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PREFACE

Barbados was once again honoured to be selected to host the 31st Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society, having performed these pleasant duties on three previous occasions. Mention must be made that this annual meeting was held jointly with that of the Barbados Society of Technologists in Agriculture (BSTA).

We were delighted to welcome some 142 registrants, including 10 university students, from 22 countries. Seven leading farmers from the Leeward and Windward Islands, who would not otherwise have been able to participate, were in attendance, thanks to the support given by Barclays Bank PLC, who joined a number of business houses and public sector institutions, principally, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in ensuring that the event was adequately financed. Without our sponsors' generosity, this meeting could not have been arranged.

CFCS continues to be the only organization of its kind, which on an annual basis brings together practitioners who operate at several different levels in their quest to find solutions to the many problems in Caribbean agriculture. The range of subject matter of the papers and posters presented attested to the fact that the Society has broadened its scope beyond the confines of food crop production. It is my earnest hope that CFCS will continue to follow this desirable course without a name change and without losing sight of its ultimate objective of raising the quality of life of all Caribbean people. Consistent with this widened outlook, the theme of the meeting, Global Trade Liberalization and Caribbean Agriculture, will only survive as a viable option for the region's people when it finds new paths to modernize itself and thereby be in the position to take full advantage of new opportunities which the liberalization process will undoubtedly present.

I am pleased to record that in keeping with the Society's objective of encouraging excellence, two special awards were made to two long-standing members for their distinguished contribution to Caribbean agriculture. The recipients were Dr Lucien Degras and Dr Reginald Pierre.

I wish to record my sincere thanks to the members of the conference organizing committee for their dedication and unfailing support in the preparation and management of the meeting, as well as in the compilation of these proceedings.

Ronald A. Baynes
President

(1994/95)

FEATURE ADDRESS (SUMMARY)

THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CARIBBEAN REGION

FAO POSITION PAPER

Lawrence A. Wilson

FAO Subregional Representative for the Caribbean

FAO has recently completed its quantitative assessment of the impact of the Uruguay Round on major agricultural markets. The results of this assessment for world commodity markets and the implications for food security were discussed in April this year in Rome by the Committee on Commodity Problems and the Committee on World Food Security, respectively. The paper prepared for this conference draws on this assessment and focuses in particular on the implications of the Uruguay Round on the agriculture and food sector of the Caribbean region.

The main elements of the methodology used in the FAO assessment are given in section 3.1 of the paper. The assessment is limited to selected agricultural exports and imports of the region, but as it is explained, the selected commodities covered amount to a substantial share of the region's agricultural trade.

The region has been traditionally a net agricultural exporter. During the 1987-89 period the region exported an average of US\$5.6 billion of agricultural products and imported some US\$3 billion annually, resulting in a net export surplus of US\$2.6 billion. However, following the virtual collapse of Cuba's traditional export market in the early 1990s, its agricultural exports declined drastically by over US\$2 billion in 1991 compared to 1990, and then it turned into a net agricultural importer in 1993.

The region's major agricultural export commodities include sugar, banana, coffee and cocoa. On the other hand, the region is a net importer of basic food commodities. In value terms, of the region's total food consumption in the period 1987-89, some 56% was imported.

The implications for trade of the implementation of the Uruguay Round stem from changes in market prices and incomes, new market opportunities for agricultural exports and the extent to which external market signals are transmitted back to producers and consumers. Section IV provides some estimates of export earnings and food import expenditures as a result of the Uruguay Round. It also attempts to give a tentative estimate for the agricultural sector as a whole.

The FAO assessment of the impact of the Uruguay Round on the Caribbean region points to both some positive and some negative effects. On the positive side there is an

increase in the value of export earnings of the region as a result of a strengthening of prices of the major agricultural commodities exported. However, at the same time, there could be an erosion of preferential margins leading to a reduction in the value of preference. Also on the negative side the region's food import bill is seen to increase due to the projected rise in the price of basic food commodities. In the aggregate, the net trade balance for the region as a whole is positive, although small in relative terms and not equally shared.

In general, the agricultural potential of the region as a whole is limited. However, some countries are better endowed than others and could exploit their potential by taking advantage of opportunities that may be available in view of the general strengthening of world markets. It may be noted that such opportunities are not to be found only in products which are already exported by the region but other agricultural products in raw or processed form.

For some countries of the region, the most heavily dependent on food imports, there is little that they can do by themselves in compensating for the higher import bills as a result of higher food prices. These countries would require some compensation from international mechanisms, as envisaged by the relevant Decision of the Final Act on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food Importing Developing Countries. In addition, these countries will have to strengthen existing domestic mechanisms which would protect poor households in the event of excessive price increases in basic foodstuffs.

