

## Climate Change Biggest Threat To Coffee: Illy CEO

CoffeeNetwork (Medellin)- Climate change is the most severe threat facing the coffee sector now, and to tackle the risks to Arabica supply, a global action called the Coffee Global Adaptation Plan has been discussed to support coffee adaptation to weather changes, Andrea Illy, chairman of Illycaffè told CoffeeNetwork.

The initiative, which has been in talks since last year, seeks to create a public-private partnership that could channel resources from the industry, institutions, governments, growers, retailers and non-governmental organizations to transfer new technologies to adapt to climate change, said Illy, who presides over the idea and who manages one of the world's ten largest roasters, in an interview.

Illy fears that if this initiative does not move quick enough, Arabica coffee production could drastically be reduced as climate change will require coffee plantations to move up to higher altitudes, develop plantations resistant to weather changes, and change agronomical practices.

"Climate change is the top urgency at the moment. I hope that by the end of the year, we know if this is a go or a no go project," Illy said on the sidelines of the World's First Coffee Growers Forum.

By 2050, the world would need to produce twice as much coffee it produces now with only half of the suitable land nowadays because of climate change, he noted.

Doubling production with half the suitable land is a challenge, he said. "Coffee is a perennial crop, and a few decades represent a very short time frame," he added.

The Swiss Coffee Trading Association is leading the initiative for the "Global Adaptation Plan", by representing the industry, while the Swiss bank UBS has already committed to invest \$5 billion to invest in this plan.

The Global Adaptation Plan approach should be multi-stakeholder involving institutions from consuming and growing countries, Illy said. The International Coffee Organization is the intergovernmental representative of the institutions.

Illy, which buys high-quality Arabica beans from 20 different countries including Brazil, Ethiopia, Central America and Colombia, acknowledges that climate change is already impacting the quality of the beans they buy.

Illycaffè will participate by transferring know-how about the Arabica genome among other aspects. He recognizes that several organizations like the Colombia's Coffee Research Center (Cenicafe) are very advanced in the research of varieties that will adapt to climate change, but he said competition among other research institutions might undermine the capacity to reach the necessary critical mass and the deployment of the holistic approach.

Failure to solve the problem would lead to a price shock and significant social problems for rural coffee communities. He estimates that 80% of the people who grow coffee in over 50 countries will be impacted if no solutions are found.

Colombia is already being impacted by rising temperatures. The Central province of Caldas has lost 20,000 hectares of coffee plantations in almost 20 years hit by global warming, and as land has migrated to more profitable plantations.

Writing by Diana Delgado, editing by Alexis Rubinstein