

CLOSING REMARKS OF SECRETARY GENERAL  
INTER AFRICA COFFEE ORGANIZATION

Statement by the Secretary General of IACO

On behalf of Member States of the Inter African Coffee Organization, once again, I would like to convey our gratitude to President Yoweri Museveni and the government of Uganda for hosting the second G25 AFRICA COFFEE SUMMIT.

The Summit was opened by H.E. President Yoweri Museveni. We were privileged with the presence of H.E. Sahle-Work Zewede, President of Federal Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Youssouf Mondoha Assoumani, Ambassador of the Union of the Comoros in Ethiopia & Permanent Representative to the AU, H.E. Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy & Sustainable Environment. We also had the presence of Ministers from Angola, Burundi, Cameroun, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Malawi, Rwanda, Togo and Zimbabwe and Republic of Algeria as Observers. There were also representatives from a number of International Organizations.

The G25 Africa Coffee Summit has given IACO a political instrument to address the underperformance of the coffee sector on the Continent for decades. We embarked on our journey to re-evaluate the overall performance of the coffee sector at our first G25 Africa Coffee Summit which was kindly hosted by the government of Kenya in May 2022.

At this Summit we signed the Kampala Declaration in which we requested the Leaders of the 25 African Coffee Producing Countries to support the adoption of coffee as an anchor agricultural commodity in the African Union Agenda at their next Annual General Meeting in February 2024. In addition, to request the designation of the Inter African Coffee Organization as a Specialized Agency of the African Union. The two declarations will be presented to the African Union for inclusion into the African Union Agenda 2063.

The issues we tackled at this Summit included:

- The future of the African coffee industry under AfCFTA.
- Financing options for value addition

- Production and productivity in the African coffee region and sharing regional experiences in creating a coffee culture in Africa.
- Role of Research in value addition
- Strategies to promote Value Addition and access to new markets
- Accelerating the implementation of African Coffee Standards under the AfCFTA framework
- Role of Digitization and new technologies in value addition
- Role of Youth & Women in value addition.
- Emerging issues in the coffee industry.
- Impact of EU Regulations on the African coffee sector
- Impact of Climate Change on the African coffee sector

His Excellency Yoweri Museveni stressed the importance of value addition at origin. He added that although coffee has benefits for human body, it has remained a beverage of rich people and less income people tend to drink tea. Africa has been exporting its products including coffee as raw materials to rich countries which is a parasitic system, a system he had been fighting for over 50 years. Exporting raw materials meant exporting jobs which is a big loss for the Continent. The government of Uganda had succeeded in some sectors, such as dairy, fisheries, textiles, sugar, leather, etc. However, in many sectors, including the coffee sector a lot of money and jobs have been lost. Countries, producers of raw-materials, including coffee need to add value to benefit from better remuneration and create more jobs for their youth.

There was general consensus that we need to promote value addition, empower women and youth in the coffee value chain; create programs to promote social, economic and environmental sustainability; domestic consumption, promoting partnerships and consumption amongst African non-coffee producing countries, branding and enhancing effective marketing of African coffees and facilitating access to affordable finance and consolidating partnerships for financing the coffee value chain in Africa. To capture the 99% of value addition, the G25 African Coffee Producing countries need a strategy to create public private sector partnerships to fund and support investment in value addition and promote careers in the coffee sector through vocational training centres for the youth. Africa has a huge potential to increase production drastically.

I would like to highlight some of our discussions which I will take on board in our work at IACO in line with the Kampala Declaration:

Develop strategies to increase value addition for the African coffee sector to provide fair trade in order to increase benefits for small-scale farmers together with empowering youth and women in the coffee value chain; improve yields and quality; improve local consumption of coffee; enhance the economic integration; increase the intra-Africa coffee trade; prioritize the negotiations of Coffee Standards under the AfCFTA framework; support Coffee Research; participate in standards setting Universal membership of ARSO ; address issues affecting coffee in view of climate change ; adopt technology and capacity building; and embrace digitization to ensure a prosperous and resilient coffee sector.

In conclusion, to move forward, we need to strengthen the role of the Inter African Coffee Organization by requesting:

1. The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government to endorse the inclusion of coffee as a strategic commodity in the AU Agenda 2063 at the next AU Assembly;
2. Designation of the Inter African Coffee Organization (IACO) as an AU specialized agency responsible for coffee to work with the African Union Commission (AUC) and Member States on the effective transformation of the coffee value chain in Africa as part of the implementation of the AfCFTA strategy on boosting Intra Africa Agricultural Trade;
3. The AfCFTA Private Sector Strategy which anchors the development of Regional Value Chains prioritizes coffee value addition as a key deliverable in the aforementioned strategy; and
4. The African Development Bank and the African Export and Import Bank provide dedicated financial resources to boost coffee production and enhance coffee value addition.

I am very optimistic that we can transform the African coffee sector through value addition. We have a huge untapped market on the Continent. Together we can fulfil our goal by supporting coffee research, promoting domestic consumption, value addition, encourage boosting production and productivity and lastly, opportunities for our youth and women.

Thank you once again for the support and comradeship.