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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS .....

### ***"Trade Globalization is Embraced with the Community deciding to Create an International Body"***



The world is fast evolving into a global village thus necessitating strategic changes by organisations and countries so each can position themselves well to maximise potential benefits that could be earned from opportunities created. Connectivity between countries and within regions has surpassed expectations as nations embark on major infrastructure developments in transport, trade and market networks, communication links and accelerated development of economic corridors, to name a few. These developments would avail business opportunities at every level starting from the informal sector, then the micro and small to medium enterprises including large corporations.

It is therefore timely to observe that the coconut industry worldwide is moving towards an explosion mode in the production of higher value products from coconut such as Desiccated Coconut (DC), Virgin Coconut Oil, Coconut Water, Coconut Milk and Coconut Sugar. Importing countries of coconut products at present crisscross all continents including Russia and North America. As an example, DC is a well established product that started in the 1960s with export destinations virtually spread across the globe. In 2015 nearly 200,000 metric tonne of DC, valued at an estimated US\$400 million, was shipped by just three producing countries of Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, destined for Europe, United Kingdom, USA, Brazil, China, Japan, Korea and Singapore. DC is also produced by India, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, Dominican Republic and smaller volumes in one or two other countries including those in the Pacific region.

The scenario described with the growing DC trade would also justify the proposed upgrade of the only inter governmental body established for coconut, the APCC, to gain international status so that it is able to represent its stakeholders at globally recognised forums of trade, marketing and agro-industry. It was therefore timely that the recently held 52<sup>nd</sup> APCC Session/Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, moved to progress the regional Community into an international organisation by 2019, a timing that not only coincides with the year in which APCC reaches its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary but would allow adequate transition period ensuring a careful process of engineering this change in full consultation with all relevant stakeholders including the member countries.

An important project, aligned with future changes mooted for APCC, to facilitate and improve trade is set to be undertaken in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint UN and WTO development agency, in relation to the modernisation of APCC Secretariat functions, facilities and ICT architecture. This would enable the creation of a digitised information portal that is intended to deliver real-time data, market intelligence and trade information to stakeholders that include growers, producers, processors, traders, buyers, seller and manufacturers as well as all other participants in the coconut value chain.

Take some time in this issue to read about the 'miraculous' benefits to human health and wellbeing as shared by people who personally experienced from use of products such as the VCO as nutritional and food supplement contributing to healing of HIV/Aids and related skin disorders.

APCC looks forward to improving services provided through the Secretariat toward the stakeholders and its member countries to participate in developing the coconut industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "URON N. SALUM".

URON N. SALUM  
Executive Director, APCC