



Organización Internacional del Café
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London, England

**Future of the International Coffee
Agreement (ICA) 2001**

**Communication from the
Chairman of the Promotion Committee**

Background

The attached proposal to introduce customer satisfaction as a new objective into the International Coffee Agreement 2001 has been received from the Chairman of the Promotion Committee, Dr Ernesto Illy.

Action

The Board and Council are requested to consider this document.

Proposal to introduce customer satisfaction as a new objective into the International Coffee Agreement

Background

1. Quality is a crucial factor in increasing coffee consumption. Nevertheless, it is a concept that is difficult not only to define but also to control. This is because quality is not a simple variable but a message, and, like all messages, it needs a transmitter and a receiver to communicate it.

2. One of the best definitions of quality is “the subjective relationship between a product and a consumer”. This perspective reflects not only the characteristics of the product but also the sensitivity, education and background of the consumer, aspects which are not readily quantifiable.

3. Customer satisfaction is a valuable tool which can help to assess how acceptable a product is. It has a number of benefits, including the following:
 - it can be measured, and adapted to the different cultures of coffee consuming countries;
 - it is dynamic and develops with the learning process that follows increases in incomes;
 - it is attractive to coffee producers, who can monitor their ability to meet consumer preferences;
 - it can guide scientists trying to improve coffee plants using the tools of genetics.

4. Monitoring customer satisfaction can help marketing departments understand feedback messages sent by consumers, which are frequently cryptic, for example the inversion of price elasticity i.e. where lower prices have not led to increases in consumption. This can be understood to mean: “Give me better, not cheaper coffee”.

Proposed draft objective

5. To promote quality and customer satisfaction.