



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBES GCA EFFORTS TO RESUSCITATE COCOA INDUSTRY AS REMARKABLE**

**ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, APRIL 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011**\_ Prime Minister Tillman Thomas has described as “remarkable”, the efforts of the Grenada Cocoa Association to resuscitate the industry in 2010 and commended the Association for its management of the industry following the ravages of two hurricanes and the mismanagement of the industry by the previous administration.

Speaking to farmers attending the Annual General Meeting of the Grenada Cocoa Association (GCA) at Bain's Hall in St. Andrew, the Prime Minister acknowledged “the consistent and constant” recovery of the industry since the devastation caused by hurricanes Ivan and Emily in 2004 and 2005.

“You, our cocoa farmers, have done remarkably well. For the first time we have reached the EC \$5M mark in cocoa sales, since 2004. I especially thank the management of the Association for your prudent leadership of the industry,” said the Grenadian leader.

He restated his government's vision for the sector which, he said, holds the greatest promise “for economic advancement, reducing unemployment, improving foreign exchange earnings and creating wealth for our people.”

He commended the Association for trimming its administrative costs, which now represents just eight percent of sales, while placing strong emphasis on giving back to the farmers. “This is truly a good sign for building a sustainable cocoa industry. If we want our farmers to remain in the land, I firmly believe that we must compensate them well,” he said.

The Prime Minister said, despite the global economic difficulties, his government continues to “push forward” on its promise to make agriculture and food security, meaningful players in Grenada's economic development.

“As a result, we are very proud of our successes and can continue to say that the agribusiness sector is one of the brightest spots in the Grenadian economy. We are not just talking agriculture, but we are implementing measures that will move the sector forward. We are taking decisions that will position agribusiness to lead in the economic transformation of the national economy.

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The Grenadian leader told farmers his government “deliberately” selected agribusiness as one of the five pillars of the island’s economy because of the recognition that “strategic and aggressive steps” are needed to increase the national wealth and reduce poverty.

“It is our firm view that together with you and other private sector investors, we can do it. We are marching forward, unwavering in our desire to harness the strengths of our farmers, the talents of our people and the available technology, to help us improve this sector,” the Prime Minister told the meeting.

He appealed for increase cultivation of cocoa given its demand importance on the world market and the reduction in supply due to wars and other factors in competing countries. The Prime Minister pointed to a recent flurry of reports which indicated a “continuous increase in the price of the commodity”, as global supply decreases.

He promised continued government assistance and support with a “significant increase” in the number of cocoa plants propagated and distributed to farmers, as evidenced by the GCA’s 2010 Annual Report which showed that the number of plants produced moved from 30,570 in 2009 to 50,950 in 2010.

According to the Grenadian leader, that number will be increased in 2011 with the expansion of the Boulogne Station, increased propagation of plants at both Maran and Ashenden Stations and the clearing of another 150 acres of cocoa, which remain abandoned.

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