SPEECH AT THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE COUNCIL, ICO ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2012

ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED
The Chairman, International Coffee Organisation

The Executive Director, International Coffee Association

Governments’ delegations from various countries

Executive Directors and Managing Directors from the Various Association and Coffee Institutions

Members of the Private Sector Consultative Board

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. **Self Introduction:**

I bring you Coffee fraternity greetings from Africa Coffee Producers. I stand here as an African Farmer. I head the Mzuzu Coffee Cooperatives from Malawi. Every day, I go out to the coffee field and spend day with my cooperative farmers. I do have first-hand information of the struggle and successes of African Farmers.

2. **AFCA in Brief**

The African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) is a regional non-profit, non-political, professional regional coffee association.

Mr. Chairman, AFCA was formed in the year 2000 and headquartered in Uganda. AFCA represents 11 Coffee growing countries of Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda (The East African States), Ethiopia in the North, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in the south and Democratic Republic of Congo in the West.

AFCA is a private sector led initiative, to promote the trading and accessibility of African Coffees. This was the original mission for AFCA and still remains one of the most important.

Strategic Plan
In its five years strategic plan, AFCA is committed to ensuring the African Coffees take their rightful place in Coffee production by ensuring that Africa is the leading origin of fine/speciality coffees. AFCA mission is to provide its membership highly valued services and build the linkage that drives the growth of African fine coffees. To achieve its mission, **AFCA has identified 4 strategic objectives namely:**

1. Develop and disseminate unique **field intelligence on high quality coffee** from Eastern Africa.
2. Provide numerous channels through which to **link coffee producers and buyers** for their mutual business advantage.
3. Provide relevant, accessible and unique **coffee market information** from production to sales
4. Develop industry leading **training** across the coffee value chain.

3. **Change of Name – EAFCA to AFCA and Core AFCA Activities**

In the 11th General Meeting held in Ethiopia on February 17th February, this Year, the AGM approved the Directors proposal to change EAFCA name to AFCA. Hence forth, AFCA will proceed to expand to other producing African countries.

   i) **Membership**

AFCA membership, spreads across the African Continent and the world, with Membership in African Countries (this form chapters). We also do have membership from the USA, European Union Countries, Japan, Korea, China, Australia, and other parts of the world.

We have 235 paid up members, the bulk of which are the big African cooperatives with an average of 3,000 farmers per cooperative. This has ensured high level participation of farmers in AFCA events and continues to enable AFCA leverage market situations, through effective representations.

   ii) **AFCA Quality Initiatives**

Quality fine coffees will continue to play a central role in AFCA exported coffees. To promote quality at Farm level, AFCA has initiated a project supported by CFC
and ICO aimed at expanding Coffee certification and Verification in 9 AFCA members country. Emphasis will be laid on good agricultural practice and Good management practices at the farm level.

iii) AFCA TOH AND PROMOTION OF FINE COFFEES

AFCA’s Taste of Harvest which is geared to Discovering and Promoting the Best Coffees of Eastern Africa, is held in each of the 9 countries, immediately after close of the main harvest season. The TOH aims at cupping all coffees grown in African countries at the farm gate and thereby collect valuable coffee quality characteristics, volumes produced and who is producing the same.

This information is availed to international buyers on a timely basis and it is hoped that buyers will review this information and base their buying decisions on this information. The TOH relies on an international panel of judges to cup and identify the best coffees in the harvest.

AFCA is therefore the knowledge hub of where to source the best quality coffee in the African region. This will both respond to member needs as well as bring real meaning to its identity as a ‘fine’ coffees association. The ToH achieves this through:

• Increase the market visibility of producing members through the publishing of member profiles enhanced with reliable quality-related data.

• Provide unique intelligence to buyer members about coffee from individual member countries.

• Reduce the transaction costs in sourcing African coffee by providing buyers easy access to ToH intelligence.

AFCA has committed to encourage members to focus on quality issues through promoting coffees that achieve high cupping scores in the TOH and help buyers and roasters easily identify high quality coffees in the Africa

iv) AFCC & E

The 10th AFCC & E, Uganda to be held on 14th to 16th February 2012, in the Pearl of Africa, Uganda.
We expect over 2000 coffee professionals to attend the 10th Conference. The conference is a great opportunity to make new business contacts, build new relationships and renew old relationships and enables stakeholders to share knowledge and ideas that are critical to the growth of the high quality coffees.

