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**Statement by Mr Faustin Lokinda,
Principal Adviser to the President of
the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
to the 116th Session of the International
Coffee Council on 9 March 2016**

His Excellency Mr Tefera Deribew, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

His Excellencies Ambassadors of Member countries of the ICO,

His Excellency Mr Iván Romero-Martínez, Chairperson of the International Coffee Council,

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

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and genuine pleasure for me to take the floor before this august gathering on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the occasion of the 116th Session of the ICO at Addis Ababa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to perform the pleasant duty of paying tribute to both the President of the Republic and the Government of Ethiopia for our warm welcome and the quality of the organization of these high-level meetings on coffee cultivation.

On taking the floor, I should explain that the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is unable to attend due to official duties.

In his absence, it is my pleasure to apprise you of activities to revive coffee cultivation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Led by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Joseph Kabila Kabange, the Government is pursuing with great determination the revival of coffee cultivation – which is a promising sector, and the Head of State is keen to point out they are working towards this goal.

Despite the fact that a few diseases are destroying plantations, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo encourages private initiatives under public-private partnerships with a special focus on the participation of women and young people in the coffee industry's chain of production.

It should be noted that, hitherto, the agricultural policy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has certainly been to provide encouragement to smallholders in rural households in the form of training and support from the National Coffee Office (ONC), which has already commenced working towards this goal. The aim is to revive coffee growing from production to marketing, taking in the entire value chain.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished participants,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo avails itself of this opportunity to request from the International Coffee Organization, or ICO, substantial support for coffee cultivation to establish nursery plantations and make industrial coffee roasters both more numerous and more modern with a view to increasing local consumption.

This request is important if the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to be in a position to sustain its plan to revive coffee cultivation: not only is coffee a promising segment of the agriculture sector, it also – primarily – drives growth in GDP and foreign exchange holdings in producer countries because it generates wealth in rural areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished participants,

The revival of coffee cultivation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can also be viewed in relation to climate change: it can be regarded as an adjustment and mitigation measure, an alternative activity, because coffee has also been identified as a genuine carbon sink.

This is an opportunity to reaffirm the political will of the Congolese Government of Kinshasa in its fundraising campaign to support agronomic research into coffee cultivation.

I cannot conclude without reiterating the support and determination of the Head of State to revive coffee cultivation.

Before closing, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I must extend our thanks to the Council and the Office of the Executive Director of the ICO on the accession of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a fully paid-up Member country.

Thank you.