

**United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) 16/17
BARBADOS Statement on Agriculture
24 February 2009**

Distinguished Chair,

The Government of Barbados has recognised the need to maintain a strong agricultural sector despite the competition for its small land space by competing sectors of the economy. As a result, the Government has taken action over the past years to strengthen key areas in order to maintain jobs, ensure food security and prevent land degradation in vulnerable zones.

Madame Chair

Barbados is still able to maintain a healthy capacity for certain products for which we have a production advantage. The sugar industry, while somewhat contracted is still able to produce over 30,000 tons of sugar annually while at the same time ensuring adequate production of molasses to support the traditional rum industry which is an important foreign exchange earner.

Further, the country is self sufficient in fresh pork, fresh milk and fresh chicken and is even able to export small quantities of these products to neighbouring islands and to the cruise industry.

In an effort to stimulate local food production the Government of Barbados has provided a well managed package of incentives to the agriculture sector. These incentives appear to have reaped some success as farmers have invested in new technologies such as tunnel ventilation systems and greenhouses during the past few years

A Sustainable Agriculture bill is currently being drafted in collaboration with The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in order to give legislative support to the sector.

A food security policy and comprehensive plan is currently being designed. Some of the focal elements in the food security plan will include the identification and quantification of products that are critical for food security and a National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority, which will ensure that the country upholds national and international food safety requirements and regulations.

Madame Chair

Despite some apparent successes there is still a need for assistance in developing our very ambitious programs.

Over the past 10 years the Entomology Department of the Ministry of Agriculture has been severely strained by having to deal with the control of some sixteen (16) invasive species including the Pink Hibiscus mealybug, Papaya mealybug and the Giant African Snail. In some cases the department has had outstanding success but in others it is losing the battle against some of these pests which have put our food crop sector at risk. We therefore have a need for technical support in research geared toward control and eradication of these invasive species.

Additionally, the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC) will be seeking to establish a food science and development department whose functions will include introducing new entrants to agro-processing, providing training to the food industry, the application of new technology and the development of new and improved products and processes.

The corporation is now producing small quantities of both breadfruit and cassava flour in order to satisfy a growing demand for these products but requires technical support in order to produce commercial quantities and develop new industries which will help to sustain our mandate toward food security.

Madame Chair

The above represents only a few of the areas in which Barbados is seeking technical assistance partnerships to support agriculture. Barbados is a country which has pressing needs as well as specific skills to share. As an outcome of CSD 17, we hope that we will be able to find partners with whom we can forge alliances which can be mutually beneficial.

Thank you Madame Chair.