Cashew sector at a glance

Current global production of raw cashew nuts (RCN) exceeds 2.1 million tons valued at nearly US $2 million, which corresponds to a quarter of the world edible nuts production. Some 60% of the global RCN output is harvested in Asian developing countries and 35% in Africa. Processing takes place mainly in India, Vietnam and Brazil. Only 10% of the African RCN is locally processed, wherefrom a considerable loss in the value chain.

World cashew demand is growing strongly in both volume and value; prospects are for world consumption to continue to increase.

Main buyers from US and Europe, as well as processors from India, Vietnam and Brazil will increasingly source RCN from Africa. The interest in this origin has intensified in the past 5 years, with major Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Brazilian and European companies investigating and investing in medium and large scale processing units in the major African production areas. The prevailing competitive disadvantage of Africa as far as processing is concerned will change with the implementation of mechanized processing.

Cashew sector performance is largely subject to rumours and adversely affected by lack of marketing intelligence. The sector is now in full transition, with a growing demand of importing countries for traceable supply chains based on sustainability, increasing awareness of future supply availabilities and the relationships between RCN and derived processed products within the total supply chain. The changes underway create new settings and enhance the importance of African developing and least developed countries in the global supplies, in particular for countries where RCN exports provide significant parts of national export earnings.