



International Coffee Organization
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**Statement by the Deputy Minister for
Agriculture and Irrigation of the
Republic of Yemen to the International
Coffee Council on 23 May 2008**

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Yemen and also on behalf of the coffee farmers of Yemen, our delegation wishes to thank the Council for inviting us to observe the proceedings of this very important Organization.

During this week, we have had the opportunity to learn so much more about the global coffee community, meet and make friends with delegates from both the producing nations and the consuming nations.

Yemen, as you all know, is the original origin, the land that introduced coffee cultivation and consumption to the world, the region that held a monopoly on the farming and world-wide distribution of coffee for centuries.

The botanical name *Coffea Arabica* is clearly a derivative of the term in common parlance throughout the Middle Eastern region “Qahwa Arabiya”, which simply means Arabian coffee. It is also exceptionally unique that this ancient coffee land is the contributor of one of the most widely used terms in the coffee world – Mocha.

Coffee lovers throughout the world fondly remember the dark chocolate undertones that permeate through the complex flavours of a true Yemeni Mocha, and the rich mix of intoxicating aromas that have been preserved within the dry-processed shells of a typical Yemeni bean.

Those of you that have had the opportunity to visit Yemen, also known as Arabia Felix or Happy Arabia, have witnessed the unusual conditions in which coffee is cultivated in

this country. Terraces have been carved out into the steep mountain slopes providing small stretches of farm-land at altitudes as high as 3,000 metres above sea level. The construction of step-farms is an ancient engineering marvel, creating a farming method that has survived more than a millennium under harsh and arid conditions, as an unsurpassed example of sustainable farming.

For those that have missed this journey into coffee history we extend our invitation and look forward to welcoming you with our traditional hospitality. We are also excited and enthusiastic about our participation and association with the global coffee community through this forum, sharing the best that we have to offer, and hoping to gain in every way from the vast knowledge base and other pooled resources of this Organization.

We thank you for your attention.