



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY

MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION

MILAN, 1 OCTOBER 2015

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am extremely pleased to be joined by all of you today for the launch of the first official International Coffee Day. This is a historic event, as for the first time coffee culture is celebrated on the same day across 75 countries all over the globe.

Today, we get together – not only here in Milan but around the world – to celebrate coffee’s remarkable journey from seed to cup – a journey of diversity, quality, and passion.

In fact, **diversity** is a key characteristic of the coffee experience. Virtually every country around the world has its own coffee culture. The differences manifest themselves in the coffee varieties grown, the regions the beans are sourced from, the roasting style, the brewing method and also how and where the coffee is enjoyed. Whether it is a formal Ethiopian coffee ceremony, or two friends casually having coffee in a café – coffee cultures abound throughout the world.

This immense diversity was also the main reason why so far coffee days were celebrated at the national rather than the international level. The ICO members and international coffee associations, however, wanted to emphasise that in spite or even because of this wonderful diversity all countries are united in their love for coffee: the idea was born to celebrate the International Coffee Day worldwide on 1st of October.

Today we also celebrate **quality**, which has become more and more vital in the coffee sector. Over the years, we have seen an incredible transition from the “commodity” coffee to an affordable luxury good that has become an integral part of modern lifestyle. Today, consumers are increasingly interested in coffee quality. This is also due to the huge efforts of all stakeholders in the coffee value chain – growers, traders, roasters and baristas. They have optimised production and processing techniques in order to increase coffee quality while educating consumers about flavours and origins. We can clearly observe that the rise of

specialty coffee fosters the further differentiation of the product. The fact that value is added to the bean does not only improve the coffee experience for consumers but also results in economic benefits for both producers and processors, contributing to a sustainable coffee sector.

Finally, coffee is also about **passion**. Whenever I meet farmers, roasters, exporters or traders I am always deeply impressed by the excitement and enthusiasm they show for the bean we all cherish. Everyone along the value chain goes to great lengths in order to provide consumers with a unique experience, each time they enjoy a cup of coffee. Coffee drinkers around the world will certainly agree that enjoying coffee is an experience that touches equally your heart, body and soul.

Diversity, quality and passion are important drivers behind the growth we currently observe in the coffee market. Today, 50 per cent more coffee is consumed than only 20 years ago. The International Coffee Organization expects this trend to continue. We estimate, that over the next ten years, world coffee consumption will increase by another 25 million and could even reach 175 million bags.

These dynamics are positive for the more than 25 million families in less developed countries who are directly engaged in coffee farming.

But we should also use the International Coffee Day to remind ourselves that many challenges remain for growers and the industry. For example, today at the Global Coffee Forum we have discussed how in the future climate change will pose a severe challenge for the coffee sector. Together, we need to develop solutions that help to increase further both the environmental and also social sustainability of the entire value chain to ensure that we will be able to enjoy our coffee in the days to come.

The International Coffee Day is launched here in Milan. The celebrations, however, take place everywhere in the world. In support of truly global event, the ICO has launched a dedicated social media campaign. Coffee lovers around the world have used the website, which was specifically designed for the International Coffee Day, to share how they celebrate this special day. The success of this initiative is overwhelming, and as we speak, we are joined by millions of coffee aficionados around the globe. There are countless wonderful events, from a coffee brewing competition in a local coffee shop in the US to an Open Farm day in Nicaragua. Remarkably, the All Japan Coffee Association will celebrate this International Coffee Day with a Brazil-style samba parade in the streets of Shibuya, Tokyo's prime shopping district.

The ICO will mark this day through a special cooperation. We have joined forces with Oxfam to launch a fundraising initiative: the Coffee4Change Campaign.

[This initiative was born out of the old Neapolitan tradition of “Caffè Sospeso” – a tradition still found in coffee bars in Naples and around Italy today. When someone experiences good fortune, they will order a second Caffè Sospeso alongside their own daily coffee as an act of charity and kindness. This truly noble tradition has inspired us to launch together with Oxfam an in-store and online campaign that is now on the way in many countries around the world.] The funds raised through this campaign will support Oxfam’s coffee projects that support smallholder coffee farmers in such places as Haiti, Honduras and Timor-Leste.

This huge variety of activities clearly shows that the idea of the International Coffee Day has successfully transformed into waves of celebration and solidarity, into action but also reflection. I am convinced that today we lay the groundwork for a well-established and meaningful custom of celebrating the International Coffee Day on October 1st.

On behalf of the International Coffee Organization, I would like to express my gratitude to all ICO members and the dozens of coffee associations, which have supported the idea of the International Coffee Day from the outset and have ensured that this special event will become such a great success. Once again, I would like to thank Oxfam for the fantastic collaboration on this truly unique campaign of solidarity.

From now on, every year on 1st of October, we will say: Happy International Coffee Day!
I would like to thank you very much for your kind attention.