



International Coconut Community

Established 1969 / a UNESCAP inter government organization

International Coconut Community - Organization Statement

27 March 2023 16:00 – 17:00 hrs.

Agenda item 3: Towards the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, and fellow coconut industry stakeholders,

It is an honor to address you today on behalf of the International Coconut Community (ICC). Our objective is to promote, coordinate, and harmonize all activities in the coconut industry to ensure the sustainable and resilient coconut sector development. In this context, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations serve as a vital framework to guide our efforts.

The coconut tree has been called the "Tree of Life" because of its incredible versatility and ability to provide sustenance, shelter, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and livelihood to countless communities worldwide. As we strive to achieve the 17 SDGs, we must recognize the potential of the coconut tree to contribute to sustainable development across multiple dimensions.

First and foremost, we must recognize the potential of the coconut industry to alleviate poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2). Through the promotion of sustainable coconut farming and fair wages for farmers, we can contribute to the economic wellbeing of millions of people in coconut-producing regions. Coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera* L.) is grown on about 12.25 million hectares in more than 90 countries and consumed by people in more than 110 countries worldwide. The economic contribution of coconuts is reported to be around USD 13.18 billion as export value in 2022 excluding the large domestic consumption in terms of fresh water, coconut oil, coconut milk-based foods and other invaluable products. The outlook for coconut is positive, as global demand continues to rise. Furthermore, coconuts are a versatile source of nutrition, providing essential nutrients that can support food security and public health (SDG 3).

To create a truly sustainable industry, we must foster gender equality (SDG 5) and ensure that both male and female workers have equal opportunities and fair wages. Additionally, we must focus on providing decent work and promoting sustainable economic growth (SDG 8) by creating jobs, fostering innovation, and supporting entrepreneurship in the sector. About 100 million producers and workers in the industry and more than 700 million people have been fully engaged in coconut value chain.

Our commitment to responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) is evident in our efforts to minimize waste and maximize resource efficiency. By utilizing every part of the coconut tree, from the husk to the fronds, we can create a circular economy



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that reduces waste and environmental impact. Moreover, the coconut industry can play a significant role in combating climate change (SDG 13) through its renewable (biofuel) and biodegradable (the shell and husk-based products), preserving forests, and serving as an effective carbon sink.

Finally, we must prioritize the protection of life on land (SDG 15) by embracing sustainable farming practices, such as agroforestry and organic farming, which contribute to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. The development of good agricultural practices (GAP) and traceability has the potential to support the achievement of SDG 15

To achieve these goals, the International Coconut Community has undertaken and remains committed to facilitating knowledge sharing, capacity building, research and development support, advocating for progressive policies, fostering strategic partnerships, and monitoring progress.

The economic, social, and environmental benefits of the use of coconut and its value-added products have prompted efforts to sustain this sector and its market. Despite the benefits that coconuts offer, the industry must overcome several challenges including but not limited to impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical instability, extreme climate events, high inflation rates in some countries, disruption to supply, demand and export flows. No single effort and institutions can solve these problems alone. As challenges relatively increase in complexity and scale, strategic partnerships become an imperative. The International Coconut Community call upon all stakeholders – governments, NGOs, private sector organizations, and local communities – to collaborate with us in this vital endeavor. Together, let us harness the power of the coconut industry to create a more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable world for all.

Thank you.

DR. JELFINA C. ALOUW

Executive Director

International Coconut Community