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## **Conservation International and the Colombian Coffee Federation Partnership Update**

### ***Conservation Guidelines for Coffee Production in Colombia***

The National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FNC) and Conservation International (CI) are announcing the release of the *Conservation Guidelines for Coffee Production in Colombia*. The guidelines represent a major milestone in the three-year partnership between the FNC and CI to develop ecologically sound coffee production in Colombia.

The *Conservation Guidelines for Coffee Production in Colombia* address a range of key issues in coffee production including protection of natural ecosystems and wildlife, soil and water conservation, efficient use of energy, pollution prevention and waste reduction, ecological management of pests and plant disease, and enhancement of coffee quality and farmer livelihoods.

Farming practices consistent with the guidelines are currently being implemented through a pilot phase at two *Conservation Coffee* projects being undertaken by CI and the FNC in the regions of Valle de Cauca and Santander. The Federation and CI work closely with the coffee producers at these two project sites in the implementation of the Guidelines and the application of local conservation practices specific to each coffee region. Lessons learned during this pilot phase will be used to refine and update the Guidelines. Success in these project sites will allow replication in other coffee regions of Colombia.

These guidelines have been formulated with the following objectives:

- Integrating coffee production with biodiversity conservation.
- Providing a tool for the coffee industry to promote and reward good practices that enable positive conservation and social outcomes in coffee-producing areas.
- Contributing to ecological planning, environmental impact assessments, farm management plans, as well as tools to verify the progress of integrating environmental and social standards into coffee production.
- Influencing public policies and financing in favor of conservation and improved farmer livelihoods.

One of the leading producers of high quality coffee around the world, Colombia also has a very rich biological heritage. In less than 1 percent of the Earth's land surface, it harbors 15 percent of all terrestrial biodiversity. Colombia ranks first globally in total number of bird and amphibian species, second in plants and third in reptiles and butterflies. Two large regions of Colombia lie within areas scientists classify as biodiversity hotspots. The 25 biodiversity hotspots make up just 1.4 percent of the planet's surface, yet harbor over 60 percent of all plant and animal diversity, and are under increasing threats.

While coffee production has long been a major economic activity for the people of Colombia, a global coffee crisis is threatening this traditional way of life. Current low global coffee prices are forcing farmers to convert their coffee fields and surrounding pristine forests into cattle pasture, posing a significant threat to the biodiversity of Colombia.

The Santander Conservation Coffee project, located in eastern Colombia, lies within the Northern Andean Conservation Corridor. More than 300 farmers managing approximately 6300 acres of land containing farms and forests are participating in the project. Valle de Cauca, located in coastal Colombia, lies within the Chocó-Manabí Conservation Corridor. This project consists of 350 farmers and approximately 5,500 acres of land containing farms and forests. The overarching goals of each project are to connect fragmented forests and parklands in the region, promote environmentally friendly coffee growing practices, provide critical habitat for species, and provide a foundation for farmers to maintain their traditional way of life.

In preparing the Colombian guidelines, CI and the Federation drew heavily upon the *Conservation Principles for Coffee Production*, a comprehensive framework for producing environmentally friendly coffee. In a process convened by the Consumer's Choice Council, these principles were developed by several leading conservation organizations in consultation with coffee stakeholders around the world.

Additional technical expertise in the creation of the *Conservation Guidelines for Coffee Production in Colombia* was provided by the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB), a division of Conservation International. The Center is working with various food and agriculture companies to integrate conservation objectives into business supply chains.