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INMED Launches Program to Help Smallholder Farmers Start Climate-Smart Aquaponics Agri-business Enterprises in Jamaica

KINGSTON, JAMAICA: Tanesha Wallace has dreamed of this day for a long time. Today, she is on her way to starting her own business, thanks to a new program by INMED Partnerships for Children to bring smallholder farmers in Jamaica into the mainstream economy. Launched officially last week at an event hosted by the Office of the Prime Minister through the Minister of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) (which covers Environment) the Honorable Daryl Vaz, and the Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), the Honorable Karl Samuda, the 4-year initiative will provide access to financing and markets, training and technical assistance to help small-scale farmers, women and youth start aquaponics enterprises.

Aquaponics is an innovative food production technique that combines aquaculture (fish farming) with hydroponics (soilless crop production in water) in a closed symbiotic system. Advantages of aquaponics include crop production at least 10 times higher than traditionally farmed plots of equivalent size, 85-90% less water consumption than traditional irrigation, low energy consumption, year-round crop production and flood and drought resilience. INMED has been working to improve the health, education, safety and opportunities of Jamaica's most vulnerable citizens through adaptive agriculture, school gardening, climate change adaptation, nutrition education, positive youth development and teacher training programs since 2002.

INMED's in-country affiliate, INMED Caribbean, will implement the "Increasing Access to Climate-Smart Agriculture" program in partnership with the MICAF; MEGJC; Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); Inter-American Development Bank/Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB/MIF); United Nations Environment Programme-Danish Technical University Partnership and Jamaica's Rural Agriculture Development Authority.

Tanesha Wallace attended the launch event and is one of the many interested farmers who will be participating in the program. For the past year, she has been experimenting with a home aquaponics system comprising a plastic bin of catfish and four shelves of vegetable plantings. It has been a labor of love, but it hasn't been promising as a source of income—that is, until she learned of INMED's new program in Jamaica. As one of the program's first participants, Tanesha and other budding entrepreneurs will learn the many advantages of aquaponics for improving food security; adapting to climate change; providing greater access to fresh, nutritious and local food; protecting the environment; and bolstering community development.

INMED is working with the Development Bank of Jamaica and local Financial Institutions to provide smallholder producers access to affordable financing to start aquaponics enterprises and facilitate loan

repayment. The CDB will be providing the funding for local RADA agricultural extension agents to provide technical training and assistance in aquaponics to farmers in their communities to grow the program and ensure sustainability. “We at CDB understand the role that aquaponics enterprises can play in supporting economic growth in Jamaica and the livelihoods of entrepreneurs and their families,” said Darran Newman, Acting Division Chief, Technical Cooperation Division, Caribbean Development Bank. “Capacity-building is also key to developing this high-potential sector, and we are pleased to collaborate with other partners on this project.” Caribbean Development Bank has committed USD180,000 through the Bank’s Caribbean Technological Consultancy Services Network to support training that will increase awareness and understanding of aquaponics farm management and help participants start or expand aquaponics farms.

IACA program participants will attend a series of educational workshops on everything from the technical aspects of constructing and maintaining an aquaponic system to business planning to identifying profitable markets for their produce and fish. Participants will receive hands-on technical assistance throughout and after the program.

“My main goal is to have a registered family-owned business from this venture to achieve financial security for myself and family, especially my mother, who is solely caring for herself and my two youngest siblings and her grandson,” says Wallace.

“Tanisha is just the sort of person we’re trying to reach,” says Dr. Linda Pfeiffer, President and CEO of INMED Partnerships for Children. “With the right tools and resources, Jamaicans can transform their personal futures and local economies in a sustainable way.” For more than 30 years, INMED has worked quietly in the background to coalesce governments, communities, the private sector and other partners to find lasting solutions for breaking complex cycles of poverty around the world. “It’s an extremely difficult process,” says Pfeiffer, “but we have achieved lasting outcomes that have improved the lives of millions of children and their families.”

For more information about this program, visit <https://inmedcaribbean.org>.

About INMED Partnership for Children:

INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries to create a world where all children are safe, healthy, educated and have access to opportunities to thrive. Through multi-sector partnerships, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty and generate opportunities for success. INMED’s programs in adaptive agriculture/aquaponics, maternal and child health and disease prevention and education and have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986.

About INMED Caribbean:

INMED Caribbean was officially incorporated in Jamaica in 2010, but INMED Partnerships for Children has maintained a presence in Jamaica since 2002, working to improve the health, education, safety and opportunities of the nation’s most vulnerable children through adaptive agriculture, school gardening,

climate change adaptation, nutrition education, positive youth development and teacher training programs. Learn more at <https://inmedcaribbean.org>.

Photo captions:



INMED CEO Dr. Linda Pfeiffer (right) tours one of INMED's commercial aquaponics systems in Jamaica with Marco Schletz (center) of UNEP-DTU Partnership and a group of farmers who will participate in INMED's recently launched "Increasing Access to Climate-Smart Agriculture" program.



From left: The Honorable Daryl Vaz, Minister of Economic Growth and Job Creation; Adriana La Valley, Chief of Operations of the Inter-American Development Bank, Jamaica; INMED CEO Dr. Linda Pfeiffer; and the Honorable Donovan Stanberry, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries sign certificates of cooperation for INMED's 4-year program to help small-scale farmers launch aquaponics enterprises in Jamaica.