



A worker picks cherries in a coffee field which belongs to the Nuns of St Therese in Fort Portal. Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.

## Ugandan coffee farmers

Despite an annual market of \$44.6 billion USD (€41.4 billion, 2021/2022), coffee farmers are among the poorest farmers in the world. Coffee crops are located close to the equator in Asia, Central America and Africa.

In Uganda, second producer in Africa after Ethiopia, over 70% of the population works in the agricultural sector. Coffee plantations are primarily operated by « small-scale producers » which refers to families who cultivate their land. Coffee is one of the main cash crops for these families, along with vanilla, maize and sometimes cotton. The income from these crops allows families to purchase what they cannot produce themselves (food, clothing, tools) and educate their children. A wide network of cooperatives and coffee factories enables producers to pool resources such as machinery for drying and hulling coffee cherries, warehouses for storing coffee bags, communication means, and skills for billing and distribution.

Like all agricultural productions, coffee is affected by the consequences of climate change. On the one hand, the quantity and quality of harvested cherries are already impacted by the lack of rain. On the other hand, the distinction between rainy and dry seasons is becoming less pronounced. Despite Uganda's average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita being lower than 0.15 tons per year, Ugandan coffee farmers have to adapt to the climate change consequences, which are mainly induced by developed countries.



A worker dig the fertile soil with a spade to prevent weeds to grow. This coffee field belongs to the Nuns of St Therese in Fort Portal. Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



Outside of the main roads, tracks are often in poor condition, especially during the rainy season. Transporting goods (matooke bananas, coffee cherries) from the fields to the bulking centres is one of the biggest challenges for farmers and cooperatives. Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



The freshly harvested coffee cherries will be dried in the sun or in a dryer, sheltered from the rain. Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



The coffee cherries ripen at the beginning of the rainy seasons. During this period, drying is a challenge because the cherries must be protected from the rain to prevent the apparition of mould. Small-scale producers can't afford rain sheltered dryers. Kasanda district, Uganda, April 2024.



Being of volcanic origin, the soil in the Rwenzori region is very fertile. Leading to a highly diverse and productive agriculture: coffee, vanilla, matooke bananas, beans, avocados, potatoes, etc. Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



A woman brings water back to her village, 100 meters uphill from the stream. Rwenzori mountains, Kasese district, Uganda, February 2023.



A coffee farmer is having a tea break during the hottest hours of the day, after a morning of harvesting coffee cherries. Mityana district, Uganda, February 2023.



Beginning of the day in Kasese. Kasese district, Uganda, February 2023.



Coffee cherries drying under the sun. Rwenzori mountains, Bunyangabu district, Uganda, March 2024.



A coffee plant dies due to drought. Climate change is affecting coffee production in Uganda, particularly the less distinct alternation between dry and rainy seasons, leading to prolonged harvesting periods and posing new logistical challenges for farmers, cooperatives and coffee factories, where hulling takes place. Mityana district, Uganda, February 2023.



Deployment of the ROBUST project funded by the European Union and implemented by CIRAD in a cooperative. This project aims to improve the adaptation of Robusta coffee plants to climate change through genetic crossbreeding with Ugandan Robusta coffee plants and agroforestry techniques. Mityana district, Uganda, February 2023.



A researcher at work in the National Coffee Research Institute (NaCORI), Mukono district, Uganda, February 2023.



Coffee farmers working with Arabica coffee sort freshly harvested cherries: they remove those that are not ripe enough to ensure high-quality coffee. Rwenzori mountains, Bunyangabu district, Uganda, March 2024.



Once the coffee cherries are dried, they are packed in bags and sent to the nearest coffee factory for hulling, by motorbikes or trucks depending on the road condition. Kasanda district, Uganda, April 2024.



Coffee farmers are loading a truck with coffee cherries bags. The destination is the coffee factory where cherries will be hulled and then sold to local or international buyers. Kasanda district, Uganda, April 2024.



Mityana town, Uganda, April 2024.



A worker unloads a bag of coffee cherries from the truck. Each bag weighs approximately 100 kilograms. Mityana district, Uganda, April 2024.



A coffee farmer sleeps on the bags of coffee cherries he has just delivered to the factory. Due to a power outage, the cherries cannot be hulled. The farmer waits for the electricity to return. He will be paid based on the weight of the coffee beans processed. On that day, the electricity will be out for 8 consecutive hours. Mityana district, Uganda, April 2024.



A man brings medicine to his father-in-law, who lives more than an hour's walk from the nearest town. Rwenzori mountains, Bundibugyo district, Uganda, February 2023.



A coffee farmer comes back from the trading centre where he bought some rice and a dried stick of wood to light fire. Rwenzori mountains, Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



In a small mud-built kitchen structure, a young boy lights a fire under a pot filled with water. The water must be boiled to be drinkable. It is vital for people to be able to make fire, even during the rainy season. Rwenzori mountains, Kabarole District, Uganda, February 2023.



Coffee farmers are hulling fresh Arabica cherries as part of the « wet processing ». This cooperative is also being used as a church when no coffee is being processed or stored. Rwenzori mountains, Bunyangabu district, Uganda, March 2024.



In Buzaaya Growers coffee factory, Robusta cherries are being hullled (once dried) with a machine. Usually, they run the factory at night because the electricity is cheaper. Kamuli district, Uganda, March 2024.



Evaluation of coffee beans at Bukonzo Organic Cooperative. Only high-quality coffees are eligible for Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). This indication helps cooperatives and farmers to get a better value out of their production. Rwenzori Mountains, Kasese district, Uganda, February 2023.



An independent coffee farmer (member of no cooperative) is paid cash for his production. Most coffee farmers are gathered into cooperatives to negotiate a better price per kilogram for coffee beans with the hulling factories. Payments are then made via bank transfer from the factory to the cooperative. The cooperative potentially keeps a certain percentage for the operating cost (transportation, billing). The net income will be subsequently distributed to each farmer. Kamuli district, Uganda, March 2024.



Workers are loading a truck of coffee beans bought by a local coffee dealer who's going to export them, probably to Europe. Mityana district, Uganda, April 2024.



A worker in a coffee plantation brings dried banana leaves. These leaves will be spread on the ground around coffee plants to reduce the evaporation of morning dew and avoid the growth of competing species. Mityana district, Uganda, February 2023.



A young woman on her way to school, which is nearly an hour's walk from her home. Rwenzori mountains, Bundibugyo district, Uganda, February 2023.



A young man at mass. Kasese district, Uganda, February 2023.



Religious procession during Easter celebrations. Kasese district, Uganda, March 2024.



Primary school class at Bupomboli School. Rwenzori Mountains, Bundibugyo district, Uganda, February 2023.



During the rainy season, downpours can be very heavy. As soon as it starts raining, all activities come to a halt, and people seek shelter in shops or at home. Life resumes once the rain stops. Rwenzori mountains, Kabarole district, Uganda, April 2024.



Southern part of the Rwenzori Mountains, a few kilometers from the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Rwenzori mountains, Kasese district, Uganda, February 2023.