Mission report

Subject	Global SME Ministerial Meeting 2025
Place and dates	Johannesburg, South Africa – 22 to 24 July 2025
ICO staff member	Vanúsia Nogueira, Executive Director
Purpose of travel	• Participate in the Global SME Ministerial Meeting 2025: o Take part in the Business and Innovation Space session on "Circular Economy: (Re)generating Value for SMEs in the Global Coffee Sector" co-created with ITC and the Center for Circular Economy in Coffee (C4CEC) (23/07/25). o Contribute to the Third Ministerial Roundtable Discussion on "Green and Inclusive Growth for SMEs – Climate, Nature, Circularity, and Sustainability" as a panellist in the 40-minute session on private sector views (24/07/25).
Five-Year Action Plan/Programme of Activities relevance	**Five-Year Action Plan** • **Strategic Goal II:** Using the Organization's convening power to provide a forum for dialogue between and within the public and private sector • **Strategic Goal III:** Facilitating the development of projects and promotion programmes through public-private partnerships **Results and Deliverables from the PoA:** • III.A.3 Advocacy for the promotion of cooperation with bilateral, regional & multilateral development agencies and donors with a focus on regulatory framework and sustainability and resilience of the coffee sector • III.A.5 Providing advisory services and cooperation with IGOs, private sector, civil society/academia • III.A.7 Supporting the operation and promotion of the Center for Circular Economy for Coffee (C4CEC) • III.B.2 Helping Members launch campaigns and organize coffee promotion events and activities in the UK and abroad

OVERVIEW

1. Global SME Ministerial Meeting 2025 - Johannesburg

The inaugural Global SME Ministerial Meeting 2025 was organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in partnership with the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) of

South Africa. The initiative aimed to elevate the political importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) development by bringing countries together to establish a new platform focused on advancing sectoral growth and addressing challenges that hinder SME full potential. The meeting took place in Johannesburg on 22-24 July 2025, during South Africa's G20 presidency year, centred around the theme "Navigating New Business Frontiers" with a focus on access to finance, digital connectivity, and green transition.

1.1 Business and Innovation Space session on "Circular Economy: (Re)generating Value for SMEs in the Global Coffee Sector

This panel, organized in partnership with ITC and the Center for Circular Economy in Coffee (C4CEC), explored opportunities to transform biological waste into valuable resources through circular economy models. Participants discussed environmental and economic benefits, innovative practices, enabling policies, and ways to ensure that small businesses, especially in the Global South, can share in these gains.

The Executive Director emphasized ICO's leadership in advancing this agenda and shared insights from the *Coffee Development Report 2022–2023*.

1.2 Third Ministerial Roundtable Discussion on "Green and Inclusive Growth for SMEs – Climate, Nature, Circularity, and Sustainability"

The panel featured discussions on how SMEs can chart a course for accelerating contributions to a sustainable future while ensuring competitiveness, resilience, and inclusive economic growth. It addressed the finding that 61% of firms face environmental risks, including temperature changes, floods, and extreme weather events, and explored concrete actions needed from governments and partners to strengthen access to finance for SMEs.

CONCLUSIONS/MAIN OUTCOMES

1. Global SME Ministerial Meeting 2025 - Johannesburg

The meeting reaffirmed the vital role of SMEs, including those in the coffee sector, in driving sustainable and inclusive growth. It recognized the need for collective action on global challenges, reiterated support for key international agreements (UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact, Declaration on Future Generations, and the Paris Agreement on climate change), and committed to advancing the green transition through improved finance, skills, and regulation.

1.1 Business and Innovation Space session on "Circular Economy: (Re)generating Value for SMEs in the Global Coffee Sector

The Executive Director highlighted the ICO's work and collaborations on the circular economy and regenerative approaches in the coffee sector, showcasing initiatives, partnerships, research, innovation, and policy efforts that promote sustainability, value creation, income growth, and youth engagement across the global coffee value chain.

1.2 Third Ministerial Roundtable Discussion on "Green and Inclusive Growth for SMEs – Climate, Nature, Circularity, and Sustainability"

The panel emphasized the need for targeted interventions that can generate significant impact while ensuring the competitiveness and resilience of SMEs, including those in the coffee sector, in the face of climate challenges. Key outcomes included identification of three critical areas: (a) access to affordable green finance mechanisms; (b) development of skills and knowledge of green technologies and practices; and (c) establishment of a clear, balanced, and enabling regulatory framework.

AOB

N.A.