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Envisioning 2016: A Message from ACA's Managing Director

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Dear ACA members and Cashew Industry Stakeholders,

We started the year 2016 with a renewed commitment to provide services to our members and engage in networking activities so as to promote the cashew sector and ensure the visibility of ACA as an international industry alliance. In preparation for the year, ACA held a strategy meeting where we reviewed our activities for 2015 and developed the work plan for 2016. The highlight of the work plan is the crafting of strategies aimed at sustaining the support of our stakeholders through the delivery of value-adding services and creation of networking platforms for the promotion of the industry.

One of these crucial areas is the organization of the sector to create a more effective and productive value chain from farmer to consumer. To this end, we plan to organize National Stakeholder Dialogues in ACA member countries following the example of the one that took place in Accra, Ghana, in January 2016, where ACA was a sponsor and played a major role in its facilitation. The objective of these dialogues is to create a platform for the stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges in the industry and allow ACA to better advocate for the industry. The next one is planned for April 2016 in Guinea-Bissau.

ACA also attended the PTNPA Convention in Florida, USA, in January, where we had the opportunity of interacting with some international partners of ACA. The discussions we had with the partners will be continued in a separately organized International Partners Forum, during the 2016 INC Conference in California, USA in June. The forum will provide the opportunity to ask international partners how ACA can offer more value-added services and thereby, sustain their support for ACA and the industry.

During the first two months of the year, ACA continued to deliver business support and technical services to our members. Two Nigerian cashew processors benefited from a Business Expansion Feasibility Study and consultancy that will enhance their business operations. In our efforts to strengthen relationship between ACA and the African Cashew Initiative (ACi) we also participated in their strategic planning meeting held in Amonabo, Ghana in January. As partner organizations, we aim to deepen our understanding of their operations in order to explore further areas of mutual cooperation.

ACA has also commenced preparations for the 2016 ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo, slated for Guinea Bissau in September 2016. A team, led by myself, visited the country to explore the infrastructures available to host this important event. We met with

major cashew industry stakeholders and discussed the various aspects of the conference and logistics. We received their commitment to set up a Local Organizing Committee that will collaborate with ACA to organize the conference. The ACA also team met with the Country's Minister of Finance and Economy who gave assurances that the government will fully support the event.



We are currently exploring various avenues for improving our current services, as well as offering new ones to our members. We are working on deploying technology to improve market information dissemination to rural cashew farmers in order to assist them with getting more value for their products. We are also working to expand and upgrade the ACA Quality & Sustainability Seal program to farmers with the goal of providing quality assurance to African processors and international buyers as well as incorporating environmental issues into the seal. ACA is also reaching out to regional and international institutions for resource mobilization and technical support. This is to ensure that the ACA Seal meets the requirements of global food security standards that will soon be implemented.

These are just some of the activities and initiatives ACA will be pursuing in the course of 2016 and which we will articulate in more detail as the year progresses. We are counting on our Executive Committee, the Advisory Board and all our stakeholders for their continued support and assistance in the efforts to deliver value to the African and International Cashew Industries. We look forward to new formal partnerships and hearing your contribution/inputs/feedback on upcoming issues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Babafemi Oyewole

Your partner for a sustainable African cashew sector

Intersnack

Contact us at
cashews@intersnack-procurement.com
www.intersnack.com

National Cashew Dialogue in Accra, Ghana

On the 19th of January 2016, the Cashew Industry Association of Ghana (CIAG), with the support of ACA and other partners, organized the first ever National Cashew Dialogue under the theme: “Revitalizing the Cashew Sector: An Opportunity Neglected by the Nation”.



CIAG is an umbrella body of players within the cashew value chain with the aim of organizing the entire industry in Ghana into the major groupings of Producers, Processors, Traders, and Service providers.

The Dialogue brought together more than 150 stakeholders within the cashew sector to have a discussion with key government organizations including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ghana Export Promotion Council. ACA’s Chief Business Services Advisor, Sunil Dahiya, participated in the event and gave a presentation titled “The Global Outlook of the Cashew Sector: Shaping Sustainable Strategies for the Ghanaian Cashew Industry”.

