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**THE INVASIVE SPECIES SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE'S FRAMEWORK FOR THE REPOSITIONING OF AGRICULTURE IN THE REGION – THE JAGDEO INITIATIVE**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Wider Caribbean is a forum to enable dialogue and the creation of a common vision and agreed goals and objectives for agricultural and rural development in the Caribbean. The Conference of Heads of Government (CHG) authorized Mr. Bharat Jagdeo, President of Guyana, to launch the Jagdeo Initiative on the development and implementation of a process that would result in the resurgence of agricultural potential in member countries, individually and collectively. Through this Initiative ten major key Binding Constraints on agricultural development in the Caribbean have been identified, and corresponding remedial actions required at the national and regional levels have been prescribed. Examples of constraints and remedial actions that would assist in the combat of invasive species include the following: Constraint No. 1: Limited Financing and Inadequate New Investments; remedial actions: (a) establish an Agricultural Modernization Fund (AMF), and (b) define CARICOM's Agri-Food Needs at 2005 to 2015 to identify investment opportunities (incl. tourism); Constraint No. 2: Deficient and uncoordinated risk management measures including Praedial Larceny; remedial actions: (a) operate a disaster fund within the AMF, and (b) support mandatory farmer and fresh produce trader registration; Constraint No. 4: Outdated and inefficient Agriculture Health and Food Safety Systems; remedial actions: (a) provide funds from AMF to operationalise CAHFSA and national agencies or systems, (b) strengthen the legislative and regulatory trade framework through establishment of CAHFSA and National Agencies or Systems, and (c) collective financing of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) protocols to improve industry competitiveness.

**KEY WORDS:** binding constraints, Agricultural Modernization Fund, CAHFSA, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) protocols

**INTRODUCTION**

I have been asked by the Organisers of the Symposium to position the Invasive Species Safeguarding Strategy (ISSS) within the Agricultural Alliance's Jagdeo Initiative. I believe that most of you know of the ISSS and, if you do not know, by 4:30 pm this afternoon you will certainly do. Accordingly, this is one element of the presentation that I do not need to define and /or describe. However, I believe that I do need to provide some background information for the other two elements, the Alliance and the Jagdeo Initiative. This is especially so for non-CARICOM members.

## ALLIANCE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL MILIEU IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN

Firstly, the Alliance or to give its complete name, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Wider Caribbean. This is a Forum that has been conceptualized by IICA to enable dialogue and the creation of a common vision and agreed upon goals and objectives by the major stakeholders involved in agricultural and rural development in the Caribbean. The members are the Forum of Ministers of Agriculture (that provides the Chairman), the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA), the Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE), the Caribbean Agriculture Forum of Youths (CAFY), the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) and the Regional Technology Innovation System (PROCICARIBE). It has, as Observers, regional and international institutions involved in agricultural and rural development, such as, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute/Pan American Health Organisation, the Caribbean Regional Negotiation Machinery (CRNM), Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), and the Caribbean Fisheries Management Project.

The CARICOM Secretariat and IICA initially comprised the Secretariat. They were joined by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in 2003 and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in 2005.

The Alliance and its members are in the process of establishing functioning national chapters in each CARICOM Country.

The Jadgeo Initiative has its origin in the request of President Bharat Jagdeo of Guyana, in his capacity as Lead Head for Agriculture within the Conference of Heads of Government (CHG), to the Directors General of FAO and IICA in late 2003. This request was to assist him in the development and implementation of a process that would result in the resurgence of agricultural potential in member countries, individually and collectively.

Consequently, representatives of the two institutions, along with the CARICOM Secretariat, assisted President Jagdeo in the preparation of a position paper that he presented to the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CHG in Grenada in July 2004. This paper, which was accepted by Heads, highlighted, inter alia, the multifunctionality of agriculture, its economic and socio-cultural importance, the trend of declining production exacerbated by the rulings of the WTO and EU Trade Agreements, the need to put in place a New Agriculture to address this decline and the need for the major stakeholders to identify what were/are the major key Binding Constraints that would limit the success of this exercise.

To facilitate the process of identification of the major key Binding Constraints, IICA, with financial support from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and logistical support from the CARICOM Secretariat and FAO, organized two regional workshops:

- In October 2004, to brief National Focal Points on the conduct and expected outputs of national consultations with the major stakeholders; and
- In December 2004, to synthesise, integrate and prioritise the results of the national consultations.

These national and regional consultations resulted in the identification of 10 key Binding Constraints along with some suggested Interventions to address these Constraints. These were ratified by the Forum of Ministers of Agriculture, as part of the Alliance in Jamaica January 2005, and agreed to by the CHG at its Intersessional Meeting in Suriname February, 2005. You would note that the process was fast tracked. This is a reflection of the very limited time available to the Caribbean to reposition its agriculture.

