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REMARKABLE POTENTIAL FOR GOAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

The Agro sector in Goa is doing remarkably well and is turning out to be a beacon for growth in exports, employment generation and overall economic prosperity of Goa. The notable part of this ongoing success story is the judicious employment of mechanizations in the farms, wherein, the progressive community farmers of Curtorim in South Goa transplanted paddy seeds covering 25 acres of farmland in one single day in July this year. It was in this backdrop that World Trade Center Goa organized a meeting with some of the progressive farmers to find out the strategies they adopt to make their farming community productive. The meeting brought out many aspects and also challenges that these farmers strive to overcome. In order to identify themselves as a bio diversity hotspot, the entire village is mapped into different zones, and activities are carried out according to the specialized demarcations. This village does farm in the kharif as well as the rabi seasons. The Goa State Bio Diversity Board, under the leadership of Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary, in coordination with Mr. Santano Rodrigues, Convenor, the Goa Panchayati Raj Institutions Union, Curtorim, ably advises the progressive farmers here. Apart from rice, the village is also looking to grow different types of fruits, like pineapples and bananas; spices like pepper and cash crops like coconuts. The farmers then plan to come together and market this harvest across Goa and also at the local community market, which is well patronized. Mr. Santano Rodrigues informed that some of the challenges faced by the community farmers are related to processing, storing and marketing of the paddy crop. He opined that in the years to come Curtorim will be able to have a good production of rice which they could export to markets across the globe. Mr. Hubert Fernandes, a progressive farmer who specializes in the production of coconuts which amount to almost One Lakh units per annum, made a plea for the subsidies to come in time, so that they could train more toddy tappers and pluckers to harvest the coconut trees as well as diversify into the production of Virgin Coconut Oil for the international markets. Mr. Savion Peres, another progressive farmer, while voicing his concerns, expressed that despite rice being the staple food across the globe and having a readymade market, he is yet to see better transportation facilities, more certification facilities by government bodies and the procuring of quality machinery for which the subsidies should be equitably distributed to all the farmers. "Yes, this village is truly blessed with good bio-diversity and will one day progress to make Goa well known for agricultural produce in many international markets, we look forward to that day that seems to be not so very distant," Mr. Peres expressed hope.

The meeting was held at Curtorim on November 30, 2021