



Fruits and Nuts

Summary of Key Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Fruit and Nut Production

- ✓ Undesirable and Hazardous Work
- ✓ Vulnerable Workforce
 - Child Labor
 - Migrant Labor
 - Casual Labor
- ✓ Associated Contextual Factors Contributing to TIP Vulnerability
 - Association with Large-Scale Land Acquisition/Displacement
 - Association with Environmental Degradation

Overview of Fruit and Nut Production in sub-Saharan Africa

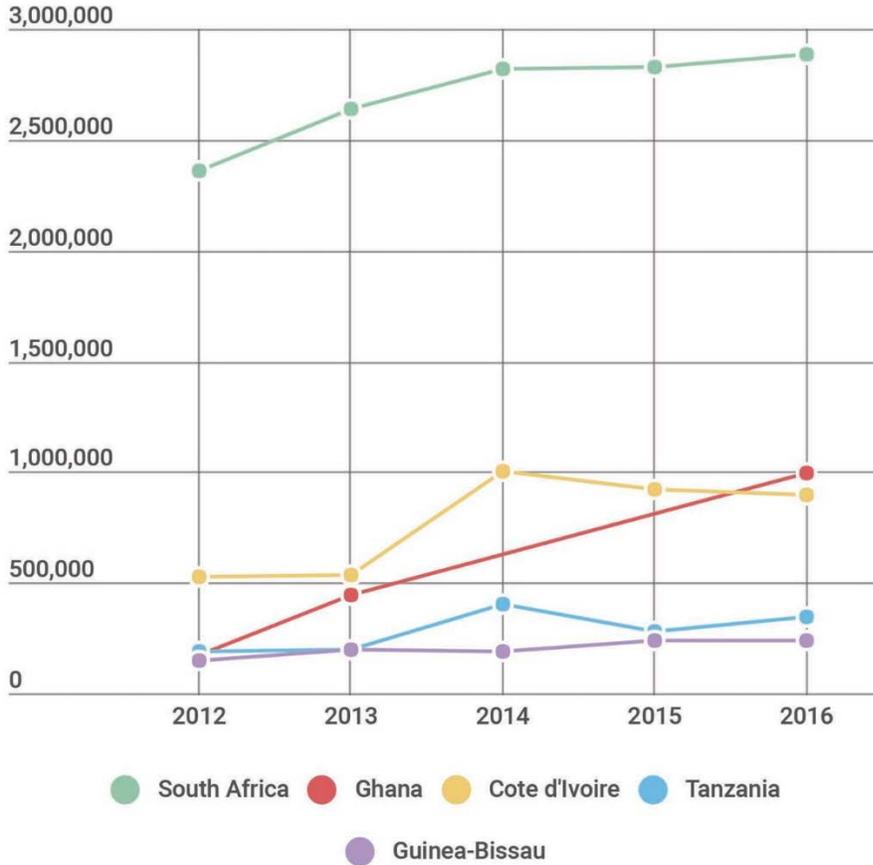
Trade

The top exporters of fruits and nuts overall from sub-Saharan Africa are South Africa, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, and Guinea-Bissau.¹

Although the climate in many regions of Africa is advantageous for growing a variety of fruits, the vast majority of it is consumed locally; only about five percent is exported.²



Top Exporters of Fruits and Nuts (Value USD/Thousands)



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The top importers of fruits and nuts from sub-Saharan African countries are India, Vietnam, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong (China).⁴

Key types of fruit and nuts exported are coconuts, cashews, citrus, grapes, pineapples, mangoes, apples, pears, fresh berries, and bananas.⁵