I take this opportunity to officially invite ALL participants to attend and participate in the various activities in the Conference. Indeed, it would be a platform to meet the producers from African Countries and be able to cup coffees from various regions in one room.

v) **Trade Information for AFCA Members.**

AFCA has made available trade related information of African producers to the international market. We will soon be publishing an online AFCA members, trade and coffee quality profiles database, in an effort to increase the market visibility of producing members.

It is hoped that this will reduce the transaction costs of sourcing Eastern African coffee by providing buyers easy access to ToH intelligence.

vi) **Engaging African Governments to pay attention to the Coffee Sector**

We note a lack of attention to the Coffee sectors by Governments, most countries with low national public investment (1%) and decreasing foreign aid on agriculture, Lack of subsidies for agricultural production and overall Low productivity and production in our farms. This is compounded by Climate change (change of weather patterns), leading to prolonged droughts with alternated Heavy rains (abnormal).

We wish to call on African Governments to pay more attention on coffee and develop a public private sector initiative to tackle the many problems facing Coffee production and marketing.

The Key areas for consideration include:

- Efforts to Strengthen support services / capacity-building within the sector are bearing fruits,
- application and strengthening of research in coffee genome and development of new varieties
• Implement adaptation and mitigation strategies to offset climate change and other adverse effects of weather
• Improve labor productivity especially harvesting techniques and improve post-harvest processing
• Increase yields per hectare and increase land area under coffee cultivation.
• Social sustainability: empower women & attract youth to the farms
• And implement value addition services in the coffee sector.
• Promotion of modern agriculture and continuous assistance to small-scale farmers
• Development of a system that attract the main actors in agriculture the private sectors and the farmers

Faced with a multitude of issues to handle, AFCA advocates for
• an increase in establishment of partnership between public and private sectors, at all levels,
• Improving the agricultural business environment
• Diversification of production areas and
• increasing acreage under coffee while still maintaining the high quality of the product.

vii) Project Activities

CFC/ICO/EU project, Building Capacity on Certification and Verification in AFCA Countries, has entered its next phase, and now embarks on the training of farmers in the 9 AFCA Members countries in 2012. The project has already trained 39 master trainers, 17 auditors and 30 trainers of trainers.

These experts are now in position to deliver the trainings to extension officers and the identified farmers group. Over the next two years, the first batch of certified coffees from the identified farmers group will be exported.

Viii) AFCA Other planned programs – short to Medium term.
EAFCIA plans the following strategic programs in the immediate and medium future;

i. African Coffee Centre of Excellency, envisioned to consolidate and expand trainings to the coffee value chain practitioners

ii. EAFCA is working in a phased manner to establish an African Coffee Exchange that will start with an African Coffee Trade database portal.

iii. An expanded Taste of the Harvest that showcase the best coffees from African Countries.

iv. Arrangement are at an advanced stage to set up an Web based Information system, that will house a Membership Trade Directory, Important Coffee data on coffee traders and key coffee information. We hope that these new products will not only benefit our membership greatly but further strengthen the fine coffees sector in Africa. We invite our members to provide up to date information on their organizations to update this IT portal.

4. **Regional Coffee outlook**

Overall, the AFCA members countries are expected to produce about 14.5 million bags of coffee in 2011/12 coffee year and export about 11.0 million of these. Coffee continues to play an important role in the economies of these countries. It is the highest contributor to GDP and foreign exchange in 4 countries (Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), and among the top three in Kenya and Tanzania. With current improved world coffee prices, coffee is on the way to reclaiming a bigger contribution to the economies.

**Pronouncements form African Producers**

a. Coffee blue prints and strategic plans that clearly chart a way forward of coffee with pronouncements of increasing production. This is a very significant development.

b. Seedlings multiplication schemes in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and DR Congo.

c. Improvement on productivity from current land and increasing the acreage under coffee, chiefly driven by business /commercial
motivation. This is especially strong from Multinational and local business community.

d. Greater cooperation between the governments and private sector in delivering solutions to domestic bottlenecks in coffee production and trade.

e. Development of disease resistant coffee varieties.

f. Involvement of youth in the coffee industry chiefly driven by new technological advance including the mobile phones technology.

5. **Conclusion:**

Africa is the place to be for the coffee fraternity. We boast of idle lands suitable for growing both Arabica coffees and Robusta of high grades, we have suitable climate and we have matured significantly in the political arena.

AFCA has positioned itself to be a strong voice for the coffee business and has proven that with good leadership the African business can grow strongly to ensure reliable supply of coffee and be the future for the additional coffees demanded a growing consumer market that is increasingly focusing on high quality coffee.

AFCA looks forward to increasing and deepening our relationship with ICO and we hope to increase the volume of coffees produced and efficiently exported from Africa.