

4 QUESTIONS FOR SAMSON VILVIL FARE ON THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PACIFIC AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONS

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1 *The Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Programme promotes the agricultural development of the Caribbean and the Pacific through their market integration. What are the programme's special features?*

There are a vast number of intra-ACP programmes, but the programme in question aims to foster the sharing of good agricultural practices between regions, and particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This programme, which has four components (agricultural policy; value and market chains; ICTs, science, technologies and climate change; and knowledge and communication management) has been designed to help SIDS in the Caribbean and Pacific open up internationally as a means to acquiring good practices and technical and financial partnerships. To achieve these objectives, CTA is developing several initiatives and sharing its expertise in a variety of fields ranging from value-chain development to knowledge management.

2 *How can smallholder farmers from the Caribbean and Pacific be better integrated into markets?*

Agritourism is a particularly interesting example. In the Caribbean and the Pacific, tourism accounts for half of GDP but,

very often, tourists do not consume 'local' products. Why miss out on this enormous market (40 million tourists a year in the Caribbean and 1.5 million in the Pacific)? To link local farmers with markets, CTA provides financial and technical assistance to farmers' associations and the programme's institutional partners. An agritourism conference has also been held in

the Caribbean. In bringing together political decision-makers at this event, CTA wanted to assist in the development of favourable policies.

Beyond the local level in these regions, which have difficulty accessing the international market for various reasons (distance, insufficient production, etc.), existing resources need to be taken advantage of. If tourists are given the opportunity to discover high-quality, local products, they can become potential customers once they return home. Many niche products, such as virgin coconut oil, organic meat and coffee, could be produced and exported further, as is the case with chocolate from Grenada, which is sold on international markets. People are prepared to pay more for high-quality, ethical products.

3 *Is climate-smart agriculture particularly important to SIDS?*

Climate change is a serious threat to the survival of SIDS. Coastal areas, where the majority of populations and infrastructure are located, are the most affected. In these states, however, there is no question of emission reduction as they produce hardly any carbon dioxide. Climate-smart agriculture, therefore, is an appropriate

solution and research is a priority in this field. As such, the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community has developed food crops that are adapted to climate change. For example, trials have been carried out on the breeding of crops, such as taro (*Colocasia sp.*) and breadfruit, with very positive results in the field. Exchanges are being planned with the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute in the Caribbean with, for example, a taro that is adapted to high levels of water salinity.

4 *2014 was the UN's international year of SIDS. What was the result of this international year?*

A UN international year is always a positive event and 2014 provided the opportunity to raise awareness amongst the international community to the urgent situation of SIDS. But we must ensure that this attention does not waver in the coming years because there are many challenges. CTA has focused its attention on the private sector because agricultural producers are, above all, business oriented. Before the UN's international conference held in Samoa in September 2014, CTA participated in a forum organised for the private sector to support the sustainable development policies of SIDS. Tangible results have been achieved with the creation of partnerships, such as that between CTA and the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation to strengthen agri-food systems in the Pacific by supporting the development of the agri-industry. Another result was the official announcement by CTA of a Pacific Week of Agriculture - similar to the Caribbean Week of Agriculture - which will take place in Vanuatu in 2015.

For further information on the Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Programme see: <http://tinyurl.com/ozc8vkl>