



**Speech delivered by H.E. Mr Iván Romero-Martínez,
Ambassador of Honduras to the United Kingdom
4th World Coffee Conference
Opening Ceremony
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 7 March 2016**

His Excellency the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Mr Hailemariam Dessalegn;

His Excellency the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr Erastus Mwencha;

His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr Teferra Derebew;

His Excellency the State Minister at the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Chairman of the Opening Ceremony of the 4th World Coffee Conference, Mr Wondirad Mandefro;

His Excellency the Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia, Ms Chantal Hebberecht;

The Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization, Mr Robério Oliveira Silva;

The Secretary General of the InterAfrican Coffee Organisation, Mr Fred Kawuma;

Ms Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi, who is here representing Dr Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, President of the African Development Bank;

The President of the Board of the Ethiopian Coffee Exporters Association Mr Hussein Agraw (ECEA)

Representatives of the diplomatic corps and international bodies here today on this important occasion;

Distinguished delegates of the ICO Member countries;

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Republic of Honduras thanks the Government of Ethiopia for its kind invitation to hold the 4th World Coffee Conference here in the beautiful city of Addis Ababa. It is my great honour to address you, the distinguished delegates to this event – an event which promises to be a huge success thanks to the select group of panellists and moderators invited here by the International Coffee Organization and the Government of Ethiopia to participate in this celebration of coffee.

I should also like to thank the Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization, Mr Robério Oliveira Silva, his staff and the National Coordinating Committee of the Government of Ethiopia, who have made this event possible. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) for providing us with these facilities in which to hold the Conference.

It is a huge privilege for me, as Chairperson of the International Coffee Council, and Ambassador of the Republic of Honduras to the United Kingdom, to address you during the opening ceremony of this, the 4th World Coffee Conference. This is an important occasion and all the more relevant because it is a celebration of coffee that is being hosted in the birthplace not only of coffee but of humanity itself.

I should mention too the importance of an event of this nature for the coffee sector. Assembled here in this building are important representatives of the public and private sectors who are interested in discussing the most important aspects of the global coffee industry surrounding the matter of ‘Nurturing Coffee Culture and Diversity’.

As the Chairperson of the International Coffee Council and a producer, I am here in Ethiopia representing the millions of men and women in around 70 nations whose dedication and commitment ensure that sun and water nurture the coffee we enjoy. The very elixir that enables us to begin each day filled with energy and enthusiasm, that warms us on a cold winter’s afternoon, and which is now facing major challenges. An event of this quality and calibre is the right place for international dialogue and cooperation to begin to be able to provide possible solutions to the millions of coffee growers. Matters of high importance such as business profitability, gender equality, access to technical assistance and finance, together with the threat of climate change, will inspire discussion over the next two days.

I invite you to celebrate the lively coffee culture here in Ethiopia and to use this very important forum to discuss and debate the matters on our agenda.

Welcome to the 4th World Coffee Conference.