

Mission report

Subject	World of Coffee Brussels
Place and dates	Brussels, Belgium – 24 to 27 June 2026
ICO staff member	• Vanusia Nogueira, Executive Director • Hannelore Beerlandt, Head of Operations • Miguel Zamora, Coffee Public-Private Task Force (CPPTF) Coordinator • Lavinia Gasperini, Junior Professional Officer, Sustainability and Partnerships • Maria Clara Faria de Carvalho, Operations Division intern
Purpose of travel	• Attend World of Coffee Brussels and related meetings and side events
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 and testing between and within the public and private sectors on coffee-related issues. • Strategic Goal III: Facilitating the development of projects and promotion programmes through public-private partnerships. Link to PoA: • Participation in expert groups • Follow up and facilitation of partnerships • Technical advice to partners • Develop relations for finance for projects • Joint promotion of coffee

OVERVIEW

1. Attending World of Coffee Brussels and related meetings

The ICO's Executive Director, Head of Operations, CPPTF Coordinator, Junior Professional Officer and intern attended the World of Coffee and related meetings in Brussels, Belgium.

World of Coffee Brussels 2026, organized by the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA), is Europe's largest specialty coffee trade show. The event brought together thousands of international coffee professionals, including producers, traders, roasters and baristas.

Held in the heart of the EU institutions in Brussels, the event also offered a unique platform for dialogue with policymakers, industry representatives and development partners on the progress, challenges and opportunities shaping the coffee sector.

In this context, the ICO and its CPPTF worked closely with partners – notably the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the European Coffee Federation (ECF), the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO), the Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO), the European Commission's Directorates-General for International Partnerships and Environment (DG INTPA and DG ENV) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) – to organize, support and attend key side events, namely:

- (a) Sustainable Coffee Challenge 2026 All-Partner Workshop – by Conservation International/Sustainable Coffee Challenge:

On 23 and 24 June, the ICO-CPPTF team travelled to Brussels to attend a series of pre-event activities ahead of World of Coffee, including the 2026 Sustainable Coffee Challenge (SCC) All-Partner Workshop. This event brought together leading coffee companies, NGOs, research institutions, and technical experts around the theme 'From Risk to Resilience', exploring new research, challenging assumptions, and identifying practical pathways for collaboration across the coffee sector.

- (b) Workshop: Introduction to Specialty Coffee Markets – by ITC, SCA, ICO:

On 24 June, the ICO Executive Director participated in an introductory workshop on the specialty coffee market. This event was part of the collaboration between the SCA, ITC and ICO to strengthen local capacity and support coffee-producing countries in developing their specialty coffee sectors. During the workshop, the Executive Director delivered a presentation on key sector data, consumer trends, and emerging market opportunities, and took part in a Q&A session with participants representing Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Mozambique and Uganda.

- (c) Sustainable Coffee Value Chains in Africa: A Public-Private Sector Dialogue – by UNIDO:

This roundtable, convened by UNIDO on 24 June, brought together the ICO, ECF, senior private-sector leaders, EU officials, and representatives of ICO Member States to discuss how UNIDO's technical assistance and partnerships are driving sustainable investment across African coffee value chains. During the discussion, the ICO Executive Director highlighted Africa's strategic importance to the global coffee sector, emphasizing its cultural, economic, and sustainability contributions. The event also included the signing of a Memorandum of

Understanding between UNIDO and the ECF, two key partners of the ICO, reinforcing their shared commitment to advancing sustainability across the coffee sector.

(d) Opening Ceremony:

For the 2026 World of Coffee in Brussels, Uganda was the “Portrait Country”. The ICO Executive Director attended the Uganda booth’s opening ceremony on 25 June, featuring a cultural presentation and bringing together distinguished guests from the SCA, ITC, the Belgian cabinet, and the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). The ICO reaffirmed its commitment to remain close to this important coffee-producing country.

(e) Guided Tour of World of Coffee – by ECF and SCA:

ECF and SCA organized a guided tour of the exhibition, on 25 June, to introduce the show to key public sector stakeholders, mainly from the EU Commission. The group stopped at stands of coffee-producing countries, traders, roasters and the barista championship. The ICO–CPPTF team participated in the tour and continued visiting Member country booths afterwards to discuss specialty coffee production and the key opportunities and challenges facing producing countries.