I will return to the key Binding Constraints and the Interventions subsequently. At this time, I would wish to indicate some key characteristics/features of the Jagdeo Initiative.

## THE JAGDEO INITIATIVE

### The Jagdeo Initiative

(i) Visualizes a Sector that no later than 2015 has:

- a. made substantial progress towards contributing significantly to national and regional development and to economic, social and environmental sustainability;
- b. a transparent regulatory framework at national and regional levels, that promotes and facilitates investment and attracts (direct and indirect) inflows of capital;
- c. significantly transformed its processes and products and stimulated the innovative entrepreneurial capacity of Caribbean agricultural and rural communities; and
- d. enabled the region (as a whole) to achieve an acceptable level of food security that is not easily disrupted by natural and or manmade disasters; and

(ii) Emphasizes that it:

- a. finds its legitimacy in the Regional Transformation Programme for Agriculture (RTP), established through Articles 56 and 57 of the Revised Treaty and which has as its main objective:
- b. the fundamental transformation of the agricultural sector towards market oriented, internationally competitive and environmentally sound production of agricultural products.
- c. is not an attempt at a comprehensive reform of the RTP for Agriculture. Rather, it recognizes that progress within a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) requires that we operationalise the RTP (with appropriate adjustments as necessary);
- d. incorporates and builds on previous actions, such as, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu (1998), the Caribbean Development Bank's symposium on the Repositioning of Regional Agriculture (2002), the FAO Food Security Project (2003), and the OECS Policy and Plan of Action (2003/2004);
- e. does not attempt to treat with the traditional sub-sectors of sugar, bananas and rice which currently are being addressed separately.

A Core Group, comprising the Secretariat of the CARICOM and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, the CARDI, CDB, CRNM, FAO and IICA, has been appointed by the CHG to develop and monitor the implementation of the Jagdeo Initiative. However, the Core Group has initiated a process to determine within each Intervention the actions required at the national and regional level and those ongoing and/or proposed. In this way, a prioritized set of programme/project actions with cost estimates and appropriate time frames will be developed. Further, it has identified agencies to lead the implementation of various components of the Proposal.

1. The Key Constraints that have been identified by the stakeholders, are:
2. Limited financing and inadequate level of new financing
3. Deficient and uncoordinated risk management measures
4. Fragmented and unorganised private sector
5. Inadequate research and development

6. Outdated and inefficient agricultural health and food safety systems
7. Inadequate land and water distribution and management systems
8. Inadequate transportation systems, particularly for perishables
9. Weak and non-integrated information and intelligence systems and services
10. Marketing – weak linkages and participation in growth market segments
11. Lack of skilled human resources

## CONSTRAINTS AND OPERATIONALISATION OF THE INVASIVE SPECIES SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY

You will note that almost all of these Constraints have a direct bearing on the operationalisation of the ISSS. However, because of time constraints, I will use a few examples of the listed Interventions to illustrate this potential relationship.

### **Constraint No. 1:** Limited Financing and Inadequate New Investments.

#### Interventions:

- i. Establish an Agricultural Modernization Fund (AMF) taking into account the Regional Development Fund.
- ii. Conduct a study on CARICOM's Agri-Food Needs at 2005 to 2015 to identify investment opportunities (incl. tourism).
- iii. Mandatory farmer and business registration to facilitate channeling of financing and investment from AMF.

### **Constraint No. 2:** Deficient and uncoordinated risk management measures including Praedial Larceny.

#### Interventions:

- i. Operate a disaster fund within the AMF.
- ii. Support mandatory farmer and fresh produce trader registration.

### **Constraint No. 3:** Inadequate Research and Development.

#### Interventions:

- i. Establish, upgrade, consolidate R & D facilities and infrastructure, esp. modernized laboratories.
- ii. Increase industry collaboration and investment in research and infrastructure.
- iii. Governments should prioritize and facilitate skills training

### **Constraint No. 4:** Outdated and inefficient Agriculture Health and Food Safety Systems.

#### Interventions:

- i. Provide funds from AMF to operationalise CAHFSA and national agencies or systems.
- ii. Strengthen the legislative and regulatory trade framework through establishment of CAHFSA and National Agencies or Systems.
- iii. Collective financing of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) protocols to improve industry competitiveness.

The above indicates very clearly that the Jadgeo Initiative provides a framework within which the ISSS can fit. Specially, it has the potential to provide financial and human resources and the development and operationalisation of the physical – laboratories, marketing and

transport - infrastructure, as well as the institutional redefining, restructuring and retooling that are required by the ISSS.

It is now for us to work together to make use of this platform, so as to assist in achieving increased trade of agricultural trade and improved incomes to our agripreneurs.