# 20 20 Conference: “Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security”

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 15May 2014

# Expanding Economic Opportunities of Women Farmers and Entrepreneurs

# Background on CANROP

The Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) was formally launched in 1999, with four (4) Chapters. The network was established in the response to the need to equip women with technical, administrative and entrepreneurial skills as a means to improving their socio-economic status and create employment in the rural areas in which they live. Presently, CANROP’s regional affiliations include: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Haiti will soon formally become a member but Chapters are still to be formed in Belize and Dominican Republic. CANROP is the umbrella organization that shelters the nation chapters of women farmers, processors and crafters.

From its inception, the Inter-America Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has supported the establishment of CANROP and continues to do so. Through the **deliberate** effort of IICA, the network is a member of the Alliance for sustainable Development of Agriculture and Rural Milieu (The Alliance). This privileged position gives CANROP access to inform Government Ministers and other participating agencies of our success stories and to advocate for our needs at the annual Alliance forum during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture.

In July 2013, CANROP participated in a forum organized by the U.S Department of state and New Zealand Ministry of foreign Affairs and Trade. The theme was “Supporting Economic Empowerment and Development in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands (SEED CAP). The network was selected for support with the priority areas of focus being that of improving governance and strengthening CANROP’s Network. These we continue to pursue.

The Technical Center for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) has and continues to support the development of the national chapters under CANROP. Presently CANROP’s national chapters are participating in a Knowledge Management Platform project funded along with technical assistance provided by CTA. The project will address specifically the need for greater knowledge management of CANROP to facilitate empowerment of rural women producers/processors in the Caribbean to actively participate in economic opportunities in the diverse global environment and in the contribution to food and nutrition security.

# The Experiences of CANROP in Building Resilience of Women Farmers and Processors in the Caribbean

Food consumption is needed to support life. The levels of production, availability, choice, access and cost of foods will determine the food and nutrition security of the citizens of any nation. Women in Agriculture play a critical role in the growth and development of this sector through their roles as labourers, farmers, processors and entrepreneurs. However, gender inequalities have inhabited our access to land, opportunities and other resources needed for greater contributions to food security.

From the time of CANROP’s inception to now, growth and development has been slow. Our present existence is due to the resilience of some Chapters and the continuous support from IICA. Currently, deliberate steps are presently being pursued to strengthen the economic empowerment of rural women through capacity building and professional development of the organization by incorporation in October 2014, improvement in networking at cluster; national and regional levels, strengthening communication and trade and investment policies.

Further Areas of Needed Assistance

Construction and equipping of HASSAP Standard processing plants to provide accepted work sites for food processors, so they can produce on a large scale to meet the demands of the local regional and international markets.

Sourcing of IT equipment and supporting accessories for capacity enhancement.

Establishing linkages between the Caribbean and Pacific Islands specifically in inorganic certification and Cuisine Hospitality by sharing best practices and lessons learnt.

Creation of Revolving Loan funds for all Chapters to assist in the economic empowerment of members.

Presented by,

Carmen Nurse (Ms.)

President

Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers