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State Minister lauds Carib Cement for DCS Greenhouse Initiative

The Department of Corrections (DCS) has partnered with the Caribbean Cement Company Limited to start a Greenhouse Project at Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre.

The State Minister who is responsible for the DCS has lauded the partnership, which facilitates inmates' exposure to training in modern agricultural techniques, and is expressing confidence in the benefits it will create for both correctional officers and inmates.

Minister Charles said, *“The use of Greenhouse technology at Tamarind Farm is a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance rehabilitation through skills training, and advance the production of quality crops that can be used in our eat what we grow campaign.”*

Twenty correctional officers and ten inmates have been trained in greenhouse farming technology. According to Linton Campbell, correctional officer attached to the institution, *“The type of system that is being introduced to the inmates and staff is the hydroponic system based on water and nutrients. It is the first of its kind to be set up at the Tamarind Farm facility and the inmates and staff are very happy*

to be part of this historical occasion. I know with the energy and interest shown the project will be successful and will help tremendously with the rehabilitation of our inmates.”

One inmate who is being trained as a hydroponic farmer stated, *“The Greenhouse Farming will help us inmates to be better men in society and to learn the basics of setting up the greenhouse. The basics of the greenhouse is to build it from start, maintain and keep it to standard. I am proud to become a hydroponic farmer, and be part of this system for as long as I can!”*

The greenhouse is intended to produce organic vegetables such as lettuce, cucumber, sweet pepper, tomato and pak choy which will be sold to staff members, visitors, and supermarkets.

The initiative is another thrust in the Ministry’s drive towards rehabilitation for reintegration and forms part of the fifth pillar of reducing re-offending.

Sophia Lowe Pinnock, Corporate Communication and Public Affairs Manager in highlighting Carib Cement’s role said, *“By introducing Greenhouse farming technology in the correctional system, we believe that this initiative will be an intervention tool and be an excellent model for corporate Jamaica to get on board in our country’s rehabilitation process. Also we want to provide these inmates with the knowledge and tools to become entrepreneurs up on leaving our correctional facilities and, by extension; we hope that this project helps with the reduction of recidivism.”*

Speaking on what can be achieved when there is public-private partnership, Sen. Parnell Charles Jr. applauded Carib Cement for its demonstration of corporate social responsibility. *“This partnership has presented viable win-win opportunities to expand knowledge of*

innovative farming techniques that support the best agricultural production conditions, while promoting purposeful rehabilitation for successful reintegration,” he stated.

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