



**UNION EUROPEENNE**

DELEGATION EN REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN

**Discours prononcé par M. Joel Neubert**  
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**République du Bénin**

**Cérémonie d'ouverture**  
**African Cashew Alliance (ACA) – 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Cashew**  
**Conference & Expo**

**Sofitel**

**Cotonou, le 17 septembre 2024**

- HE Ministry of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance in charge of Cooperation, Benin
- HE Ministry of Livelihood and Transport, in charge of Sustainable Development, Benin
- HE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Benin
- HE Ministry of Industry and Trade, Benin
- Mr. Director General of APIEX, Benin
- Mr. Representative of the OACPS
- HE Ambassador of Germany to Benin
- HE Ambassador of the USA to Benin
- HE Ambassador of India to Benin
- Mr. President of CICC, Ghana
- Mr. Project Leader of GIZ-MOVE, Ghana
- Mr. President of IFA Benin
- Mr President of ACA, Nigeria
- Ladies and Gentlemen
  
- Dear Guests

It is a great pleasure to be here this afternoon and contribute to the opening of the 18<sup>th</sup> ACA Annual Cashew Conference & Expo on behalf of the European Union

My congratulations to ACA for organising this 18<sup>th</sup> Edition

My congratulations also to Benin for hosting it for the third time.

Cashew Value Chain transformative potential is well known to all of you members of the African Cashew Alliance. It hasn't gone unnoticed for the European Union. Raw Cashew Nuts is the second agricultural commodity in revenues for the region. Raw Nuts production is just the tip of the iceberg on its potential to deliver sustainable economic growth and jobs.

To accomplish this transformative potential, smart, sustainable and inclusive investment and policies are needed; covering production, processing and marketing within a solid predictable governance framework. To really reach the scale and impact we expect a performant, competitive and vibrant private sector, from farmers to retailers with a clear focus on processing. In Benin, for instance, the Government, over the last few years, has prioritised local transformation. Notably through strategic choices of strict rules on exports, promoting incentives for more and more efficient production, job creation, and seeking private investments in transformation for instance at the Special Industrial Zone of Glo-Djigbé. I am sure other countries member of the alliance are promoting similar solutions to further increase the local added value and the job potential.

It is essential to understand the social and environmental impacts of such decisions, notably the longer-term potential that the value chain may hold for reducing poverty and improving food systems, especially among vulnerable groups and infants.

At the sub regional level, in the long run it is also critical to develop a common view, a fair access to market and limit trade practices that may prevent producers from other countries from getting fair prices.

The EU is very interested to see a thriving processing hub in Africa, closely linked to European Markets and guided by inclusiveness and sustainability principles, maximizing revenues and jobs for African Nations.

Beyond, Cashew has the potential to spearhead and set an example for an agro-industry based on agroecological principles.

This is the spirit of the EU Cashew Initiative which is in the making. It is set to frame the European Interventions in the sector in a Team Europe Spirit and closely aligned to our Partner Countries Interests.

We don't start from zero. EU is the proudly main donor of GIZ implemented Move-ComCashew Programme. We salute its 15 years of engagement and its key contribution to the dynamic sector that Cashew is today in Africa.

Move - ComCashew is Embedded in the larger AgroBusiness Facility for Resilient Value Chains, Co-Funded by the EU (43.8 million EUR) and the German Ministry of Cooperation (12.2 million EUR).. Cashew remains by far the most important value Chain in the programme.

We are very proud as well that under this programme, Editions 16 and 17 of the African Cashew Alliance Master Training Programme have trained dozens of experts in West Africa from 20 African countries. We look forward for Editions 18 and 19 in East Africa.

Still under this programme, 26 Private sector Partners, among them cooperatives, processors and distributors, have been selected to receive a Matching Grant Fund in 11 different countries. It is mobilising around 6.5 million EUR addressing the 'missing middle' actors to reach formal finance or to develop some inclusive or sustainable aspects of the cashew value chain.

But the EU Intervention on Cashew Spans larger under three pillars: Technical Assistance, Business Development and Support to Policies. Bilateral Programmes at EU Delegation level support or will consistently support Cashew Value Chain in producer countries from Guinee-Bissau to Mozambique (engaging dozens of millions of Euros of EU Budget).

On sustainable financing, EU funded blending facilities as AgriFI, ABC Fund or AATIF have operations providing investment and working capital for processors and traders.

And last but not least, an important priority is to support the development and implementation of transformative policies in partner countries. On this aspect, we are following with great interest the policy developments in Benin and eagerly keen to learn from its results. EU Delegations are at the forefront in this Policy Support on a demand-driven Basis for Partner Countries.

We remain committed and our ambition is to step up an EU Initiative on Cashew, on demand and along our African Partners and stakeholders that you represent here today.

Thank you for your attention