With this advocacy program, CIAG was able to facilitate productive discussion on key challenges within the cashew sector and identify future strategies with important stakeholders. During the event, four key proposals were laid for discussion including a mass insecticide spraying program, a credit scheme for cashew farmers, a warehouse inventory system and legal and administrative issues.

ACA is proud to have supported and sponsored such a successful event and looks forward to further collaboration with all of the country’s stakeholders.



ACA Reaches Mid-point in USAID WATIH Project

With the completion of the third workshop under ACA’s partnership with the USAID West Africa Trade & Investment Hub, ACA has successfully implemented the first phase of the workshop series). The U.S. Agency for International Development administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide. The goal of the project is to significantly increase the capacity and technical knowledge of cashew processing in the West African cashew value chain.



For the first phase of the project, ACA targeted cashew processing managers, market information system professionals, and data collectors. Since November 2015, ACA has trained a total of 57 participants from 10 West African countries. The workshops have focused on crucial issues of food safety, product quality, environmental management, and market data collection and dissemination.

The most recent was a two-day workshop held in Bissau from February 2-3, 2016 and hosted participants from Guinea-Bissau,

Guinea-Conakry, The Gambia and Senegal. The event had excellent support by local government agencies and related organizations. During the opening remarks, ACA welcomed the President of ANCA, the national regulatory agency for cashew in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the coordinator of PRSPDA, a World Bank supported project focusing on private sector rehabilitation in the cashew industry. ANCA and PRSPDA representatives actively participated throughout the two days and spoke about the importance of strengthening the entire value chain to ensure long-term sustainability.

The second phase of the workshop series will focus on business planning and management, investment skills, international competitiveness, and advanced market information system strategies.



**This workshop is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the African Cashew Alliance and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

ACA Team Attends Two International Industry Conferences

Two large international conferences, one in the U.S. and one in Dubai, have allowed ACA to meet with key industry players and partners and discuss the development of the industry. From the 15th to the 18th of January, ACA Managing Director Dr. Oyewole Babafemi and ACA Finance Manager Akwasi Adom-Dankwa participated at the 4-day business convention organized by the Peanut and Tree Nuts Processors Association (PTNPA) at the Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, U.S.A.

The PTNPA convention brings together most US peanut and tree nut processors along with many foreign processors based in Europe and Asia. As a standing member of this critical and active business association, ACA has been invited to attend this convention as a key partner during the past couple of years.

During this event, Dr. Oyewole and Adom-Dankwa met with a number of key private sector stakeholders to discuss the activities of the African Cashew Alliance, identifying possible areas for partnership, and exploring American and European processors’ expectations for African cashew nuts. ACA members present seized this opportunity to display the enormous potential of the African cashew, highlighting the benefits that foreign companies, especially roaster and global traders, and US can gain from supporting the industry.

Consequently, a number of companies expressed strong interest in sourcing directly from Africa or even investing in a factory with the assistance of ACA as an industry platform.

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Above: ACA Secretariat meets with stakeholders in Dubai

From the 18th to the 20th of February, a team from the ACA, including the Managing Director, Business Advisor and the Human Resources Advisor, attended the World Cashew Convention held in Dubai. ACA Executive Committee members, Mr. Tola Faseru from NCAN and Mr. Ronald Zaal from TDG, also participated in the event. The convention attracted more than 250 delegates from over 28 countries, including cashew traders, processors, suppliers, machinery, and supply chain managers. ACA participated as a speaker and exhibitor, showcasing the organization and its services to over 100 participants who visited the ACA exhibition booth.

During the three-day event, Dr. Oyewole gave a presentation on “ACA’s Initiatives in Promoting Investments in African Cashew Sector” at the Investor Forum, while Dahiya delivered a presentation on RCN quality at the “Meeting RCN Buyers’ Expectations” plenary session. The ACA delegates also hosted Business-to-Business roundtables with a number of private sector executives and company representatives interested in sourcing cashew, including RCN and Processed Nuts, or engaging in other business and investment opportunities in Africa.

At both events, ACA promoted the upcoming 2016 ACA World Cashew Festival and Expo to be held in Guinea Bissau (Guinea-Bissau is a major player in the West African cashew sector with 240,000MT per annum), and began the process of securing partnership and participation.



Overall, the conferences were both a huge success and ACA is pleased to have represented our members and the African cashew industry to the international market.

