

**News Release  
For Immediate Release**

**ROLAND EDWARDS PRIMARY REAPS REWARDS WITH CIBC FIRSTCARIBBEAN**

**Bridgetown, Barbados, 24 September, 2018** - An agribusiness project being undertaken at primary and secondary schools in Barbados has gained added impetus and is ready for expansion within the Caribbean starting with a primary school in St. Kitts.

This was disclosed on Friday September 21<sup>st</sup> during the launch of a new phase of the Regional Entrepreneurship and Agriculture Programme (REAP) at the Roland Edwards Primary School, St. Peter, Barbados, where the project has taken root and borne fruit.

Marsha Clarke, founder of Youth Equipped to Achieve! (YEA!), the organisers of REAP, said with the help of other organisations, YEA! saw REAP grow from one school, Gordon Walters Primary, in 2010 to 43 primary and secondary schools in Barbados.

Clarke explained that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme funded REAP in Barbados but **CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank** was now lending its financial support and this would allow REAP to become a regional school programme.

The bank's developmental investment will stretch the programme's reach to Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines as well as provide its sustainability in Barbados.

Confirming this, the bank's Director of Corporate Communications, Mrs. Debra King told the students of Roland Edwards that St. Kitts would be the first stop in the regional outreach and in a sense, they would be twinning with a school in St. Kitts since they would both be involved in a similar project.

Mrs. King highlighted the importance of agriculture to Barbados and the region, encouraging the children to see the benefits from a national perspective as well as a personal one. She explained that Barbados imported a significant percentage of its food and for food security reasons; there was a great need to reduce this dependency. Therefore, she said it was necessary for people to grow more food locally.

On a personal level, Mrs. King spoke to the students about the many careers ranging from farmer to scientist that sprang from agriculture. She said it can also allow them to become self-employed business people who are creative and innovative as they seek to grow their businesses.

David Bynoe of GEF/SGP and the school's principal George Francis spoke to the children in similar vein. Bynoe pointed out that the agribusiness programme was helping to provide them with knowledge and skills in several areas including science, business, technology, Mathematics and learning how to interact with others as business people. He also thanked CIBC FirstCaribbean for its involvement noting that it was good to see civic society and the private sector involved in a project that could help Barbados in its economic transformation.

Principal George Francis also thanked the organisations for their involvement in the project and their interest in the school, adding that he was happy that it was chosen for the launch of a new phase in

the REAP project. He pledged the support of his entire staff, ancillary and teaching, to the project, noting that he hoped to see the agribusiness programme at the school thrive and that others see it worthy emulating.

Representatives of the organisations were then taken on a tour of the school's garden led by the principal and teacher, Ms. Dominique Jordan who manages the agriculture project. Students assisted, with LeDion Farley explaining what was done in the garden and Khade Belgrave speaking about methods such as hydroponics as well as the importance of paying attention to good environmental practices. Later Joshua Farley thanked the organisers on the school's and students' behalf.

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CIBC FirstCaribbean is a member of the CIBC Group. CIBC is a leading Canadian-based global financial institution with 11 million personal banking and business clients. Through our three major business units - Retail and Business Banking, Wealth Management and Capital Markets - CIBC offers a full range of products and services through its comprehensive electronic banking network, branches and offices across Canada with offices in the United States and around the world.

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