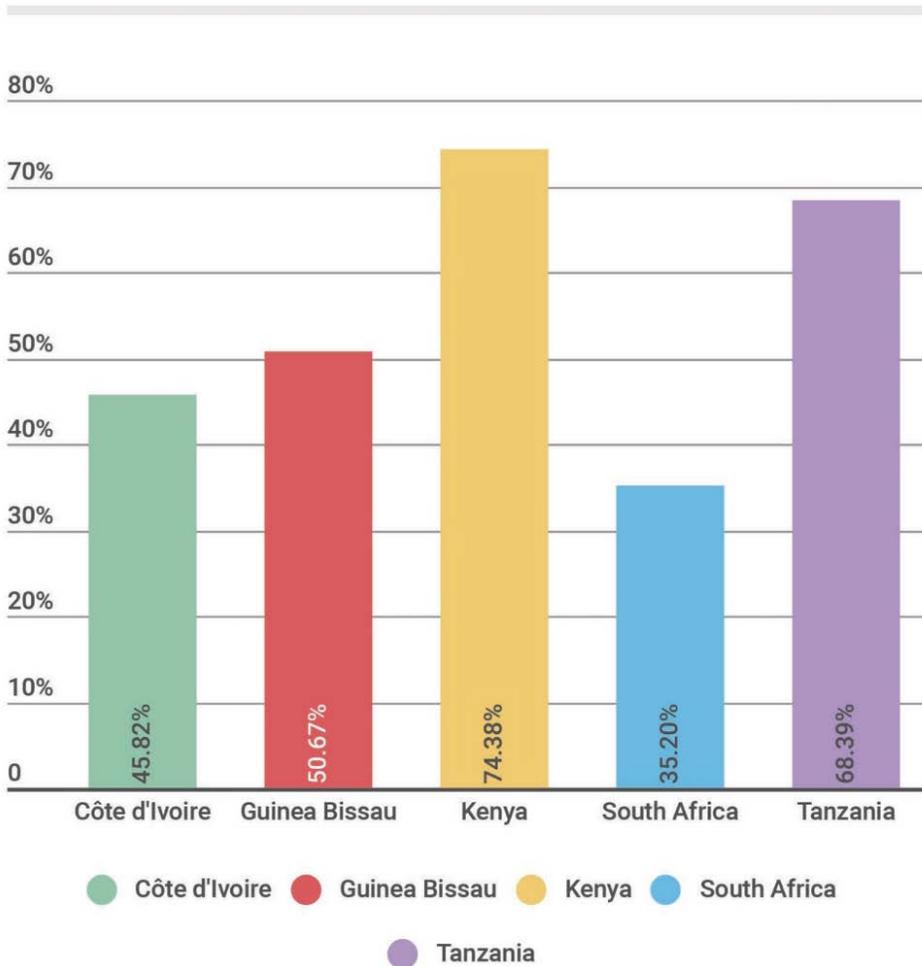


Features of Production and Supply Chain

Production features of export fruit crops depends on the species in production. Coconuts, one of the top exported products, are produced for export primarily in Ghana and Tanzania. In Ghana, about 80 percent of coconuts were produced by smallholder farmers.⁶ Smallholders also dominate coconut production in Tanzania, where farmers work plots of approximately one-half to one hectare.⁷ In general, the peaks of labor intensity around harvest periods promote the use of seasonal, casual workers (see below).

