



PRESS RELEASE

Celebrating women in coffee

London 8 March 2018 – To mark International Women’s Day, the International Coffee Organization (ICO) is celebrating the role of women in the coffee value chain.

Be it in Brazil or Burundi, Cameroon or Colombia, India or Indonesia, women are playing an increasingly active role in the international coffee industry. According to figures from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations¹, women represent 43% of the labour force in agriculture, playing important roles as farmers, labourers and entrepreneurs. Recent studies suggest that globally 25-35% of coffee farms are in fact headed by women.

It is important to note however, that this achievement on the farm is often combined with the fulfilment of the traditional role of the woman as mother and homemaker. In fact, women working in coffee face even greater barriers than their male counterparts. Female coffee producers have lower yields and lower income than their male peers, as a result of less access to land ownership, credit, markets, technology, seeds, water, information and education and other services. Such constraints are often due to gender norms and cultural barriers.

Closing this gender gap in agriculture, including coffee production, will not only contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality, but also bring with it wider economic benefits, improved welfare for rural communities as well as higher productivity to help to meet the growing demand for coffee.

“Clearly there is a need for better public policies and provision of services to help overcome the barriers women face across the coffee farming community”, according to Mr José Sette, Executive Director of the ICO.

¹ *The State of Food and Agriculture. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome, 2011.*

The ICO is the main intergovernmental organization for coffee, bringing together importing and exporting Governments and the private sector from across the world, to support the development of policies which strengthen the global coffee sector and promote its sustainable expansion for the betterment of all participants.

Mr Sette continues: “In celebration of women’s achievements in coffee and to encourage the wider participation of women in all aspects of the coffee industry, I am delighted to announce on International Women’s Day that this year the ICO will be focusing on ‘Women in coffee’ as the theme for International Coffee Day on 1 October, as well as in our wider work programme. It is in all our interests to empower women in the international coffee community. I look forward to working with our Members and partners to help make this happen”.

Notes to Editors

About the International Coffee Organization

The International Coffee Organization (ICO) is the main intergovernmental organization for coffee, bringing together exporting and importing Governments to tackle the challenges facing the world coffee sector through international cooperation. Our Members represent the Governments of 98% of the world’s coffee producing countries and 83% of consuming countries.

We endeavour to make a positive and practical contribution to the development of a sustainable world coffee sector and to reducing poverty through the following three Strategic Objectives:

- Delivering world-class data, analysis and information to the industry and policy-makers
- Providing a forum for dialogue between and within the public and private sectors
- Facilitating the development of projects and promotion programmes through public-private partnerships.

More information is available at: www.ico.org

About International Coffee Day

Celebrated every year on 1 October, International Coffee Day is a global commemoration of coffee’s journey from the farm to local shop. More information is available at: <https://internationalcoffeeday.org/>

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