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**Statement by the Honourable Minister of  
State of the Federal Ministry of Industry,  
Trade and Investment of Nigeria,  
Ms Aisha Abubakar, to the 122<sup>nd</sup> Session  
of the International Coffee Council on  
20 September, 2018**

Excellences,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Observers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be at the 122<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting of the ICO for the first time since my assumption in office. Over the last few years, the Government of Nigeria has intensified efforts toward diversifying the economy from its current dependence on crude oil owing to the unstable world crude oil prices. It became imperative for my Ministry to adopt new strategies in making informed policies to further develop and transform the non-oil sub-sector, particularly, the Agricultural Commodities. For instance, the Ministry is working towards the development of the commodity in collaboration with the private sector and sensitization campaign to improve domestic consumption of coffee.

2. Pursuant to this new development, one of the commodities that Nigeria is developing in Nigeria's commodity basket, as an alternative source of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings is coffee. Before the discovery of crude oil and days immediately after independence, Coffee was one of Nigeria's major foreign exchange earner and quite a large number of families across the production areas benefited from the proceeds of this Commodity.

3. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, out of the 36 States in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, 22 States grow coffee and all others are directly or indirectly involved in the Coffee value chain and responsible for the generation of over 1 million jobs. These States are spread across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

4. Nigeria has been a member of the ICO since inception and had participated effectively in the activities of the organization. In this regard, Nigeria participated in the negotiation and drafting of the (ICA) 2007 which was eventually opened for Signature by member Countries in March, 2008. My Ministry, being the focal Ministry for International Commodity Organizations that Nigeria belongs, signed the ICA 2007 on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2008 on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In an effort to ratify the Agreement my Ministry made a memorandum to apprise the Nigeria Federal Executive Council, on the status of Nigeria's membership of the ICO, seeking approval for Nigeria's ratification of the Agreement in line with procedure for membership of the ICO in document ED 2033/08 Rev. 11.

5. I am very optimistic that given our commitment and the renewed efforts by the Nigeria's present administration, approval for the ratification of her membership of this organization would soon be completed. In this regard, I wish to reaffirm Nigeria's continuous cooperation and support to this organization. However, I would like to express Nigeria's discomfort with OBSERVER STATUS placed on her not for non-payment of membership contribution (Nigeria has a credit balance of payment with the ICO) but for a process to which so much effort was being made especially as such decision comes through legislation which takes a long time. In addition, this will serve as a motivation for further Government commitment to developing policies for the betterment of coffee sector stakeholders. Therefore, I humbly appeal to this distinguished Council for reconsideration of that status even as a WAIVER which I believe would no doubt fast-track the ratification process. I want to assure you that if granted, I will use my position as Honourable Minister to achieve this as soon as possible. We appreciate the understanding and patience of the ICO in this regard.

6. Thank you and God bless