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**Statement by H.E. Mr Berhanu Kebede  
Ambassador Plenipotentiary and  
Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia to the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of  
the International Coffee Council  
on 3 March 2014**

Your Excellency Mr Jawaid Akhtar, current Chair of the ICO Council,  
Your Excellency Mr Roberio Silva, Executive Director of the ICO,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege to speak before this august assembly to solicit your support for Ethiopia's bid to host the upcoming World Coffee Conference 2015.

The Government and people of Ethiopia are fully cognizant of the role that this important conference plays in bringing together high-level government officials, senior members of the private sector, specialists and experts in the industry to identify and address matters of common concerns.

As a long standing Member of the ICO, Ethiopia attaches paramount importance to the deliberations of this conference, as it continues to harmonize the position of the international coffee community, in their pursuit to protect their interest in the global market place.

Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, as a diplomatic hub of Africa and the birth place of the coffee bean itself, I believe, is an ideal place to give high profile to our collective effort to promote the coffee industry which continue to play a pivotal role in the economies of many countries.

Having this conference in Africa, which accounts to almost half of the producing countries of the ICO and which has a long tradition of consultations through its various continental organizations and of course the InterAfrican Coffee Organisation, gives new experience to Members of the ICO.

Ethiopia, as a leading coffee producing country in the continent will provide first hand understanding and the chance to learn more about the incredible pool of coffee genetic diversity of which most of them are identified by their distinct and characteristic flavour, aroma and taste.

Mr Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia is an ideal place to witness the role of coffee in the economy of producing countries and its role in the daily life of citizens. More than 15 million family members and stake holders grow the crop for a living; hundreds of thousands of middle men are involved in the collection of crop from farmers and in the supply of the domestic and export market. The commodity accounts up to 30% of export earnings. Coffee enjoys a popular local consumption pattern of about 50% equivalent to 2.4kg per capita – a consumption level comparable to leading coffee consuming countries.

As coffee continues to play a very important role in the economy of Ethiopia, the government has adopted a strategy to brand its special coffees. It has successfully worked to introduce the renowned coffee brands – Sidama, Yirga Cheffe and Harar to the world through the Trade Marking of these coffee brands in 2005. Many of the ICO consuming countries, as partners in this endeavour, have contributed their share in securing recognition and market value to our coffee and increase of income of farmers.

In Ethiopia, we say coffee is a way of life, it is the pillar of family union, it is a meeting point for problem solving and planning for the future. Coffee ceremony is an occasion to exchange news and well-wishing with friends and relatives to express respect to elders and to appreciate the blessings of life.

Ethiopia welcomes you all, to appreciate the rich coffee genetic diversity it has due to the endowment of well-defined growing areas with soils, altitude, rainfall, temperature suitable for this diversity. It also invites you to witness its state of the art Commodity Exchange Market – the first of its kind in the continent which has revolutionized the marketing of coffee.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Holding the World Coffee Conference 2015 in Addis Ababa – the Diplomatic Capital of Africa and the seat of the AU, UN Economic Commission for Africa and more than 103 Embassies and diplomatic representations, will be an unforgettable experience to its Members, as the people of Ethiopia will welcome you with our unique coffee culture and hospitality.

Addis Ababa hosts regularly summits of the African Heads of State and government that draw close to 10,000 delegates as well as various high-level and sector specific conferences of the UNECA. In Coffee alone Ethiopia has successfully hosted the East African Fine Coffees Association (EAFCA) and the African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) conferences and exhibition. The World Economic Forum, the Inter-parliamentary Union conference and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum, just to name a few, are some recent conferences hosted testifying Addis Ababa's ever increasing stature as a global meeting place.

I would like to reassure you that your presence in Ethiopia will provide you with an opportunity for an incredible touristic experience. In addition to the sheer scale of its physical beauty, Ethiopia's proud and colourful culture, its wonderful climate, ancient and medieval monuments, old and rich civilization, and natural touristic attractions to mention a few, make Ethiopia a great place to hold such a magnificent conference. I have further the honour to assure you that participants of the event can take the time to explore Ethiopia's historical sites and museums within the country where all the cities and many more have a direct flight connection to the capital.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the right time for the world coffee community to be in Addis Ababa the capital of Africa, a continent that is registering remarkable economic progress. Ethiopia alone, has registered a double digit growth in the past 10 years in which the productivity of agriculture including coffee has played a significant role to this growth.

As you would surely appreciate, there is no better place than the birthplace of coffee Arabica to deliberate on agendas of the global coffee sector.

Finally, It would be remiss of me, if I do not mention here that the role the Ethiopian Airlines, as a member of the Star Alliance, reaching 76 destinations and all continents of the world, will proudly facilitate your travel to attend the conference.

If Ethiopia is offered the privilege of hosting the 2015 conference, I can assure you that the people and the Government of Ethiopia will do their at most best to make your stay in Addis Ababa a fruitful and a pleasant one.

Thank you.