

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 11th September 2007

Millennial signing for Monmouth Coffee House

Monmouth Coffee House, one of the UK's most prestigious coffee companies, signed a licence agreement yesterday, on the eve of Ethiopia's Millennium which falls today 12th September.

Ethiopia has recently trade-marked three of its fine coffees, Sidamo, Harar and Yirgacheffe. The new trademarks mean that the three coffees should in future be sold only by licensed distributors and an agreement is signed with Ethiopia's Intellectual Property Office (EIPO).

Anita Le Roy from Monmouth Coffee House said:

"We are very excited about the Ethiopian Coffee Initiative project; the agreement will have a positive impact in the wider industry, and help the Ethiopian coffee industry improve the quality of the coffee and the quality of grower's lives. We are looking forward to getting our work with the Initiative started."

The aim is to develop the country's coffee industry and keep more of the value of its internationally-renown coffees with farmers and their communities. It is the Ethiopian government's firm hope that the Trademarking Initiative will improve farmers' income, and boost the value of our country's coffee industry. Getachew Mengistie, head of the EIPO, who met with UK and European coffee trade representatives at a reception at the Ethiopian embassy in London last week, said:

"We very much hope that the initiative will provide longer-term security for farmers through the more direct trading relationship, allowing farmers to invest in production and improve coffee quality. Through working together we can create an historic opportunity to make a difference to the lives of our coffee farmers and their families as well as effectively meeting the quality requirements of the coffee companies and delighting consumers". Mr Getachew added; "We have begun to observe an increase in the farm-gate price of Yirgacheffe coffee in recent months and we will have to wait and see if this is a permanent trend."

The three trademarks have been registered in 28 countries and 22 companies have so far signed up - in the US (18) and Europe (2) and now two in the UK – Equal Exchange signed an agreement on 5th September and Monmouth Coffee House on 11th.

Ethiopia has chosen to use international trade rules, which in so many cases work against poor producers, to benefit small-scale farmers. The intention is that prices received by farmers will eventually be more closely linked to retail prices for premium coffees.

Monmouth is well known in the coffee trade for its rigorous sourcing and naming of specific coffees, making clear to consumers where the coffee they drink originates. Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee and this partnership will help to develop an even greater understanding of premium Ethiopian coffee in this, the country's new millennium.

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Note to editors

Monmouth Coffee House has shops in London in Borough Market (2 Park Street, SE1) and in Covent Garden (27 Monmouth Street, WC2) www.monmouthcoffee.co.uk

The Ethiopian Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative - The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com

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