Other policy areas that may require some further attention are the need to develop policies that comply with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture in respect of member countries of that organization. Others, non-members, may also actively consider the value of adopting similar policy packages. The reduction and possible elimination of non-trade barriers should also stimulate countries in the region to examine the scope for strengthened intra-regional trade links in the future. Finally, because of the greater relevance in the future to national agriculture policy of the WTO disciplines, permanent internal administrative machinery may need to be developed to handle the complex issues of compliance with the Agreement on Agriculture.

OPENING ADDRESS

*The Hon. Ronald Toppin
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Barbados*

Mr President, Distinguished Guests; Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen:

I willingly accept this invitation to address the Opening Session of the Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society since it provides me with the opportunity to make contact with both scientist and practitioner in the important field of agriculture and agribusiness.

I would like to congratulate the President and his Coordinating Committee for the excellent preparatory work they have done which has resulted in the impressive opening we are witnessing here this morning. No praise is too high for a job well done. I am sure the Caribbean Food Crops Society is proud. On behalf of the Government and people of Barbados it gives me great pleasure to welcome the delegates and officials from the Caribbean region and beyond and to extend to you best wishes for an enjoyable and rewarding stay in our country. The same wishes are also extended to your spouses who have accompanied you here for this conference. I am sure that the organizers have made all the necessary arrangements for your comfort.

Barbados' association with the Caribbean Food Crops Society began at its very inception with the inaugural meeting which was held in St Croix, US Virgin Islands in 1963. According to my information, in the following year, the annual conference was held here, followed by conferences in 1973 and 1982. This is therefore the fourth occasion on which your annual meeting has been held within these shores. Having seen the impressive line-up of speakers and knowing the level of hospitality which the Organizing Committee has provided, I am confident that the period between meetings in Barbados will be shortened rather than lengthened when next you meet here again.

My understanding is that the Caribbean Food Crops Society functions as a non-governmental organization with an interdisciplinary membership drawn from both government and private sectors of CARICOM, the Dutch-speaking territories, French Overseas Departments, the US Antilles, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Central America and the USA. The Society can be truly proud of a representation that is truly Caribbean and interdisciplinary in that it has within its ranks development specialists, researchers, managers, farmers and scholars, among others. On occasions such as this, with so much talent in one location, the opportunity for healthy and useful discussion, cross-fertilization of ideas and the exchange of information should be exploited to the fullest to result in the distillation of workable solutions for meeting the many challenges which the agricultural sector is facing, especially the challenge of reducing our food import bill.

Mr President, I have taken note that central to your mission is the upliftment of the quality of life of the Caribbean people through the advancement and fostering of food pro-

duction, food processing, and food distribution. These are indeed noble objectives and I believe that with dedication and application such goals are totally realistic and achievable. The mere fact that this is your 31st successive Annual Meeting is clear evidence of an unswerving commitment and dedication to the cause you serve. I wish therefore to take this opportunity to salute you and to give you the assurance of my Ministry's continued support and cooperation in the years ahead.

Your most recent Newsletter reveals that your last conference featured 15 technical sessions in which more than 76 papers were presented with 18 poster presentations covering the theme Caribbean Economic Stabilization Through Agricultural Development Strategies and that a total of 170 participants representing 23 countries were in attendance. There were field trips and sightseeing tours. I am pleased to learn that this year's conference is no less impressive.

The Society must be commended too for reaching out to and involving young professionals by facilitating the availability of scholarships to them. I hope you will be successful in pursuing with the United States Department of Agriculture their offer of four scholarships in post-harvest technology. My Ministry remains committed to dialogue with the Caribbean Food Crops Society on such matters and stands ready to render any assistance that would be helpful in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen, your programme for this year's conference appears well tailored to the issues of the day and your theme, Global Trade Liberalization and Caribbean Agriculture, encapsulates some major agricultural concerns of the region in general. I look forward eagerly to the outcome of your deliberations on this subject. The pace of change in development strategies is gathering momentum and we must be prepared to navigate the tide. We must set the agenda for free but fair trade at the regional and global levels.

I wish to share a few thoughts with you on my Ministry's approach to this strategic area. The conclusion of the GATT Agreement in April 1994, reflected a strong international commitment to open trade policies. CARICOM, in keeping with current thinking agreed to reduce its Common External Tariff (CET) in line with other trading blocs in Latin America by 1998. The privatization process, aggressively pursued in 1994, which will, needless to say, affect agriculture, has to be taken on board so that the anticipated recovery in the industrialized countries in 1995/96 may be used as a favourable external environment for export-led growth in the agricultural sector.

The decision was taken in 1992, that with the abolition of the licensing arrangements that apply to intra-regional trade in agricultural goods, some safeguard mechanisms should be available to member states to protect their domestic agricultural production from any injury that might arise from the importation of regional agricultural imports. The provisions of the Treaty of Chaguaramus setting up the Caribbean Community and the new Article 29A will allow member states of CARICOM to impose quantitative restrictions on imports of regional agricultural products if such imports cause or have the potential to cause injury to domestic agricultural interests. Now that Article 29A has been ratified and the matter

was discussed at the Georgetown Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government, I shall have to be advised on the outcome by the Prime Minister.

