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European Commission, ARIPO Sign Agreement On Agricultural GIs

By William New, Intellectual Property Watch on 27/11/2012 @ 3:27 pm

The European Commission and African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) yesterday signed a cooperation agreement on the protection of traditional agricultural products from specific geographical locations or with specific characteristics.

The Commission announcement is [here](#) ^[1].

The legally non-binding memorandum of understanding, signed in Zanzibar, Tanzania, commits the two sides to work together on promoting GIs, including building a legal framework for GIs, under which Africans would have to protect European GIs. GIs have been alighted upon in recent years as an economic development engine for developing countries, as a way to organise and elevate agricultural production, including through increased public awareness.

Protection of geographical indications has long been a priority of the European Union, which has many such products, and it has been promoting GI protection worldwide, including in trade negotiations. The ARIPO Council adopted a decision to develop a system for protection of geographical indications in December 2011, and has received support from the EU on this work.

A [3-7 December meeting](#) ^[2] of the Lisbon System on appellations of origin at the World Intellectual Property Organization will address a proposed international instrument on the protection of GIs.

ARIPO is based in Harare, Zimbabwe, and brings together 18 member countries (Botswana, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and 12 observers.

The press release states that the following names have been proposed as candidate for GI protection in joint work carried out by the EU and the African Union (which is broader than ARIPO):

(* = ARIPO member country)

- Zanzibar cloves (clous de girofles) from Tanzania*
- Rift Valley Coffee from Tanzania*
- Sidamo coffee from Ethiopia
- Rooibos from South Africa
- Karoo lamb from South Africa
- Beurre de karité du plateau Massif from Burkina Faso
- Miel blanc d'Oku from Cameroon
- Poivre blanc de Penja from Cameroon
- Shama shea butter from Ghana*
- Ghana Fine Flavour Cocoa*
- Café Diama from Guinea
- Rwanda Mountain Coffee*
- Mount Kenya Roses from Kenya*
- Ngoro Ngoro Mountain coffee from Kenya*
- Rodrigues Limes from Mauritius
- Karakoel pelt from Namibia*

Senegal Yett
West Nile district cotton from Uganda*
West Nile Honey from Uganda*

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URLs in this post:

[1] here: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/developing-countries/gi/memorandum-aripo/ip_en.htm

[2] 3-7 December meeting: http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=27683

[3] Study On Non-Agricultural GIs Supported By European Commission: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2012/05/01/study-on-non-agricultural-gis-supported-by-european-commission/>

[4] New Guide Issued To Help Developing Countries Embrace GIs, As WTO, WIPO Meet: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2011/12/10/new-guide-issued-to-help-developing-countries-embrace-gis-as-wto-wipo-meet/>

[5] European Commission Seeks Public Input On Preservation Of The Open Internet: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2012/07/23/european-commission-seeks-public-input-on-preservation-of-the-open-internet/>