

**STATEMENT BY MR RICARDO VILLANUEVA,
PRESIDENT EXECUTIVE BOARD ANACAFE
OPENING CEREMONY
THIRD WORLD COFFEE CONFERENCE
GUATEMALA
FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2010**

Your Excellency the President of Guatemala,
Mr Álvaro Colom

Your Excellency the President of El Salvador,
Mr Mauricio Funes Cartagena

Your Excellency the President of Honduras,
Mr Porfirio Lobo Sosa

Your Excellencies:

The Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization,
Mr Néstor Osorio

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,
Mr Supachai Panitchpakdi

The Executive Director of the Common Fund for Commodities,
Mr Ali Mchumo

The Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund,
Ms Ann Veneman

The Chairman of the International Coffee Council,
Mr Rodolfo Trampe

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Guatemala

Distinguished Officials of the Government of Guatemala and other Friendly Countries

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board of the National Coffee Association

Distinguished Delegates of National and International Coffee Organizations

Distinguished Coffee Growers of Guatemala

Friends of the National and International Press who are following this conference,

Welcome and greetings.

On behalf of Guatemalan coffee growers I would like to express our warmest gratitude for your presence and participation in this Third World Coffee Conference, which is today being inaugurated in our beautiful country, a country located in a very small territory and bound by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, where there are 37 volcanoes, lakes, lovely beaches and high mountains, colonial cities, and vestiges of the splendour of Mayan civilization, a country which produces the world's best coffee.

Coffee is more than the bean that gives us the world's most comforting natural beverage; it is a way of life for coffee producers and consumers, for all those involved in manufacturing coffee machinery and equipment, coffee cups and coffee machines. The imagination falls short in considering facts related to coffee.

And as a way of life coffee has direct effects on human beings. This beverage has hundreds of years of history and is present throughout the world.

It is part of the basic diet in many countries, while in others coffee-drinking is growing as a pleasurable and healthy habit.

This is why it is essential to talk about coffee. In most producing countries it is the mainstay of the economy and in consuming countries it makes a very significant contribution to domestic product.

Given its importance, coffee has significant social, and hence environmental impacts, making the dialogue on technical aspects of production, its environmental consequences and, more significantly, its social consequences both inevitable and necessary.

And to ensure the successful outcome of this dialogue the producing and consuming countries have the International Coffee Organization, the only global forum where we can discuss the problems I have mentioned, as well as taking advantage of the coming together of so many countries and the exchange of practical experiences.

The coffee producers of Guatemala represented by Anacafé wish to express their heartfelt thanks to the Member countries of the International Coffee Organization for their confidence in giving us the responsibility for organizing this event.

The Guatemalan coffee growers' union that I represent is distinguished by its constant efforts in seeking personal improvement, leading to better living conditions for the families of our collaborators and communities, and achieving improved quality for our world-renowned coffee.

This has not been easy but the experiences we have lived through have ensured our maturity and commitment to the constant search for a better future.

Dialogue is urgent but we should not forget that climate change affects us all every day and every moment and that we are all waiting for immediate action. Dialogue is all well and good but not for too long. We want action now.

We have every confidence in the comments and conclusions that this Conference will produce and we hope that these will have a positive and immediate impact on the influence of coffee in human history.

Thank you all very much and welcome to Guatemala.