The Common External Tariff (CET) was revised in 1992 and provisions were made for its phased reduction through to 1998. Reductions have already been undertaken. Barbados introduced Phase II of the CET by 1 April this year, and remains committed to the regional integration movement and the move towards the Single Market.

Under GATT, Barbados is faced with allowing some degree of access to its market of agricultural products that have not been imported in the past to the extent of 3% of their average annual domestic production between 1986 and 1988 and this must be expanded to reach 5% of the annual average by the end of the implementation period, 1996. There is some provision for exemption on the grounds that domestic support is directed towards the promotion of crop diversification, the preservation of the environment and the improvement of the efficiency of the agricultural sector. Consequently the domestic support which Barbados provides, for example to the sugar industry and the production of fresh milk, is justifiable and can remain intact.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the impact of the GATT Agreement and the CET will be challenging for the agricultural sector. The dismantling of the licensing regime will have some implications for farmers who adjust slowly to the new marketing environment. Initially, Barbadian farmers might find themselves competing with goods from other CARICOM countries. Hence the need for a level playing field before products are removed from the licensing regime, especially certain sensitive commodities. Differences in currency valuation and wage levels in the agricultural sector might also be problematic for Barbados in the critical stages.

To ensure smooth implementation of GATT requirements my Ministry will among other things be looking to:

- Ensure that the provisions of Article 29A of the Treaty of Chaguaramus are applied, if and when necessary.
- Take necessary action to help reduce production cost; this essentially is in place with the removal of import duties and related taxes on inputs into agricultural production.
- Upgrade and properly police pesticide control legislation as well as plant and animal quarantine legislation.
- Ensure that antidumping legislation is upgraded to restrict exports into Barbados if the export price of those goods is below their domestic market price.

The local producers will need to promote the greater use of local products, and encourage importers to buy local where price and quantity are right and competitive. Importers

must source the goods from local producers who meet their requirements. This is imperative to stop the unnecessary drain on our country's foreign reserves.

Mr President, the Barbados National Standards Institution, the Government Analytical Laboratory, the Animal and Plant Quarantine and the Ministry of Health will be getting together to review the existing trading arrangements and legislation so as to ensure that imported products meet the required standards of wholesomeness, hygiene, health, labeling, environmental criteria and the like. In addition, it will be imperative to put the necessary arrangements in place to police adherence to the standards established.

The present Government has already laid the foundation to create competitiveness in Barbadian agriculture. The farmers have already benefited from a set of cost-cutting and incentive measures, especially the removal of all duties and related taxes on imported inputs into agricultural production. With the establishment of the Rural Development Commission, within the very near future, my Ministry will be in a better position to bring more services and support to the rural community. The approach to agriculture and its linkage with rural development will be more meaningful and more assertive. In this new thrust the Rural Development Commission along with the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation and the entire farming community will be effectively linked to reflect a new approach to development that not only recognizes the needs of communities but effectively deals with those needs in terms of agriculture, infrastructure such as roads, street lighting, health amenities, sport facilities, housing, cottage industries and the like and places the individual at the centre of economic activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, consistent with Government's proposed reform of public sector institutions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is in the process of carrying out a review of its operations to ensure that its role and mission are in consonance with today's world. The Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation will be restructured and the preparation of the Business Plan which Government has mandated is expected to be ready very shortly. Agroprocessing will be revisited, and to reinforce the point, a team of consultants has already submitted their report on the feasibility of refloating the agroprocessing plant. The Project Coordinating Committee of my Ministry will soon be handing in their recommendations on that study to me.

The Ministry in conjunction with the Barbados Agricultural Management Company has launched the Sugar Cane Replanting Programme for the independent plantations and small farmers and we expect that sugar will soon again make a more significant contribution to overall agricultural production in Barbados. I have appointed a task force to advise me on immediate and appropriate solutions to our programme for the cotton industry, since this industry must assume its proper role in earning foreign exchange and in providing much needed jobs.

I am convinced that the Scotland District area has much potential for adding to the agricultural development of this country. As you know the Prime Minister in his recent

Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals declared the Scotland District a Special Development Area. In this regard my Ministry is in the process of preparing proposals including the necessary incentives to respond to this declaration. These proposals will be completed by the end of this month.

Mr President, these are just some of the new initiatives being undertaken by my Ministry.

The Caribbean Food Crops Society has a role to play in the efforts to streamline and modernize the agricultural sectors in the region. The participants in this Annual Meeting, including a number of officers from my Ministry, must ensure that the knowledge and skills gleaned from the deliberations over the next few days are channelled back into the system to benefit our farmers. Your report and papers will be welcomed and carefully read; and where practicable and feasible, I am sure your recommendations will be applied.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to declare the Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society open. I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you very much.