

**Caribbean Regional Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security  
and Climate Resilience**

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 4-6 September 2018**

**Triálogo Regional del Caribe sobre Polinizadores, Seguridad  
Alimentaria y Resiliencia Climática**

**Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 4-6 de Septiembre 2018**

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The term Pollinators elicits images of bees hopping from flower to flower collecting pollen and nectar. However, bees are not the only pollinators; in fact, any insect that comes into regular contact with the reproductive area of plants can be considered a pollinator. For this exercise let us however, focus on the bee since its activities has numerous benefits to agriculture.

As a matter of fact this little insect with the terrible sting is the only insect that produces food - “honey” that humans and numerous other organisms consume. Honey exfoliates, is an excellent wound healer and is an all-around healthy food. It is therefore imperative that these busy little insects are protected since they play a crucial role in food security.



It is therefore important that everyone plays a role in the protection of pollinators by adopting the three pronged approach this Trialogue has embraced.

First there must be a paradigm shift in agricultural practices, particularly in the way pests are controlled or managed. This may mean changing the types of pesticides used or the time and frequency with which they are applied. To ensure that this initiative is a success, stakeholders need to encourage research that is singularly focused on the protection of pollinators and utilize practices that are climate resilient. Food production needs to be viewed as a national security issue and as such it is important that agriculture be given prime position in strategic planning for national development.

So when our policy makers “talk” Food Security they **MUST** understand that the protection of Pollinators has to be a part of the conversation and plans.



Secondly, there needs to be an educational initiative focused not only at the main stakeholders but at the general public. If people are made aware of the importance of pollinators ie, their impact on food security and the cost of food, these same individuals will answer the call to arms and be at the vanguard of the initiative.

The threat of climate change necessitates that we not only focus on the decline of pollinators and how to protect them but on the issues that drive climate change. Engaging in sustainable activities and using climate resilient agricultural methods will ensure that we are able to guarantee food security.

Finally, in order for any real change to occur, there must be policy that has teeth that bite. In particular in the islands whose GDP are dependent on tourism. This means that the politicians must introduce legislation that will marry Tourism to Agriculture and that can be measured and enforced.

There must also be a systematic review and assessment of these policies carried out periodically to ensure that they remain current and practical for the reality on the ground. This will mean that stakeholders – particularly agriculturalist – be intimately involved in national, regional and international conversations about food security, climate resilience and environmentally suitable agricultural practices.



### **The Agriculture Alliance of the Caribbean (AACARI) as a key stakeholder:**

- Opening our membership to all agriculture stakeholders in the development of agriculture in the Caribbean to include bee-keepers cooperatives and associations
- Focusing on Training and capacity building especially – youths
- Seeking to incentivize farmers who are interested in bee-keeping
- Interested in the Santa Domingo Botanical Gardens annual bee-keeping training program
- Look forward to BESNet working with us to develop and implement an exchange training program between the English-speaking Caribbean and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean – Santa Domingo and Cuba who seem to have advance best practices and policies to protect pollinators.
- Use AACARI website as a knowledge sharing platform to bring an awareness to the public and our policy makers of the benefits of working with and supporting NGO, who are the drivers of critical, national initiatives such as recognizing the valuable role pollinators play in food security and nutrition.



**THANK YOU.**



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