



**INTERNATIONAL
COFFEE
ORGANIZATION**

ICC 125-8

25 September 2019
Original: English

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International Coffee Council
125th Session
23 – 27 September 2019
London, United Kingdom

**Statement by the Chair of
the International Coffee Council,
for the opening ceremony of the
125th Session of the Council**

His Excellency Mr Pablo Anliker – Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador,

His Excellency Mr Oumer Hussien, Minister of Agriculture of Ethiopia,

Mr José Sette, Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization,

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Twelve months ago, I had the honour to be elected as the 66th Chair of the International Coffee Council and the third female Chair.

Twelve months ago, as Members of the International Coffee Council we also came together to ratify Resolution 465 on coffee price levels. This declaration mandated the International Coffee Organization to take immediate actions in engaging all links of the coffee value chain and the international community to address the impact of low coffee prices on the livelihoods of coffee farmers and their families, and on the long-term sustainability of the coffee sector.

Twelve months ago, we set the Executive Director and his team this challenge and I hope you will all agree with me that the Organization has taken on this task with gusto, working tirelessly to fulfil this mandate: Through mobilizing all stakeholders to identify solutions in a spirit of shared values and responsibility in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

So far this sector dialogue has manifested in five successful consultative events, including two at the United Nations in New York in which I had the pleasure to participate. This event provided a valuable opportunity to bring the coffee sector to the attention of the UN and its 193 countries.

This dialogue will now continue in the first CEO and Global Leaders Forum of the coffee sector, which will start in less than an hour from now. It is a testament to the Organization's commitment to act on Members' wishes that the sector dialogue has already involved over 80 technical experts and over 2,000 participants, in addition to the impressive line-up of high-level panellists in today's CEO and Global Leaders Forum. Participants today represent exporting and importing governments, international institutions, roasters and traders.

I'm pleased to tell you that the ICO has generated considerable financial support from private sector actors and governments for this process.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Executive Director and his team for their sterling efforts. The work continues... and for the Organization to act on Members' wishes to support a sustainable coffee sector, we all need to play our part.

Following the CEO Forum, it is envisaged that these decisions will form a Declaration of Intent and a Roadmap with concrete actions to be considered by Council later this week. This makes me even more honoured to chair the 125th Session of the International Coffee Council this week and to help ensure that we reach a successful outcome and agree on long-term and transformational solutions. Solutions that can be implemented jointly to address price levels and volatility.

In this room we have over 40 countries representing producing and consuming countries across the world, including my own country Switzerland. In this wider context, I firmly believe that the International Coffee Organization, bringing together importing and exporting countries, but also the private sector, academia and international organizations is a unique and valuable forum for the international coffee community that should be not be underestimated. This is why over 50 years ago it was recognized there was a need for such a unique forum to exist, bringing together the global coffee community.

I am pleased that the ICO Secretariat will be sharing with us the active steps they have been taking and are taking to address the challenge set by us Members in Resolution 465. However, in addition to supporting a positive endorsement by Council of the Forum's Declaration, I hope I can be so bold in my capacity as Chair of Council to set us another challenge this week.

You will have seen the video playing on the screen as we came in. If you haven't seen it already, this is the anthem for this year's International Coffee Day campaign – an initiative proposed by the Private Sector Consultative Board and endorsed by Council in 2015. Along with engaging with the roasting sector, Resolution 465 called on the Organization to sensitize consumers to the reality of coffee.

This video is not only a celebration but a perfect illustration of what goes into making our favourite cup of coffee. It is a process that relies on the dedication and hard work of millions of coffee farmers across the globe. The campaign also includes the #coffeepledge to engage consumers and all actors in support of a fair, living income for coffee farmers. Currently I think we're at 4,000, so our challenge this week is also to help give the ICO the support it needs in engaging with multilateral entities, such as the G-7, G-20 and the General Assembly of the United Nations, to effect change.

Each one of us here today should ask ourselves, what we are doing to promote International Coffee Day? Have you signed the coffeepledge? Have you shared the coffeepledge? All you need to do is to log on to the International Coffee Day website (www.Internationalcoffeeday.org, *on screen*) and click on the pledge button. We will keep a tally and update you during the week. I invite you to get all your people to sign the #coffeepledge in your country so we can see what number we reach by the end of the week.

In preparing my speech today I came across a Swiss proverb which in English means: "Words are dwarfs, deeds are giants". Endorsing the words in Resolution 465 is not enough, we all have duty to support the ICO so it can be a giant who is heard in the international community, and that coffee can continue to be a source of living income and employment for smallholder farmers and enjoyment of millions of consumers across the world.

The Embassy of Switzerland in London, for example, instigated a series of informal discussions with its fellow ICO Members to explore these very issues. We see this as just one additional forum to come together to consider possible solutions, and I am grateful for the contribution of a large number of ICO members to this dialogue.

During this process we have heard a lot of differing views. Yes, sitting here today we may have different interests but we all share a common cause. That is also why industry is here today to join forces to find solutions.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as a global coffee community, we have an extremely important responsibility to work together in a spirit of positive cooperation – now more than ever. And the need for action is now.

As Members of the ICO we all have a duty to ensure the fulfilment of the mandate of the International Coffee Agreement to foster the sustainable development of the coffee sector. We must support the ICO in its role to administer the Agreement, not only for the ever-increasing number of consumers across the world, but most importantly the millions of

people whose livelihoods directly depend on coffee. We will be discussing later this week the review of the current Agreement, and I am pleased that feedback from Members overwhelmingly supports the continuation of the Agreement.

In closing, I wanted to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to hold this special role as Chair of the International Coffee Council and for your trust in me.

I look forward to a constructive week of discussion and deliberation during our time in London. Take the opportunity to talk with each other during the week and take back to your capitals the need to support our collective endeavours.

The Organization needs you, we need each other, but most importantly coffee needs us all.

Thank you