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THE NEW ROLE OF CARDI

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I notice that the subject on the programme is 'The New Role of CARDI'. I should like to correct this and state that I am not coming out with anything new in so far as CARDI's role is concerned. I am merely identifying the role that the Institute should have been carrying out all along.

CARDI officially was born on August 1, 1975. It took over the operation of the previously existing Regional Research Centre which had formed part of the Faculty of Agriculture, U.W.I. The Agreement establishing it as an autonomous unit was signed by the twelve member Governments in December of 1974. The member Governments are Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Belize, St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, Antigua, St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla and Montserrat.

The objects of the Institute as laid out in the Agreement are:

1. To provide for the research and development of the agriculture of the Region as identified in national plans and policies.
2. To provide an appropriate research and development service to the agricultural sector of member States.
3. To provide and extend the application of new technologies in production, processing, storage and distribution of agricultural products of member States.
4. To pursue for specified periods long-term research in relevant areas.
5. To provide for the co-ordination and integration of the research and development efforts of member States where this is possible and desirable.
6. To undertake teaching functions normally at the postgraduate level, limited to the development of the relevant research by a member State.
7. To seek to achieve the optimum decentralization of facilities.

Policy formulation occurs at two levels - general policy at Standing-Committee of Ministers of Agriculture level and directional policy at the Board of Directors level.

The emphasis of the Institute and its predecessor had been traditionally oriented towards academic pursuits rather than towards hard-core agricultural development. This was understandable bearing in mind that the predecessor organization was patently a research and not research and development organization.

The objects of CARDI, however, are clearly designed to promote the development of "The Agriculture of the Region". Certain key roles and activities will, therefore, have to be fulfilled by the Institute in order to achieve its objectives. Some of these might be:

1. Formulation of policies to guide the operations of the Institute within the ambit of the various national agricultural efforts within the Region.
2. Development and maintenance of programmes designed to increase the awareness of the need for agricultural development.
3. Formulation and execution of programmes and field activities to assist in developing agriculture in the member States.
4. Influencing and promotion of the involvement of Governments and other bodies in agricultural development.
5. Continual ensuring of the development and introduction of modern methods, techniques and developments through effective linkages between research and programme activities.

Priority will be given to applied and developmental research linked with productive or commercial systems and a significant emphasis will be placed on development aspects. Research will be carried out as a means to an end not as an end in itself.

There must be complete integration of programmes with the Ministers of Agriculture of the member States. This must be built in at the planning stage to ensure that optimum effort is achieved.

CARDI and the Faculty of Agriculture, U.W.I., must work very closely together. The atmosphere of competition which appears to exist must be eliminated. The two groups must complement each other. Neither one can have all the expertise but together they can go a long way towards helping to solve the problems of agriculture in the Region.

CARDI now has Field Units in Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Belize, St. Lucia, Antigua and St. Kitts. Better to serve the member Governments we will be adding additional units as well as strengthening those in Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Belize. This objective will be achieved by staff transfers from Trinidad Headquarters as well as by recruiting additional staff. Expertise and capability of these staff members will depend on the expressed needs and desires of the member States.

I would point out that the implementation of our programmes will be carried out by the Field Units. They will have a line function. Headquarters staff will be a resource group of specialists whose function will be to provide support and service to the Field Units.

To sum up, CARDI must have total involvement in the Region and the specific expertise of CARDI must be made available to participating States. CARDI must be permitted to carry out the role envisaged for it by the objectives as laid out in the Agreement establishing it. It must play a lead role in Regional Agricultural Development. This proliferation of Agencies must not be allowed to continue. It just does not make sense. Rather than start new ones, it would be more efficient to consolidate into more compact cohesive groups those that already exist, i.e. CARDI and CARDATS.