



International Coffee Organization
Organización Internacional del Café
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PRESS RELEASE

**ICO Executive Director welcomes
Oxfam campaign on coffee**

The Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization, Mr. Néstor Osorio, today welcomed the launch of ‘What’s that in your coffee’ campaign by the non-governmental organization, Oxfam.

Speaking prior to the reception to mark the launch by Oxfam on 18 September 2002 at the headquarters of the International Coffee Organization, Mr. Osorio said:

“I very much welcome Oxfam’s efforts to raise awareness of the plight of coffee farmers around the world who are struggling to make ends meet. The current low prices, at their lowest level in real terms for 100 years, are catastrophic for the 125 million people with their families who depend on coffee for their livelihoods.

We are seeing an exodus from rural communities in Latin America as farmers abandon their farms in desperation, and migrate to the North; in Asia there have been incidents of suicides by indebted coffee growers, and the long-term development of producing countries is eroded as the education and health of their people suffer. The huge inequity between income received by producers and that received by consuming countries must be resolved as a matter of urgency.

We now have a chance at next week’s Council session to agree on actions which will improve this alarming situation. I appeal to our delegates to face up to our responsibilities and act accordingly.”

Action by the ICO to address the crisis

Representatives of 63 Governments of the International Coffee Council will meet in London from 24 to 27 September 2002 to discuss progress by ICO in implementing an action plan to assist producers worldwide.

The ICO has identified a number of measures to address the crisis through international cooperation, both on the supply and demand sides. On the supply side, it has introduced a new global Coffee Quality-Improvement Programme to take effect on 1 October 2002, setting minimum grading standards and maximum moisture content for coffee exports. It is promoting diversification and monitoring production, and will ensure that multilateral and bilateral donor institutions are informed of the coffee balance in order to avoid inappropriate projects that would lead to further imbalances in the coffee market.

On the demand side, it will build on highly effective promotion activities in both importing and exporting markets to promote the consumption of coffee, and within the framework of WTO negotiations will seek the elimination of tariff and other barriers to all forms of coffee, together with those affecting all agricultural products originating in developing countries.

About the ICO: Established as an intergovernmental organization in 1963 to serve the international coffee community, the ICO is the focus for international cooperation on coffee matters, coordinating activities with other international agencies and bringing together producing and consuming Governments and private sector representatives to exchange views and address policy issues. In October 2001, the latest International Coffee Agreement entered into force, with new objectives including promoting quality, promoting coffee consumption and encouraging the development of a sustainable coffee economy. The ICO provides the following services: up-to-date information and statistics; innovative projects to benefit the world coffee economy; economic studies; and promotion of coffee consumption in emerging markets.

For more information please contact:

Néstor Osorio, Executive Director
Pablo Dubois, Head of Operations

Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7580 8591
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7580 6129
Email: info@ico.org