the Minister of Education and Member of Parliament for the area Mr. Anthony Garcia Mayor of Arima- her Worship, Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julien and Ricardo Bharath Hernandez, Carib Chief of the Santa Rosa Community.

Minister Garcia said he was very appreciative of the efforts of the Agriculture Ministry on this initiative and gave his assurance that the seeds will be put to great use for the benefit of the country by the various communities. In her comments, the Mayor of Arima, Mrs. Morris-Julien praised the initiative and thanked the Minister of Agriculture for selecting Arima as the first point for the national seed distribution, which she says is significant, based on the constituency's history.

The Mayor added, that the Borough Corporation have already initiated a programme for persons who are interested in home gardening. The Corporation has assisted with the supply of dirt, manure and also with planting containers for individuals who don't have enough yard space. She says that distribution of the seeds will commence soon, but persons must first register with their Local Government Councillor in order to receive the seeds.

The Arima Borough Corporation will be providing technical assistance for all interested persons while at the same time implementing a check and balance system to ensure the programme's long term viability.

Speaking on behalf of the First People, Chief, Ricardo Bharath Hernandez said, that today marks thirty (30) years to the day, that the Santa Rosa First People community was recognized by the Government as the representative voice of all first people in the country. He said he is very grateful for the launch of this programme, since agriculture has always been part of their culture, and it will continue to be an integral part of the Heritage Village and other areas occupied by the First People for generations to come.

At today's event over 1000 packets of seeds were distributed from the MALFs National Seed Bank in Chagaramas, they included, pigeon pea, melongene, bodi, corn, pumpkin and ochro. Along with the seeds, there were also instructional booklets for the 'soon to be' home gardeners.

At the conclusion of the formal ceremony, Minister Rambharat planted some of the seeds with the First People at the Heritage Village site.

End

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