Percent of Rural Population in Fruits and Nuts Exporting

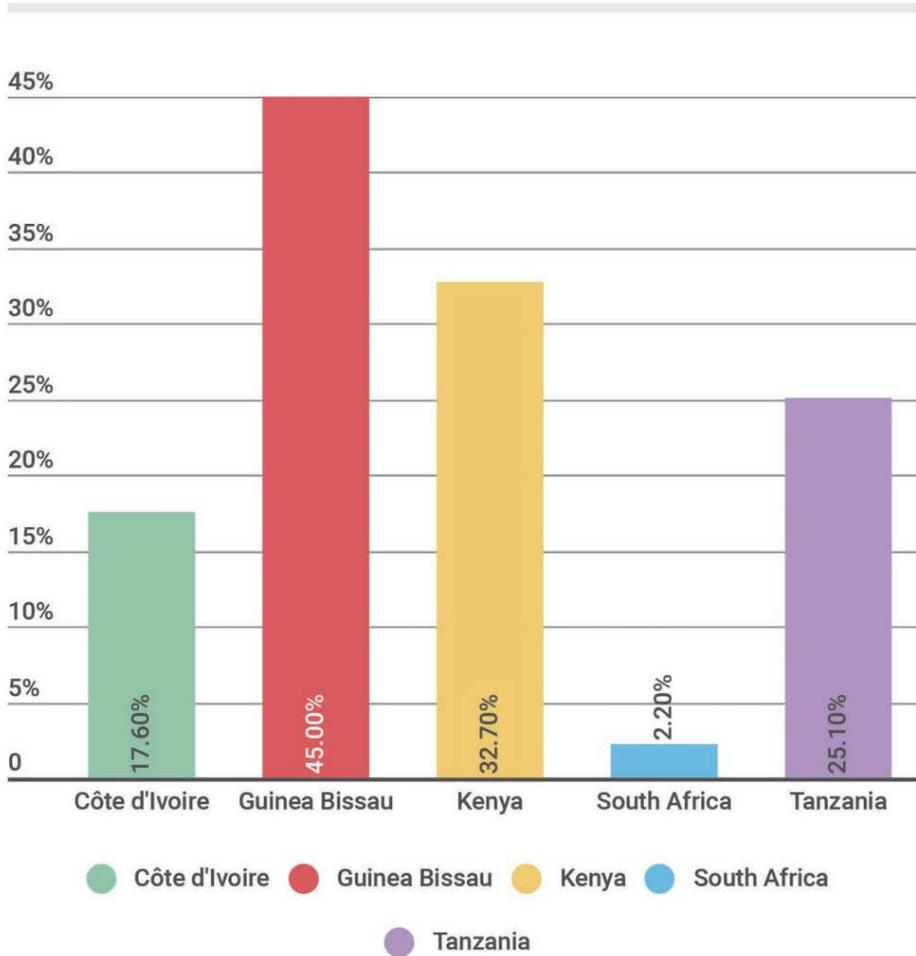
Countries



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Employment Rate in Fruits and Nuts Exporting Countries



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Coconut production and harvesting is not as labor intensive as other crops. There are three primary methods of harvesting. The first is to simply let the coconuts drop to the ground before collection. More commonly “pole” and “climbing” methods are used. In the pole method, coconuts are removed from the tree using long poles, while in the climbing method, a skilled climber climbs the trunk of the tree and manually removes the coconuts.¹⁰

Citrus for export is primarily produced in South Africa where it is grown on relatively large commercial farms.¹¹ Citrus production is labor intensive. In South Africa, an estimated 100,000 people are employed in both orchards and packing houses.¹² Citrus production involves four steps: selecting a favorable rootstock to plant citrus trees, planting the tree on suitable soil, watering and fertilizing the trees, and protecting the trees from disease and weather. Sometimes companies will contract out the harvesting of the fruits to individuals. These individuals may then sub-contract out harvesting work, leaving the company with little visibility into the harvesting process.¹³ Within the fresh fruit market, exported fruits



usually pass through the packing house for washing, sorting, grading, and packing. The fruits are then sent off to the wholesale market where they are sold to consumers.¹⁴

Pineapples are also grown by smallholder farmers and large-scale commercial farms in Africa, although most of the pineapples for export are produced on the larger commercial farms, which employ a significant number of hired workers.¹⁵ Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are the top exporters. The pineapple production process generally includes fertilizing and pesticide spraying in addition to the usual labor-intensive agricultural activities, such as land preparation, planting, and harvesting. A large workforce is required to cultivate the fruit. After an extensive period of planting, protecting, and watering pineapples, they are harvested and packaged to be shipped to processing plants or to be sold as fresh fruit.¹⁶

Bananas exported from sub-Saharan Africa primarily come from large plantations in West Africa owned by multinational companies. West Africa primarily supplies bananas to French and UK retailers. The costs of production associated with bananas in West Africa are relatively high compared to Latin America due to inconsistent infrastructure and more variable climates. However, labor costs are noted to be lower.¹⁷ Banana production is labor intensive. Production includes “clearing of jungle growth, propping of the plants to counter bending from the weight of the growing fruit, and irrigation in some regions.” Pesticides are used heavily.¹⁸ Significant numbers of manual laborers are required for harvesting; banana bunches are very heavy and require more than one person to cut them down and carry them. ¹⁹

West and East Africa are both leading cashew producers. Côte d'Ivoire is the biggest producer by far, followed by Guinea Bissau and Nigeria.²⁰ Côte d'Ivoire alone was responsible for about 22 percent of global production in 2014.²¹ Cashews are an attractive cash crop for farmers, as they typically yield higher earnings than crops grown in similar regions such as cotton. Further, they are a year-round crop that can provide a steady income stream.²² There were approximately 250,000 small scale cashew farmers in Côte d'Ivoire in 2014.²³ However, 90 percent of processing happens outside the region, depriving growing countries of significant potential revenue.²⁴ Most processing takes place in India, Brazil, and Vietnam.²⁵

Key Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Fruit and Nut Production

According to the 2016 U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons report, “Forced labor is reportedly used in fruit and vegetable farms across South Africa,” and in Côte d'Ivoire “boys from other West African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Togo are found.... in forced labor in agriculture,” including on pineapple plantations.²⁶



