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**Statement by the Chair of the International  
Coffee Council, H.E. Mr Aly Touré, at the  
opening ceremony of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Session  
of the International Coffee Council on  
17 September 2018**

Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ambassadors  
Distinguished Delegates from our ICO Member countries,  
Members of the press,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

May I begin by thanking our speakers Mr Kitack Lim and Ms Luiza Carvalho for their statements to this Session of the International Coffee Council.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We are meant, at this session, to be celebrating the role of women in the coffee industry. For this reason we have listened with interest to the insights which Ms Luiza Carvalho has provided on the subject. But unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, just as we celebrate women, we must lament the desperately low prices currently being paid to the coffee-producing countries, because it will not have escaped your notice that 80% of world coffee is produced by small-scale growers in Latin America, Asia and Africa. So there is a conundrum here. We celebrate women gladly, yes, but sadly too.

Prices today are becoming a matter of survival for coffee producers, and there is a lot for us to do. This session gives us an opportunity to strengthen our co-operation with the IMO, UN Women and other partners. As my term of office comes to an end, I have just one wish: that this session should be the time when all actors in the coffee value chain come together and courageously face up to the challenge of the sector's sustainability.

The ICO is an intergovernmental organization made up of producers and consumers. It is important that our discussions at this Session should tackle the issue of prices.

I would like to encourage the ICO and its Member countries to hold a frank and open debate on the challenges facing the coffee industry. I do not want to talk for too long because we are already running well behind schedule. I should like to see the coffee sector prospering in future. And for that to happen, we need strong women, but also an extremely strong and sound International Coffee Organization.

Thank you.