INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION

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Report of the Statistics Workshop held on 25 September 2017

1.   The Statistics Workshop, chaired by the Head of Operations a.i. was held on 25 September 2017 in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire.

Item 1:   Welcome by the Executive Director

2.   The Executive Director opened the meeting, noting that the strategic review process had been concluded and had identified three strategic goals, the first of which is directly related to the purpose of the workshop: the delivery of world-class data, analysis and information to the industry and policy-makers. He emphasized that the purpose of the workshop was not only to provide information to Members, but to also hear from Members about the challenges they face.

Item 2:   Introduction by the Head of Operations a.i.

3.   The Head of Operations a.i. introduced the programme of the workshop, which is detailed in document [ED-2249/17 Rev. 1](#).

Item 3:   Reporting requirements of statistical data to the ICO

4.   The Senior Statistical Assistant presented the Rules on Certificates of Origin while the Senior Economist presented the Rules on Statistical Reports. They emphasized that Members determined the type of data collected, which was reflected in the Rules on Certificates of Origin and Rules on Statistical Reports. Two videos showing how to complete the Certificates of Origin and the Statistical Reports were shown. These video guides are available to download in English, French and Spanish from the ICO website.

5.   The delegate of Brazil asked whether differences in data collection methodologies created difficulties for incorporating data into the ICO's database and how representative was the data reported to the ICO of total coffee exports in a given year.

6.   The Head of Operations a.i. stated that the compliance report showed the actual coverage and would be discussed later in the workshop.

7.   The Senior Economist stated that the Rules on Statistics ensured that data based on these rules generally used the same methodology, but that data submitted outside the Statistical Rules tended to have more variation between countries, which could make cross-country comparisons more difficult.

8.   The representative of the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO) asked whether coffee exports were double-counted when coffee was shipped to a producing country that then re-exported the same coffee to another destination.

9.   The Senior Statistical Assistant noted that exports to the second country should be recorded as an import before being re-exported, which would avoid double counting.

10.   The delegate of Indonesia asked whether the ICO collected data on the retail price of coffee in importing countries and if this data would provide the cost structure of the price.

11.   The Senior Statistical Assistant explained that the ICO collected data on re-exports from importing countries in addition to data on the retail price of roasted coffee in Member countries, and that this was published in the Quarterly Statistical Bulletin.

12.   The delegate of Burundi raised the issue of tracking exports when coffee was shipped informally across land borders and noted a need for improving coordination between different government agencies, since lack of cooperation often led to delays in sending data. The delegate also asked about the differences between prices paid to growers and the ICO composite indicator price.

13.   The Head of Operations a.i. stated that the ICO does not have a method to capture these exports, but relied on individual countries to do so. It was understood that the Regulatory Authority of the Coffee Sector (ARFIC) collected all of the data for Burundi, but the delegate was encouraged to contact the Secretariat if difficulties arose.

14.   The Senior Economist explained that the ICO composite indicator price was essentially a world coffee market price and included costs associated with transporting coffee from the farmer to the port, which would likely be different from the price paid to growers. There were also differences in prices paid to growers between countries due to their market structures. He stated that prices paid to growers were to be provided by producing countries to the ICO.

15.   The delegate of India asked whether the ICO had guidelines for collecting production costs.

16.   The Head of Operations a.i. stated that the ICO had a methodology, which had been prepared by a consultant some years ago and would need to be updated.

17.   The delegate of Nigeria emphasized that informal trade occurred frequently in Africa, particularly across land borders, while noting that much of the coffee produced in Nigeria was exported by ship from a neighbouring country and considered as an export from the exporting country rather than from Nigeria. Additionally, it could be difficult to get production data from farmers without some form of support offered in return.

18.   The Head of Operations a.i. requested that the delegate provide a contact to the Secretariat in order to work together on the issue.

19.   The Secretariat took note of the issues raised under this item.

Item 4:   Compliance with the provision of statistical data

20.   The Senior Statistical Assistant presented three slides summarizing Annex 10 and Annex 10A of document SC-76/17, Compliance with the provision of statistical data for coffee years 2007/08 to 2015/16 and October 2016 to June 2017. Annex 10 of the document showed the rate of strict compliance with the Rules on Statistics by exporting Members. This was particularly low for the new data required under the 2007 Agreement. During the current coffee year, less than 5% of the total volume of annual average exports over the previous four calendar years had good compliance with the Rules on Statistics, which represented just two countries. However, there were 20 exporting Members that were entirely non-compliant. Annex 10A showed data that was in compliance, but received after the deadlines stipulated in the Rules on Statistics. In considering data that was submitted late, 6 exporting Members covering 55% of the total volume of annual average exports over the previous four calendar years were considered to have achieved generally full compliance while the number of non-compliant Members decreased to 18. It was noted that while late data provided a more complete picture, it was difficult for the ICO to publish accurate reports when data has not been provided by Members in a timely manner.

