



International Coconut Community

Established 1969 | a UNESCAP inter government organization

Press Note

2nd September is celebrated as World Coconut Day to mark the establishment of the International Coconut Community (ICC), formerly known as the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC), in 1969 under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICC secretariat and our community from Asian, Pacific, African, Caribbean and South American countries are finding other ways of celebrating the 2020 World Coconut Day to stay in touch and to acknowledge this special day. The theme of the 2020 World Coconut Day is **“Invest in Coconut to Save the World”**. The theme highlights the roles of coconut and its products in economic, health, social, cultural, and environmental sectors, and reflects on how to address current situation related to COVID-19.

Coconut palm is justifiably called *The Tree of Life*. It is grown in over 90 countries on around 12.1 million hectares producing around 69 million nuts per year. The global exported value of coconut products in 2019 reached USD 11.6 billion. The major products exported are coconut meat-based products, followed by water, shell, and husk-based products. The 20 ICC member countries now account for over 90% of the world’s production and exports of coconut products. The products and by-products have reached consumers in over 110 importing countries. This does not include the household and domestic utilization of the coconut both as food and non-food products in the informal sector.

The increase of health-consciousness among consumers and the many uses of coconut – as a functional food, source of energy, immune-system booster, prophylactic and curative agent against several diseases, including COVID-19, and as an effective water purifier from toxic contaminants – are some of the major drivers for growth of global coconut-based product demand. Lauric acid (C12) as the primary fatty acid in coconut oil, and its biochemical precursor, monolaurin, have been reported to inhibit pathogenic viruses, fungi, and bacteria and can potentially be used as an immune-system booster against COVID-19. As a rehydration agent and aseptic liquid, coconut water has been used in medical emergency procedures, such as intravenous drip fluid during World War 2 in the Southeast Asian countries. Scientific research has revealed its ability to prevent oxidative damage to liver cells. Additionally, the coconut palm can absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, storing the carbon, and producing oxygen in the process. So, the coconut is also called *The Tree of Heaven*.



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The vision of ICC is to improve the socio-economic welfare of the farmers and other stakeholders in vibrant coconut sectors, and its mission is to develop a sustainable coconut sector through its member countries to:

- a. Increase production through improved farming systems that are environmentally sustainable
- b. Promote product diversification, generate innovative products, and maintain high-quality product standards acceptable to consumers
- c. Encourage market research and market promotion and assist in addressing market-related issues.
- d. Facilitate activities for capacity building and technology transfer.

Global market demand for coconut products is increasing. Further synergies between coconut stakeholders are needed to increase production and meet these growing demands. Such collaboration is also needed to support value addition, processing, and marketing of high-value coconut products, as well as to counter any adverse publicity against coconut and its products.

The ICC Secretariat, in collaboration with our member countries and other international organizations, is going to hold a series of online training and webinars amid COVID-19 pandemic under the theme: “Stay healthy and productive during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. We look forward to a global economic recovery from COVID-19 and a sustainable development of the coconut sector.

The involvement of the International Coconut Genetic Resources Network’s (COGENT’s) program within ICC’s structure will catalyze the conservation and use of coconut genetic resources to improve production.

ICC wishes every family and nation a successful and enjoyable World Coconut Day for 2020