



**Statement by Mr Robério Oliveira Silva,
Executive Director, International Coffee Organization
4th World Coffee Conference
Closing Ceremony
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 8 March 2016**

His Excellency Mr Teferra Derebew, Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources;

His Excellency Mr Wondirad Mandefro, State Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources of Ethiopia;

His Excellency Mr Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, Minister of Commerce of the Republic of Cameroon;

His Excellency Mr Iván Romero Martínez, Chairman of the International Coffee Council and Ambassador of Honduras to the United Kingdom;

Mr Hussein Agraw, President of the Board of the Ethiopian Coffee Exporters Association;

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two exciting and inspiring days here at Addis Ababa are coming to an end.

These were two days of discussions on the current trends, challenges and opportunities in the coffee sector. We also had the opportunity to celebrate diversity in world coffee culture.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Mr Haliemariam Desalegn, and the First Lady of Ethiopia, Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, for addressing the audience at the 4th World Coffee Conference.

Once again, I would like to thank all speakers, moderators and participants for making this a most successful World Coffee Conference.

We have covered a lot of ground and discussed a variety of opportunities including the coffee sector's most pressing issues.

Coffee consumption has now increased to 150 million bags. While this trend continues, new opportunities for producers will arise.

Even though the World Coffee Conference has allowed us to look at the challenges that continue to affect the coffee sector, we have observed that great progress has been made both in better understanding the nature of those challenges and in formulating and implementing effective responses.

Let me share with you some key messages that have emerged from the discussions:

First and foremost, the economic sustainability of production remains a concern.

Against this background it is encouraging to see that new varieties are being developed and increasingly taken to farmers through successful replanting campaigns.

Profitability at farm level can also be improved by taking advantage of the on-going trend towards product differentiation.

For that reason, it is necessary that both the industry and the coffee producers establish an understanding in order to find ways for bringing economic sustainability to coffee production.

In order to further advance sustainable practices along the value chain, we need to improve coordination between different programmes and initiatives available to growers.

A second key message is that the sector must prepare to face the impact of climate change. Fortunately, we have witnessed a more decisive and active response to this serious threat.

At the political level, the new climate change agreement reached at COP21 in Paris is a historic milestone. At the same time, an increased number of sector initiatives tackling climate change through concrete adaptation projects has developed.

The third key observation is that the issue of gender and youth inclusion has received the attention it deserves.

The opening remarks given by the First Lady of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Mrs Roman Tesfaye during the panel on gender equality, highlighted the importance of women in the coffee sector on the same day that the world is celebrating International Women's Day.

The final message is that, on a global level, coffee is a sector of strategic importance.

Hence, we need to work together to build on the economic significance of the coffee sector.

I strongly believe that a healthy coffee sector:

- secures the livelihood of smallholders,
- provides crucial eco-system services, and
- has the potential to advance sustainable economic development.

I am convinced that in 2021 when we meet for the 5th World Coffee Conference, a stronger coffee sector will have significantly contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The key results of the World Coffee Conference will be reported to the Session of the International Coffee Council tomorrow.

Thank you very much your participation.