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Mexican Coffee Producers Ask Government To Join New International Coffee Association

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Members of the National Coordinator of Coffee Organizations (Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Cafetaleras, CNOC) are urging the Mexican government to make a greater commitment to assist the coffee sector by joining the newly formed Association of Coffee Producing Countries (Asociacion de Paises Productores de Cafe, APPC). Mexico refrained from joining the APPC at a recent meeting in September to avoid jeopardizing ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), since 90% of Mexico's coffee exports are sold in the US and Canadian markets. Instead, Mexico opted to attend APPC conferences as an "observer" (see Chronicle of Latin American Economic Affairs, 10/07/93). Nevertheless, CNOC representatives from Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Puebla, in a petition to the Agriculture Secretariat (Secretaria de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos, SARH) in early November, suggested that Mexico was foregoing the opportunity to have an important say in world coffee pricing policies by not becoming a full member of the APPC. In addition, the CNOC representatives asked the SARH to incorporate the coffee sector into the government's agriculture support program (Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo, Procampo), which is geared mainly toward basic foodstuffs. The government has denied recent requests to incorporate the coffee sector into Procampo, saying coffee producers are already served by a special support program (Programa Emergente para los Caficultores). The CNOC reports that the absence of sufficient support for the coffee sector has reduced coffee production by 35% in the past five years. The CNOC estimates output will drop to about 3.614 million 100 pound bags in the 1992-93 cycle, compared with 5.428 million bags in 1988-89. Producers estimates that the majority of Mexico's 275,000 coffee farmers will earn an average of about 1,300 nuevo pesos (US$415) this year. Other actions requested by the CNOC were direct supports for infrastructure upgrades for coffee producers, the creation of regional coffee processing companies run by small producers, and a restructuring of the Mexican Coffee Council (Consejo Mexicano del Cafe, CMC) to place greater emphasis on promotion efforts to stimulate demand for Mexican coffee overseas. (Sources: Notimex, 11/09/93; La Jornada, 11/16/93)

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