

ASSESSMENT OF COFFEE SECTOR IN TOGO: A QUICK SUMMARY[‡]

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I. Introduction:

A quick reconnaissance survey of the coffee sector in Togo was conducted from 20 – 23 august 2012. The main objectives were:

1. To assess the status of coffee production and the system of production in Togo,
2. To identify major constraints of coffee production and measures to be taken to address the constraints, and
3. To understand the agro-ecological diversity of the coffee growing areas in Togo for consideration in quality profile mapping project.

To achieve these objectives: (a) discussions were held with relevant authorizes in the coffee sector and (2) field visits were made to discuss with the farmers to observe the realities on the ground under farm conditions and collect first hand information.

Coffee Stakeholders Visited:

1. Coffee and Cocoa Sector Coordinating Committee (CCFCC)
2. Agronomic Research Institute of Togo (ITRA)
3. Institute of Technical Council and Support (ICAT)
4. Coffee Quality Control Authority (DCMC)
5. Private Coffee ware houses owned by Indian, OLAM and OASIS companies in Lome and Kpalime
6. Coffee and Cocoa Technical Unit (UTCC)
7. Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (CRAF)
8. Federation of the Unions of Coffee and Cocoa Producers of Togo (FUPROCAT)

[‡] A quick field trip report prepared for wrap up session that was held right after field visit on 24 August, 2012.

Field Visit: The fields visited include Agadji village, Patatoukou village and the surrounding coffee farms. Coffee husbandry practices in relation to agronomic management practices such as stumping, pruning, fertilizer application method, shade tree management and other practices were observed and on-spot advices were given to local development agents regarding some mal practices. Due to time shortage, the mountainous coffee regions were not visited, but the advice given and the recommendations given below apply to all areas.

II. Coffee Production Status:

- Coffee production in Togo started in the 1920s during the colonial era. The coffee production in the country was constantly below 15,000 tons over the last 12 years. The yield per hectare is very low, estimated at about 300kg (3 qt/ha).
- The total coffee coverage before 2001 was estimated at 40,000 ha. This has reportedly come down to about 20,000 - 25, 000 ha as a result of coffee sector liberalization in 1996. Most farmers abandoned their coffee farm because of low coffee prices and lack of government support in supplying appropriate fertilizer, agrochemicals and other agricultural inputs. Private sectors were not interested to supply these inputs since the demand is relatively low and less profitable as most farmers are resource poor to buy at higher price.
- The coffee growing area is so far limited to small areas in the central western part of the country bordering Ghana. There is a need to explore new potential areas and expand coffee growing in non-traditional areas as one way of maximizing the volume production.
- Coffee quality control system which is strictly done from farm gate to export level by regional and national experts of DCML is a good system to sustainably maintain the inherent quality of Togo coffee and its reputation.
- The extension service system developed by the Coffee and Cocoa Technical Unit (UTCC) that stretches up to village technical advisors level is a perfect structure. At present, there are 4 high level technicians who run the UTCC office at Kpalime and provide training to 8 subject matter specialists (SMS) one at each of the 8 administrative districts. The district SMS in turn regularly train and supervise 55 technical advisors distributed in 55 villages of the coffee producing areas.

III. Major Constraints:

1. **Use of old and traditional variety** – The farmers are still managing a variety named ‘Niaouli’ which was introduced during the colonial period in the 1920s. There are 7 clones developed after independence by the research Center (CRAF), but were not adequately multiplied and distributed to farmers.

