



Ministerial Meeting on Food Security & Climate Adaptation in Small Island Developing States

SESSION IV

Improving rural livelihoods of smallholders & family farmers especially women in the CARICOM CARIBBEAN

by

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Rural Livelihoods

A portfolio of assets, activities and capabilities based in rural areas that are a means of earning a living. Assets in this framework include:

- **Human capital** (education, skills & health of household members),
- **Physical capital** (infrastructure, farm equipment); social capital (social, producer, community networks & associations such as farmers' associations to which people belong);
- **Financial capital and its substitutes** (savings, credit, land cattle, etc) and
- **Natural capital** (the natural resource base such as access to water).

FAMILY FARMS



Family Farms are central to rural livelihoods, community social cohesion, cultural identity & ecological values. Most of the poor in L.A and the Caribbean (LAC) region depend on agriculture to make a living and generally work on small-scale family farms. In almost all CARICOM countries family farming is the most important source of rural employment.

Family Farms defined:

- Predominantly dependent on family labour with the head of the household participating directly in the production process;
- Farming is the main source of household incomes
- Limited access to land and capital resources.



FAMILY FARM SIZES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Majority are smallholdings and among those who operate on less than 10 hectares.

1. 89.5% operate on less than 2 ha. and account for 55% of the land cultivated
2. 7% of small farmers have holdings of between 2 and less than 5 ha. and represent 17% of land cultivated
3. 3.4% of holdings are between 5 ha. & less than 10 ha. And represent 27% of land cultivated
4. In every CARICOM state, so-called *landless farmers* (mainly found in livestock production) utilize the 'commons' to support their livelihoods

FAMILY FARMS & RURAL SECTOR



- Although the rural population of CARICOM is relatively large and derive their livelihoods from small scale farming systems, the incomes generated from the farming itself are generally low. In Haiti , eg. more than 75% of persons in extreme poverty live in rural areas. And most of them are small holders or depend on agriculture for their means of living. There are probably more than 1mn FFs in Haiti.
- Some estimates suggest that FF supply in excess of 60% of the Caribbean's food production (not Cn).
- They also are considered strategic allies in Caribbean's fight against high food import dependency :
- In 1995 the average regional food import dependence ratio was 0.54 and rose to 0.71 by 2011 with
- half the countries in CARICOM importing more than 80% of the food they consume.



1. In several CARICOM states most small scale family farm household incomes is derived from a range of non-farm activities. The latter include:
 - Tourism
 - Remittances
 - Small rural enterprises
 - Mining
 - Timber processing
 - Or even charcoal in the case of Haiti and on the Linden highway Guyana
 - In several CARICOM states most small scale family farm household incomes is derived from a range of non-farm activities

FAMILY FARMS & SELF SUFFICIENCY



1. Family farms are a key contributor to food and nutrition self sufficiency in the region
 - Main producers of roots and tubers in CARICOM
 - Main producer of rice in Guyana and Suriname where roots and tubers are among the main staples
2. Also family farms supply fruits (tree crops and vines) and fresh vegetable to the domestic market.
3. In the light of nutrition-related diseases facing the region these are a desirable contribution to the resolution of the problems



1. Women are important in the operation of the farming systems in the Caribbean from two important angles. They are a wasted asset/ resource as well as a denied access to complementary resources:
 - Women particularly young women have less access to employment than men
 - Female unemployment stands in excess of 30% compared with 20% for males
 - although 48% of single-headed households engaged in farming in the OECS are women, the proportion of women who own land is far less than that of men ie. 30% VS 70%
2. It follows that in order to properly address the issues related to food security and marginalisation of women broader, rural development strategies would be needed.

SOME CONCLUSIONS



1. Small scale and family farmers could be a strategic ally in the fight against:
 - high food import dependency and the excessive food import bill
 - unemployment
2. In addressing rural poverty policies need to be addressed to women and in order to properly address the issues related to food security and marginalisation of women broader rural development strategies would be needed.



1. *CREATING AN ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT*

which encourages stronger livelihoods diversification strategies via:

- Facilitating inter-sectoral policy dialogue at national, sub-regional and regional levels
- Evidence-based policy support and capacity development in the formulation & implementation of policies, strategies and programmes that generate decent rural employment with particular focus on women, youth and indigenous people
- supporting policy and strategies to create new opportunities for rural women, youth and indigenous peoples in rural related industries
- Strengthening policy and institutional capacities to link family farming to social protection and decent employment strategies in rural areas
- Better characterisation of family farming for targeting different producer categories and assisting on succession challenges in rural areas



RELEVANT REMEDIAL ACTIONS BEING PURSUED IN THE REGION & ELSEWHERE cont.

11

2. encouraging stronger livelihoods diversification strategies via:

- Connecting family farming to food supply chains and public purchases of goods and services, including school feeding programmes, hospitals, security services
- Improving specific value-chains and access of small scale farmers to productive resources, services (including access to finance services such as credits and saving), *technologies, knowledge* and markets. This goes with pricing schemes and crop insurance programmes for small scale family farming
- Strengthening small scale farm producer organisations, associations and cooperatives at local and national levels
- Increasing family farmers' resilience by improving access to technical assistance, seed grants, agriculture weather-related insurance and markets.