ACA PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

The African Cashew initiative (ACi) - Innovative Delivery Methods of Addressing the Challenges in the Cashew Sector

By Rita Weidinger, Executive Director GIZ/ACi

ACi together with private and public partners focuses on organizing and building a sustainable African cashew sector to reduce poverty. To date, the initiative has supported more than 400,000 cashew farmers to add at least US\$ 600 to their annual family income. ACi is active in five project countries namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Mozambique.

Key challenges for the African cashew value chains remain the low productivity of 250 to 700kg/ha; and the high costs for in-country processing. With changing power relations in the cashew value chain, the market linkages become more important for all players, with high potential for producers.

Thus, ACi aims at increasing raw cashew nut production, productivity and quality and also increase the quantity and quality of African cashew kernel and cashew by-product processing. The initiative further targets establishing and expanding sustainable links to the global market place and advocate policies that favor cashew production and processing.

In 2015 ACi and its partners saw tremendous progress towards the realization of its vision: over 400,000 farmers were fully trained on two different topics, of which 22 % were women. To date, these farmers cumulatively earn an additional net income of \$120 million. Also, cashew processing in Africa increased from 3% to about 10% since the beginning of the project in 2009, though processors in the last two seasons faced heavy competition with RCN buyers. As a result, few processors across West Africa had to shut down processing operations temporarily but were however still engaged in trading, while most of them run below capacity. About 5,800 direct employments were created in the processing factories alone; women were the biggest beneficiaries taking up 75% of the total number of jobs created with accumulated wages of US\$ 3.6 million in all 5 project countries.

ACi has since received a general commitment from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to enter a third project phase continuing in May 2016. Other funding partners – IDH and EU/ACP secretariat – intend to support the joint vision too.

With the expected funding support from new partners, all is set for the take-off of the third phase of the initiative with an added component of promoting the nutritional and health benefits of cashew.



ACA is a member of the Board of ACi and works closely with them in the development of the cashew industry and is excited to further collaboration in 2016.

The Recipe Room: Chocolate-Filled Cashew Cookies



INGREDIENTS

- 1 roll Pillsbury® refrigerated sugar cookies
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salted cashews or peanuts, chopped
- 1 bag (13 oz) milk chocolate candy drops or pieces (about 81), unwrapped
- 46 salted whole cashews or peanuts

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat oven to 350°F. In large bowl, break up cookie dough. Stir or knead in flour and chopped cashews until well blended. Shape dough into 46 (1-inch) balls. Wrap each ball of dough around 1 milk chocolate candy. On ungreased cookie sheets, place 2 inches apart.
2. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until cookies are set and edges are light golden brown. Cool 1 minute; remove from cookie sheets to cooling racks. Cool 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in small microwavable bowl, microwave remaining milk chocolate candies uncovered on High 1 minute; stir until smooth. If necessary, microwave 10 seconds longer.
4. Swirl 1/2 teaspoon melted chocolate on top of each cookie. Press 1 whole cashew into chocolate on each cookie.

*Source: <http://www.pillsbury.com/recipes/chocolate-filled-cashew-cookies/07bf06f8-f348-4e2c-a6e1-f988d9c18462>

Recent Cashew Industry News

“Gambia: Ambassador Patricia- U.S. Govt Spent \$US 8.6 Million on CEP2 Project”

Read more: allAfrica, Global, March 2, 2016

“Budget Jolt: Import Duty to Hit Cashew Industry Hard”

Read more: The New Indian Express, India, March 3, 2016

“Go Scientific for Better Returns, Cashew Farmers Advised”

Read more: Deccan Herald, India, March 3, 2016

“Kwara to provide 13,000 hectares of Land for Commercial Agriculture”

Read more: The Eagle Online, Nigeria, February 29, 2016

Read more at: <http://www.africancashewalliance.com/en/news-and-info/cashew-news>

Cashew Calendar 2016

March

21-22 ACA Executive Committee and Advisory Board Meeting in Accra, Ghana

April

7 National Cashew Stakeholders Dialogue in Guinea-Bissau

7-9 Association of Food Industries Annual Convention, Florida, U.S.



Contact us
aca@africancashewalliance.com
or call +233 302 78 22 33