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**Statement by the Executive Director of
the International Coffee Organization
made at the opening ceremony of the
140th Session of the Council**

Your Excellency, President Xiomara Castro.

Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates of the International Coffee Organization, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

It is truly an honour to find myself once again here in Honduras. Perhaps it is because I am also Latina, but each time I visit this beautiful country, I am deeply moved by the warmth of its people and a welcome so genuine that it always makes me feel at home.

First of all, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the Government of Honduras for generously offering to host this historic Session of the International Coffee Council. This is a milestone for all of us gathered here today.

Not only because it is the first time our Council has met on Honduran soil, but also because we do so under the leadership of a woman – the first to lead this nation.

As a woman, and as the first female Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization, it is a great personal and professional honour for me to share this moment with President Xiomara Castro.

Madam President, allow me to extend my warmest congratulations on your visionary leadership over the past few years. The achievements reached under your mandate, and the recognition you have received not only within your country but also internationally, speak for themselves.

Among them, the recent Pioneers in Women's Political Leadership Award, received in Montenegro just a few weeks ago, is a powerful acknowledgment of your historic role in advancing the rights and leadership of Honduran women.

The commitment of Honduras and President Xiomara Castro to the coffee sector cannot be denied. Since joining the ICO as a Member in 1967, Honduras has demonstrated active and consistent participation.

And while I was not the Executive Director at the time, I am proud to recall that during her first international visit as First Lady, President Castro chose to visit the International Coffee Organization in London.

This is a testament to a profound and long-lasting relationship, which I hope will continue going from strength to strength for many years to come.

May Honduras, the coffee-producing countries of the region, and all ICO Members continue working together to build a bright, inclusive, and sustainable future for the global coffee sector.

Before concluding, I wish to thank all those who have made this extraordinary week of events possible.

My heartfelt thanks to the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock, the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Chamber of Commerce, and all the Honduran authorities that have devoted their time, energy, and passion to make us feel truly welcome.

On behalf of the International Coffee Organization, thank you very much for your generous hospitality and for receiving us with such warmth here in Honduras.

Thank you very much.