2. **Old age of coffee trees and use of traditional management practices** – Farmers knowledge about good agronomic practices (GAP) is highly limited. The age old coffee trees produce below economic yield and require rejuvenation or replacement by new plantation.
3. **Liberalization of the coffee Sector** – The liberalization of the coffee sector in 1996 was a devastating measure that resulted in abandoning of the coffee farm by the farmers. The government extension services providing body dubbed '**Coffee and Cocoa Renovation Company (SRCC)**' was liquidated. Since there was no strong private sector to take over the services, provision of training to farmers, supply of fertilizer and other agricultural inputs, organizing of farmers in to associations and other services were ceased.
4. **Lack of adequate extension services** – In the past (1971 – 1995), there was good extension services which was provided through a government extension body called **Coffee and Cocoa Renovation Company (SRCC)**. This service has been discontinued as a consequence of coffee sector liberalization in 1996.
5. **Low coffee Prices** – one of the major reasons for reduced hectare (ha) of coffee from 40,000 ha to 25,000 ha currently estimated to be available was low coffee prices as opposed to high management cost. At times it is said that growing maize is more profitable than coffee. Currently, the price of coffee is about 950 FCFA at farm gate level and 1040 FCFA if transported to Lome Central market. Therefore, price is not as such a problem at present.
6. **Inadequate supply of planting materials and Fertilizer** – Before liberalization, government used to have 15 multiplication and distribution centers. At present, however, there are only 3 sites. Unavailability and inadequate supply of fertilizer is a major constraint as soil fertility is reportedly depleted too much. Private sectors are not interested to supply fertilizer as the demand is low due to unaffordability of the price by the resource poor farmers. Government has currently decided to supply about 600 tons since last year, but what is required is estimated at more than 6,000 tons.
7. **Inadequate farmers' organization** – Currently, only 25% of the coffee farmers are reportedly organized in to associations. A lot of sensitization activity is needed to reverse the negative attitude of the farmers and organize the remaining 75% in to associations to facilitate training, input supply and other extension services.
8. **Land tenure system and deforestation of coffee shade trees** – Coffee is traditionally grown under shade system in the originally forest areas in Togo. According to the national legislation, the tenant has no the ownership right on the trees and the land owner can cut down any time for timber production and other purposes. The local farmers complain that it

is against shade tree maintenance apart from damaging the coffee trees when the trees fall down.

9. **Shortage of labor** – The youth is no more interested to stay in the village and involve in coffee farming. Socially, living in the village and working in the farm is considered as low social strata. Consequently, most of the youngsters prefer to live in the town and drive motor bikes or do labor work in the town. On the other hand, most of the coffee farmers are said to be old enough. This situation has created a serious shortage of labor in the rural areas causing the application of proper coffee management very difficult.
10. **Inadequate budget and skilled human power for Research** – there are several research challenges such as land degradation and poor soil fertility, diseases (coffee leaf rust, tree die-back) and insect pests (coffee berry borer), low productivity, shade tree management, soil analysis and fertilizer rate determination, etc. However, budget is a major constraint to address all these challenges. The available technical staff (7 researchers and 5 technical assists) is not also adequate.
11. **Limited Extension agents and inadequate budget for effective provision of extension services** – Currently there are 7 extension agents of FUPROCAT. On the other hand, UTCC has 8 agents (one in each district) and 55 local technical advisors at village levels. Altogether there are only 15 skilled agents for all coffee growing areas. These limited agents are not operating at their full capacity due to critical shortage of budget.
12. **Climate change** – since the recent past, rainfall pattern and amount is said to be changing as a result of climate change. A prolonged dry period of 4 months has been recorded in some years. This can significantly affect blossoming and final yield. The rain fall amount has also reportedly come down to 1000mm and even less in some areas , which is not adequate for Robusta that requires about 1500mm of annual rain fall with even distribution for good yield and growth.
13. **Limited knowledge of the farmers in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** – Most of the farmers' field visited show irregular plant density, lack of pruning and stumping of the old coffee trees. Establishment rate of cutting materials appeared very low as acclimatization or hardening off practice is not well known. Proper application of fertilizer and management of stumped coffee is not also well understood.

IV. Suggested Measures to Revamp Coffee Sector:

1. **Sensitization, Training and organizing of farmers** – It is necessary to sensitize the farmers to reverse the bad impression they have developed after liberalization of the coffee sector.

They also need intensive training on good agricultural practices (GAP) to change the traditional way of coffee management and there by improve **productivity** and quality. The fact that coffee is the major cash crop compared to cocoa in the region, sensitization of the farmers would not be a challenge provided their complaint is properly addressed. It is necessary to organize farmers in to associations and other forms of farmer's group in order to facilitate training, input supply and management of the organizations.

