

PRESS RELEASE

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell has called on the Agency for Reconstruction and Development Inc. (ARD) to work closely with the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB) to ensure farmers have current and reliable information about markets.

During his monthly meeting with ARD staff on Friday (March 31), the Prime Minister said it is important that farmers are able to market their crops effectively and consistently.

"As I go around the Country and meet people in the villages, farmers are telling me that they are having problems finding markets for the crops that we have asked them to produce," the Prime Minister said.

ARD Agricultural Planner Keith Owen provided the Prime Minister with an update on the Agriculture Enterprise Development Programme (AEDP), which

the ARD is formulating in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The AEDP seeks to establish a unit within the Ministry that

provides administrative and planning capacity to ensure that farming is done on a commercial basis. This includes assisting farmers to prepare sound business plans for their operations in order to access credit.

The Prime Minister said the ARD must ensure that the MNIB is sufficiently engaged in the process.

The Prime Minister also called on the ARD to examine the legislative agenda and advise Government on ways to update and modernise some legislation. As an example, the Prime Minister made reference to the environment and the practices of removing sand from beaches and illegal dumping of waste.

"As it stands now, the law does not have the teeth needed to stop these destructive practices," the Prime Minister said, adding that beach sand is not the best material to use in construction.

The Prime Minister was also apprised of the works ARD is doing with respect to:

- * examining potential housing sites and the type of houses required for the topography;

- * the activities of the Human Settlement Task Force and the remapping of Grenada;

- * the Visioning Workshops being held to facilitate the formulation of the National Strategic Development Plan;

- * support to the Ministry of Carriacou and Petit Martinique Affairs in documenting the heritage of the sister isles;

- * support for the new Resource Centre in Carriacou and training for children and the wider community to effectively use the facility;

* support to the Ministry of Social Development in the development of a gender policy; and

* the development of a post disaster psycho-social response mechanism.

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