



WGEF 25/24

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Report on the 8th meeting of the Working Group for the Entry into Force of the International Coffee Agreement 2022

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1. The Working Group for the Entry into Force of the International Coffee Agreement 2022 (WGEF) met for the eighth time on 15 July 2024. The Chair of the Group, Mr Michael Wheeler of Papua New Guinea, welcomed all participants and thanked delegates for their presence.

2. Representatives of the following Members were present online using Zoom software: Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, European Union (including EU-Ireland, EU-Italy and EU-Sweden), Japan, Papua New Guinea, and Togo.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda contained in document [WGEF-23/24](#) was adopted.

Item 2: Report of the 7th meeting of the Working Group held on 3 June 2024

4. The Chair presented the report of the previous meeting, contained in document [WGEF-22/24](#).

5. The WGEF took note of the report.

Item 3: Participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the activities of the Organization

6. The Chair thanked all the Members that had taken part in the questionnaire circulated as document [WGEF 24/24](#) on 19 June 2024, recalling that the latter was non-binding and intended to give delegations that had been less vocal during meetings a way to express their views in writing. He noted that a higher participation rate was expected as only eight countries had submitted their answers.

7. The delegate of Brazil stressed that the absence of answers from certain countries, including his own, was not to be interpreted as their willingness to join the consensus emerging from the questionnaire or endorse suggestions by the Secretariat or the Working Group. He then commented on the pace of the WGEF activities, stressing that there was no need to rush decisions without the full agreement of Members and their coffee value chains since many countries like Brazil were still finalizing the procedures for their membership of the ICA 2022.

8. The delegate of Brazil noted that the opinion expressed by the delegation of Brazil at WGEF meetings always reflected the consensus reached following a complex consultation process with different bodies, including ministries and associations, in charge of deciding on coffee matters. As some Brazilian institutions had filled in the questionnaire before a consultation meeting to identify a common position in this sense, he asked the Chair to disregard answers submitted directly to the Secretariat inadvertently.

9. Regarding the questionnaire itself, the delegate of Brazil expressed its country's discontent as it did not contain some of the options put forward by the Brazilian delegation during the 7th WGEF meeting, namely the suggestion to:

- i) keep the number of participants of the Board of Affiliate Members (BAM) at the existing level of the Private Sector Consultative Board (PSCB) and possibly revise this structure only following an appropriate assessment of the results achieved;
- ii) maintain an equilibrium between the number of exporting and importing countries within the BAM (eight representatives per group as in the PSCB), stressing that equal representation was the cornerstone of the BAM structure;
- iii) maintain the representation and distinction among the four coffee groups as one of the BAM's composition criteria.

10. The delegate of Brazil noted that it was important to stress that the intergovernmental nature of the International Coffee Organization is a valuable characteristic that distinguishes it from other fora aiming to bring together non-state actors. While emphasizing how the advisory nature of the BAM coincided with the functions of the PSCB as foreseen in the ICA 2007, he also pointed out that the BAM was not to be considered as a means to increase the collection of funds for the Organization. This was in light of the fact that contributions paid by Members endorsing the application of an entity to the BAM were meant to guarantee this kind of activity already.

11. The Chair thanked the delegate of Brazil for his intervention, noting that during the renegotiation of the ICA 2007 the establishment of the BAM was introduced as the PSCB was failing to achieve its objectives and a greater involvement of the private sector was to be sought. He then stressed that the intergovernmental nature of the Organization was never questioned, as made clear in the provision of the ICA 2022 which granted the power to make decisions only to the International Coffee Council. He also noted that while a step-by-step approach was crucial, the WGEF still needed to make progress as some of the countries considering joining the ICA 2022 would wish to know how the 2022 Agreement would be implemented. While agreeing with Brazil on the point of not using the BAM as a source of revenue for the Organization, the Chair recalled that a small fee was introduced to prevent applications lacking commitment.

12. The delegate of Brazil noted that expanding the number of members of the existing PSCB would not improve its efficiency, stressing that a more effective way of ensuring the fulfilment of its functions would have been to change its composition, as provided in the ICA 2007.

13. While thanking the delegate of Brazil for his constructive interventions, the Chair stressed that the PSCB was not considered fit for purpose and a consensus to replace it with a more dynamic body had been reached during the renegotiations of the 2007 Agreement. He noted that it was the WGEF's responsibility to explore all the options available and identify the best one before making a recommendation to the Council. He also specified that the questionnaire was not fully inconclusive as there seemed to be a consensus between respondents on the need to

maintain a distinction and an equilibrium between exporting and importing countries. Lastly, he invited Members to consider that, in order to establish a balance between entities, a fixed number of affiliate members needed to be identified by definition.

14. The delegate of EU-Italy expressed his support for an expansion of participation in the BAM compared to participation in the PSCB as a way to get more inputs from all coffee stakeholders and invited Members to work together to identify ways to improve the former PSCB.

15. In response to an intervention of the Chair on the question of having major coffee stakeholders join the BAM, the delegate of Brazil noted that this was already foreseen and being implemented within the Task Force, a body that had been integrated into the structure of the Organization as per the provisions of the ICA 2022. He also pointed out that local branches of major international companies could also participate in the activities of the BAM through the national associations they were members of.

16. The delegate of the European Union endorsed the suggestion to maintain an equilibrium between the two categories, as well as the need to set a maximum number of members for the BAM.

17. The delegate of EU-Ireland supported the idea of recirculating a revised version of the questionnaire. On the same point, the delegate of Brazil opposed the recirculation of the questionnaire as the first round of answers indicated that the approach adopted was not the most appropriate, while inviting the WGEF to identify other ways to build consensus.

18. In light of the debate, the Chair noted that the WGEF could start addressing other questions and documents that still needed to be drafted as agreed during the first WGEF meeting.

Item 4: Date of next meeting

19. The date of the following meeting – 2 September 2024 – was shared on screen for Members' reference.

Item 5: Other business

20. The Chair instructed the Secretariat to start looking into a presentation on the methodology for the calculation of votes and contributions as of post-September.

21. The Head of Operations noted that while the document on the methodology for the calculation of votes and contributions would provide a clear explanation of the provisions of the ICA 2022 in this regard, the document on the conversion factors would require further technical and strategic discussions in light of the introduction of “premixed coffee” in the ICA 2022. In response to an intervention of the delegate of EU-Italy, the Head of Operations stressed that for

the definition of conversion factors the private sector would be consulted as per standard practice.

22. With reference to a comment from Brazil on the proposal for Members with increased contributions, the Chair recalled that the Council had instructed the Executive Director to consider ways to alleviate the impact of such abrupt changes for some countries. He noted that while the task in question was a complex one, the WGEF would need to consider it and work within the framework provided by the Council and the ICA 2022.