



**INTERNATIONAL
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**Statement by H.E. Mr Wondirad Mandefro,
State Minister of Agriculture and
Natural Resources of Ethiopia,
to the 116th Session of the International
Coffee Council on 9 March 2016**

His Excellency Mr Mauro Luiz Lecker Vieira, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil,
His Excellency Mr Iván Romero-Martínez, Chairperson of the International Coffee Council,
Mr Robério Oliveira Silva, Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization,
Dear delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am extremely honoured to have you with us at the capital city of Africa, Addis Ababa!

This week is unique and a delightful one because at the same time we are also celebrating the coming back to the home of coffee. On behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and my own I warmly welcome you all.

We are very much honoured to have you here at 'the birthplace of coffee'. Coffee, for many countries of the world is not only a vital contributor to foreign exchange earnings, but also a contributor to a significant proportion of the gross domestic product, and is a livelihood for billions of people.

As is well known, coffee in Ethiopia is the most important commodity which plays a prominent role in national economy. Over 30% of the foreign exchange, 4% of the GDP and 10% of the total agricultural output is generated from coffee and 25% of the population mainly around 25 million people depend on coffee for their livelihoods.

To put it in a nutshell, coffee is a medicine, food and beverage in Ethiopia. With a very strong coffee culture, a huge natural diversity and harbouring dozens of specialty coffee types we will ensure the coffee sector prospers to its potential. During your stay in Ethiopia I hope you will see how deep coffee culture is in Ethiopia, and also its values.

Before I conclude allow me to thank you all for choosing Ethiopia to be the venue for this International Coffee Organization Council meeting in conjunction with the 4th World Coffee Conference.

In closing I would like to wish you all a pleasant stay in Ethiopia and a fruitful meeting.

Thank you!