

Title: Developing a sustainable coffee economy

By Dr Denis Seudieu

Chief Economist, International Coffee Organization (ICO)



Denis Seudieu's CV summary

After being awarded a *Doctorat de troisième Cycle* in International Economy at the University of Aix-Marseille 2 in France, he worked as a lecturer at the high school of Agronomics in Côte d'Ivoire, teaching economic analysis, macroeconomics and commodity economics. His research has been mainly oriented towards Risk Management in Commodity Markets and Macroeconomic and Environmental aspects of Agricultural product-based economies. He has contributed to a number of scientific publications.

From February 1991 to March 1996, he held the position of technical advisor at the Ministry of Commodities in Côte d'Ivoire (now Ministry of Commerce).

In April 1996, he was appointed as Chief Economist at the International Coffee Organization (ICO) in London. Since he joined the Organization in early 1996, Dr Denis Seudieu, as head of Research/Market Analysis and projects, has contributed to the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of many development projects benefitting coffee producing countries, especially projects designed to address poverty reduction and food security issues in rural communities, as well as coffee sector improvement.

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Abstract: Developing a sustainable coffee economy

Coffee is a remarkable commodity for being produced in almost all no-arid countries in the tropics. Over 50 countries produce coffee in significant amounts and in many of these, earnings from coffee exports are of vital importance to the country's balance of payments. A further characteristic is that, with minimal exceptions, coffee is produced in developing countries, including a significant number of least developed countries (LDCs). It is indeed produced in 4 main regions, including Africa (25 countries), Asia & Oceania (11), Mexico & Central America (12) and South America (8). Africa has the largest number of coffee growers estimated at 12 million as opposed to 5.5 million in Asia & Oceania, 2.3 million in Mexico & Central America and 2.2 million in South America.

Sustainable development presupposes a concern for social equality between the generations, a concern which should logically extend to equality within the same generation. In order to achieve this, there are three areas that need to be considered, namely economic growth, social development and respect for the environment. A sustainable coffee economy is based on the well-being of the various actors in the chain, particularly the producers who are the weakest link in this power relationship. More precisely, a sustainable coffee farmer will meet long term environmental and social goals while being able to compete effectively with other market participants and achieve prices that cover his production costs and allow him to earn an acceptable profit margin.

Therefore the speaker highlights the concept of sustainable development from the perspectives of the coffee sector before introducing various initiatives of the International Coffee Organization to address the challenging issues of the industry.