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ICO 1963–2023: 60 years of serving the international coffee community

The Executive Director is delighted to announce that the ICO commemorates its 60th anniversary this year. She conveys her sincerest gratitude to Member governments and the global coffee community for their continued support and reiterates the Organization's commitment to achieving a fairer and more prosperous sector, anchored on the tenet of international cooperation.

Much has changed since the ICO was first established to oversee post-war cooperation under the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) 1962. Since then, membership has increased from 32 to 42 exporting countries and from 22 to 33 importing countries. Moreover, in a historic development under the new ICA 2022, the private sector and civil society will now also have a voice in decisions affecting the sector through the Board of Affiliate Members, and will provide assistance to producing countries through the Coffee Public-Private Working Party.

Sector changes in the last 60 years have been impressive. Today, we produce and consume 100 million more 60-kg bags than when the ICO was first established, and we now drink 2.7 billion cups a day compared with 1.1 billion in the 1960s. Brazil remains the largest producer and exporter, but Vietnam – previously absent from the top 5 producers and exporters – now occupies second place. Meanwhile, the EU has overtaken the USA as the world's largest consumer, and Japan and Indonesia have also crept up the consumption rankings since the ICO's inception, replacing the UK and Canada in the top 5.

Over the past six decades, we have convened 134 Council Sessions and drafted eight ICAs, each one adapted to questions firmly rooted in the economic, social and political realities of our times. As we commemorate this important moment in our history and look to the future, let us draw inspiration from the way in which we have harnessed human agency and collaboration to bring about meaningful and transformative solutions over the past 60 years.

Finally, in anticipation of the official celebrations planned to take place in Bangalore, India, the Executive Director is honoured to share the official anniversary logo. Prepared by world-renowned designer Giulio Vinaccia, it can be found in the header of this document and on the ICO website in black, red, gold and white. Members are encouraged to include it in general communications and to use it when inviting coffee stakeholders to join events taking place within the 136th Session of the Council and 5th World Coffee Conference from 10–15 July 2023. The Secretariat is also preparing a report documenting the Organization's technical cooperation projects from the last 60 years, which we look forward to sharing in due course.