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**Statement by H.E. Mr Luc Magloire
Mbarga Atangana, Minister of Trade of
Cameroon, made at the opening
ceremony of the 142nd Session of the
Council**

Your Excellency, Mr Ambassador, representative of the Swiss Government,

Mr Chair of the International Coffee Council,

Madam Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization,

Madam Deputy Executive Director of the International Trade Centre,

Madam Director of the Intellectual Property, Government Procurement and Competition Division
at the World Trade Organization.

Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Cameroon,

Your Excellencies, representatives of the Member States,

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of international organizations, the private sector and civil
society,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a real honour and a pleasure for me and my country to address you on behalf of the
Government of the Republic of Cameroon at the opening ceremony of this 142nd Session of the
International Coffee Council here in Geneva.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the authorities of the Swiss
Confederation and to the International Coffee Organization for their warm welcome and
hospitality. I am grateful to the Swiss authorities for the arrangements they have made to ensure
the success of our proceedings.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Coffee remains an important export crop for many developing countries. It provides a source of income for millions of producers and workers across the world and contributes directly to the development of rural areas.

For producing countries in Africa, coffee represents much more than a simple raw material destined for international trade. It is a tool for rural development, job creation, income generation and the fight against poverty.

In Cameroon, the government is paying particular attention to the revitalization and development of the coffee sector, with the aim of strengthening its contribution to the structural transformation of our economy.

Recent developments in the international coffee market teach us, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, a fundamental truth. The sustainability of the sector cannot be separated from the economic and social situation of producers. It is therefore essential that we continue to jointly reflect on how to ensure a fairer distribution of value throughout the global coffee supply chain.

As market demands – including those relating to quality, traceability, environmental sustainability and social responsibility – become more stringent, producers must also have the technical and financial resources necessary to meet these requirements. It would be neither fair nor sustainable for the costs associated with these new requirements to be borne mainly by small-scale producers from countries of origin, whilst the bulk of the added value continues to be generated further down the supply chain.

Cameroon therefore considers that sustainability must be economic, social and environmental. It must be a sustainable coffee sector that protects ecosystems, whilst also safeguarding the income and future of those who plant, tend, harvest and market the coffee.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am not telling you anything new. International trade is going through a unique period characterized by a profound transformation of the conditions that previously prevailed.

End markets now demand greater guarantees regarding traceability, quality, environmental protection, compliance with social standards and transparency in supply chains. These developments, which we support, may contribute to greater sustainability in the sector, but can also become barriers to trade when they are not accompanied by appropriate mechanisms for cooperation, financing and capacity-building.

Cameroon therefore considers it necessary to strengthen support for small-scale producers so that they can meet new requirements without losing their access to markets.

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants, through our participation at ministerial level in this 142nd session, Cameroon wishes to reaffirm its commitment and adherence to new requirements, as well as to the international cooperation that this entails. Cameroon's commitment is demonstrated, in particular, by the full powers I have been granted by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, to sign the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) 2022; I therefore officially announce Cameroon's approval to sign this important instrument. It is official. I am announcing it here and now.

Naturally, we support these new requirements. That is why we are agreeing to sign the ICA. However, we wish to add – and I address this to the legal experts – that a contract, by definition, is reciprocal. In other words: I give, I receive; I receive, I give. It is a partnership; it is shared.

We therefore believe that the new requirements must also meet other requirements, particularly those of the market. Among these requirements – and for us, this is fundamental, not just for Cameroon, but I am sure also for all producing countries, particularly those in Africa – is fair remuneration for producers. This leads to the necessary market transparency, which in turn is synonymous with the equitable distribution of the value generated by coffee across all links in the value chain. For us, this is the essence of our commitment. It is also the essence of this vital forum, which we support and which has the advantage of bringing together producers, consumers, international organizations and civil society.

Being in Geneva for this 142nd Session therefore offers us a fresh opportunity to strengthen our dialogue and to seek, together, solutions to the challenges facing the global coffee sector.

In this context, and to conclude my remarks, I therefore wish us successful deliberations and express the fervent hope that this session of the International Coffee Council will mark a further step towards a global coffee sector that is more balanced, fair, equitable, inclusive and prosperous, and truly sustainable.

I will end on that note – on sustainability, including our own self-reflection – so that we may advance in the search for solutions [to the problems] that hinder the smooth running of our Organization. Some issues remain unresolved, particularly regarding the relocation of the Organization, among others.

It is important that, during this session, we are able to make progress and that we finally focus on the essential issues rather than on these administrative matters that take up so much of our time and prevent us from getting to the heart of the matter – the heart of the matter being, as I have said, the new requirements, but also the other side of the coin: fair remuneration for producers and market transparency.

I therefore wish you every success in your work, and long live international cooperation. Thank you.