



**INTERNATIONAL
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**Statement by H.E. Dr Alexander Yakovenko,
Ambassador of the Russian Federation to
the United Kingdom, to the 115th Session of
the International Coffee Council on
28 September 2015**

Mr Executive Director,
Mr Chairman,
Members of the Council,
Dear delegates,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the congratulations on Russia's accession to the International Coffee Agreement 2007, which was officially announced on 24 April 2015. Russia has become the seventh importing Member (EU taken as one) of the ICO, while Japan closed the list of importers as the eighth importing Member. We congratulate Japan on its ICO membership.

In the recent years Russia participated in ICO activities as an observer. Now we are a fully-fledged Member of the Organization with all relevant rights and duties. The first thing Russia did in this capacity was the execution of its financial commitments before the Organization by paying up its annual fee for the 2014/15 agricultural year.

Russian coffee companies support the work of the ICO, above all, to improve the quality of coffee and its products. The Russian business community actively participates in the development of regulations for the coffee industry and new government standards for all coffee grades in accordance with global standards. Although tea remains the most popular hot drink in Russia, the popularity of coffee continues to grow; the proportion of regular coffee drinkers in Russia has been at a stable level throughout the recent years (more than 70% of Russians).

As evaluated by the ICO and the Russian Association of Tea and Coffee Manufacturers (Rusteacoffee), Russia is the eighth coffee consumer in the world, with a market value at US\$ 2.5 bn, which is nearly three times more its level in 2000. Nevertheless, *per capita* consumption is relatively modest (around 120 cups per year) as not all the consumers prefer this beverage.

Coffee import in Russia is on the rise, with an annual average growth rate of 5.2% from 1994 onwards, and a slight drop since 2010 brought it to 4.4%.

In joining the ICO, we were not only guided by the interests of the domestic coffee sector and its consumers. Being committed to international development assistance, Russia aims to help coffee exporting countries, above all, least developed countries, which make up more than one third out of 40 Members of the ICO, to build national production capacity, stimulate growth based on trade in traditional export goods, enhance the potential of the private sector, for coffee is mainly grown by small farming communities in need of micro loans, and facilitate their access to suppliers on the external market.

We proceed from the assumption that Russia's membership in the ICO will be beneficial both for Russia and all the countries that grow coffee beans and process them.

Russia is ready to cooperate with all the ICO Member states to further develop the strategy of the Organization and raise its efficiency.