

## Face to Face at World Cashew Convention 2017

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**Ms Sanata Berthe-President and CEO, ICAF- Cote d’Ivoire**

*An Exclusive Interview with Ms Sanata Berthe-President and CEO, ICAF- Cote d’Ivoire, at the World Cashew Convention, 09-11 Feb, 2017, Singapore*



**Could please elaborate about ICAF and its activities?**

ICAF is a company based in Ivory Coast that makes consultancy for companies in plant design for the engineering segment. We help companies design the best layout for their plants, when they want to embark on processing. We also work in the field of Consulting, Audit and Training; Consultancy as part of standards, support for certification or implementation of standards that meet client specifications, the same for training, and certification audits for BRC, ISO 22000 and other agro-industry standards.

**With regard to the cashew sector, have you trained producers and processors to meet the various food safety and quality standards such as HACCP, BRC system in their factories?**

Yes. We have already worked with several people in the cashew industry, notably the Olam group in their factories in Bouaké and Dimbokro for which we helped them to implement the requirements of the BRC system. We are also working with CASA to set up their BRC certification system, which is nevertheless the requirement of US and European industry.

**Have you ever had to encounter difficulties during these trainings or the various audits you conduct?**

Not really, in terms of training. We are in demand because industrialists know that they have a lack of competence in terms of standards, so they call us to help with skills acquisition. When we enter a business, we already know that there is a gap that we have to fill, there are no problems at this level; Industrialists are receptive because they know they need them to access certain markets. The problem we face is mainly in the counseling and support sector. When manufacturers, especially transformers, need to set up standards, we have difficulties in acquiring information from their suppliers, especially those of equipment and packaging. So we have a lot of food concerns. When you talk about HACCP and food safety, everything related to food, equipment and packaging must be of good food quality. Manufacturers often find it hard to receive these food certificates from their suppliers; Some of them provide primary packaging, the bags for example; Then when you ask for certificates proving that the packaging sack is admitted for food contact, it is often difficult to have them. We also have all the production equipment that is presented, has good technology, the equipment is correct for the processing; they manage to achieve technologically what needs to be done. But is the surface of this equipment admitted for food contact? We do not know. At this level as well, it is difficult to prove to listeners that surfaces in contact with food, especially in terms of equipment, are food grade. So I think

equipment designers should make a little effort at this level and above all give consistently proof of the food compliance of their equipment.

**The Cotton and Cashew Council recently announced that Côte d'Ivoire is aiming to process more than 80% of its local production of raw cashews; do you think that the labor is available and especially qualified to reach this goal? Are the plants adequately equipped for this type of objective?**

Having participated in SIETTA and also at WCC, I think it is an effort that will be made. As one speaker said yesterday, we are not at the same level of labour capacity as countries like India or Vietnam that already have experience. There will necessarily be a need for increased capacity in terms of human resources, but it is not the resource that is lacking; I think that with proper training we should be able to achieve that level of processing, we are able to do that.

**With regard to ICAF, what are your future plans?**

Our future projects in the very short term are mainly to be able to make a very good partnership with the cashew sector in order to facilitate access to the market. As we say, we facilitate market access through compliance with standards. Even if the market is available, only compliant products will be available to the market. So the current challenge is to cover the cashew market in Côte d'Ivoire and help them. For future projects, there is a need to extend the region; we are already present in countries of West Africa, at a small level in Central Africa. We need to make this extension, and why not, to have partnerships with Vietnam and India so that we can also benefit from the training so that we can pass it on to our compatriots in the region.