



INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION
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Gabon – national coffee policy

Background

The attached document outlines the changes in the national coffee policy of Gabon.

Action

The Council is invited to take note of this document.

**STATEMENT BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CAISTAB
TO THE 110TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE COUNCIL**

THE CHANGING NATIONAL COFFEE POLICY IN GABON

Your Excellency the Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization,

Distinguished Delegates from Member countries of the International Coffee Organization,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the large Coffee family,

I am very honored to be given the opportunity to present to you the recent developments in Gabon's national coffee policy.

It is true that the Coffee Sector in Gabon has gone through significant changes driven by the need for the most senior political authorities of the country to assign it a more prominent role in filling the gaps among the people in terms of economic conditions, controlling the movement of the population from rural to urban areas and fighting against poverty. That the Gabonese Government has maintained a Stabilization and Equalization Fund while such funds are being dismantled in some countries bears testimony to the interest Gabon's Government now places on turning the coffee sector into an important tool at the service of the national Economy.

In fact, the preparation of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP) in 2005 testifies to the will of the late President of the Republic, Omar Bongo Ondimba, to give renewed impetus to a New National Policy for Agriculture. As a result of that will, coffee now ranks very high in the strategic plan for the country's development.

In line with that political vision, the Management of the Stabilization and Equalization Fund of Gabon, as part of their mandate as the regulatory agency for coffee, has undertaken several actions aiming at materializing the objectives set forth in the GPRSP.

1. Administrative devolution through the establishment of new Provincial Delegations:

To better provide support to the producers, the Management of the Stabilization and Equalization Fund decided, in 2007, the extension of such provincial delegations into the major coffee-producing provinces with the main purpose of allowing producers to be provided with technical and material assistance through the permanent presence of Agricultural Engineers within these provincial delegations.

The Management of the Stabilization and Equalization Fund further strengthened these actions through the distribution to farmers of seedlings free of charge, thus creating many crop nurseries in the production areas.

This attention CAISTAB has shown towards producers has enabled the creation of around 300 acres of new rural farmlands and the rehabilitation of more than 500 acres of former industrial coffee farmlands long left aside by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Nevertheless, Gabon's biggest challenge over these years has admittedly been the will to see a new class of producers emerge that will be able to replace the old farmers now aged 60 to 70. Therefore, in order to create a nationwide urge towards the cultivation of coffee and encourage the youth to be interested in this commodity, the Gabonese Government proceeded to upgrading the price of the kilogramme of coffee which was brought to 450 CFA francs per kg in 2007 up from 350 CFA francs per kg in 2005.

2. Improving the quality of coffee in Gabon

It is important to point out that our main concern remains the boosting of the coffee sector for it to play a significant role in the national economy as in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon. Thus the need for us to have development partners who could assist us and provide us with support in boosting the coffee sector in Gabon. Gabon is very much aware of its status as a small producer. However, for three years, it has strived to get the best of its assets, notably the quality of its coffee. The main objective we are seeking is the development of coffee in Gabon through its adaptation to the standards and requirements of the global market (*creation of a Gabonese label*) and the targeting of **niche markets**.

The '**washed coffee**' project funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) is a proof of that ambitious approach which was started back in 2008.

The future setting-up of a washed coffee station in the larger coffee-producing provinces reinforces yet again this will to move one step further.

To this day, Gabon has recorded a production level of Robusta Washed Coffee of around ½ ton. This outcome is more than encouraging and satisfactory and has therefore led us to popularize this technique among all our producers for them to take advantage of it.

Therefore, the practice of washed coffee had also lead to the setting up of a New Coffee Price Structure.

So, the price of coffee cackle is 500 CFA francs per kilo, coffee beans are at 700 CFA francs per kilo and washed coffee is at 1,200 CFA francs per kilo.

3. Gabon Emerging Strategic Plan (PSGE)

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, decided to make Gabon an Emerging economy by 2025. To do so, he has made strategic choices geared towards centering the country's development on three pillars: '**Green Gabon, Industrial Gabon, and Gabon of Services**'.

One big challenge we need to overcome in the context of Gabon's development is to promote local processing of raw materials and exportation of high value-added products.

This new strategic vision has resulted in the coffee becoming a development asset, which requires getting major players in the 'value chain' like NESTLE involved in the process of boosting the coffee sector in Gabon.

By choosing to make the coffee sector an economic asset for the country, Gabon's Government has agreed to take an active part in ensuring that the International Market is Sustainable and Competitive.

The fact that Gabon mobilized to host in Libreville, in January 2013, the 2nd General Assembly of the African and Malagasy Robusta Coffee Agency (AMRCA), an agency whose main objective is the promotion of Robusta Coffee, is proof of our country's interest in other member states and in seeing coffee play a greater role in the World Economy.

The objectives assigned to CAISTAB are clear: produce 2,000 tons of coffee to 4,000 tons by 2016.

This is what we have strived to do so far by taking new partners on board.

We have entered into several partnerships, like the one with INAGROSA, a company specializing in the supply of biological fertilizers. Also with IRAD Cameroon in 2011 for the setting-up by 2014 of new coffee genetic bases with capacity to provide our farmers with high-yield seeds.

All in all, these actions have served one main purpose: boosting a sector thus far neglected, so that it can contribute, first to improving the standard of living of rural populations, and secondly to the diversification of the National Economy.

Expectations are high and challenges huge. Gabon wishes to shift coffee from a subsistence sector to a develop sector, which may benefit all stakeholders in this sector in our country.

Thank you for your kind attention.