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11 September 2013
Belo Horizonte, Brazil

**Statement by the Delegate of Cuba to the
Projects Committee on 11 September 2013**

Mr Chairman,
Members of the Projects Committee,

I have requested the floor to inform ICO Members and other participants that Cuba has a strategy for the recovery of coffee production. Ours is a small country but has nine provinces and 31 municipalities that produce coffee and a potential area of 100,000 hectares suitable for coffee growing.

During the 1960s Cuba produced over one million bags 60kg bags of coffee. For various reasons, however, including: economic, financial, climatic factors (Cuba has been affected by several hurricanes), exodus of the rural population to the cities, and other reasons, production fell to below 200,000 bags.

The strategy I have mentioned provides for some strengthening of the sector but above all it shows the commitment of the Cuban Government to coffee, as recognized in the outline of socio-economic policy approved at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba but we need more assistance, material and financial support to achieve an increase in production. It is for this reason that we are requesting the intervention of the ICO.

In the agricultural sector the Government approved Decree Law number 300 providing for the allocation of land, which has made it possible to bring a significant number of producers into coffee growing, which will doubtless require support and finance.

In terms of human capital in Cuba, there are over 20,000 producers involved in coffee growing, which provides their main economic support and in this context the strategy focusses on prioritizing the employment of women and young people in coffee recovery activities.

In the field of science and technology we have a national agroforestry institute (INAF) with a network of nine coffee stations dedicated to research and training for producers, in this case requiring information exchange and access to new technology for which the ICO could provide some facilities.

In 2012 we held the First Cuban Coffee Congress and we are currently preparing the convocation of the Second Congress to which all participants in this meeting are invited. The congress will be held in Havana on 24 and 25 April 2015.

Finally, I wish to inform you that we have finalized some projects for strengthening the coffee recovery programme, for which we need the approval of the ICO. Outlines of the following initial projects will be forwarded soon:

1. Increase in organic coffee in Cuba's mountain areas with the participation of leading producers (Counterpart funding: Common Fund for Commodities).
2. Use of advanced technology in the development and management of coffee farms and technological re-equipment of the processing industry in eastern Cuba. (Counterpart funding: Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)).