

“Mitigation and adaptation to climate change – voluntary contributions of the coffee sector”



Climate change is recognized as being among the greatest challenges of our time. The agricultural sector as a whole plays a critical role in the mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as well as in adapting to the already occurring climatic changes.



The coffee sector is particularly affected by climate change. As a key export commodity, coffee is cultivated in more than 70 countries. With processing and retailing, it employs more than 100 million people worldwide. Globally, approx. 70% of producers are smallholder family farmers, with a major contribution from women who often provide the majority of the labor. As 90% of the global coffee is produced in developing countries, these figures underline the sector’s importance as a pillar for economic development and rural livelihoods. Furthermore, they illustrate how millions of farmers and all actors along this value chain may become strongly affected by climate change: Extreme weather events or phenomena such as El Niño have already negatively impacted coffee production and resulted in global production losses of approx. 2-3% in some years. The anticipated changes in temperature and precipitation patterns are very likely to decrease and/or change areas suitable for coffee growing and further aggravate challenges in coffee production, e.g. through increased exposure to pests and diseases and pressure on forested areas at higher altitudes as these areas become more suitable for coffee production.

We, leading companies of the coffee sector and organizations engaged in development partnerships with sector stakeholders, are aware of the described impacts of climate change and the resulting threats – for millions of farmers and coffee growers. We have begun responding to the risks and threats, but we recognize that more and concerted action is needed. The long-term, pre-competitive and action-oriented “coffee & climate initiative (c&c)” demonstrates our willingness to work together, consolidate experiences and to disseminate successful approaches in coffee-producing regions worldwide.

Pioneer activities provide important lessons learned for replication and scaling up. For instance, the so-called coffee NAMAⁱⁱ in Costa Rica demonstrates that emissions can be reduced by 13.5% through the more efficient use of nitrogen fertilizers, agro-forestry systems, as well as measures to reduce water and energy needed for coffee processing on an area of 93,000 ha. The c&c pilot projects enable coffee farmers in Brazil, Central America, Tanzania and Vietnam to effectively adapt to climate change and enhance the resilience of their production systems. The potential and the need to develop, support and expand this and similar programs is tremendous. We, the companies and organizations cooperating within c&c and supporting this statement, join the global efforts to effectively address climate change. We not only recognize the need to strengthen the resilience of coffee farms and farmers, but we also wish to highlight the large potential of the coffee sector’s contributions to mitigating GHG emissions in the land use sector. We associate ourselves with the objectives of the Bonn Challenge for Forest (and) Landscape Restorationⁱⁱⁱ and with the UN Declaration on Forests^{iv} (agreed in New York in September 2014).



We equally associate ourselves with the UN Sustainable Development Goals^v and acknowledge that climate-smart coffee production can simultaneously ensure food security and provide income for millions of farmers, while enhancing climate resilience and contributing to socially responsible land use. Diversified coffee production can help stabilize ecosystems and landscapes, and enhance biodiversity. We believe that our sector can assume a leadership role in promoting sustainable land use practices for a wide range of commodity crops. Thus, we strive to:

- explore options for public-private partnerships that aim to develop and strengthen more sustainable and high quality coffee supply chains;
- support responsible use of resources (energy, fertilizer, water, soil, land) in coffee production and the transition of farming units into sustainable and high quality production systems, with a particular focus on productivity, mitigation and the benefits of adaptation;
- participate in, and actively contribute to, relevant fora and processes working towards the implementation and scaling up of adaptation and mitigation initiatives in coffee growing countries, aligned with Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

However, as private sector companies we rely on suitable enabling environments and strong partnerships with investors, governments, civil society and other organizations in order to realize the given potentials. In addition to our active engagement in the global efforts towards sustainable development in the land use sector, we request that governments and relevant institutions:

- support innovation, e.g. to test and implement low-carbon and climate-resilient technologies, including sustainable coffee research and development;
- support enhancing the awareness and capabilities of coffee farmers to deal with climate change, with a special focus on the crucial roles of women and youth;
- facilitate fora for exchange and invite sector representatives to build networks of cooperation and partnerships that develop and implement concrete projects in coffee-growing regions;
- help raise consumer and market awareness for appropriately and fairly valuing climate-smart solutions for commodity production and sustainable land use.

The organizations supporting this statement represent about 50% of global coffee business. For us this is a living document, and should be considered as the beginning of an open process, marked by the desire for hands-on action, mutual learning and rising ambition. We invite further companies, organizations and actors from the coffee value chain to join forces to take action towards overcoming the challenges of climate change to enhance the resilience and livelihoods of coffee farming communities and the sector as a whole.

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ⁱ c&c is a development partnership of private and public institutions with the aim to sustain and/or increase coffee production by improving the resilience of producers and landscapes where coffee is produced. (www.coffeeandclimate.org).

ⁱⁱ <http://www.nama-facility.org/projects/costa-rica.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.bonnchallenge.org/content/challenge>

^{iv} <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/07/New-York-Declaration-on-Forest-%E2%80%93-Action-Statement-and-Action-Plan.pdf>

^v <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>