Introduction

The Horticulture Division continued with its long standing activities in the fields of vegetable seed production, plant propagation and plant genetic resource (PGR) conservation aimed at:

1. Ensuring an adequate and timely supply of quality vegetable seeds and other planting materials to the planting community and public.
2. Conserving crop genetic resources for sustainable use.

Seed production

Seedcrops for the production of vegetable seeds were grown on a total area of 28.3 ha on different stations of Horticulture and Agronomy Divisions. At Barkly ES (BES), 12 different crops were grown on some 3.97 ha for the production of seeds whilst at Roches Brunes Seed Production Centre (RBSPC) 7.63 ha were planted with 11 crops for the same purposes.

About 24,300 fruits and 64 tonnes of other harvested materials, comprising of an aggregate of 36 crop varieties and types were received at BES for seed processing.

The quantity of seed issued by the Seed Processing Unit (SPU) amounted to 3801 kg. As far as seed testing is concerned, 1,533 germination and 133 moisture tests were carried out.

The quantity of seeds sold to commercial growers was 3436 kg for a total sum of Rs 1,153,899.

Plant propagation

At the Plant Propagation Unit (PPU), 33,256 plants of different fruit and ornamental species were produced as follows:

(i) Breadfruit: 1373
(ii) Citrus grafts: 7591
(iii) Mango grafts: 572
(iv) Misc. Grafts (Jujube, Atemoya, etc): 431
(v) Litchi layers: 1948
(vi) Coconut seedlings: 120
(vii) Pawpaw: 2595
(viii) Misc Fruit trees: 14086
(ix) Misc ornamental/Spices/medicinal plants: 4540

In addition, 13,962 plantlets were produced by the Tissue Culture Laboratory as follows: orchids (7926), banana (5528), anthurium (108) and African violet (400).

The total number of plants sold by the PPU was 41,341 for a sum of Rs 3,037,405.

Conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR)

At the Plant Genetic Resource Unit (PGRU), 224 movements of accessions were recorded from (121 movements) and to (103 movements) the Seed Gene Bank located at the Curepipe ES for one or more of the following purposes: regeneration, multiplication, processing and characterisation.

Ninety three (93) germination tests and 119 moisture content tests were carried out in relation to that activity.

One hundred and thirteen (113) accessions of 22 crops were maintained at the Field Gene Bank located at Nouvelle Découverte Plant Genetic Resource Unit (NDPGRU).

Accessions of amaranthus, bean, lettuce, celery cabbage, beetroot, peas, Chinese radish, lima bean, cucumber, squash, tomato, bottlegourd, pumpkin and chilly were grown for regeneration whilst those of cassava were for maintenance and those of dwarf bamboo, fern and rose for propagation.

Characterisation was ongoing in chilly (BES) and cucumber (NDPGRU) accessions. Purification exercise was ongoing in pumpkin (NDPGRU) and bottle gourd var. Natale (Richelieu ES and Plaisance ES).
Enactment of the Seed legislation

The Horticulture Division participated in several meetings with different stakeholders and the State Law Office to finalise the Seed Bill which was then enacted in May 2013. It has made its recommendations on measures that should be taken for the implementation of the Seed Act (2013) by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security. This involves primarily seeking assistance from FAO or other international institutions for consultancy services to assist the local authority to establish the regulatory, institutional and technical frameworks necessary for effective implementation of the Seed Act (2013). It would also be necessary for the Ministry to promulgate Part II (Management and Administration of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office) of the Act to allow for the establishment of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office (NPVSO) and National Plant Varieties and Seeds Committee (NPVSC), which are the sole legal entities responsible for the administration of the Seeds Act.

Workshops/Seminars/Training Courses attended

(i) Mr N. Gopaul (DSO): Capacity Building Workshop on Nagoya Protocole, 11-13 February 2013, India.

(ii) Mr R. Beeharry (SSO): Regional Workshop to review the Charter Establishing the SADC Seed Centre and the Strategic Plan of the SADC Seed Centre, 4-8 March 2013, Johannesburg, South Africa.

(iii) Mr A.R. Dooky (TA): Treatment and Utilisation of Agricultural Waste for Developing Countries, 16 July – 12 August 2013, China.