

Cocoa Farmers in Saint Lucia Banding Together In Tough Times



Castries, March 20 (teleSUR-RHC) Cocoa farmers in Saint Lucia have been meeting to discuss the fate of their livelihoods and the future of the industry. They are facing serious problems in taking care of their families, including increasingly high costs and difficult access to local markets for their produce.

Cocoa Farmer spokesman, Christopher Frederick, says they can only survive through unity. "Agriculture is being neglected in certain areas ... we think the best thing now is all farmers coming together under one umbrella to make a difference."

Saint Lucia is one of only eight countries in the world that produces fine or aromatic cocoa. Most countries produce bulk cocoa. The farmers are hoping that they can benefit from the "Farm Labour Support Programme."

This is a component of a larger initiative known as the National Initiative for the Creation of Employment (NICE), which is funded by the government of Saint Lucia, with support from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA).

Agriculture Minister Moses Jn Baptiste is hoping that the program will be expanded to include more farmers. "I am very pleased that the Prime Minister announced that there will be additional funding for the NICE program and while the details have not been worked out, we know that the Farmer Labour Support Programme has benefited many, many farmers and we look forward to the program continuing," he stated.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/50017-cocoa-farmers-in-saint-lucia-banding-together-in-tough-times>



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