

**Remarks by the IACO Secretary General, Frederick S.M. Kawuma,  
at the Opening Ceremony of the 15<sup>th</sup> AFCC&E, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is always a pleasure for me to participate in AFCA's Conferences which are considered Africa's largest coffee trade platform. This conference brings together a multitude of coffee enthusiasts—regional and international coffee roasters, traders, producers, professionals and, on the whole, the coffee community under one roof to address the challenges faced by Africa's coffee industry. I take this opportunity to salute the President and Board Members of AFCA, and thank the Executive Director and his team for giving me the opportunity to make a few remarks on this occasion.

The theme of this conference: “**Reshaping the African Coffee Industry for productivity investment**” is of a great importance, given its aim to address the pertinent issues regarding access to finance. I believe this will help to enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of the African coffee industry, with potentially great benefit for all stakeholders, particularly the small-holder coffee producers who supply the bulk of our coffee. Of course, we acknowledge that finance is not the only challenge that the sector faces, given all the attendant issues in the value chain that must be addressed. We have to ensure that the African coffee industry becomes competitive and attractive to our global partners. The appeal of the African Coffee Industry needs to be addressed. As a beautiful damsel appeals to several prospective suitors, so Africa will become more attractive when the issue of productivity is resolved.

In order to address the challenges of the development of the African Coffee industry, one of the instruments that the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO) is currently working on, in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), is the establishment of a special Facility for coffee at the Bank. The objective is to boost coffee productivity, production and quality in Africa. In doing so, the livelihoods of small-holder coffee growers will be improved and this is expected to boost coffee's contribution to the national economies of the Member States.

At IACO, we believe that building a regional sustainable coffee supply chain, building market linkages (which is exactly what AFCA is doing through its various activities), the promotion of investment in value adding activities, promoting climate change adaptation and good environmental practices, and information dissemination, are all critical. This forum provides great opportunities for sharing of experiences and tools, as well as building or strengthening relationships and partnerships. IACO, as Africa's inter-governmental body for the coffee industry, is pleased to partner with AFCA in all of the above, and to provide all the support in revamping and reshaping the industry for increased investment that leads to higher productivity, production, and quality.

Excellencies, Ladies Gentlemen,

My fervent desire is that the conclusion of this conference will lay clear pathways for the revolution in productivity of Africa's coffee industry through significant investments in the sector, for the transformation of the African coffee value chain.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Frederick S.M. KAWUMA**  
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