21.   The delegate of Côte d'Ivoire suggested that while there was one agency that worked with the Secretariat on statistics, it would be helpful to include other government agencies that also had data. The delegate stated that it would be helpful to send regular reminders from the Secretariat to Members, particularly when there were changes in personnel.

22.   The Head of Operations a.i. stated that it was easier for the Secretariat to work with a single contact for statistics and the Senior Statistical Assistant noted that Member countries were responsible for keeping the ICO informed of any changes to personnel.

23.   The delegate of the European Union asked what the ICO did when there was a lack of data and whether there were new technologies that could help facilitate data collection. The delegate also asked which two countries had full compliance so that other countries could learn from them.

24.   The delegate of Brazil welcomed the proactive policy of Members interacting with the Secretariat and expressed that full use should be made of technology to improve communication and collaboration.

25.   The Senior Statistical Assistant stated that El Salvador and Honduras, while not fully compliant, were the two countries that best complied with the Rules on Statistics.

26.   The Senior Economist explained that when data was missing, the ICO might consult private sector companies.

27.   The representative of IACO observed that in the past, there was software from the ICO used by countries for submitting their reports and asked whether there was a mobile application that could be used similarly for submitting reports. He also stated that it was usually coffee boards or organizations, which were government organizations, that generated data on the coffee sector and wondered why private sector companies had access to this data if the ICO did not.

28.   The Senior Economist noted that given advances in technology, it was likely that less cumbersome methods for submitting data to the ICO existed, which would help improve compliance, and that the Five-Year Action Plan included a review of these processes. Furthermore, additional data could possibly be gathered using newer technology.

29.   The delegate of Mexico explained that in Mexico there was no structure or process for collecting data in recent years. As a result, while data was collected by different government agencies, a single point needed to be created in order to begin collecting data for submission to the ICO, and the lack of a governmental coffee board meant that with each new government the process may need to be recreated. The delegate recommended that imports by exporting Members were also regularly reported to Members.

30.   The delegate of Togo agreed that having a process in place for collecting statistics was very important. In Togo's case, while the exporters had the data and certificates, it could take time for them to submit this data to the government institute charged with submitting data to the ICO and that they have been working to improve this process.

31.   The delegate of Cameroon stated that stakeholders needed to be made more aware of the deadlines for submitting data and wondered if there was any flexibility with deadlines given the number of late submissions. The delegate also suggested that it would be helpful to create a guide of best practices that could be provided to exporting Members.

32.   The Senior Statistical Assistant noted that the Rules on Statistics provided deadlines for submitting data, that these were later than deadlines under the quota system, and that under the quota system, data was received regularly from all Members.

33.   The delegate of Uganda reported that it had established a single-window system where data was collected at the port of export and then submitted to the Bank of Uganda to create consistency across government agencies. The delegate also requested regional training sessions.

34.   The representative of the African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) expressed AFCA's interest in working with the ICO on data collection and providing regional training to Members.

35.   The delegate from China noted that the China Coffee Association would continue to send its data to the Chinese Customs.

36.   The delegate of India observed that in recent years, coffee boards and organizations responsible for collecting data had become weak in terms of personnel. The delegate remarked that the pressure to improve the ease of exporting could also make it difficult to collect data.

37.   The delegate from Honduras remarked that many exporting Members faced challenges and also recommended that regional training sessions be implemented.

38.   The delegate from the European Union suggested using video conference facilities in their embassies to conduct regional training as a way of reducing costs.

39.   The Secretariat took note of the issues raised under this item.

Item 5:   Application and benefits of statistical data for decision making

40.   The Senior Economist gave a presentation on statistical data for decision making. It was noted that the ICO collected a large volume of data from Members, but there were several quality issues with the data that prevented it from being considered 'world class'.

Quality data should be complete, accurate and consistent. He stated that all Members should send the required data at regular intervals and that quality data should not contradict itself. It was suggested that Members consider what other types of data might be helpful for them when making policies or decisions, such as data on employment in the coffee sector broken down by gender or costs of production. He discussed the possibility of using alternative sources for data that would be useful for analysis, but were not regularly collected by the ICO. The types of data and sources included agricultural employment data broken down by gender that could be derived from World Bank surveys.

41.   The delegate of Nepal remarked on the importance of data for decisions when making policy and the difficulty in collecting this data given that most coffee farmers in Nepal were smallholders. The delegate also recommended that regional workshops be implemented.

42.   The delegate of Uganda stated that it was using information and communications technology, such as crowdsourcing through mobile applications, as much as possible to collect data such as the number of coffee trees.

43.   The Senior Economist suggested that the ICO could put together a document reviewing what technological solutions exist for data collection and how they can be applied in the public sector.

44.   The delegate of Ethiopia noted that in his country, the agency that collected information on production focused on annual crops rather than coffee and the cost involved in collecting data on the coffee sector made it harder to gather this data.

45.   The delegate of India suggested collecting farm gate prices and retail prices of all types of coffee, in order to know the value addition. The delegate also noted that India was developing a remote-sensing system to get an estimate of area under coffee and number of coffee trees.

46.   The Secretariat took note of the issues raised under this item.