



Common Code for the Coffee Community

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Speech of Joaquim Leite, President of the
Common Code for the Coffee Community Association

“Official launching of the 4C Association”

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the media,

Thank you for your coming. The talking is over. Today we deliver on the promise we set ourselves when we started designing the code over four years ago – to launch a basic sustainability system that would bring real benefits to the entire sector.

The Common Code for the Coffee Community, in popular speech referred to as 4C, is glad to announce its first visible and measurable results in improving social, environmental and economic conditions of the coffee sector today. Already 4.4 Million bags of coffee or 3.5% of the global coffee supply is produced under 4C criteria and the first 4C coffee is being traded on the international market from October onwards. . The 4C Association has already a significant membership, representing 54% of the global coffee production as well as the largest trading houses, roasters and soluble manufacturers worldwide and is growing quickly. Producers in key producing countries like Brazil, Vietnam, Uganda, Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, Kenya and Colombia are being verified under the 4C.

4C is the first step towards more sustainability in the entire coffee chain. It started as a voluntary initiative in 2003, initiated as a partnership of coffee producers from the most important producing countries, the global coffee trade & industry, civil society organisations and supported by the German development cooperation and later the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Cooperation. This entire concept and all its elements have been designed in consensus of these stakeholder groups. In December 2006 these dedicated actors of the sector decided to formalise their partnership and create what is today the 4C Association – an independent membership organisation to support a development of the coffee sector towards more sustainability, driven by the members of the community. Also today, all decisions in the 4C Association are taken in a participatory and transparent way by the three chambers: Producers, Trade and Industry and Civil Society.

Just a few years ago the coffee sector was in its worst crisis ever. But every crisis also carries opportunities. The coffee crisis created a partnership of the coffee community to face the problems of the sector and to design a development process which enables continuous improvement towards more sustainability – the 4C concept. The objective of this global partnership was to develop a code of conduct for more sustainability in the production, post-harvest processing and trading of coffee in a consensual process among the three stakeholder groups. It is building on the vision that economic viability for all actors in the green coffee chain is the key for socially and environmentally sustainable coffee production and processing.



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Coffee is one of the world's most popular beverages – Billions of consumers are enjoying the taste of this quality drink every day. But it is also the source of income for more than 100 Million people worldwide. It is a fantastic product with many traditions: coffee houses, coffee breaks and even coffee klatsch! But we have to keep this image alive and defend it against some bad practices which can harm the positive perception of coffee products. The global coffee sector cooperating in the 4C Association is therefore accepting its responsibility to create conditions which meet the demand of consumers for a sounder product while also enabling the coffee producers and their descendants to live well from their business in future times. The coffee sector with its main actors is convinced that only respect to social conditions, protection of the unique environment of coffee regions and economic viability of coffee businesses can assure a positive future for coffee – a sustainable future. We all as 4C Association – producers, coffee trade and industry, civil society organisations and governments – are committed to this goal.

The Common Code for the Coffee Community (4C) combines a voluntary code of conduct with good farming and management methods for improved efficiency and better profitability. The worst social and environmental practices are excluded and basic requirements established. Globally accepted ILO conventions and treaties of the United Nations form the basis for these excluded practices. Further more, producers are guided through an improvement process to reduce for instance the application of agrochemicals, to optimise the use of water, to protect biodiversity and to introduce transparent trading channels of coffee. Producers are supported in the application of good agricultural and management practices to continuously improve their performance. This concept is applicable in all coffee regions and all production systems – small holders, producer organizations, estates etc. It is not an exclusive model for a limited part of the market. It addresses the mainstream market, thus enabling coffee producers to achieve better marketing conditions. We congratulate the existing marketing and certification schemes for their success and are grateful for their cooperation in the 4C development process. Being a baseline standard, 4C must be understood as a complementary approach to these certification systems. The independent third-party verification of the 4C producer members is paid for by the 4C Association.

What are the benefits 4C brings to the coffee sector? 4C provides good agricultural practices, services and capacity building support to become more efficient and produce a good product in due respect to society and environment. Benefits for producers are reduced costs, improved market access, enhanced market transparency and better margins for their products in the global coffee market. Transparency along the chain improves the transfer of value to the producers. Trade and industry members in 4C are committed to support the application of 4C with



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contributions to capacity building activities, trainings, skill development programs and especially the commitment to buy increasing amounts of 4C coffee over time. The improved efficiency of the supply chain results in a stable supply of the consistent coffee quantities are needed by the coffee buyers worldwide.

For the new coffee year 2007/2008 that starts in October, the 4C Association has set ambitious goals to enlarge the partnership and to increase its impact in the producing countries. 4C will increase the membership in all categories by 50%, offer at least 50 training courses for coffee producers and partners in 12 countries, offer 4C verification services in at least 15 countries and increase the 4C support network with new partners from public and private side. Moreover, by 2015, 50% of the global coffee production shall meet the criteria defined by 4C.

To reach these ambitious objectives, the 4C Association needs strong partners, not only in the coffee business, but also from the public sector. Therefore, I am very grateful for the cooperation, contribution and long-term commitment of all members. I would also like to thank the public donors BMZ, Seco and FICA for their on-going support. It is important that also governments in consuming countries are committed to support a stakeholder-partnership like the 4C Association. Hence I would like to introduce Mrs Karin Kortmann, Parliamentary Secretary of State of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ, one of the founding parents of the 4C concept. Mrs Kortmann, may I invite you to deliver a statement outlining the view of public authorities on a partnership like the 4C Association?

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