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NEWS RELEASE

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FAO and the Government of Mexico offer critical support to farmers affected by drought in Antigua and Barbuda



Amid water scarcity challenges, Resilient Caribbean Initiative provides water storage tanks to 12 farmers

8 June 2023, Saint John's, Antigua and Barbuda- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government of Mexico and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda provided 1000-gallon water storage tanks to 12 farmers in Antigua and Barbuda as part of the *'Addressing the Water-Energy Nexus in Agriculture'* (WEF) sub-project of the Mexico-CARICOM-FAO Initiative *"Cooperation for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Caribbean"*, or Resilient Caribbean Initiative in short.

Like several countries in the Caribbean, Antigua and Barbuda is grappling with issues of water scarcity. As the effects of climate change become more evident with sea levels rising and rainfall patterns changing, freshwater availability and quality is decreasing while the frequency and severity of droughts increases. This, coupled with inefficiencies in the use of water, particularly affects agricultural production, which is in strong competition with other sectors for water resources.

The project, funded by the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) is being implemented by the FAO in 14 CARICOM countries. The Resilient Caribbean Initiative supports Small Island Developing States (SIDS) facing

these issues using an integrated Water-Energy-Food nexus approach in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The provision of tanks is part of the support being offered by the project, offering an immediate solution to the water storage needs of 12 farmers, with seven located in Antigua and five in Barbuda. The tanks offer crucial relief to farmers facing water scarcity challenges, assisting them in improving agricultural production and ensuring food security despite climate change impacts.

Working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Barbuda Council to facilitate distribution of the tanks, FAO's National Project Coordinator Mali Barnes shares *"Providing these 1000-gallon tanks is a critical step towards supporting our farmers in Antigua and Barbuda. By empowering them with improved water storage capacity, we are enabling them to optimize their irrigation practices and enhance their agricultural output, ultimately contributing to the nation's food security goals."*

The project is supporting 20 farmers with the provision of climate-smart technologies such as solar-powered (micro) irrigation systems, rainwater harvesting and storage to improve water efficiency and management, and access to clean, climate-smart energy to increase agricultural water productivity. This support coupled with training on the effective management of water resources is intended to help build resilience to climate change and ensure food security for Antigua and Barbuda.

Farmer and project beneficiary Ilesha Punther expressed how the project has helped to boost agricultural productivity on her farm, stating, *"I am thankful to have been one of the beneficiaries of the project. Barbuda has been facing an extended and persistent drought, which has caused many challenges for my farm. However, this tank as well as the training received through the project will help me manage my water more efficiently and increase production"*.

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For more information:

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