CONCEPT AND INFORMATION NOTE

TT AGRI-INVESTMENT FORUM AND EXPO II

"Transforming Agriculture through Innovation and Investment"

VENUE/S:

Forum: National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA)

Exhibition: Queen's Park Savannah, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Date: August 19-21, 2022

Background:

CARICOM has established a target of reducing the Region's food import by twenty-five percent (25%) by the year 2025. This was in response to changing global economic and climatic conditions the Region's rising food import bill and aims to stimulate investment in agriculture and food production, thereby reducing the Region's high dependence and vulnerability.

For that purpose, at the Thirty-Second Inter-Sessional Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in February 2021, a Special Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) was established to spearhead the commercialisation of the Region's Agri-Food System. The main objective of this Taskforce is to achieve the twenty-five percent (25%) by the year 2025 target by developing a resilient agri-food system which provides attractive and sustainable opportunities for investors, while enhancing food and nutrition security in the Region.

Emerging out of the formation of the MTF and its mandate to commercialise the Region's Agri-Food Systems, the CARICOM Heads of Government made the strategic decision to increase investment in the regional agriculture sector by hosting an 'Agri-Investment Forum and Expo', which captured the vision to reduce the region's food import by twenty-five percent (25%) by the year 2025.

The first CARICOM Agri-Investment Forum and Expo was successfully launched in Guyana on May 19, 2022 and closed on May 21, 2022. The theme of that Forum and Expo, "Investing in Vision 25 by 2025", set the benchmark for CARICOM States and marked a milestone for increasing investment in Guyana's agriculture sector. Following Guyana's lead, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) has agreed to continue this initiative by hosting a second Agri-Investment Forum and Expo. Jamaica will also host from July 31 to August, 2022, the return after a two-year COID-19 break of the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show while Barbados is scheduled to host its Agri-Investment Forum and Expo later in 2022.

Trinidad and Tobago, like many of its counterpart CARICOM partners, has grappled for decades with high imported food content, particularly highly processed food and staples. Volatility in prices and delivery schedules increased with the COVID-19 pandemic; more pronounced climatic changes affecting supply and pricing; the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on supplies and shipping and the impact of rising shipping costs and challenges in berthing vessels at major terminals.

In addition, higher inflation levels are prevalent globally, impacting the Region's reliance on imported food. It confirms the urgency of CARICOM's target of reducing the food import bill by twenty-five percent (25%) by 2025.

Trinidad and Tobago's Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II is the ideal platform to stimulate conversations among key stakeholders, such as policymakers, farmers and other food producers, potential foreign and local investors, distributors, and the region's consumers, to spotlight the potential investment opportunities towards the vision of reducing the food import bill by twenty-five percent (25%) by 2025.

This Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II is strategically aligned to the GoRTT's Policy on strengthening the country's agriculture sector and reducing its reliance on imported foods, especially highly processed food. It adds a new dimension of Regional Trade and Investment to the GoRTT's drive towards food security and reduced food import profile.

Key Objectives:

- To highlight the importance of food and nutrition security and having a resilient and sustainable agriculture system;

- To showcase agriculture stakeholders and the advancements made across the sector over the decades;

- To encourage discussions among key stakeholders in the agriculture sector, both locally and regionally;

- To highlight opportunities for trade and investment for local or regional producers/entities across the agriculture value chain;

- To improve local agricultural production, productivity, and value chains in the agriculture sector through shared knowledge and experiences;

- To encourage the exchange of technology and/or promote investment in innovative technologies to achieve increased availability of food locally and regionally;

- To enhance Regional Trade Investments in agriculture and food productions and the ecosystem which supports those investments;

- To reduce the dependency on imported food items by promoting local or regional alternatives.

Planning and Management:

An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been working to manage and execute the Trinidad and Tobago's Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II.

This Committee comprises of representatives from the following Ministries and Statutory Bodies/State agencies;

- Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
- Ministry of Digital Transformation
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of National Security
- Ministry of Public Utilities
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- Ministry of Trade and Industry
- National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO)
- Office of the President; and
- Office of the Prime Minister – Communications
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It should be noted that other regional and international bodies (CARICOM, IICA, FAO) are providing planning and technical support.

