

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

It is a pleasure for me to speak once again on behalf of the Government of Ghana at the closing ceremony of the 14th ACA Annual Cashew Conference.

This is the first edition of the ACA conference to be held virtually and I must say thank you to the African Cashew Alliance for giving us three productive days. Under the theme **Building a viable cashew industry that can withstand disruptions**, this conference has helped to bring out areas we need to speedily readjust. In my address at the opening, and I reemphasize, we need the conscientious effort of all stakeholders – private, public and development cooperation – to attain the designated theme for the conference. This statement was reiterated throughout each panel.

During the sector organization panel, a recommendation for the Consultative International Cashew Council (CICC) to engage Asia, towards joint collaboration and policy harmonization is commendable. We were also made aware that there is the need for more government support towards the operationalization of the CICC.

The private sector actors also express strongly the need for public-private dialogue, a dialogue that needs to include Asian actors given the long and complex nature of the cashew value chain.

In the area of Processing, the panels drew our attention to the following:

- We have had periods where almost all factories shut down, with most of them appearing susceptible to the least disruptions, due to the choice of the wrong processing technology and inadequate financing
- In this respect, the need to address mechanization in Africa has become very crucial. How can Africa adapt mechanization technologies to the local environment? We have heard and seen that viable mechanized processing is possible here in Africa.

- Mechanization requires equipment, with up to date technology, and there is the need to maintain this equipment. Maintenance does not always mean “to repair”. It however means keeping your equipment functioning as it was built to do. We do not only need to be concerned about equipment when they break-down. We should focus on maintaining not repairing. This done, there would be less repairing to do as the maintenance minimizes breakdowns in the first place.
- Undoubtedly, there is the need for more efforts to promote food safety standards to achieve every requirement needed for a world standard processing in Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need good nuts to process. To achieve good nuts, we need to support our producers to propagate improved varieties, that offer higher yields and quality nuts. As we have seen today, research is advancing in Africa on selection and multiplication of elite mother trees and planting materials to ensure the production of raw nuts that provide higher productivity and incomes for our farmers as well as higher returns to processors. We must as a result see more collaboration among the cashew producing countries and to share the research gains, while at the same time we support private nurseries to be established or expanded to add to government efforts.

Following the end of this conference, I believe partnerships will be established. The support shown to this conference is enough reason to believe so. The Government of Ghana is already committed to building a viable cashew industry. Being a signatory to the CICC, the passing of the Tree Crops Development Authority Act, 2019 (Act 1010) into law to establish an institution for the regulation and development of cashew and five other tree crops, the launching of the Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) programme, among many other initiatives shows the commitment of the Government of Ghana to develop the sector.

Finally, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to again thank the African Cashew Alliance 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.

To all the sponsors, partners, and members of the African Cashew Alliance, thank you for the support.

It is our hope to host you all physically in Accra, Ghana for the 15th edition of this conference when we shall convene to discuss the progress we have made towards building a viable cashew value chain starting from today.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Stay safe!