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**Statement by H.E. Mr Claudio De la Puente,  
Ambassador of Peru to the United Kingdom,  
on the occasion of Peru's reincorporation to  
the International Coffee Organization,  
to the 116<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Coffee  
Council on 9 March 2016**

Chairperson of the Council, H.E. Mr Iván Romero-Martínez;  
Ministers and Deputy Ministers;  
Executive Director, Mr Robério Oliveira Silva;  
Distinguished delegates;  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr Chairman, I should like to thank you for the kind welcome you gave Peru at the opening of this plenary session. We are confident that your ample experience will ensure that the Council's work is most successful. I should also like to thank and congratulate the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources of Ethiopia for the impeccable organization of the World Coffee Conference and the 116<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council, and to thank his Government for the warm hospitality and courtesies they have extended to the delegations. My thanks must also go to the Executive Director and the staff of the Secretariat for their very valuable work and support in the course of these important meetings. Additionally, I should like to express my warmest greetings to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil and the other Ministers and Deputy Ministers here.

Mr Chairman,

It is a great honour for Peru to participate as a new member in the 116<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Coffee Council following our formal resumption of membership of the ICO on 14 December 2015.

The decision to rejoin this important Organization goes hand in hand with the very auspicious development that the coffee sector in Peru has undergone in recent years, and its very close link to the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Peruvians.

Indeed, in Peru, as in many exporter countries, coffee is a significant source of direct employment – one third of agricultural jobs are linked to the coffee market, and it is also the source of demand for inputs, goods and services. Almost 225.000 families earn a living from coffee, many of them smallholders, and approximately 2 million Peruvians are involved in the coffee value chain as a whole. But coffee also has an added value in Peru that is worthy of particular note. It has now become one of the main replacement products for illicit crops such as coca leaf, and so is encouraging thousands of smallholders to become part of the formal, legal economy under alternative development projects.

As a result, Peru has become the world's 10<sup>th</sup> largest coffee producer; coffee is cultivated all over the eastern and western slopes of the Andes over an area measuring approximately 425.000 hectares across 17 regions in the country, in a very diverse range of climates, soils, levels of precipitation and sunlight, all of which makes for a very high-quality coffee harvest.

In terms of coffee exports, Peru is the world's ninth exporter, and coffee is now Peru's main agroexport product. Growth forecasts are very encouraging: there has been 240% growth over the past decade and, as noted yesterday during the expert panels, Peru is likely to be taking up more room on world markets, particularly because of the ongoing growth in speciality coffees, including organic coffee, for which Peru is the world leader in production and exports.

The high quality of Peruvian coffee is thus gaining increasing international recognition, as reflected in important events such as those organized by the Rainforest Alliance, the Specialty Coffee Association of America and others. This is a major boost for the development of our agriculture and for the hundreds of thousands of families who make a living from growing coffee in Peru, and has a positive effect on the work done by producer organisations who have been investing greater resources in developing quality control laboratories to establish and maintain a standard for coffee that bears the special characteristics that are typical of Peruvian beans.

Meanwhile, the Peruvian Government has been taking action to boost development of coffee cultivation, such as the National Plan for Coffee Plantations Renewal, which aims to renovate 80.000 hectares through a programme to provide finance and technical assistance to producers. Additionally, in 2013, an extensive National Plan to combat Leaf Rust was implemented alongside other support measures, such as the purchase of coffee plantation

debts from plantations where crops were affected by pests. Moreover, the Government continues to promote the production of high-quality coffee under a variety of initiatives, including the National Speciality Coffees Contest and other international fairs and events such as Expo Café Perú, which has now been held for five years in a row.

At the same time, bearing in mind that domestic coffee consumption is still low – it accounts for barely 5% of national production – the Peruvian Government has been promoting consumption by publicizing the quality of Peruvian beans and coffee's beneficial effects on health. Against that background, a 'National Coffee Day' has been established in Peru. It is held on the third Friday in August each year.

As you will no doubt appreciate, the Peruvian coffee cultivation sector and the Government are actively working together to develop this important activity. We expect to be able to complement these efforts through cooperation programmes and other activities specific to the International Coffee Organization in areas such as coffee research, quality promotion, availability of up-to-date information on market trends, phytosanitary management and development of domestic consumption.

Accordingly, our resumption of membership of the International Coffee Organization after more than 20 years is very significant for Peru, both in relation to the opportunities it presents for fuelling competitiveness in Peru's coffee sector, and as an important platform for discussion and cooperation. I would therefore reiterate our commitment to participate actively and constructively both with producer and consumer members, as well as government authorities and the private sector, to contribute to the orderly development and growth of the market, and to prosperity in the coffee sector as a whole.

Thank you very much.