



# New Horizon President Meets Garifuna Cassava Producers

## *Promoting Garifuna Economic Development*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 15, 2009**

### **Contacts:**

Escolástico Arzú  
[newhorizonclub@yahoo.com](mailto:newhorizonclub@yahoo.com)

(347) 291-4875  
[www.newhorizoninvestclub.com](http://www.newhorizoninvestclub.com)

**Bronx, New York** - New Horizon Investment Club is happy to announce that President Jose Francisco Avila visited Honduras recently, where he met with Lina Hortensia Martinez, president of Wabagari Distribution and winner of the Honduran Presidential Award as Rookie Exporter of the Year presented by Honduras' President Manuel Zelaya Rosales. The award recognizes the commitment, entrepreneurial efforts of the exporting companies of nontraditional products which contribute in a significant way to the economic growth of Honduras through successful exports to the international markets. Wabagari has been exporting cassava to the United for 18 months.

To celebrate this historic milestone in Garifuna History, New Horizon has scheduled the Second Garifuna Food Expo on **Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM**, at **985 Tinton Avenue (Between 163<sup>rd</sup> and 167)**, where visitors will be able to purchase traditional Garifuna foods, like cassava, darasa, bounu, hiyu and many more, as well as enjoy a cultural presentation while sharing with family and friends. Our special guest will be Lina Hortensia Martinez, and Cultural presentations by J Dove Productions and Chief Joseph Satuye Dance Group.

During his visit to Honduras, Mr. Avila toured the cassava manufacturing plant of the Honduran Association of (APROHCASABE) in La Union, Atlántida, where he met the women who are members of the association and shared New Horizon's satisfaction with the quality of the cassava they produce, as well as the importance of their partnership with New Horizon. In addition Mr. Avila also visited the Garifuna communities of Punta Piedra, Cusuna, Ciriboya, Irión Vieja, and met in Sangrelaya, with the cassava producers of the region. The visit was coordinated by Wabagari Distribution and the Sangrelaya Professional Association (APROSA) a Garifuna Non Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 1990 with the vision of building the capacity of Grassroots Garifuna Women organizations in order for them to participate in the development of their communities. In addition, A production and marketing agreement was signed between the Union of Women Cassava Producers from Irión (UCICAIRI) and Wabagari Distribution. Under the agreement, UCICAIRI agreed to become an official producer and supplier of cassava bread for export to the United States by Wabagari Distribution and New Horizon Investment Club in New York City. "The women producers of cassava value the dependability of a secure market and ongoing demand for their product, which, in turn, helps improve their income and standard of living." Said Lina Hortensia Martinez, president of Wabagari Distribution.

Cassava is a staple Garifuna food produced by Garifuna micro entrepreneur women in Honduras; whose average monthly family income is US\$120. In the past two decades, studies have shown that economic development using microfinance techniques has been the best solution to improve the living conditions of the poor in less developed countries. In 2006, Dr. Mohammed Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize, which recognized his microfinance organization, The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. The bank provides loans to poor women living in rural areas. The loans give opportunities to women to create small businesses and, as a result, improve their living conditions.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Molina, Tania, Casabe O' Big Mama: an Economic Development Project using microfinance, Masters Degree Term Paper, May 2009

“One of our strategic objectives, has always been to promote the economic development of the Garifuna Communities and we are happy to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the Garifunas in Honduras,” said Jose Francisco Avila, president of New Horizon Investment Club.”

According to Gilberto Amaya, a Garifuna Mechanical Engineer who resides in The Washington DC area, “The well being of people and their positive participation in political changes stems from economic power of their community. Economic power comes from the development of resources by individuals as well as groups with skills and entrepreneurial abilities. In order to gain economic power in a host country such as the United States, it is necessary to exploit our ties as a community. Living as a community has a two-fold advantage:

- a. It will help preserve our rich cultural heritage, and
- b. It would provide our business with the markets necessary for their production of goods and services. If we are able to achieve economic growth, we could influence the political changes and the decisions that affect our life and the lives of those who depend on us.

Being a homogeneous community coming from many countries, we could take advantage of economies of scale because of the number of Garifuna both here and in our countries of origin. All of us have friends, relatives and colleagues here and in our countries with the necessary skills to develop all kinds of economic ventures. This would create income generating activities financed by organizations and individuals in the United States and our brothers and sisters in both places, by encouraging production there and creating strong facilities as well as distribution systems in this country.”

New Horizon Investment Club’s aim has been to become promoters of the Garifunas economic development by increasing the multiplier effect of its investments in local Garifuna economies, by pursuing community level investments in commercial and productive infrastructure.

The strategic partnership created by Sangrelaya Professional Association (APROSA), Union of Women Cassava Producers from Iriona (UCICAIRI), Wabagari Distribution and New Horizon Investment Club, is the first economic development project in Garifuna lands and it means that the distribution channel, defined as the path along which goods move from producers to the ultimate consumers, will be managed by Garifunas and the goal is to replicate it in other Garifuna communities throughout Central America.

###

### **About Wabagari Distribution**

Wabagari Distribution is a Garifuna company dedicated to the promotion of the Garifuna culture and export of cassava under the O’Big Mama brand, The company’s name means “Our Life” in the Garifuna language; it was one of 13 companies to receive the Honduran Presidential Exporter Award in various categories, and was the only company from the North Coast, the only woman led company and the first Garifuna company represented in the awards’ five year history.

### **About New Horizon Investment Club**

New Horizon Investment Club serves as the commercial link between the Garifuna producers and mainstream markets in the United States. It has conducted market research on Central American communities to determine which products are most in demand and will connect this expertise with home country businesses. A distribution channel is defined as the path along which goods move from producers or manufacturers to ultimate consumers.

# NEW HORIZON

Garifuna Products Distribution

