



Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers

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NEWS RELEASE

ACM: St Georges, Grenada

October 18, 2010 - Three senior and well known Caribbean agricultural experts have warned about imminent dangers to the region if not enough is done by developed and other nations to roll back the pace of greenhouse gas emissions that are slowly increasing global temperatures and threatening marine life in the tourism-dependant trade bloc.

Speaking at Monday's first daily press briefing as the Ninth edition of Caribbean Week of Agriculture commenced in St. George's, Grenada, the experts all pointed to clear and mounting evidence that warmer temperatures are not only destroying centuries-old Caribbean coral reefs, but also encouraging some marine species like Dolphin fishes to swim and spawn way north from the region to waters off the Southern United States.

Coral reefs are bleaching and in the future, some indigenous crops that now thrive in current and previous climatic conditions may not be able to do so. This demands a comprehensive assessment of the risks and effects of climate change.

"This is a major challenge for us. We may not have any marine life of significance at all," warned Dr. Leslie Simpson, Natural Resource Management Specialist at the Jamaica office of the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI).

Other panelists included Dr. Nigel Durant, Head of the Agriculture Trade Unit of the Caribbean Community Secretariat and Dr. Ballayram, Head of the Food Security unit of the Jamaica-based Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI). The press briefing was chaired by CTA Director, Mr. Michael Hailu.

Touching on the links between agriculture and commerce, Dr. Durant said that the time has come when regionally-produced food would need to be better packaged and marketed as people are living in a much faster world than a generation ago. For instance, he said some regional manufacturers are packaging green vegetables for consumers, in such a way that they reduce the time a housewife or chef needs to spend cutting, cleaning or peeling in preparation for cooking. This may be part of the reason why packaged, ready-to-eat meals are making headway in the region and helping to drive up the already soaring US \$ 4 B regional import bill. "There is a market out there for semi processed products," he suggested, urging investors to take note of current developments.

Ballayram on the other hand spoke of the link between chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes and hypertension and the types of food being imported and consumed. "We have a serious food and nutrition problem in the Caribbean," he argued, pointing to current trends of high consumption of food with high sodium, oil and fat contents.

Meanwhile, the Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM) is pleased to provide all the CWA-related events on its networks, www.acmediaworkers.com and www.livestream.com/acmediaworkers.



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The live video stream is accompanied by live chat and journalists throughout the region are encouraged to participate in the discussion by logging in with your facebook or Twitter credentials. There is also a blog set up at www.acmediaworkers.blogspot.com where regular updates will be posted, and you are also encouraged to comment on the matters being discussed.

The CWA, the CTA and ACM have been conducting an e-discussion forum and journalists are invited to visit <http://groups.google.com/group/cta-workshop> to express their opinions on the topics being debated.

For further information contact Adelle Roopchand , ACM Media Relations at 1-473-537-4605 or email at adelleroopchand@gmail.com