Undesirable and Hazardous Work

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), agriculture is one of the most hazardous sectors in the world, accounting for approximately half of all fatal accidents. The ILO notes that rates of accidents have stayed relatively steady in agriculture, even as they have fallen in other fields. Further, because of the casual nature of much of the agricultural sector, actual rates are likely to be much higher due to a lack of monitoring and the fact that many accidents go unreported.²⁷ Although specific risks vary depending on the crop or sector, general risks include physically demanding work, exposure to extreme weather, carrying heavy loads, repetitive motions, use of dangerous tools and equipment, exposure to pesticides and agrochemicals, animal attacks, and working at heights. Heatstroke is a leading cause of farmworker death. Farmworkers are at great risk for heatstroke and other heat-related illnesses because of the amount of time they spend in the direct sun, particularly during warmer months. Heavy clothing required for some jobs can exacerbate the problem. Many workers do not have access to potable water and are not afforded breaks or shade.²⁸

In general, workers in fruit production can experience significant chemical and pesticide exposure, particularly when they are not provided with appropriate protective equipment.²⁹ Surveys of plantation workers in Ghana found 93 percent of workers surveyed experienced health problems due to chemical exposure, including chemical burns and respiratory problems.³⁰ A 2011 Human Rights Watch report found that workers in South African fruit production are frequently exposed to pesticides and have limited access to drinking water.³¹

Bananas specifically are a hazardous crop due to the high usage of pesticides. Banana production is pesticide intensive because of the mono-culture nature of production.³² The pesticide chlorpyrifos is reportedly widely used in West African cultivation of bananas.³³ It can cause nausea, lung congestion, chest pain, dizziness, respiratory paralysis, and death.³⁴ Children are especially sensitive to chlorpyrifos toxicity.³⁵

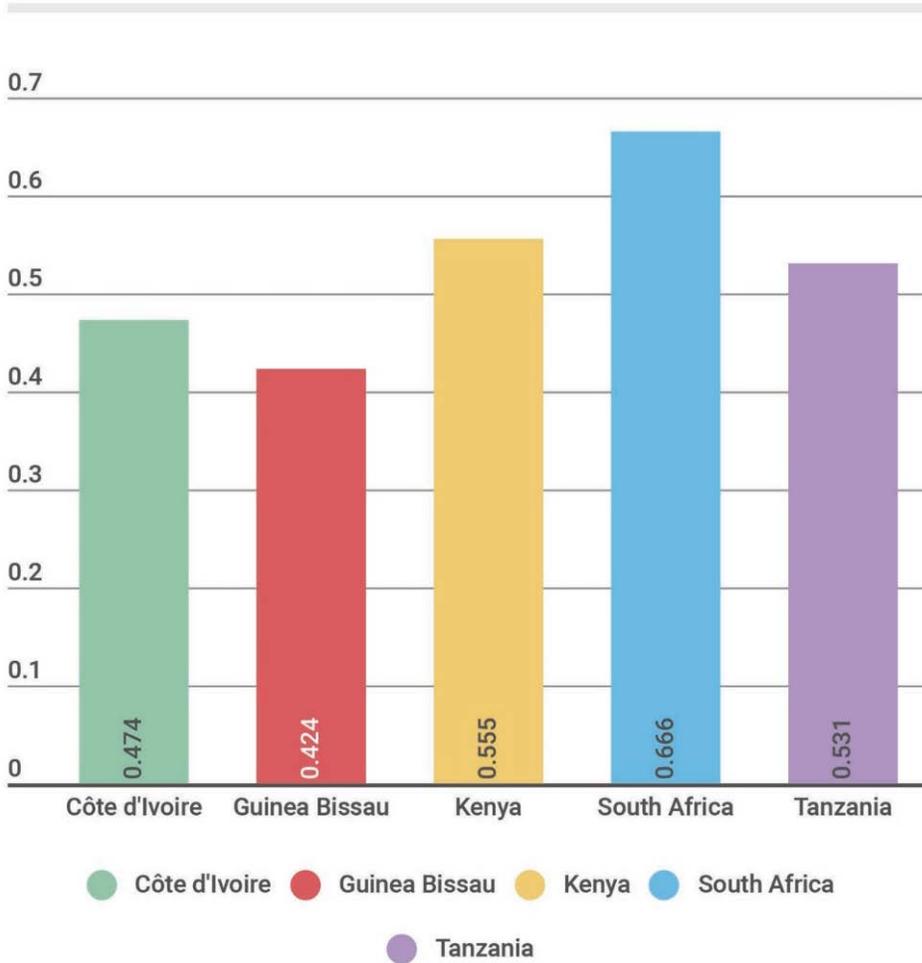
Pineapple harvesting is also grueling. Because pineapples are grown low to the ground, workers stand in awkward positions. Monoculture plantations provide no shade, so workers work in full sun.³⁶

