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**Statement by the representative of the  
Ministry of Agricultural Development of Nepal,  
to the 119<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Coffee  
Council, on 17 March 2017**

Chairperson of the Council,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, I feel highly honoured to be here to address the March gathering of the 119<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Coffee Organization. I would like to thank you for inviting us as Nepalese delegates and also as a new Member of the Organization.

Over the past few years, Nepal has been participating in the ICO Council Sessions as an observer which clearly demonstrates Nepal's commitment and willingness to become a Member of the ICO. The Parliament of Nepal ratified the membership of our country on 25 September 2016, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed the instrument of accession to the ICO on 22 February 2017. With these landmark events and dates for the history of coffee in Nepal, we feel privileged to become a full Member of this esteemed Organization.

As you may know, Nepal is a latecomer in coffee cultivation, and we still have a small production volume although the mid-hills of the country provide an excellent climate and favourable agricultural conditions to grow high-quality organic Arabica coffee. The potential is enormous, having about one million hectares of land feasible for coffee cultivation.

However, Nepal is not free from challenges for the promotion of coffee along the value chain. One of the major challenges we face presently is the supply-side constraints in relation to the high demand we observe. We want to expand the coffee cultivation area in hitherto areas through massive extension and by employing proven technologies amongst the smallholders.

Similarly, Nepal is not left untouched by climate change phenomena which may reduce the acreage and also pose risks to the lower range of foothills with the outbreak of pests and diseases. For market promotion, Nepal focuses on promoting smallholders' cooperative and fairtrade market linkages with organic production. At present, research and development in coffee is rather weak for which Nepal would like to join hands with the international community. Nepal aims to be prominent as a high-quality gourmet coffee producing country – that carries an image of coffee from the Himalayas.

On the policy front, Nepal has formulated a coffee policy and periodic revisions are made to address the changes and dynamics in the subsector. Recently the Government of Nepal has launched a long-term Agricultural Development Strategy and a Nepal Trade Integration Strategy, both of these overarching policy documents have accorded top priority for the development of coffee as an export commodity which will contribute to the national economy as well as a household economy of those involved in the value chain. However, we alone may not be able to materialise this grand and noble vision of the Government of Nepal. In this respect, we would like to join hands with the ICO and its Member countries to exchange ideas and cooperation for the development of coffee for the greater benefit of all.

The Government of Nepal would like to thank the ICO for giving us the opportunity to be part of this Organization. We as a country will be delighted to work as a team to grow this industry.

Personally, I am delighted to be a new Member of this prestigious Organization. I would like to thank all of you for your support. Lastly, I would like to welcome you all to visit Nepal.

Thank you.