



**Speech of the Executive Director
delivered at the Curtain Raiser of the
5th World Coffee Conference
New Delhi, India**

1. The Executive Director presents his compliments, and for the information of Members, observers and members of the Private Sector Consultative Board, attaches a copy of his speech delivered at the Curtain Raiser of the 5th World Coffee Conference which took place on Tuesday, 15 October 2019, in New Delhi, India.
2. Attended by 150 dignitaries from across 23 countries, the ICO's Executive Director was joined on the podium by H.E. Shri Piyush Goyal – the Honourable Minister for Commerce and Industry and Railways, H.E. Shri Jagadish Shettar – Honourable Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries from the Government of Karnataka, Shri Anup Wadhawan – Commerce Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Shri Srivatsa Krishna – Secretary of the Coffee Board of India, and Shri Anil Kumar Bhandari – President of the India Coffee Trust.
3. Mr Sette remarked in his speech that India was eminently qualified to host the 5th World Coffee Conference at such a crucial time for the coffee sector due to the continued downward trend in coffee prices and the severe economic and social consequences for producing countries. With the theme of 'Sustainability through Consumption', Asia in general and India, in particular, were key markets for world coffee consumption. The Conference would discuss how to tackle the challenges faced by the world coffee sector, and host the second CEO and Global Leaders Forum, bringing together high-level executives from the private sector to discuss concrete actions for the betterment of all coffee stakeholders.
4. The 5th World Coffee Conference and the 127th Session of the International Coffee Council will take place from 7-12 September 2020 in Bengaluru, India. More information, including how to register, is available at: www.wcc2020.com

**SPEECH OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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5TH WORLD COFFEE CONFERENCE
NEW DELHI, INDIA**

Shri Piyush Goyal, Honorable Minister for Commerce and Industry and Railways,

Shri Jagadish Shettar, Honorable Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries,
Government of Karnataka,

Shri Anup Wadhawan, Commerce Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce,

Shri Anil Kumar Bhandari, President of the India Coffee Trust,

In the name of the Members of the International Coffee Organization, I am delighted to be here with you today for the launch ceremony of the 5th World Coffee Conference, which will be held in Bangalore from September 7 to 9 next year. For those who are not aware, the World Coffee Conference is the most important event on the ICO's calendar and is held at intervals of five years. This is the time when the ICO gathers together leading experts from all over the world to discuss the most important challenges facing coffee.

The first edition of this prestigious event was held at the seat of the ICO in London. Since then, conferences have been held in Brazil, Guatemala and Ethiopia. You will note that these three host countries represent the important coffee-growing regions of South and Central America and Africa. So, the World Coffee Conference has finally come to India, which represents Asia.

Why is Asia important for coffee? Although coffee has been produced in the region for many centuries, in the past three decades the Asian share of world coffee production has grown from 16% to 32%, mostly as a result of the emergence of Vietnam as a leading coffee producer, but also due to increases in other countries, including India. Just as, if not even more, importantly, Asia represents the future of world coffee consumption. While global coffee consumption is growing at just over 2%, demand in South and East Asia is growing at over 5%. The prospects are particularly promising in India and China, with their large populations and traditional tea-drinking cultures that are increasingly attracted by coffee.

And why was India awarded this highly coveted event? When deciding on the host of the 5th World Coffee Conference, ICO Members took into consideration factors such as India's importance in coffee. Coffee arrived in India more than 150 years ago. Today, India is the world's seventh largest coffee producer, grows both of the commercially important varieties of coffee – Arabica and Robusta –. Coffee provides employment to hundreds of thousands of rural workers and the country is a fast-growing consuming market.

Furthermore, India has always taken an active role in our Organization. Your country was a founding member of the ICO, having joined us in 1963. Indians have occupied the post of Chair of the International Coffee Council, the highest post to which a delegate to the ICO can aspire, on three occasions, in the person of Lakshmi Venkatachalam, G.V. Krishna Rau and Jawaid Akhtar. I had the pleasure to know all three and can personally attest to their competence and to their important contributions to the work of the ICO. Indian representatives have also occupied other important posts on various committees and other ICO advisory bodies. The most recent example of this long and rich tradition is Mr Anil Bhandari, who has occupied the Chair of the Private Sector Consultative Board, our all-important link with the private sector, for the last two years.

So, India is eminently qualified to host this conference.

The 5th World Coffee Conference will be held at a critical time for this important commodity. Coffee prices have experienced a continued downward trend since 2016, dropping 30% below the average of the last ten years. Coffee growers worldwide are struggling to cover their operating expenses, while input, compliance and transaction costs continue to rise. Consequently, farm incomes have declined and the livelihoods of many coffee-producing households, the majority of which were led by smallholders in low- and middle-income countries, are increasingly at risk. The slump in coffee prices has severe economic and social consequences for producing countries.

The main cause of the fall in prices is excess production. One of the most important ways in which to offset this production surplus is by increasing consumption. This is why the theme of the Conference, “Sustainability through Consumption”, is so significant, since Asia in general and India in particular are key markets for world coffee consumption.

The Conference will also discuss other ways in which to tackle the challenges faced by the world coffee sector. In particular, I would like to highlight that it will include the second edition of the ICO’s CEO and Global Leaders Forum, which will bring together high-level executives from the private sector to discuss concrete actions for the betterment of all coffee stakeholders.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support provided by the ICO’s Indian partners in the organization of this event. I thank the Ministry of Commerce, the Coffee Board of India, the Government of Karnataka and the India Coffee Trust for their backing, which I am sure will result in a most successful event. I look forward to seeing all of you, and many more, next September in Bengaluru.