Work in citrus production has some specific hazards: work is often conducted at high heights on top of ladders, workers may carry heavy bags, and they are at risk for musculoskeletal disorders.³⁷

Workers on banana and pineapple plantations in Ghana, and banana plantations in Cameroon, reportedly have sizable deductions taken from their wages for disciplinary purposes, sometimes leaving them indebted to their employer.³⁸ In some cases, particularly for casual workers engaged by labor brokers, deductions may be taken for not meeting harvest quotas.³⁹



United Nations Human Development Index Scores of Countries that Export Fruits and Nuts



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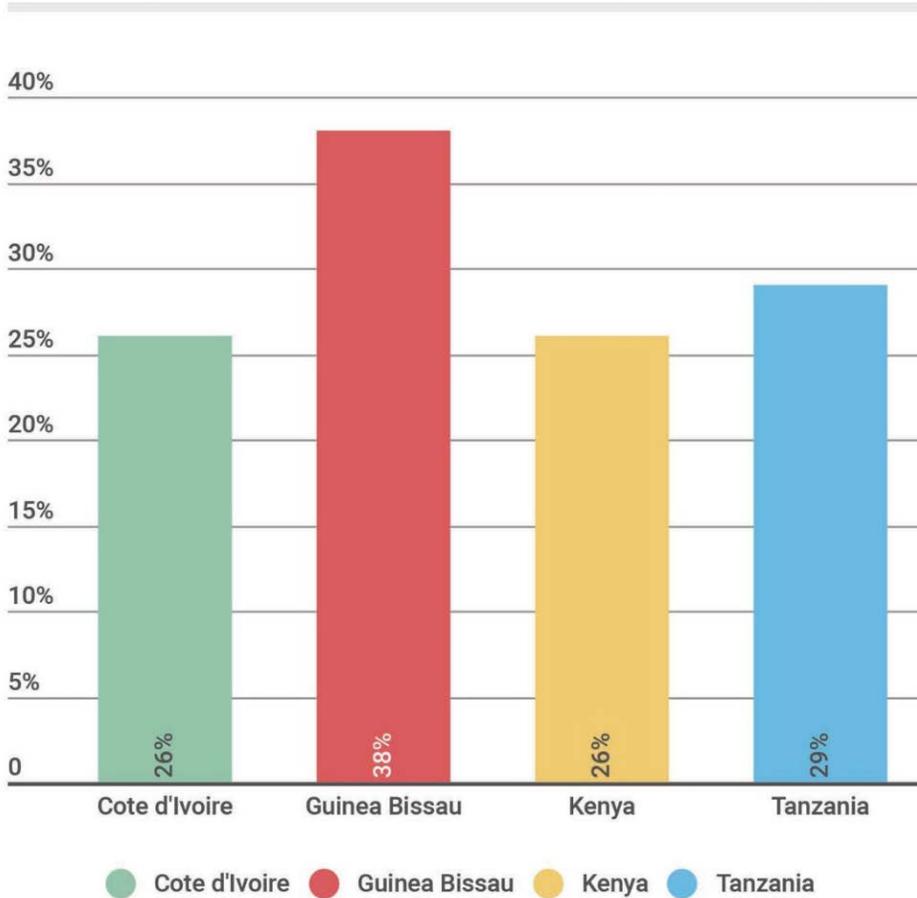
Vulnerable Workforce

Child Labor

Child labor has been noted in the production of cashews in Guinea.⁴¹ Forced child labor has been noted in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire, including pineapple plantations specifically.⁴²



Percent of Children Engaged in Child Labor in Countries that Export Fruits and Nuts



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Casual Workforce

In South African fruit production, the majority of seasonal or casual workers are women, while permanent workers, who receive greater protection, are more likely to be men.⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch found that most of these casual workers do not receive contracts.⁴⁵ Even workers who work year-round may be considered temporary or casual workers and denied benefits.⁴⁶

The largest banana plantation in Cameroon reportedly allows external labor providers – who provide their own hire crews of workers – to bid on work. The workers, known as “agency workers” do not receive contracts, may not join unions, and do not receive benefits made available to workers hired directly by the plantation.⁴⁷



