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Statement by Mr Gunther Beger, Managing Director of the Directorate for SDG Innovation and Economic Transformation, UNIDO, made at the opening ceremony of the 140th Session of the Council

Your Excellency Madam President of the Republic of Honduras,

Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), I extend our sincere appreciation to the International Coffee Organization for convening the 140th Session of the International Coffee Council.

Allow me first to express my deep appreciation to Your Excellency, Madam President, for hosting this important meeting and for your personal leadership in advancing the sustainable development of the coffee sector in Honduras and across Central America.

UNIDO is pleased to have recently strengthened its partnership with Honduras through the signing of the Programme for Country Partnership in July 2025, which reflects our shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Let me also commend the International Coffee Organization and the Executive Director Vanusia Nogueira for her leadership in uniting all coffee stakeholders under one shared vision.

Coffee is more than a commodity: it is a strategic asset for producing countries, often central to fiscal revenue and foreign exchange. As global demand grows, so do opportunities across the value chain. Yet, systemic challenges – climate change, price volatility, aging farming populations and plantations, and regulatory complexity – require collective solutions and innovative financing.

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight two areas where UNIDO, in close partnership with the ICO, is advancing cooperation with a long-term vision.

First: Towards a Global Coffee Fund.

Together with the ICO, UNIDO conducted a study on the "Sustainability and Resilience of the Coffee Value Chain." This study demonstrated the scale of investments required to drive sustainable transformation in the sector. It was instrumental to the establishment of a Global Coffee Fund, endorsed by the G7 as promoted by Italy under its presidency in 2024 to blend public and private finance, targeting critical areas such as:

- climate-resilient production and adaptation;
- circularity and regenerative practices;
- upgrading capacities and technologies;
- and the empowerment of women and youth in the coffee value chain.

By joining forces, we can unlock the scale of resources needed to ensure a resilient and sustainable future for all coffee-producing countries.

Second: Scaling the ACT Coffee Programme globally.

The **Advancing Climate-Resilience and Transformation in African Coffee, ACT Programme**, launched with the support of the Government of Italy under its Mattei Plan for Africa, is a milestone in partnership, recognized also by the EU Global Gateway Strategy for Africa. ACT brings together governments, producer associations, the private sector, and international partners to strengthen climate resilience, build value addition, and promote social inclusion.

ACT is already supporting coffee-producing countries in East Africa—including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Malawi—with a vision to expand across the continent. Implementation is being carried out in close cooperation with local governments, the ICO, as well as the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO). Through IACO, ACT is fostering African ownership, ensuring that interventions respond to national priorities.

The ACT programme has been designed to be modular, bankable and scalable, standing on five components:

- Climate adaptation
- Value Addition
- Compliance with trade regulations
- Research

- Social Inclusion

No coffee project could be impactful if these five pillars are not sufficiently considered.

We believe that **ACT's approach can inspire and be expanded to Central and Latin America** fostering also regional and south-south cooperation. UNIDO stands ready, working in close partnership with the ICO and all beneficiary countries, development partners and the private sector, to design comprehensive regional programmes and resource mobilization strategies, ensuring that no one is left behind in the transformation of the global coffee sector.

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the essence of our cooperation with the ICO: it enables us to convene, to innovate, and to act collectively for a truly global transformation of the coffee sector.

UNIDO stands ready to continue working with the ICO, Member States, and all partners to translate this vision into reality.

Together, through multilateralism, partnership, and shared responsibility, we can ensure that coffee continues to be a source of prosperity, sustainability, and connection among peoples.