



Statement by Mr Frederick S. M. Kawuma
Secretary General of the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO)
4th World Coffee Conference
Opening Ceremony
Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 7 March 2016

Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly overjoyed to join you all on this occasion when Africa hosts the World Coffee Conference for the first time. No other place in the world offers or tells a greater story than the cradle of mankind — here in East Africa — the origin of coffee. We are so glad to offer coffee as our gift to the rest of the world, and coffee is the world’s second largest traded commodity after oil, touching the lives of many people, the world over. In addition, it has great significance to the livelihoods of millions because of its impact on rural economies as well as urban entrepreneurial endeavours in the producing countries. The World Bank has stated that “agriculture has the potential to be a powerful job creator and major economic driver” and thus, given that Africa has 12 million households engaged in the coffee sector, attaining efficiency in Africa’s coffee value chain is critical. In March 2015, we set up the African Sustainable Coffee Partnership, aimed at addressing issues of sustainability in the African coffee industry, in pursuit of the above.

We note that there are formidable challenges regarding the future of Africa’s coffee production and that, therefore, the livelihoods of the producers and the sustainability of the sector are at stake. Our decisions and actions of today ought to assure better prospects for the future generations. This must be assured by addressing key issues such as climate change, the improvement of the efficiency of production systems in Africa, and the transformation of the entire value chain. Africa has been particularly impacted by the delay in its adoption of climate adaptation strategies.

The Luanda Declaration of 2015 highlighted the need to promote, strengthen and improve the participation and/or integration of women and youth in promoting a sustainable coffee value chain in Africa; to improve productivity, quality and value-addition for a sustainable and competitive African coffee industry; to promote the availability and adoption of improved

technologies to increase productivity and production; to undertake measures to identify and mitigate the effects of climate change, including fighting pests and diseases; to refocus coffee research and give special attention to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies; and to share climate smart best practices for adoption by Member States.

It was agreed in Luanda that an African Coffee & Climate Change Learning Platform needed to be established, and I dare say that the African coffee industry urgently needs this platform as a vehicle to bring the public sector and private sector to address issues of policy –under which IACO will bring together decision makers and practitioners from the African coffee producing countries. This will enable us to systematically explore objectives, approaches, experiences, results (and all other factors) in order to facilitate efficient and effective action. It will become an accelerator and will be instrumental in assuring a systematic and well-coordinated approach in the implementation of climate-smart coffee systems in Africa. We would like to invite partners who can contribute to the development and operations of this practically oriented Learning Platform.

Key to the support for the initiatives under the African Sustainable Coffee Partnership is the establishment of an African Coffee Facility, where IACO, in partnership with the African Development Bank, the ICO, IDH and other partners are working on a potential game changer in addressing issues of coffee sustainability in Africa. With technical support from the African Development Bank, a strategic workshop will take place in Abidjan on 11th and 12th April 2016, to work on the design of this Facility. We believe that this Facility will make a significant contribution to the transformation of the coffee value chain in Africa, and address the wide range of issues affecting the sustainability of the African coffee industry. All this constitutes IACO's part in the implementation of the Dakar Action Plan, by which AfDB aims to work with different partners to comprehensively address Africa's agricultural challenges.

Thank you all, and God bless your stay in Addis.