Migrant Labor

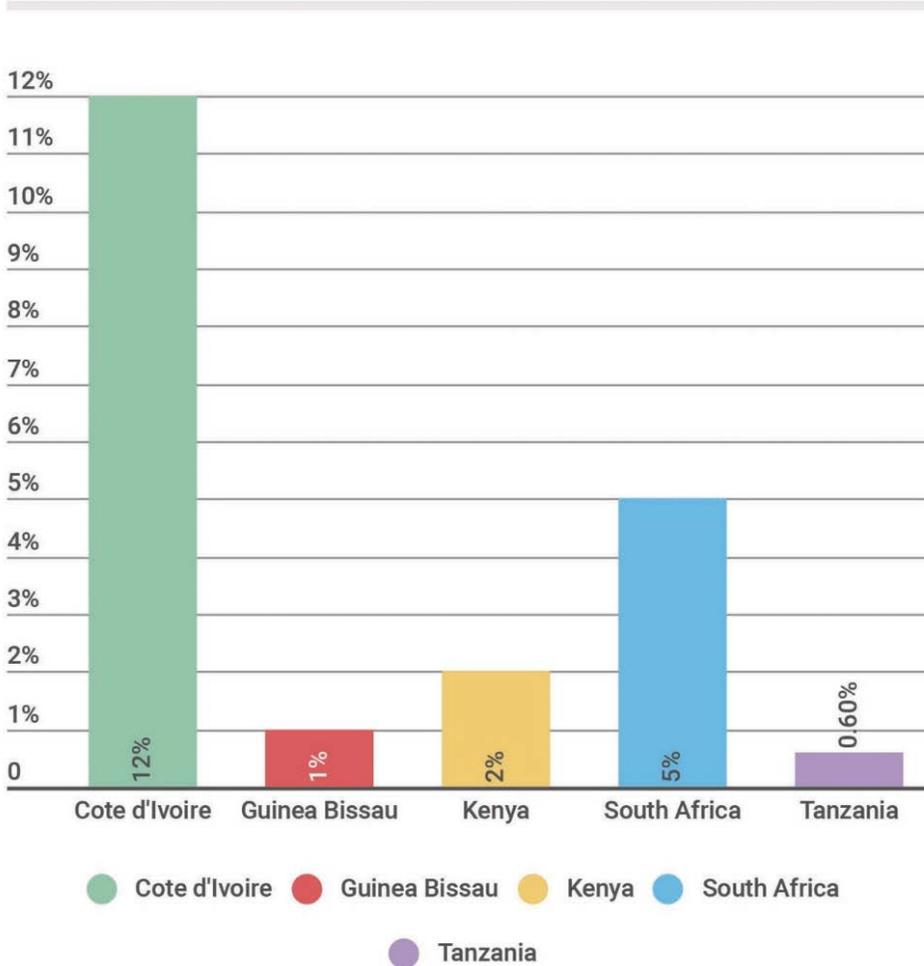
The migrant labor force in the fruit sector is reportedly growing in South Africa. These workers come from other regions in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Mozambique.⁴⁸ Some analysis notes that having migrant workers live in on-plantation housing is attractive to producers and/or farm owners because it improves worker attendance, particularly during the labor-intensive harvest season when inadequate labor can lead to rotted fruit and lost profits.⁴⁹ These migrants reportedly eventually bring their family members with them.⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch has reported that some of these migrants seek work directly, while others are recruited by third party labor brokers. These brokers may be individuals acting as informal recruiters or registered labor agencies.⁵¹

According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, migrant workers in the banana sector globally face a range of increased labor risk including temporary or casual contracts; minimized bargaining power; sub-standard accommodation; and limited access to health care.⁵² Previous research has estimated that about 30 percent of workers in the pineapple sector in Ghana are internal migrants.⁵³ Migrants from neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali reportedly work on banana plantations in Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigerians work on banana plantations in Cameroon.⁵⁴



Percentage of Migrant Population in Fruits and Nuts

Exporting countries



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Contextual Factors Contributing to Trafficking in Persons Vulnerability

Association with Large-Scale Land Acquisition/Displacement

There are reports that pineapple plantations in Ghana have been associated with land acquisition. In addition, demand for land has increased due to interest from foreign fruit companies increasing land prices and making land ownership more tenuous for local people.⁵⁶



Association with Environmental Degradation

Intensive production methods of fruit in Africa, particularly those that involve monocrop plantations, have been linked to water contamination, soil erosion, deforestation, flooding, and destruction of soil fertility.⁵⁷



Gift of the United States Government

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