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**Statement by the newly appointed
Executive Director, Mr José Dauster Sette,
to the 119th Session of the International
Coffee Council on 17 March 2017**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you. I do not have any prepared remarks, since I did not want to prejudge the outcome of the selection process. However, I did put down a few talking points that I would like to share with you.

When I first stepped into this room in 1979 I could not foresee that I would come back here, many years later when it would be used for the last time, to be elected as Executive Director. This is a great honour for me.

I would like to start with a vote of thanks to all those who helped bring me here. I cannot name all of them in person, but I will single out one to represent all of these people. He happens to be my uncle, Jorio Dauster, who was a Brazilian delegate to the ICO in the 1980s. He is an excellent negotiator, a mesmerising orator, and also a brilliant intellectual, being the translator into Portuguese of eminent writers such as J. D. Salinger, Vladimir Nabokov and Ian McEwan. He is responsible for my entering into the world of coffee and has been my mentor for many years. If I am here today, it is because of him.

Moving on, I know that the ICO needs urgent attention, and I would like to start my work as soon as possible. However, I still have some obligations to the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) and owe a huge debt of gratitude to all ICAC Members. So, I want to assure a smooth transition there before joining you. I tendered my resignation at the ICAC at the end of January, and my notice ends at the end of April. Therefore, I will take office here at the beginning of May and join you then. But rest assured that, even before taking office, I will work double shifts in order to be prepared to hit the ground running. Due to geographical proximity, Chair, I think I will start already by visiting you during this period. I look forward to that.

Despite my joy at being selected as Executive Director, I did take note of what I saw this week and the concerns raised by many of you about the state of the ICO. Many questions about inclusiveness of the Organization have been raised. To quote from one of my son's favourite works of fiction: "With great power, comes great responsibility". From this moment on, I am no longer the candidate of Brazil, but I am the servant of all Members. Ranging in alphabetical order from Angola to Zimbabwe, but since Zimbabwe is not present, let me say to Vietnam, I am at your service.

The ICO must be a modern international commodity body adapting to a changing world, while maintaining its relevancy. It must be a house of inclusiveness and representativeness guided by a spirit which I treasure, of working from the bottom up and not from the top down.

I would like to specially thank the contributions of all the candidates for the position of Executive Director who really enriched the debate. I could not fail to make a special mention of Rodolfo Trampe, whom I came to respect and admire during my year as Executive Director *ad interim*. To this day, we still exchange greetings once a year, since we share the same birth date. I pledge to study closely the ideas of all candidates and take them on board as part of our work going forward.

Once appointed, I intend to begin an ample process of consultation with Members. I think that the Producers' Forum in Colombia in July will be a special opportunity to gather, not all of you, but certainly the producing Members and discuss the way forward together. But I will also work closely with importing Members, starting with the USA, due to my current residence there, and followed by the European Union, Switzerland and others at a later date. So, I will be reaching out to all of you in the near future.

I also take note of the desire to have a staff that, in addition to having a high level of competence, is representative in geographical terms of our membership. And I want to develop with you measurable objectives for our Organization so that we know exactly how we are performing in the execution of all our work.

Now, while recognising all these important challenges we face, I want to end on a note of optimism. The image of agricultural commodities is under attack from many sides. Sugar and orange juice are considered causes of obesity; cotton, in which I am involved, is targeted as a water-thirsty crop, and many think it is not environmentally friendly; cocoa is under attack because of its social sustainability. Although coffee is not immune from criticism, it is in a comparatively privileged position. This is our greatest asset, our good name and our reputation. We must work hard to maintain it that way. We must never forget that coffee is a powerful instrument for social good. We owe it to the more than 100 million people whose livelihood depends on coffee to work together in this Organization to give them a better future.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you.