



**INTERNATIONAL
COFFEE
ORGANIZATION**

**STATEMENT BY MR JOSÉ SETTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION
121ST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE COUNCIL
OPENING CEREMONY
9 APRIL 2018
MEXICO CITY**

Your Excellency Secretario de Agricultura, Lic. Baltazar Hinojosa,

Honorable Ministers, Your Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Coffee Organization, I would like, first of all, to express our gratitude to our host for inviting ICO to hold the 121st Session of the International Coffee Council and related meetings here in beautiful Mexico City, the capital of los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

Mexico has been an active member of the ICO since its very inception, as demonstrated by leading important offices in the Organization over the years. In 1963/64, Miguel Angel Cordera served as the first Chair of the International Coffee Council, the most important post a delegate can hold in the ICO. Mr Cordera was also Chair in 1967/68 and is one of only two people to have the distinction of serving more than one term in the position. Since his time, three other distinguished Mexicans have served as Chair of the Council: Fausto Cantu Peña, Roberto Giesemann and Rodolfo Trampe. More recently, Vera Espíndola, of Sagarpa, presided over the Promotion and Market Development Committee and has also played a key role in organizing this event. We look forward to many more years of close and fruitful collaboration.

Although Mexico is a founding member of the ICO and a meeting of the Executive Board was held here in 1968, this is the first time our Council will meet in this beautiful and hospitable country, which is a demonstration of Mexico's ongoing commitment to the International Coffee Agreement and to the ICO.

Mexico is an appropriate setting to reflect on the changing world of coffee, especially with regard to coffee-producing countries. The old paradigm of producing a single type of green coffee for export no longer applies neatly. Mexico is no longer just an exporter of Mild Arabicas in bean form. Now, the country is a regional export hub for soluble coffee. Meanwhile, imports of green coffee have become increasingly important in recent years. In the domestic market, although per capita coffee consumption is still relatively low, a vibrant specialty coffee scene is emerging and prospects for increased consumption are bright. As can

be seen, Mexico is an interesting example of how the traditional exporter/importer and producer/consumer dichotomies are becoming increasingly blurred. Above all, Mexico is an example of the continuing social importance of coffee as a generator of employment and income in rural areas.

Mexico is also an example of the challenges faced by coffee producers all over the world. For example, the country is only now starting to recover from the outbreak of coffee leaf rust that also had a devastating impact on many other Latin American producing countries. The workshop focusing on that disease, which will be held later today, will provide us with an excellent opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, so that we can avoid similar outbreaks in the future or mitigate their consequences more effectively.

This week, we shall address relevant issues, opportunities and challenges to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for the coffee sector and all its stakeholders and of the ICO: YOUR Organization.

You have set the path for ICO to respond to your needs and challenges: The Five-Year Action Plan. Therefore, we are focusing our attention and efforts on the Plan's three priorities: (1) to deliver world-class data, analyses and information needed by all stakeholders in the world coffee sector, but especially by policy-makers; (2) to use the Organization's convening power to provide a unique forum for dialogue between countries and within the public and private sectors; and (3) to facilitate the development and funding of projects and promotion programmes through public-private partnerships.

Since I took office, after addressing pressing internal management and organizational issues, the ICO has taken important steps to respond to your needs. Let me just mention a few: undertaking a comprehensive review of the Organization's statistical database; increasing collaboration with private sector sustainability initiatives; preparing a proposal to improve the ICO's capacity in for project development and fund mobilisation also enhancing linkages with other international organizations, financial institutions, donor and the private sector; and publishing analytical studies on "Coffee Trade Flows" and "Coffee and Gender". I have also introduced new approaches to become make the ICO more effective and focused, for example, the adoption of an annual theme on which to concentrate the work of our Organization and the assignment of specific staff members as permanent secretaries to each committee and advisory body.

In the same spirit, in addition to the previously mentioned workshop on Coffee Leaf Rust, we will also hold, during this week's sessions, a seminar on Coffee and Health, which is especially timely in light of recent legislative developments in the USA.

These measures all demonstrate the commitment of the Organization to its Members and to the construction of a sustainable world coffee sector with win-win solutions for all: growers, trade, industry and consumers.

Although concrete steps are being taken to further enhance the performance of the Organization, we still face many challenges, even more so after the recent withdrawal of an important Member. We are also conscious of the need for urgent action and to show results. These challenges only serve to drive the Secretariat even more in our determination to ensure that the ICO delivers everything that you, our Members, expect from us.

Your Excellency Secretario Lic. Baltazar Hinojosa, Honorable Ministers, Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that, in spite of the logistic and financial challenges involved, it is very important to hold meetings outside our headquarters in London in order to bring the Organization closer to its Members and to give delegates the opportunity to see for yourselves the conditions of coffee-exporting and -importing countries all over the world.

I would, again, like to thank our hosts for giving us all the opportunity to visit Mexico City, the cradle of Aztec civilization and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I do hope that more Members will follow the example presented by Mexico and also offer to host Council meetings in the future.

I extend a special thank you to all those involved in organizing this meeting. I appreciate all the hard work behind the scenes required to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Finally, I look forward to a highly productive week of work with all of you.