



**STATEMENT BY MR JOSÉ SETTE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION
120TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE COUNCIL
28 AND 29 SEPTEMBER 2017, YAMOOUSSOUKRO, CÔTE D'IVOIRE
OPENING CEREMONY**

H.E. Souleymane Diarrassouba, Minister of Commerce, Handicraft and Small and Medium Enterprises;

Mr Kouakou Kouadio Jean, Mayor of Yamoussoukro;

Dear delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Coffee Organization, I would like to express our pleasure to be here in Yamoussoukro, the political and administrative capital of Côte d'Ivoire. The location of our meeting is highly appropriate because Yamoussoukro is the birthplace of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the founder of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, who was known as the "Sage de l'Afrique" or Wise Man of Africa and was a great believer in the power of agricultural commodities, especially coffee and cocoa, to overcome poverty. This is the first ICO meeting to be held in this country since 1969, so a return was long overdue. We thank the Ivorian authorities for making possible this 120th Session of the International Coffee Council in this beautiful and hospitable country. We are especially thankful to Minister Diarrassouba, who made this event possible. Through you, Your Excellency, I would like to thank the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and His Excellency President Allasane Ouattara. It is also gratifying to see the presence of many Ivorians who have been involved, in the present and in the past, with the ICO.

The long and close relationship between our Organization and Côte d'Ivoire continues until today. We are fortunate that this Session of the International Coffee Council is presided by an Ivorian, M. Aly Touré. I would like to extend special thanks to the members of the Organizing Committee for their tireless efforts in turning Yamoussoukro into the world capital of coffee for this week.

I believe it is important to hold meetings outside our headquarters in London in order to bring the Organization nearer to its Members and to give delegates the opportunity to see for themselves the conditions of coffee exporting and importing countries all over the world. I hope that more Members will see fit to follow the example presented by Côte d'Ivoire in the future.

Today and tomorrow, delegates will consider significant issues related to the future direction of our Organization, building on the work of the advisory bodies earlier this week. We could not ask for a better setting for these important tasks.

Vive la Côte d'Ivoire!