2. **Establishment of a viable extension services** – proper extension services to farmers is central to increased production, productivity and quality of agricultural product. Extension service includes sensitization and training of farmers, multiplication and distribution of improved planting materials, supply of agricultural inputs, organizing of farmers in to associations, facilitating of access to credit by farmers, etc. Realizing the drawback of withdrawal from coffee sector, the government has resumed its former extension services by creating '**Coffee and Cocoa Technical unit (UTCC)**' in 2008 under the auspices of ICAT to serve coffee and cocoa *per se*. In addition, the government has started supply of fertilizer at subsidized rate. These initiatives need to continue to supply the farmers with adequate quantity of fertilizer and all other extension services.
3. **Expansion of coffee farm through new planting and introduction of coffee to potential non-traditional areas** – the present coffee growing area is estimated at only 20,000 - 25,000 ha, but was 40,000 ha before liberalization. There are also potential coffee areas where coffee did not get introduced. Therefore, new planting and rehabilitation of neglected or abandoned coffee farms, survey of potential coffee growing areas and introduction of coffee cultivation to these non-traditional areas is needed to maximize coffee production in the country.
4. **Strengthening of coffee research** - Research provides training, improved management practices and planting materials (varieties), and technical backstopping to the farmers. However, coffee research at Kpalime, CRAF, need strong support to strengthen its capacity in skilled manpower (only 7 researchers), budget and facilities in order to effectively utilize the available good structural set up already available and provide the required services. The center possesses well structured planting material propagation units that has the capacity to multiply over 5 million cuttings per year but not efficiently utilized due to shortage of budget.
5. **Promotion of Value addition** – one way of maximizing income from coffee is through value addition. In Togo, there is an opportunity to add value through:
 - **(i) quality improvement through introduction of washed coffee processing and proper drying practices.** The wet processing machine introduced through Gourmet coffee

project financed by CIFC could be a good opportunity but it is not in use since 2010 because of incomplete installation owing to lack of fund. The required budget to complete the installation and make the machine fully operational is estimated at 6 – 7 million CFA. Therefore, CCFCC may need to seriously consider this matter seriously and provide its counterpart contribution as agreed in the project document in order to complete the installation and make us of this facility before the machines get destroyed because of poor handling.

- **(ii) Arabica coffee production** - Planting of Arabica coffee in the mountainous areas appears possible as the Catholic church monks are already growing this species. However, it is necessary to first assess the potential and conduct preliminary observation trial by coffee research, CRAF. Low land Arabica varieties may be introduced from Cameroon, Nigeria and D.R. Congo for this particular study.
- **(3) promotion of specialty coffee** - three distinct coffee sub-zones (plain=200 - 600m.a.s.l, plateau=700 – 800, mountain= >800) have been identified within the ‘wet forest zone’ of the coffee growing belt of Togo. In this regard, IACO will consider Togo as a partner in Coffee quality profile mapping project to assist the country in producing origin based specialty coffees.

- 6. Multiplication and distribution of improved planting materials** – CRAF has developed 7 improved clones that yield 2600kg/ha on research plot and 800kg/ha on on-farm plot. It is of paramount importance to launch a sound multiplication program to replace the traditional variety by these improved clones and boost coffee production and productivity. Discussion has been made and agreed with UTCC to develop project proposal together with CRAF and submit to IACO for negotiation with ICO and CFC for funding.
- 7. Rehabilitation of coffee Sector in Togo** – The total coverage of coffee before liberalization was as high as 40,000 ha. Currently, two types of farms are observed: (a) managed coffee, which covers about 20,000 – 25,000 ha, and (b) abandoned coffee that covers the remaining portion of the total coverage. Both managed and abandoned coffee farms need rehabilitation as the trees are old and poorly managed or completely abandoned. In effect, development of a project proposal by local experts and looking for fund is necessary on top of government support. This project must be prepared in a comprehensive manner to include the improvement of the whole value chain activities.
- 8. Promotion of Agro-forestry farming system** – the tradition of growing coffee under shade and maintenance of economic tree crops together with coffee is an important practice to minimize the effect of changes in rainfall pattern and volume as a result of climate change. This approach need to continue in a more systematic and efficient way to maximize the

return from unit area of land, improve soil fertility, maintain soil moisture, and improve the quality of coffee.

9. Government support – There is a great opportunity to revamp coffee sector in Togo. Government support in infrastructure development; allocation of budget for institutions like Research, UTCC (extension service), DCML (quality control) and CCFCC that are affiliated in coffee research and development, and formulation of favorable policy are very important. In this regard, the government has already realized the negative effect of liberalization and took corrective measures to provide necessary support to coffee development and this initiative need to continue in a more organized and sustainable manner.

10. Development of incentive mechanism to attract the youth to involve in coffee farming -

The shortage of labor created due to wrong social perception need to be reversed. Without the involvement of the youth in coffee business, the sustainability of coffee production over generation could be a serious problem. Various mechanisms of benefiting young coffee farmers need to be devised by the government.

Acknowledgement

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