



**INTERNATIONAL
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**Statement sent by H.E. Mr Sani Redi Ahmed,
Director General of the Ethiopia Coffee & Tea
Development and Marketing Authority of the
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the
117th Session of the International Coffee Council
on 22 September 2016**

Chairman of the Council, H.E. Mr Iván Romero-Martínez,
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Executive Director, Mr Robério Oliveira Silva,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address a few words to ICO Members, observers and participants. I would like to express my gratitude together with that of my country Ethiopia, for your endorsement and support for our bid to host the 4th World Coffee Conference and the 116th Session of the International Coffee Council.

My Government and I are pleased that the successful 4th World Coffee Conference and the 116th Session of the International Coffee Council together with the meetings of the other ICO bodies, were all held in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, during the week of 7 March 2016. Thanks to the excellent turnout and broad representation, the Government and people of Ethiopia were fully aware of the importance of the Conference and the Council. These events brought together high-level government officials, senior members of the private sector, specialists and experts in the industry to identify and address matters of common concern for our valued commodity, coffee.

As you all know, the 4th World Coffee Conference was fully backed and indeed opened by our Prime Minister, H.E. Mr Hailemariam Dessalegn. Mr Tefera Derebew, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Mr Yacob Yalla, Minister of Trade, were also fully supportive of the Conference. Such high-level backing indicates our trust and commitment to working with the ICO.

The Ethiopian Government, coffee producers, the exporters' association and society in general recognised that our Organization and its staff were given unwavering support in hosting the Conference and the 116th Session of the International Coffee Council. Such support enabled us to create a good opportunity for our guests to visit the birthplace and origin of Arabica Coffee, experience our culture of hospitality and our coffee.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of coffee in Ethiopia cannot be understated. More than 20 million family members and stakeholders grow the crop for a living; and hundreds of thousands of traders, processors and exporters bring the coffee to both the domestic and export markets. Coffee accounts for up to 30% of export earnings. It also enjoys very strong local consumption where about 50% of total production is consumed locally at levels which are comparable to the leading coffee consuming countries.

Coffee continues to play a very important role in the economy of Ethiopia and the Government has recently taken steps to focus in a more holistic way on all aspects of coffee from production to marketing by establishing the Coffee and Tea Development and Marketing Authority which has complete independence and oversight over coffee in Ethiopia. The authority is mandated to attain the goals laid out in the country's growth and transformation plan by enabling farmers to earn better prices, increasing coffee growing land and increasing productivity. From the marketing development side, the Authority ensures a modern, transparent and fair marketing environment as well as playing a regulatory role. With this, I feel that our Government's commitment to coffee is strengthened, highlighting the importance of coffee to the livelihood of our people and to our economy.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We therefore pledge our continued commitment to doing our part as one of the top producers in the world. With Ethiopia's potential for far greater growth in production we hope to continue to increase supply to the world market of our high value Arabica beans and to be a strong partner in the community of coffee producers.

Once again, we would like to thank and express our appreciation to all ICO Members and the staff of the Secretariat for their unwavering support. We look forward to fully engaging in supporting the Organization, and the coffee industry in general, in order to maximize the benefits of coffee for all producers and consumers.

Thank you very much.