

Continental collaboration important to produce in agriculture

The island country of Haiti buys 85% of its food with most of it coming from their neighbour, the Dominican Republic. According to the ambassador for the Embassy of Haiti, Jacques Junior Baril, this doesn't make any sense since both countries share the same water and soil. He says that this challenge has a lot to do with financing, lack of competence, and technology.



Jacques Junior Baril - Image: Le Journal de Montreal

Baril says continental collaboration is highly important. "We as countries owe each other the capacity and the capability to produce in agriculture. In Haiti, most of its people are in the agriculture business. My grandmother used to feed me with food grown in the villages and we didn't go to a large grocery store. Until 10 or 15 years ago, there was an invasion of products from other countries that were sold cheaper than what we could produce due to technology. This killed our economy and the system."

One of the other problems Baril pointed out was the invasion of people in the capital, Port-au-Prince, which can only hold about 600,000 people but is currently populated with 3 million people. "When the earthquake happened in 2010, 300,000 people died not because of the earthquake but because there were surplus population of 2.5 million people that the city could not hold."

"I think it was important for me to attend the African Sustainable Agriculture Summit 2016 and understand how agriculture works in different countries and to bring my government to the right side of the table. I am currently not aware of any trade happening between the African continent and Haiti and as the ambassador, I am here to create some. One of my first courtesy calls when arriving in South Africa was to the Minister of Agriculture as well as other ambassadors of different countries of Africa."

"Agriculture should be the number one priority to Haiti because we are an island country with rich soil, but financially poor. We are in 2016 and our country is still under the poverty level. I feel we will do well in joining cooperations with Africa. Some of the countries in Africa have the same climate as us and we also share the same kind of challenges, so I am hoping to bring experiences from the African Sustainable Agriculture Summit 2016 back to Haiti. In fact, a conference such as this one wouldn't hurt to be held a few times a year in Haiti."

The African Sustainable Agriculture Summit 2016 took place in April.

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