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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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International Experts in Cocoa Farming to Hold Three-day Seminar on Grafting and Budding of Cocoa Trees

Victoria—The Centre for Cocoa Research at the University the West Indies is sending three grafting specialists to Grenada for a three-day seminar on grafting and budding of cocoa trees. The seminar will take place at the Maran Nursery in Gouyave on February 17th, 18th, and 19th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This event is being funded and presented by the Cocoa Farming Future Initiative (CFFI), with the cooperation of the Grenada Cocoa Association (GCA) and assistance from the Grenadian Ministry of Agriculture. The ultimate goal of the seminar is to increase the profitability of cocoa farming in Grenada.

As CFFI president Paula Burdick explains, “Grenada’s climate and soil make it an ideal environment for growing cocoa beans of the highest quality. Unfortunately, however, for a number of reasons, many Grenadian cocoa farmers are struggling to make a living.

“One cause of this problem is the insufficient number of cocoa trees on the Island. Ever since two devastating hurricanes wiped out cocoa farms across Grenada almost a decade ago, farmers have been struggling to bring the number of trees back to pre-hurricane levels. The slow rate of recovery is due, in part, to the propagation techniques currently being used.

“Another impediment to prosperity for Grenadian cocoa farmers is the low productivity of their trees. This problem also has its roots in outdated grafting and propagation methods.”

To help solve these problems, the University specialists (Thayil Sreenivasan, Vinosh Jadoo, and Annelle Holder John) will introduce Grenadian cocoa growers to state-of-the-art budding and grafting techniques. These new techniques will allow farmers to increase both the number of trees on their lands and the productivity of those trees.

To ensure that the new information gets disseminated as widely and quickly as possible, the seminar will be attended by representatives from a variety of local organizations. There will be farmers from the GCA, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, managers from the four nurseries on the Island, and members of CFFI. These representatives will then share their new knowledge with cocoa growers across the Island. In addition, to help ensure that the seminar is effective, the experts from the University have offered to return to Grenada at a later date to provide follow-up and additional training on aftercare.

The mission of CFFI is to promote sustainable agriculture, economic development, and the conservation of biological diversity on the Island Nation of Grenada. Founded in 2011, CFFI is dedicated to aiding cocoa growers as they clear and re-establish their forest gardens, add value to their crops, encourage the next generation of growers, and maintain the island's biodiversity on which the cocoa crop, like all of the island's life, depends. For more information on CFFI, visit www.cffigrenada.org. For more information on the Cocoa Research Centre at the University of the West Indies, visit sta.uwi.edu/cru/.



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