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FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
ETHIOPIAN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

Ethiopia's Network of Licensed Distributors Grows as Sweetwater Organic Coffee Signs License Agreement at SCAA Meeting in Long Beach.

Washington DC- May 14, 2007. The Ethiopian fine coffee sector this week welcomes 2007 EcoQ Peaberry Award Recipient Sweetwater Organic Coffee Company, Florida's vanguard Organic and Fair Trade Coffee Roaster, as the newest licensee to join the recently formed Ethiopian network of licensed distributors.

“Sweetwater Organic is a company whose practices embody the sprit of collaboration and sustainable coffee development that Ethiopia’s Trademarking and Licensing Initiative is really about. We are very happy to have them join in our network and contribute at this important and historic time. It is important to have roasters on board that pay attention and appreciate the flavor and quality of the fine coffees that Ethiopia produces,” commented Getachew Mengistie, Director General of the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office.

The network of licensed distributors is a pioneering group of coffee companies who have formally chosen to acknowledge Ethiopia’s ownership rights to the ancient and important coffee brands such as Harar, Sidamo and Yirgacheffe. These are globally recognized as special and highly appreciated coffees. Network members are companies who have explicitly committed to work in partnership with a new fine coffee stakeholder group in Ethiopia, which includes coffee farmers’ coops, private exporters and relevant local coffee promotion and support agencies. The simple sounding, but ambitious aim is to work closely together to develop and jointly promote Ethiopia’s exquisite coffees and to define policies that make the whole chain more sustainable and improve farmers’ livelihoods.

Chris Neumann, of the Sweetwater Organic Coffee Roasters commented,

“Sweetwater Organic strives to promote organic cultivation, environmental and social responsibility, sustainability, ethical trade and cup quality on every level. We find these values to the benefit of our friends in the coffee producing world, to the global Specialty Coffee community, and to the long term sustainability of the fine and remarkable natural cultivar coffees we all have the privilege of enjoying today. Signing a licensing agreement with Ethiopia makes sense to us for the long term good of the Ethiopian coffee industry and will enhance and strengthen our strong friendship with our excellent Ethiopian producers. We are excited about participating in this project and contributing to its success in bettering the lives of the farmers and other coffee producers as they continue to improve upon the already excellent quality of Ethiopian Coffees.”

Nora Edison, one of the co-founders of Sweetwater, added: “We understand that this network is a platform for all of us in the industry who care for Ethiopian coffees to work together with

Ethiopian producers on issues we all care about, whether it is consumer awareness, reliability of supply and quality of coffee or livelihoods of farmers and their families. As the value of Ethiopian specialty coffees grows and as farmers begin to see the benefits of that value, we believe our own business will be better for it as well. We are extremely excited and honored to actively participate in this new partnership and to offer our own ideas on how to promote Ethiopian coffees.”

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Notes:

1. The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) is spearheading the Ethiopian Trademarking and Licensing Initiative
2. 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.
3. The EIPO and law firm Arnold and Porter have secured Trademarks in 28+ countries to date. In the US a Trademark for Yirgacheffe has been secured and the two others are still being sought despite opposition.
4. More information on the Initiative and who is supporting it is available on the dedicated website www.ethiopiancoffeenetwork.com
5. For more insights into Ethiopian coffee farmers' lives and the way the coffee market works see also www.blackgoldmovie.com

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