

GREETINGS



Food Production Minister Vasant Bharath greets McGill University's Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Prof Chandra Madromootoo, during the McGill-UWI food security workshop at UWI's St Augustine Campus yesterday.

PHOTO: KEITH MATTHEWS

Canada gives \$30M for Caricom food project

By MIRANDA LA ROSE

THE MINISTRY of Food Production is working on a proposal to use Caribbean products to bolster health foods in the local school feeding programme.

Food Production Minister Vasant Bharath made the announcement at yesterday's launch of a Can\$5 million (TT\$30 million) grant awarded to a Caricom Food Security Project at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus.

Bharath said the school feeding programme must serve more local and regional produced foods and fruits instead of extra-regional imports.

"We must find a way of having locally produced foods and fruits in our children's dietary requirements on a daily basis," he said. He insisted locally produced foods were as healthy as those imported from abroad.

Referring to the objectives of the Caricom Food Security Project which links food production to health among young people in TT, Bharath emphasised, "there is no doubt that change in consumption patterns must occur among young people."

"There is evidence that childhood obe-

sity is likely to lead to adult obesity," he said. Government provides an average of 150,000 meals a day for schoolchildren across the country. The three-year Caricom Food Security Project, a UWI initiative, is being conducted in collaboration with McGill University in Canada and a number of third party partners.

Some of them include the University of Guyana, University of Trinidad and Tobago, Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE) of Peru, Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, agriculture and education ministries in Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and National School Dietary Services Limited (TT).

The grant funding was awarded by the Canadian International Food Security Research Foundation and the International Development Research Council (IRDC) of Canada.

IRDC Programme Specialist, Dr Renauld De Pleau said the project was one of ten selected from a shortlist of 22 project partnerships which were invited to develop full proposals to deal with the issue of food security, and reducing hunger.