(f) The Strategic Economic Importance of Coffee: Why it matters for EU policymaking – by ECF, ICO and SCA:

This session on 25 June marked the presentation of ECF’s new [Coffee Economic Impact Report](#), highlighting coffee’s contribution to the European economy and its importance as a strategic value chain. Representatives from the European Commission joined industry stakeholders, ECF, ICO and SCA to discuss how evolving production trends, global supply and demand dynamics, and changing consumer preferences are shaping the future of the sector. The ICO Executive Director provided a global market outlook.

(g) High-level dialogue on EUDR with coffee-producing countries – by ICO, IACO and ECF:

This high-level exchange on 25 June, co-organized by ICO, ECF and IACO, brought together coffee-producing countries (including Ethiopia and Kenya), regional coffee organizations, and EU institutions to discuss the role of national data systems in enabling an efficient, inclusive, and effective implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The session was facilitated by ICO and also explored how these systems can empower coffee producers and the conditions required for their use within due diligence frameworks.

- (h) Living income in coffee: from policy to practice – by ICO-CPPTF and Fair Trade Advocacy Office:

This session, convened on 26 June by the ICO-CPPTF and the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, brought together representatives of the Belgian cabinet of the Minister of Development Cooperation and coffee-producing cooperatives across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. After a presentation on the upcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), it provided a space to exchange knowledge and practical experience on living income for coffee producers.

- (i) Coffee and Education: Brewing Knowledge – Growing the Future – by UNIDO and Ernesto Illy Foundation:

On 26 June, UNIDO and Ernesto Illy Foundation organized this event to launch the Ernesto Illy Master Alumni Community, followed by a panel to discuss how to build a stronger future for the next generations in the coffee sector. During the session, the ICO Executive Director highlighted that knowledge is key to a sustainable future and emphasized the importance of investing in education and in the next generation of coffee professionals. Dr Adugna Debela, Director-General of the Ethiopia Coffee and Tea Authority, also gave a presentation during the meeting to share the experience of the Coffee Training Center (CTC) in Addis Ababa.

- (j) How are coffee sector actors preparing for the EUDR? – by University of Basel

On the final day, 27 June, the ICO-CPPTF team attended a panel discussing how stakeholders across the coffee sector are preparing for the EUDR, based on research conducted by Professor Janina Grabs and her team, from the University of Basel, in Colombia and Côte d'Ivoire. The session presented timely research findings on the progress made toward EUDR readiness, highlighting best practices as well as the challenges that still remain.

Finally, the ICO delegation met with Belgian financial institutions and representatives of the African Union. It also held a briefing for Members present in Brussels on the status of work related to specialty coffee.

CONCLUSIONS/MAIN OUTCOMES

Overall, these are the key outcomes from the ICO's participation at World of Coffee Brussels:

1. Reinforced the ICO's convening role and strengthened strategic partnerships to advance sustainability and policy dialogue:

Through the co-organization of high-level events and active engagement with producing countries, the private sector, EU institutions and international organizations, the ICO reinforced its position as a neutral platform for dialogue on key sustainability and regulatory issues, while strengthening collaboration with strategic partners – including UNIDO, ECF, SCA, ITC, IACO, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and the European Commission – to support coordinated action on sustainable coffee value chains.

2. Strengthened policy dialogue on the implementation of the EUDR:

The mission provided an opportunity to engage directly with the European Commission (notably DG ENV and DG INTPA) and coffee-producing countries on the preparedness towards the EUDR. Discussions provided updated information on progress made by producing countries in developing national coffee data systems, particularly in Africa, and helped clarify the European Commission's position that, while such systems are not formally recognised in the EUDR or associated with any "green lane", they can play an important role in supporting due diligence. The discussions also reinforced the ICO-CPPTF's efforts to raise awareness of these national systems among supply chain actors and EU Competent Authorities to facilitate effective and inclusive implementation of the Regulation.

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