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World coffee conference

WORLD COFFEE CONFERENCE

Executive Board/
Private Sector Consultative Board
24 and 25 January 2000
London, England

WORLD COFFEE CONFERENCE

FOREWORD

1. At the 78th Session of the Council on 21 July 1999, the Council adopted Resolution number 385 which provides for a world coffee conference at appropriate intervals bringing together exporting and importing Members, private sector representatives, and other interested participants, including participants from non-member countries. Mr. Jorge Cárdenas (Colombia) was elected as Chairman of the conference.

2. A letter from Mr. Cárdenas outlines a preliminary framework for the conference and is presented for the information and comments of the Private Sector Consultative Board and for discussion within the Executive Board (see document WP-Board No. 875/00). A number of points raised in his letter may be considered by the Board as listed below.

Timing

As agreed by the Council, the first world coffee conference will be held in May 2001 at the time of the Council, which may be held from 21 to 25 May 2001 (dates to be confirmed in May 2000 after consulting with the International Rubber Study Group). It is proposed that it should be a two-day event, possibly held on a Friday and Saturday before or after the Council.

Venue

Resolution number 385 states that the conference shall be held normally at the Organization. The ICO conference room seats 284 delegates. Pillars and numbers of seats with desks are a restricting factor. Other rooms for workshops include the Boardroom (seating 101) and the Committee room (seating 25). A larger venue with more break-out rooms could be considered. This would need to be reserved urgently as venues are reserved well in advance, and would have financial implications.

Subject

Under the provisions of Resolution number 385, the Board shall decide on the form, title and subject matter of the conference, which should contribute to furthering the objectives of the Agreement. The subject will be key to attracting audience interest. It should be relevant to the world coffee community, and relate to the main trends of the world coffee economy in the new millennium. Early confirmation of the subject will be needed to identify appropriate expert speakers. The Board may wish to request the PSCB to discuss this matter and advise on possible subjects.

Speakers

Speakers will need to be high level and experts in their field (see suggestions by Mr. Cárdenas), and should be identified as early as possible to secure their participation, on the basis of invitation and expenses, rather than fees. High level political and diplomatic support will assist in sounding out speakers as time is short.

Format

The conference could include plenary sessions in the mornings, with presentations of 20 - 30 minutes followed by questions, and smaller interactive workshop/panel sessions held simultaneously each afternoon, to enable delegates to debate key issues. An alternative could be to have one opening plenary session and one closing plenary session. The conference could be opened by a keynote address by a well-known figure. Social events, such as a reception and lunches, should be included to enable networking and informal exchanges of views with other delegates.

Organization

Consideration may be given to establishing a small task force of Members to oversee preparations. It is proposed that the organization should be done by a professional conference organizer to ensure that the conference has a high profile and attracts the widest possible participation.

Collaboration

Consideration may be given to co-hosting the conference with another organization such as Dow Jones to draw on its expertise and range of contacts.

Publications

The presentations of speakers could be published in the form of a book, available in the four official languages, with Mr. Pizano and the Executive Director taking responsibility for this.

CABI Bioscience has submitted a proposal for a series of technical reviews relating to the subject matter of the conference, written by leading experts in their field. They would be carried out under joint ICO and CABI supervision and would give a clear presentation of the facts, enabling delegates to have as much information as possible on priority issues.

Costs

Under the provisions of Resolution number 385, the conference shall be self-financing. Costs are likely to be substantial as they may include the costs of a conference organizer, venue, printing, expenses for speakers, interpretation, etc.

Revenue and sponsorship

Some revenue can be generated from delegates fees. Consideration will need to be given to establishing an appropriate registration fee, and whether this should be discounted for Members. The International Sugar Organization (ISO), for example, allow around 3 delegates per Member to attend their conference free of charge, and attract 150 - 170 fee paying delegates. Additional revenue is raised from sponsorship and their event is a profit-making activity.

Sponsorship contributions from the private sector (e.g. roasting companies, banks, publishing companies) should be sought as soon as possible to assist in covering the costs of the event. Appropriate benefits to sponsors such as inclusion of logo on marketing materials will need to be identified.

Other matters

- Evaluation will need to be undertaken so that comments can be taken into account in organizing the second world coffee conference.
- Media coverage and advertising (e.g. mail-shots in coffee publications, as done by the ISO).
- Reserving hotel accommodation close to the conference venue for delegates.
- Interpretation into German to facilitate participation by German delegates (the largest consuming Member).