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INTERNATIONAL
COFFEE
ORGANIZATION

ICC 112-11

11 March 2014
Original: English

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International Coffee Council
112th Session
3 – 7 March 2014
London, United Kingdom

Communication received from Vietnam

**Changeable weather causing severe damage
to coffee production in Vietnam**

Vietnam coffee has suffered from changeable weather in the past few months. For example, three-phase cold weather and frost damage occurred in Son La province in December and early January. According to Mr Ha Quyet Nghi – Director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Son La, over 1,300 hectares of Arabica coffee in the whole province were affected by frost, mostly in the districts of Thuan Chau, Mai Son, Son La City, accounting for over 10% of the province's 11,000 hectares of coffee. This is the second time in 14 years Son La has suffered from such a severe period of frost.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Son La has specific solutions for the coffee area damaged by the frost: cutting down to the stumps (12-13 cm from where the frost damaged occurs), and then caring for the budding trees. The trees will be ready for harvesting after two years. In the case of the area which has not been damaged so seriously, the intention is to cut 10-14 cm from where the frost is, and then care especially for these trees. One year after we can harvest normally. In the case of the newly planted coffee trees we can bury them; after the frost we can dig them up and the trees will grow normally. Special attention needs to be paid to restore shade trees and windbreak forest.

The cold weather also affected coffee trees in the Central Highlands of Dak Lak, Lam Dong, Gia Lai and Kon Tum. Coffee leaves are damaged, flowers are not blooming at all, and winds caused leaves and flowers to develop what some people call 'coffee flu'.

In addition, the water shortage is quite severe. March is the time of low rainfall in the country, especially in the Central Highlands. This is lower than the annual average rainfall; with total monthly rainfall below 10 mm. Currently, in the Highlands there is just enough water to irrigate 60% of the planted area, while 40% of the area is suffering from the risk of water shortage.

In conclusion, with the frost in Son La, 'coffee flu' and droughts in the Central Highlands, this will result in Vietnam's coffee output for crop year 2014/15 decreasing significantly from 2013/14.

Coffee production of Vietnam in 2013 was reduced due to the effects of the weather: exports fell by 24.8% compared to 2012.