

INT-0334

Statement by the Representative of the
European Communities (EEC) to
the Workshop on Agricultural Research in
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
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The Commission of the European Communities (EEC) is not a research organization. But it is giving growing attention to the financing of research for development, especially in the tropics.

Although this Workshop is focusing on the intertropical zone of the Caribbean, I believe we all accept that the subject is of global inter-tropical interest, in terms of coordination and integration of effort, and effective exchange of research results.

In taking issue with statements* such as: "the EEC, with its heavily subsidized and protected agriculture, is one of the villains of the peace ... harnessing, in an unaccustomed role, its scientific research in the interests of major political issues", I would draw attention to two recent - and possibly significant - (and I say "possibly" because this depends, inter-alia, on the outcome of your deliberations) developments; and I would make two specific proposals for your consideration as recommendations of this Workshop:

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*(Dr. Patrick Alleyne (Permanent Secretary, Agriculture, Trinidad and Tobago)'s paper presented to this Workshop)

1. In December 1982 the Council decided on a Community Research Policy for development, with mention of funds ranging from an initial ECU 40 million to a 4-year programme of at least 150 million ECU aiming to:
 - (a) set up coherent national scientific policies within the Member State institutions responsible for these - in the priority fields of food, health and nutrition in the tropics;
 - (b) establish close and integrated twinning between relevant research institutions in the EC, - and those in the developing world;
 - (c) make available to the international community the results of the developed countries research;
 - (d) enhance the means for such research in the industrialized countries;
 - (e) support the "Third World's" efforts in creating their own scientific potential and in training research staff - especially in the present economic climate where the satisfaction of essential short-term needs tend to monopolize national resources at the expense of initiatives yielding less-immediate results.

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2. This development was further refined, in mid-1983, by a proposal from Commission to Council aiming at an aid-programme for development of the in-built or indigenous capacity for scientific and technical research in ACP States (1984-1987), - for financing by the EC budget.

Whereas the first proposal is largely based on a concern for coordination of scientific policies within the European Community and for "twinning" of its facilities with those in the tropics to ensure a globally coordinated and integrated approach to development through research, the second aims at strengthening research institutes in the "Third World".

The two, I suggest, should go hand-in-hand in the interests of avoidance of wasteful duplication, and in ensuring complementarity of effort and proper exchange of research results.

I should add that, under the second proposal, a first input of ECU 60 million (of which 40 to agriculture and 20 to health) is envisaged. And if successful, a 2nd phase would extend to research on population, environment, energy and mineral resources. A Consultative Committee, comprising 50% from developing countries, would initially determine scientific content and priorities of the programme.

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Although both proposals must still go through the bureaucratic procedures of formal consideration and approval, a first indicative and prior incentive would be the availability of some detailed information on the title, terms of reference, competence, structure and programmes of the various facilities existing in the Caribbean - together with their budgets (autonomous and co-financed by outside agencies/aid programmes. I would appeal to the Secretariat to supply us with this kind of information if it exists. If not, I suggest a recommendation to this effect be adopted by this Workshop.

I repeat that I bring these developments to the attention of this Meeting with some reservation ... because they are still in the form of proposals. Let me stress, however, that they will mature in proportion to the will expressed at meetings such as this ... not for building up more individual facilities in research, but for determined and sincere efforts at complementarity, avoidance of overlap and wasteful duplication, coordination and the fullest possible exchange of relevant research results.

Can a second recommendation of this Workshop be for a determined effort to arrive at such a coordinated blue-print for research, indicating priorities, location, inputs and deadlines for work and results? In other words, an accepted, regionally meaningful framework for agricultural research policies and management for the Caribbean.

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In the meantime and in conclusion, many of you are aware of the EC-funding that is being given through our Caribbean Regional Programme to such regional institutions as CARDI, WINBAN and UWI for research in agriculture - and I would add that, from our non-associated countries programme budget, we are assisting at least six regional institutions - among them CIAT, CIP, ICRISAT here present.

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