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Statement by H.E. Ms Iris Xiomara Castro, President of the Republic of Honduras, made at the opening ceremony of the 140th Session of the Council

Land of the unmistakable aroma of coffee – fruit of the labour of more than 120,000 families who, from dawn, sow each seed with hope. Today, we are inaugurating the 140th Session of the International Coffee Council and the 7th CEOs and Global Leaders Forum, which are being held here in Honduras for the first time in history.

This event marks a historic milestone in our productive diplomacy and confirms that the name "Honduras" is spoken with respect and admiration around the world.

We are gathered in San Pedro Sula, our country's industrial hub, which today becomes the global epicentre for dialogue and cooperation within the coffee sector. Coffee is not just a product; it is culture, identity, work and dignity. It is the root of our history and the future of millions of Latin American and African families whose lives depend on this noble crop.

Honduras today is the leading coffee producer in Central America, third in Latin America and eighth in the world. The sector represents 30% of our national agricultural GDP, 5% of our total GDP, and sustains over one million Hondurans. During my government of democratic socialism and national refoundation, I committed to making coffee a driver of social justice, sustainability, and rural development.

In 2024, we launched the National Coffee Plantation Renewal Plan which, in its first stage, through the *Agrobosques* programme, delivered 30 million coffee plants. In the second stage, we are now producing 115 million plants of varieties that are resistant and tolerant to climate change, ensuring productivity, traceability, and profitability for small producers.

With the support of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock, we formed a national technical team that provides credit, assistance, and training to more than 150 producers, and promotes the active participation of women and rural youth as protagonists of change.

Through the presidential *Coffee Bonus* programme, we have helped more than 119,000 small and medium coffee farmers, providing fertilizers, phytosanitary kits, tools, solar dryers, nurseries, and ecological benefits.

Of every ten beneficiaries, three are women — because in my government, equality is not rhetoric; it is concrete action in the Honduran countryside.

These initiatives generate decent work, strengthen the rural economy, and reduce forced migration, because when there are opportunities in the countryside, no one needs to leave their homeland. We are advancing towards sustainable coffee production alongside environmental justice. We have reduced deforestation in protected areas by more than 90%, and through the *Zero Deforestation 2029* programme, we defend our forests and ensure that every cup of Honduran coffee is also a cup of life for the planet.

Our model is aligned with the European Union's new regulations, which require deforestation-free production based on ethical and sustainable principles. Honduras delivers and it does so with dignity — without sacrificing its people, its mountains or its sovereignty.

During this assembly, the exporting and importing countries that represent 93% of global production and consumption have a responsibility to look to the future with solidarity. This assembly cannot be limited to debating prices or markets, and it is here that Honduras presents its proposal: to offer the world a new way of understanding coffee justice. This proposal was not born at a desk. It was born in the field, in the soil, from the hands that work under the sun and the rain. It was born from the heart of the people.