INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION

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Statement by the Chair of the International Coffee Council, Mr Tom Fabozzi, made at the opening ceremony of the 140th Session of the Council

Dear Madam President of Honduras,

Secretaries of State,

Executive Director of the ICO,

Distinguished delegates,

Welcome to the 140th Session of the International Coffee Organization. It is truly an honour to stand before you today.

Just over a year ago, this very Council not only appointed me as its Chair for coffee year 2024/25. It also approved the proposal of Honduras, put forward by our esteemed colleague and friend, Ambassador Iván Romero Martinez, to host the first Council Session in the country, right here in San Pedro Sula. Without his vision, wisdom and friendship we would not be here today.

More than ever, as I reflect on the words I shared with you during my first speech as Chair, I am reminded that while the challenges facing our sector have not diminished, it is only through dialogue and a spirit of shared responsibility that we can navigate our way towards a more sustainable future.

As we look ahead, we are confronted by a world in which the need for multilateralism is clearer than ever. The challenges we face transcend national borders and require a collective, coordinated response. We have witnessed this in the speeches of world leaders and policymakers this year, where there has been a resounding call for greater collaboration and cooperation among nations, organizations, and all the stakeholders committed to contributing to positive change. Whether it is addressing the complexities of global trade, tackling climate impacts on agricultural systems, or ensuring fair and sustainable development for all, it is clear that

unilateral action will not suffice. The power of multilateralism is not just a diplomatic ideal—it is an essential pathway for solving the most pressing issues of our time.

The coffee sector demands our unity, but it also requires a critical, forward-thinking approach. This is not the time to hold back on efforts or resources in shaping the future of both this Organization and the coffee industry as a whole. Rather, this is the time to strengthen the foundations of collaboration, to take bold steps forward and to ensure that our collective vision becomes a reality.

Let us value and prioritize forums like ours, where diverse perspectives converge, where differences are acknowledged, and where solutions are co-created. Here, we have a unique opportunity to move beyond discord, to dialogue in a constructive way, and to foster an environment where progress is not only possible, but reachable. We may not agree on every issue, but we all agree that solutions must be reached.

My chairmanship may conclude with this Council Session, but my commitment to this cause remains. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow delegates, the Executive Director, the Secretariat, and all those who have actively contributed to the significant results we have achieved over the past coffee year.

Together, we can and must chart a path that not only supports the coffee sector but ensures its resilience and sustainability for generations to come.

Thank you.