

ED speech to welcome guests at Opening Cocktail of WCC

It gives me great pleasure to welcome so many distinguished guests and participants to the first International Coffee Organization World Coffee Conference.

We are delighted and honoured that so many delegates have registered for the conference.

There are two reasons for the exceptional interest in this conference: firstly, we wish to thank Dr. Jorge Cardenas for lending his immense prestige and giving his wholehearted support to the conference, and agreeing to be its Chairman. Thanks to him we have at the WCC the best-known and most influential figures in the world of coffee and elsewhere.

Dr. Cardenas and Don Diego Pizano have worked tirelessly, with imagination, insight, - and diplomatic skill - in designing the programme.

My own staff and the conference organizers from F.O. Licht have also worked very hard and I am personally grateful to all of them.

The second reason is the opportune timing for the conference. There is an imbalance of supply and demand and coffee growers are suffering from very low export prices for coffee. We need to examine ways to achieve greater stability, to improve quality and to increase demand.

Under the new International Coffee Agreement 2001, the ICO will be ready to respond to ideas that will result from this conference and play its full part in helping the world coffee community.

Thank you all for coming here and for participating in this important event.