



EIPO Press Release: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2007

**Ethiopia Gets Ready. Prepares to Strengthen its New International Coffee Network.**

*Addis Abeba*, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Leaders and representatives of Ethiopian Fine Coffee Sector, farmers cooperative unions and exporters as well as representatives of relevant government bodies are gathering in Addis Ababa to be trained in trademarking and licensing management. This will further strengthen the innovative new coffee partnership with international specialty coffee buyers and distributors.

At a four-day training course this week, a wide range of stakeholders in the Ethiopian coffee sector will gain know-how in trademarks, licensing and negotiation.

“This is a pivotal event in the long history of Ethiopian coffee production and export. While using trademarks and licensing agreements is a common enough affair in many international industries and global distribution chains, it is surprisingly, almost unprecedented in coffee. We need to be prepared and confident in the full knowledge of our rights, our powers, and our options as we approach our buyers overseas to join our network of licensed distributors,” remarked H.E Mr. Yakob Yala, State Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in his Opening Speech to the trainees.

This training programme is part of the Ethiopian Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative, spearheaded by the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office and supported by the UK Department of International Development. The course is being run by the EIPO and Light Years IP, a Washington DC based NGO specialising in intellectual property strategies and capacity building for developing countries, acting as advisers to Ethiopia on the Initiative.

“The timing of this event is strategic”, noted Getachew Mengistie, Director General of the EIPO. “We are ensuring the readiness of all protagonists for the fine coffee sector to promote Ethiopia’s ‘new deal’ for international buyers and distributors of our fine coffee brands, Sidamo, Harar and Yirgacheffe.”

EIPO staff, private exporters and coffee cooperatives have ample opportunities to promote Ethiopia’s concept of long-term partnership and the new network of licensed distributors in the coming months. EIPO has planned a number of overseas marketing activities and participation at the upcoming Specialty Coffee Association of America Annual Conference in Long Beach California and the Specialty Coffee Association of Europe’s annual event in Antwerp, Belgium, both to be held next month.

Notes:

1. This month the EIPO launched a brand new website, dedicated to providing information and charting the progress of the Trademarking and Licensing Initiative at: [www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com](http://www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com).

2. Representatives of the private sector, the Cooperative Unions and Governmental bodies directly responsible for the long-term and sustainable development of the coffee sector in Ethiopia, as well personnel from Ethiopian Embassies abroad are participating in the training. Participation levels are three times higher than expected, with more than sixty participants registering to date.

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