



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Bethel community gets community garden through Habitat and RBC

**PORT OF SPAIN (TRINIDAD & TOBAGO) – MAY 17, 2023** - A hydroponic garden in the community of Bethel, Tobago represents the fruits of labour from a commitment between Habitat for Humanity TT (Habitat TT) and RBC Royal Bank (RBC). A similar garden is also underway in Chaguaramas, Trinidad. On May 15, the twenty-by-twenty-foot garden was handed over to Bethel Village Council who will now maintain, manage, and reap the profits of the community garden. The project represents a collaboration between Habitat and RBC to support sustainability and provide training to heighten awareness of disaster risk reduction practices in rural communities.

In addition to the garden, plans are to assess the Bethel community and provide disaster risk mitigation training for community members and RBC staff.

Speaking at the hand-over event, Richard Downie, Managing Director, RBC Trinidad, noted, “Today’s accomplishment marks the efforts of many people who have worked together to foster the hope of a better tomorrow. Endless are the conversations of the rising cost of food prices and our need to create sustainable living ... this is a step in the right direction – empowering a community and creating a brighter vision for the future.” He commended the RBC team who recently came out and planted 900 seedlings of kale, herbs, and lettuce.

In Trinidad, members of the St James Police Youth Club are currently managing a similar sized garden in Chaguaramas and are being trained to manage the hydroponic system. At last year’s sod-turning ceremony, Downie noted, “this is a wonderful opportunity for the young people of the St James Police

Youth Club. This hydroponic farm will create a chance to partake in an endeavour that promotes local food security.”

He highlighted that it has the potential to provide employment, community activities, and sources of income, and encouraged the young charges to embrace the learning opportunity, acquire new skills – both in agriculture and business/entrepreneurship – and most importantly, take pride in their accomplishments.

Downie explained the Habitat projects are in keeping with the Bank’s ESG focus, which is “our commitment to taking responsible behaviours and actions in Environment, Social and Governance as part of our business.” He lauded Habitat TT for its work to build communities and develop community-based approaches to resiliency.

Jennifer Massiah, National Director of Habitat TT stated, “I am excited to partner with a corporate entity that supports the development of communities and sees the benefits of investing in the youth of the country.”

The projects are designed to have a positive, long-lasting impact on the respective communities by investing in neighbourhood revitalisation focussed on disaster mitigation and building resilient communities.

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*Richard Downie, Managing Director RBC Trinidad and Tobago chats with members of the Bethel Community Council in Tobago following the handing over of an RBC sponsored garden for the community.*



*FLASHBACK: Richard Downie Managing Director RBC Trinidad and Tobago turns the sod on a plot of land in Chaguaramas, Trinidad, where a hydroponic garden has been constructed with the support of Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago.*





*Members of the St James Police Youth Club in Trinidad reap herbs from an RBC-sponsored garden, constructed with support from Habitat for Humanity TT.*

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