

14TH AFRICAN CASHEW ALLIANCE (ACA) ANNUAL CASHEW CONFERENCE
BUILDING A VIABLE CASHEW VALUE CHAIN TO WITHSTAND MARKET
DISRUPTIONS

The Honorable Minister of Commerce, Industry and Handicraft – Burkina Faso,

Fellow Government Ministries and Agencies,

The President of the African Cashew Alliance (ACA)

Cashew Industry players

Members of the Media,

Ladies and gentlemen

1. It gives me great joy to be at the opening ceremony of the 14th African Cashew Alliance (ACA) Annual Cashew Conference. The effects of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have affected many spheres of our life. As a result, the 14th ACA Annual Cashew Conference is being held fully online for the first time, but we know that we will be successful as a global community as we all put in our best in the fight against the pandemic. It is my hope that come the next edition of the Conference, we will be able to physically host you in Accra, Ghana, in September 2021.
2. I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the African Cashew Alliance for their resilience in the face of adversity and for forging ahead to host the annual conference despite the current global situation.
3. Over the years, ACA has indeed proven itself to be a partner in the development of the cashew sector and a learning hub that has brought knowledge and expertise of the cashew sector to all stakeholders through organizing series of physical and online conferences, forums, and workshops. This is an organization that has embraced change while continually serving the cashew sector in Africa. I am particularly honored to have the secretariat here in my country - Ghana

4. Ladies and gentlemen, we are logged in online this morning because of one thing - Cashew! Cashew has gradually become one of the most important crops on the continent. Africa today produces 2.1 million tons of Raw Cashew Nuts (RCN) annually representing 57% of the global cashew production, with West Africa accounting for 78% of Africa's productions.
5. Cashew production serves as a major source of income for nearly 1.8 million cashew farming families in West Africa providing them their livelihoods especially during the lean season. With the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, farmers have experienced declined farmgate prices, a situation that can greatly affect production levels and the results of the many years of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) adopted by farmers.
6. Processing of cashew in Africa serves as a source of employment for thousands of workers, with over 65% of them being women. With nearly 200,000 metric tons of raw cashew nuts processed in Africa in 2019, representing about 10% of the cashew production in Africa, there are over 40,000 jobs (estimated as 200 jobs per 1000 tons), which must be saved through the joint efforts of governments, development cooperation, and our private sector partners. As a result of the pandemic, some processors had to shut down their operations, while most of them had to incur additional costs to implement covid-19 protocols to remain operational.
7. It is in the light of the issues mentioned above that I could not agree more with the theme for this year's online conference: **"Building a viable cashew value chain to withstand market disruptions"**. Market disruptions, either resulting from inefficiencies in the value chain or from pandemics such as covid-19, will continue to be with us unless we adopt and implement conscientious efforts to build a viable cashew value chain, that is efficient and effective and ensures profitability for all actors along the value chain.
8. The Consultative International Cashew Council (CICC), of which Ghana is a signatory, has committed itself to supporting the cashew sector in Africa by coordinating and harmonizing the policies and interventions of the various producing countries in Africa, as well as proposing urgent actions to support expansion of cashew production and processing. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague Minister, Hon. Mr. Harouna Kabore, Minister of

Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts of Burkina-Faso, who assumed the role of President of CICC in December last year.

9. In Ghana, through the leadership of His Excellency the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Tree Crops Development Authority Act, 2019 (Act 1010) was passed into law to establish an institution for the regulation and development of cashew and five other tree crops. Preparations are currently ongoing to operationalize the Authority by the end of the year. I will want to take the opportunity at this point to acknowledge the support of the African Cashew Alliance (ACA) and other partners in the drafting of the law and urge their continued support toward the full establishment and strengthening of the Tree Crop Development Authority.

10. Ladies and gentlemen, in 2019, the Government of Ghana launched the Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) programme to promote the development of selected tree crops for diversified export earnings, boost production, promote rural economic growth, improve household incomes of rural farmers and create a sustainable raw material base to support the decentralised industrialisation drive through the One District One Factory (1D1F). Under the programme, a total of 15 million seedlings were produced and distributed to farmers of cashew and other selected crops. Over the past two years, through the favourable business environment and support of our partners, six (6) processing factories that were shut down in the previous years were revived to increase our processing capacity and create additional jobs.

11. Distinguished guests, the Governments of Ghana and other cashew producing countries of Africa are committed to building a viable cashew industry that will attract and protect investments, thereby creating additional incomes and jobs for the people. However, it must be efficient and effective enough to withstand any market disruptions, and that is why the outcome of this conference is of much importance to our governments and people.

12. As I bring my speech to an end, I wish to congratulate the African Cashew Alliance for setting up this platform for which I am convinced will achieve the objectives of this conference by the end of these three days.

13. I also wish to encourage all stakeholders to seize this opportunity to deliberate to make the the conference a success for us to have a formidable cashew industry in Africa and the world at large. On behalf of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana, I declare the 14th ACA Annual Cashew Conference duly opened.

14. Thank you for your kind attention and stay safe!