

Closing Address by the ACA Board President, Babatola Faseru
15TH African Cashew Alliance (ACA) Annual Cashew Conference
A Sustainable Cashew Supply Linkages for the Future

The Honorable Minister of Commerce, Industry and Handicraft –Burkina Faso and
President of the Consultative International Cashew Council (CICC),

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development - Cameroon

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries - Benin

The Honourable Minister of Food and Agriculture – Ghana

Fellow Government Ministries and Agencies,

Development Corporations

Cashew Industry Stakeholders

Members of the Media,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to speak once again as we bring the main session of the 15th ACA Annual Cashew Conference to an end and continue with the side events from the 20th to the 24th of September.

Again, the Secretariat of the Alliance has given us yet educative sessions in the last three days under the theme, A Sustainable Cashew Supply Chain for the Future. This conference has indeed proven to be a continuation of what we started last year when we had the first online conference due to the pandemic. I must say, ladies and gentlemen, the experience from these last three days, must not end with the conference. We need a conscientious effort to realize all we are taking away from the moment.

As discussed during the inaugural plenary, sustainability in the cashew chain involves every segment of the chain. To ensure sustainability in production, we need to ask ourselves how important are supply chain linkages from processors Worldwide to growers of cashews? Can the current infrastructure we have sustain the growth in RCN trade and kernel demand? When we look at our environment, what are the responsibilities of each stakeholder? How can we manage threats

from climate change? How can we even handle the change COVID19 and its impact on the industry? what can we learn from the pandemic about sustainability? Ladies and gentlemen, these and many questions came from the inaugural plenary session which were answered to an extent, but we must think further taking into consideration the actual state of our respective countries when it comes to cashew.

At the sustainable processing and supply linkages, we were exposed to trends big industry players in the end market are taking to ensure our farmers and processors are prepared for the future. Supply linkage, how can we ensure farmers are put in cooperatives given we have a competitive industry. We were privileged to see how some processing units operate in terms of the standards, what linkages are established and leverage upon, the issue of traceability.

Ladies and gentlemen, we had representatives from various cashew producing countries share with us a sort of national report on what each is doing to ensure sustainability, from researches, practices which can be technical like the proper selection of germplasm for planting, government-dependent practices like being responsible for the provision of nuts and planting materials, private dependent practices which centre around logistic and commercially feasible for example the safe transport of RCN, proper drying among others. This session on sustainable cashew production shows that we must collaborate even more among the producing countries and share the discoveries and research gain. We need to work on ensuring higher productivity as it does not suffice only to say Africa is the number 1 cashew producing continent.

Ladies and gentlemen, even more, interesting is the just-concluded session on creating an enabling policy environment for a sustainable cashew supply chain. During this session, we asked ourselves what the existing policies are, which ones can positively impact our industry taking the future into consideration? Who are the authorities and regulatory institutions? What relationships exist between the public and private sectors? What are our expectations from the Consultative International Cashew Council (CICC)?

Ladies and gentlemen, let me not go on with all the questions we sought to find answers to in the last three days as we pondered on sustainability. I would like to challenge us as we go back to our respective factories, organizations, farms, countries, may we reflect on these questions, and may we find answers that will positively impact our industry not only in Africa but across the globe.

Following the end of this conference, we cannot pretend we did not experience technical glitches, particularly unstable internet among others as we journeyed the last three days. We in ACA will continue to research and enhance the online conference streaming technologies to assure effective delivery. We welcome every idea and suggestion.

Finally, excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen, I would like to again thank my team at the African Cashew Alliance Secretariat for a well-organized conference with relevant content needed to reshape the industry in Africa and globally. The opportunity you provide to the stakeholders of the cashew industry is enormous and commendable.

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We also thank members of the African Cashew Alliance, thank you for the support.

We are eager to host you all physically again, but until then we will continue to bring to you in virtual formats, needed knowledge for a sustainable cashew supply chain for the future.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Stay safe!