Theme:

The theme for TT Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II is *"Transforming Agriculture through Innovation and Investment"*.

There are two (2) segments;

A Forum – to be held at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) on August 19, 2022 from 9:00a.m. to 4:00pm. Discussions will include members from CARICOM member states, local and regional farmers, fishermen and entrepreneurs, local and regional Chambers of Commerce, private and public sector organizations, financial agencies, NGOs and FBOs and educational institutions.

The **Thematic Areas** for discussion are;

1) Food and Nutrition
2) Agriculture, Finance and Marketing
3) Agriculture, Trade & Investment
4) Agriculture and Innovation & Technology

(The final Programme is attached at **APPENDIX I**)

- An Exhibition – Following the forum, the Official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to open the Expo will take place on August 19th, 2022 at 2:30pm at the **Queen's Park Savannah (QPS)** and will run till 10:00pm.

- The Expo will continue on August 20th – 21st, 2022 from 10:00am – 10:00pm.

Proposed Participants for Forum & Expo:

- CARICOM Member States
- International and Regional Development Partners
- Public Sector/Gov't Agencies
- Private Sector Groups across the Agriculture Value Chain
- Local Farmers/Fishermen and Livestock Producers
- Financial Agencies
- Academia inclusive of students at various levels of education
- NGOs and FBOs

APPENDIX I

PROGRAMME

National Anthem

Opening Prayers

Welcome

Key Speakers from across the Region:

1) Mr. Gervase Warner, Chairman CARICOM Private Sector Organization
   Theme: Building out the CARICOM's Agri-Food Value and Distribution Chains.

2) Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Mia Mottley, Q.C., M.P.
   Theme: CARICOM 25% by 2025 within the Global context and mandates.

3) President of Guyana, His Excellency Dr. Irfaan Ali
   Theme: Progress and Vision for the CARICOM Agri-food sector.

4) President of Suriname & Chairman of CARICOM, His Excellency Chandrikapersad Santokhi
   Theme: CARICOM Community and its Overall Development Policy.

Feature Speaker: Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley

TEA BREAK: (Cultural Item: Caribbean Man)

PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

Moderator: Dr. Damie Sinanan, Manager of Competitiveness and Export Promotion, Caribbean Export Development Agency

Food and Nutrition

1. Ms. Mweia Elias, Co-Founder and Director of Empower Nutrition Ltd.
2. Mr. Shaun Baugh, CARICOM Secretariat (Guyana)
3. Dr. Renata Clarke, F.A.O.(Barbados)

Agriculture, Innovation & Technology

1. Mr. Hamlyn Holder, Managing Director of Cube Root Farms
2. Mr. Ralph Birkhoff, General Manager of Berrycove
3. Mr. Glen Ramdhani, Executive Chairman of NOVO Farms

Moderator: Mr. Daniel Best, Director of Projects - Caribbean Development Bank

Agriculture, Finance and Marketing

1. Ms. Karen Yip Chuck, General Manager in Commercial and Retail Banking - Republic Bank Limited (RBL)
2. Mr. Sekou Mark, Chairman of Agricultural Development Bank (ADB)
3. Mr. Durwin Humphrey, Program Management Specialist in Economic Growth & Local Works Development at USAID
4. Mr. Marcus Sun Kow, CEO of Fresh Start Juices

Agriculture, Trade & Investment

1. Dr. Desmond Ali, Executive Director of the C'bean Poultry Association
2. Mr. Allister Glean, Specialist for International Trade and Regional Integration from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
3. Dr. Patrick Antoine, Technical Director of CARICOM Private Sector Organization

Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.)

- CPSO and Supermarket Association of T&T (SATT)
- CPSO and Caribbean Manufacturer's Association (CMA)
- CPSO and Caribbean Agri-Business Association (CABA)

Closing of Forum

LUNCH

Official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Tour of Exhibition at Queen's Park Savannah

Entertainment and Closure of Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II (for Heads of State and their Delegations from CARICOM)

EXIT OF CARICOM HEADS & DELEGATIONS