



Statement by the Director General of the Cotton and Cashew Council at the Opening Ceremony of the 15th African Cashew Alliance Conference (ACA)

Ladies and Gentlemen, all in your respective ranks, grades and capacities,

I would like, in my capacity as the person in charge of the development of the cashew sector in Côte d'Ivoire, to express my joy at seeing this Conference being held despite the obstacles and restrictions linked to the resurgence of the Covid-19. The online conference option is an excellent alternative.

Before continuing my remarks, allow me to convey Côte d'Ivoire's warm congratulations for the efforts you and all ACA Partners are making to support the sustainable development of the cashew nut industry in Africa.

I am pleased to acknowledge the participation of the high-level Experts who have accepted to spend their time to share their knowledge and experience. This is why I would like to acknowledge the presence of all the Moderators and Panelists of the different sessions, please accept our greetings and our gratitude.

I would also at this juncture like to thank all those technicians who are working behind the scenes to enable us to follow in detail the activities of this 15th Conference.

August participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we know, the future of the cashew nut sector in Africa, and particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, lies in the sustainable development of local processing.

It is in response to this urgent need that the Ivorian Government has made the development of local cashew nut processing a major objective. The aim is for Côte d'Ivoire to move from the status of being a sole supplier of raw materials to an exporter of cashew kernels and by-products.

To achieve this objective both in CI and in other producing countries, one of the challenges of the cashew industry today remains the security of supply. Our industry must rely on good quality and stable supply, in an environment that allows us to operate with competitive processing costs and facilitates access to major export markets.

We therefore welcome **the theme of this 15th Conference which is: A Sustainable Cashew Supply Chain for the Future.**

The analysis of the various associated themes should make it possible to identify new ways of improving our current actions.

Indeed, to achieve its sustainability objectives, the Ivorian government has put in place important accompanying measures in the cashew sector, particularly to create an environment favourable to the development and competitiveness of cashew processing units.

Thus, the operational management of the cashew nut sector since the 2013 reform has tended to favour private investment and to create a framework for sustainable development from production to export or local processing.

Based on this experience, we believe that the sustainability of the cashew nut sector in Côte d'Ivoire and in Africa must take into account the following challenges and issues:

- productivity optimisation and quality improvement;
- guarantee of a remunerative price for producers;
- improving the environment and living conditions of producers;
- transparency and reliability of the marketing system;
- increasing value addition through processing.

In this regard, Côte d'Ivoire has structured its initiatives for the sustainable development of the cashew nut sector. These include

- The establishment of a dedicated farm advisory system;
- The organisation of research with the mobilisation of the synergies of all national universities and research structures for the establishment of a National Cashew Research Programme (PNRA);
- The structuring of marketing ;
- The creation of the Cashew Innovation and Technology Centre (CITA);

- Promotion of small cashew shelling units;
- Installation of agro-industrial zones dedicated to cashew nuts;
- Subsidy for local cashew processing;
- Deposits for the acquisition of the raw material;
- Support from local equipment manufacturers;
- Export facilitation through certification of units;
- Support for the search for outlets and promotion of by-products.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This conference is a timely opportunity to share our experience with the rest of Africa and the world, and above all, to learn new lessons to refine our strategy. I hope that this will be the case for all.

I therefore invite all participants to pay close attention to the work of these three days and to take ownership of the strategies and ideas developed.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my thanks to all the technical and financial partners, especially ACA for their support.

I wish this 15th Annual ACA Conference very successful deliberations

Thank you.