

MOTIVATION

*There is need to create an efficient supply chain to enable a higher share of the export price to be transferred to farmers*

By Faridah Kulabako

The International Coffee Organisation (ICO) executive director, Jose Sette, has urged coffee stakeholders in Africa to commit resources to research in new pests and disease-resistant varieties and ensure efficient extension services so as to increase coffee production.

Sette, who was speaking during the opening of the 16th African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) conference and exhibition at the Kampala Serena Hotel yesterday, said there is also need to invest in modern farming techniques and improve access to affordable credit to enable farmers modernise production.

He said while the global coffee demand has increased by over 50% from 100 million bags, each weighing 60kg in the mid-1990s, to 159 million bags currently, the continent's share of the global output decreased from 17.6% in 1990 to 10.8% in 2016/17.

He also said the continent's share of the total global coffee export value decreased from 21% to 9.4% over the period.

This was attributed to the stagnation of coffee production in most coffee producing countries in Africa, due to limited use of fertilisers, constrained access to affordable credit, aging trees and lack of extension services, which hampers skills transfer and adoption of modern farming methods.

According to Sette, the average coffee yield in Africa is estimated at 400kg per hectare compared to 1,500kg in Brazil and over 2,000kg in Vietnam.

To motivate farmers to grow more coffee, Sette said there is need to create an efficient supply chain, especially for logistics, to enable a higher share of the export price to be transferred to farmers. This, he said, will boost farmers' morale to continue investing in coffee production.



The state minister of agriculture Christopher Kibananga (front-left), Moses Ali and Schluter during the launch of the 16th African Fine Coffee conference at Serena Conference Centre yesterday. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

# Global coffee boss tips on production

Most farmers are currently being cheated by middlemen, who are profiting at their expense by offering them low prices. This has demotivated many farmers, forcing some to cut coffee trees.

Despite the glaring picture, Sette said coffee still plays an important role in many African countries as it remains among the major foreign exchange earners and provides livelihood and employment to about seven million households in Africa.

The Uganda Coffee Development Authority managing director, Emmanuel Iyamulemye Niyibigira, said Uganda exported 4.6 million bags of coffee in 2016/17, earning the country \$540m.

**New export markets**  
To boost coffee production and

MIDDLEMEN

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export volumes, Iyamulemye said UCDA plans to work with farmer co-operatives so as to offer enhanced outreach and extension services and collective marketing and processing.

To address climate change-related challenges, Iyamulemye said a number of adaptation measures, such as

rainwater harvesting for smallholder farmers, water conservation, planting shade trees and intercropping with banana trees are being taken in the various coffee-producing parts of Uganda.

This is part of the coffee development roadmap that seeks to increase coffee production to 20 million bags by 2025, create local demand for coffee, promote value addition and create an enabling environment for the coffee sector.

Iyamulemye said UCDA is exploring markets in China, Korea, Russia, Japan, Egypt and Algeria. It also seeks to increase exports to Sudan so as to create demand for Uganda's coffee in international markets.

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MARKET

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"UCDA intends to set up a permanent office in China to have our presence there and other countries in the Far East. We also want to start exporting directly to Algeria instead of them buying our coffee through other countries," Iyamulemye said.

Although Iyamulemye said Uganda loses a lot of money through exporting unprocessed coffee beans, Phil Schluter, the managing director of Schluter SA Value Additions Opportunities, said Uganda would be better off exporting raw beans because it will incur more costs if it is to export value-added coffee.

"Uganda is better off exporting raw coffee beans because the roasting and packaging in Europe is based on freshness. You have to ensure that the value added coffee is fresh to preserve the quality and taste and that requires a lot of resources.

"Uganda will spend three times more to process and preserve the freshness until it reaches the final consumer," he said.

However, Schluter said value-addition should be done to promote local coffee consumption.

The first deputy Prime Minister, Moses Ali, urged coffee stakeholders to undertake sustainability initiatives in all their business models to ensure high and sustainable coffee production.

He also called for the establishment of an enabling policy environment, strengthening the regulatory framework and promotion of coffee research to enable Uganda regain its position as the leading coffee producer in Africa. The country is currently the leading coffee exporter on the continent and the second biggest coffee producer after Ethiopia.