



Ethiopian Coffee Partnerships Brewing. Ethiopia's Licensing Team Prepares to Expand the Network of Licensed Distributors in Europe

LONDON - May 14, 2007. The Ethiopian Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative plans to offer the European coffee industry a whole new brew this week in Antwerp, Belgium.

Following on from considerable press coverage and recent high profile signings in North America, the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office licensing team are participating in Europe's top specialty coffee conference and are ready to enlist European partners for their innovative new approach to joint management of Ethiopia's best known fine coffee brands, Sidamo, Harar and Yirgacheffe.

Since the Trademarking and Licensing initiative started in 2004, the EIPO has been preparing hard for this, their first major sales mission in Europe and with law firm Arnold and Porter have secured trademarks for Ethiopia's unique Harar, Sidamo and Yirgacheffe coffees in 28 countries around the world including the EU.

After a highly productive exhibit at the annual gathering of the specialty coffee industry in California last week, EIPO Director General, Getachew Mengistie observed: "We are surprised and heartened to see how many coffee companies are checking out the Initiative's via our new, dedicated website, www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com. There is clearly a strong urge to find out more and why others have already joined. We stand ready to answer the questions that the industry has about the goals of this Initiative which is of critical importance to Ethiopia. We look forward to engaging with every European importer and roaster trading Ethiopia's special coffee brands."

Coffee is an integral part of Ethiopia's culture and heritage and an estimated 11 million people depend on the production and export of coffee for their livelihoods.. Ethiopia is the acknowledged birthplace of all coffee drunk around the world today and is also widely respected as producing some of the very finest gourmet coffees available in the market.

"The fine coffee sector in Ethiopia is really enthusiastic about forging a new form of partnership with coffee companies in Europe" added Mengistie. "For too long, once a container of coffee left Ethiopia its ultimate destination was unknown and unknowable. The coffee effectively ceased to exist! Farmers and all in the chain work very hard for very little to make this possible. They have no idea of the level of appreciation among coffee lovers overseas for their fine coffees. This is set to change as producers and retailers come together in our new network. It is very inspiring for all," continued Mengistie.

This is a formative time for Ethiopia and its partners, but just the beginning for Ethiopians looking for a more sustainable and prosperous future for all in the chain from tree to cup.

Notes:

1. The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) is spearheading the Ethiopian Fine Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative
2. Arnold & Porter LLP is the Washington DC-based law firm which has been advising Ethiopia on the Initiative.
3. The Initiative has financial support from the UK's Department for International Development, and advice and training from Washington DC based NGO Light Years IP, but no funding directly from coffee companies.
4. Since launching the licensing phase of the Initiative in late 2006, more than a dozen US companies have signed up to join Ethiopia's network of licensed distributors and two Network meetings have taken place to date.

###

For more information please contact:

Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office

[Getachew Mengistie](#), Director General

T +251 115 534 969

www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com

Ethiopian Embassy, London

Gail Warden

T: +44 (20) 7589 7212

gail@ethioembassy.org.uk

Ron Layton

Light Years IP, Washington D.C.

T: 202 545 7515

ron.layton@lightyearsip.net

www.lightyearsip.net