

PRESS RELEASE

Geneva

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***At a crucial time of the WTO's "Doha Development Round",
origin-based producers from all over the world invest in a Geneva-based organisation
to secure effective protection of Geographical Indications at the global level***

The international organisation of origin-based producers – OriGIn – opens its new headquarters in Geneva to better coordinate its advocacy campaigns, aimed at securing an effective international regime of protection of those names, such as “Basmati Rice”, “Café de Colombia”, “Tea of Kenya”, “Swiss Watch”, “Tequila”, “Champagne”, whose unique reputations and characteristics depend on their area of origin. Those names are commonly referred to as Geographical Indications (GIs).

“While negotiations within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are entering a crucial phase, worldwide producers want to make sure that their voice is heard when key decisions on the future of Geographical Indications are taken. Our new Secretariat in Geneva is instrumental in achieving this goal”, says Luis Fernando Samper, Director of Intellectual Property at the Colombian Coffee Federation and President of OriGIn.

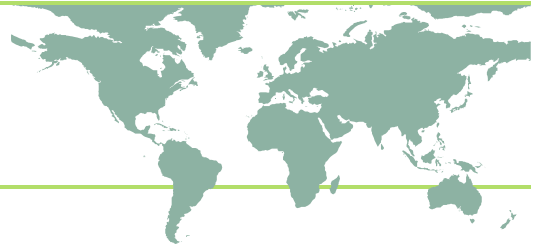
Current WTO rules on Geographical Indications (GIs) do not offer origin-based producers effective legal remedies to prevent and stop abuse. Free-riding has been increasing over the years and, as a result, producers are losing market share. OriGIn considers that the extension of the protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits to all GI products would contribute to stopping these misappropriations. To better achieve this objective, OriGIn considers that a multilateral register for Geographical Indications should be established within the WTO. Such a register should be open to all products and binding on all WTO Members, producing meaningful legal effects.

“With a few exceptions, developing economies are not wines producers. However, those countries have a tremendous potential to develop and market other origin-based products, such as agricultural goods and handicrafts. Ensuring that all products benefit from the protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits as well as setting-up a meaningful register, would contribute to meeting the expectations raised by the Doha Development Agenda in establishing a more development-friendly global trading system”, states Mr. Samper.

Geographical Indications have become a global phenomenon. Over the past few years, several countries have adopted specific legal systems to protect geographical names.

“More and more developing economies are looking at Geographical Indications as a way to promote sustainable development in the context of poverty reduction programmes. Through the new Secretariat in Geneva, OriGIn is keen to consolidate its role as a catalyst for technical assistance projects aimed at helping producers to fully benefit from their unique origin-based products”, says Massimo Vittori, the new Secretary General of OriGIn.

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For more information:

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About OriGIn:

The Organisation for an International Geographical Indications Network – OriGIn – is the first international organisation of geographical indications' producers. OriGIn represents some 80 organisations and more than two-million producers.