

## Mission report

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| <b>Subject</b>                                          | World of Coffee San Diego 2026 and related events                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Place and dates</b>                                  | San Diego, California, USA – 10 to 12 April 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>ICO staff member</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vanúsia Nogueira, Executive Director</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Purpose of travel</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the Panel: “From Soil to Supply Chain: Regenerative Practices, Market Competitiveness, and Responsible Business Conduct”</li> <li>Sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO)</li> <li>Participate as keynote speaker in the panel “The Value of Living Income: Understanding the Connection between Resilience and Prosperity”</li> <li>Attend the Board meeting of the Alliance of Coffee Excellence (ACE)/Cup of Excellence (CoE)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Five-Year Plan/Programme of Activities relevance</b> | <p><b>Five-Year Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Strategic Goal II:</b> Using the Organization’s convening power to provide a forum for dialogue and testing between and within the public and private sectors on coffee-related issues.</li> <li><b>Strategic Goal III:</b> Facilitating the development of projects and promotion programmes through public-private partnerships.</li> </ul> <p><b>Link to PoA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in expert groups</li> <li>Follow up and facilitation of partnerships</li> <li>Technical advice to partners</li> <li>Develop relations for finance for projects</li> <li>Joint promotion of coffee</li> </ul> |

## OVERVIEW

### 1. World of Coffee San Diego 2026

The Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) World of Coffee is an international event that provides a platform for networking, innovation, and professional development. Held annually in major cities around the world, the event brings together coffee enthusiasts, producers and industry professionals to explore advanced technologies, high-quality products and specialty coffee offerings.

The San Diego edition, held from 10 to 12 April 2026, attracted a global audience and reaffirmed the sector's commitment to innovation and industry growth through education, international collaboration and sustainable trade.

The Executive Director participated as a panellist and highlighted the International Coffee Organization's (ICO) role in promoting best practices for the sustainable development of the coffee sector. She emphasized the ICO's commitment to addressing global challenges affecting production and supporting inclusive economic development, resilience and fairness for coffee growers worldwide.

2. Panel “The Value of Living Income: Understanding the Connection between Resilience and Prosperity”

This panel brought together experts on sustainable livelihoods, data scientists, and coffee industry professionals to examine how responsible procurement and fairer pricing builds a climate-adaptive, regenerative coffee sector. Discussions explored the interplay between sustainable agricultural practices and market incentives, and how these factors influence the adoption of a holistic approach to strengthening farmer resilience. It focused on the data and calculations needed to close income gaps and achieve true resilience, as well as showcasing models and tools that link farm practices to prices that sustain dignified livelihoods and enable climate adaptation.

In her intervention, the Executive Director emphasized the importance of ensuring prosperity for coffee producers in the age of high prices. She highlighted the industry's main concerns regarding long-term sustainable supply, as well as producers' priorities for building a resilient and sustainable future in coffee farming. She also underscored the need for greater collaboration across the coffee sector to promote living incomes and resilience.

3. Sign the MoU with IACO

The ICO and IACO officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding on day 1 of World of Coffee San Diego, reinforcing their long-standing partnership and a shared commitment to strengthening Africa's coffee sector.

The agreement, available in document [ICC-141-4](#), sets a clear framework for joint action – from improving data collection and analysis, to supporting compliance with evolving global regulations, advancing research on climate-resilient coffee production, and building capacity across the value chain.

4. Panel “From Soil to Supply Chain: Regenerative Practices, Market Competitiveness, and Responsible Business Conduct”

Organized jointly by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC), the Center for Circular Economy in Coffee (C4CEC), and the ICO, this session explored how regenerative agriculture and agroecological practices, as part of a Responsible Business Conduct approach, can transform coffee landscapes, diversify farmer livelihoods, and support compliance with emerging due diligence expectations.

The Executive Director represented the ICO as a strategic founding partner and advisor to the C4CEC, as well as a partner supporting ITC and CLAC's work in Responsible Business Conduct and Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) readiness.

Together, the panellists examined how regenerative agricultural approaches address gaps in regulatory compliance and how improved due diligence supports de-risking, regulatory compliance, impact measurement, and the growing need and demand for climate-resilient coffee.

5. Information Meeting “Towards a Development of a Green Coffee Grading Standard”

The Executive Director represented the ICO at this meeting, which was convened to present a draft for the green coffee grading standard, developed from an initiative that the SCA has been working on with several coffee producers' organizations to further define the concept of green specialty coffee, and to build on the SCA's general definition of specialty coffee.

Participants were shown the rationale for the draft standard, the proposed green coffee specifications, and the next steps for producing countries interested in joining the initiative.

6. Board meeting of the Alliance of Coffee Excellence (ACE) / Cup of Excellence (CoE)

The Executive Director participated in the meeting of the Cup of Excellence (CoE) Board as one of its members.

The Cup of Excellence programme was originally established through the Café Gourmet Project and supported by the ICO and the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) between 1997 and 1999. Since its inception, the programme has provided support to several ICO Member countries that produce high-quality Arabica coffees. Given its success, there is growing interest in expanding the programme to include Robusta-producing countries as well, to promote excellence and value addition in the sector.

## **CONCLUSIONS/MAIN OUTCOMES**

1. The Executive Director's participation in World of Coffee San Diego 2026 panels strengthened dialogue on key priorities for building a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous coffee sector.
2. The living income panel discussions underscored the link between resilience and prosperity. Participants emphasized that sustainable livelihoods must remain at the centre of global efforts and that collaboration across the value chain is essential to turn commitments into tangible outcomes. Advocating for increased investment and cooperation to support sustainability, traceability, deforestation-free supply chains, and climate resilience in the coffee sector, the Executive Director showcased the ICO's expertise on best practices for a sustainable coffee sector transformation.

## **AOB**

N/A



