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NEWS RELEASE

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Revamping hot pepper production in St Vincent and the Grenadines

Farmers and extension officers will engage in a three-day training, provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to encourage better production of the country's hot peppers to increase yields and incomes.



Pics by Jai Rampersad

January 23, 2025 - Bridgetown, Barbados – Over the past months, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour have been working closely to revamp the hot pepper value chain. Crucial to this process is assessing the value chain and understanding the priorities for its development, including areas for improvement such as production using good agricultural practices and increasing access to markets. FAO technical officers will spend one week in St Vincent and the Grenadines to support this process.

From 28-30 January 2025, some 60 farmers and 20 extension officers will gather for training in hot pepper production, mid supply chain, the impact of climatic factors on production, hot pepper varieties, the cost of production, markets and utilisation of agricultural technology. The

training will be delivered to participants in the Eastern and Western zones by Mr Luke Lee, FAO Hot Pepper Production Specialist, Mr Jai Rampersad, FAO Trade Development Specialist and Dr Omardath Maharaj, FAO Agribusiness Finance Specialist.

Mr Rampersad and Mr Lee will also spend two additional days visiting hot pepper farms, distributors, processing and research facilities and seed propagation centres to aid in assessing the needs of the value chain sector and strengthening data and information collection on the sector.

The week will culminate with a review and evaluation of the Upgrading Strategy for the Hot Pepper Value Chain by key stakeholders, as well as a hot pepper cost of production presentation. It is expected that during this session, the stakeholders will validate the upgrading strategy to set into motion its implementation.

Mr Juan Cheaz Pelaez, FAO Trade and Markets Officer for the Caribbean and Lead Technical Officer for the FAO project conducting the week's activities, highlighted that, "the hot pepper value chain in St Vincent and the Grenadines is one of two important sectors that FAO is focused on strengthening for their high potential to increase economic opportunities; the other is dasheen. Recognising the potential for both, our approach is to understand the coordination gaps and other factors that have limited sector growth over the years and find ways to support strengthening the value chain so that we can increase incomes for farmers and other players in the value chain, secure public-private partnerships and increase opportunities for investment in the hot pepper sector."

The development of the hot pepper value chain and the week of engagement with its stakeholders are being conducted under a two-year project of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme focusing on Promoting Windward Islands Food Production and Trade Corridor through national and regional value chain development, which is scheduled to end this year.

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