



International Coffee Organization
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**ICO Seminar on
Geographical Indications for Coffee
(20 May 2008)**

Summary report by the Chairman

Background

1. A Seminar on Geographical Indications (GIs) for Coffee took place on Tuesday, 20 May 2008 at the ICO headquarters in London, chaired by Mr Max Schnellmann, Counsellor (Economic Affairs, Commodities), Embassy of Switzerland, London.
2. The Chairman made a summary report to the Council at its 100th Session from 19 to 23 May 2008, a copy of which is attached.

SUMMARY REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SEMINAR ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS FOR COFFEE

The aim of the Seminar was to inform Members and other participants about the concept of GIs, and their development and possible importance for the coffee industry. It was divided into four sections: overview of key issues; use of GIs; issues of labelling, traceability and certification; and current legal issues. The Seminar was not intended as a platform for the discussion of trade or legal issues relating to the use and development of GIs, but rather to offer the opportunity to representatives of the world coffee sector to listen to international experts presenting the latest findings on this topic, to share the experiences of countries which had already secured GI status for their coffees, and to benefit from first-hand information on how some important consumer markets were regulating this key tool. Presentations were made by the following eight speakers:

Overview of key issues

- Mr Daniele Giovanucci, Consultant and Team Leader, International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) Guide to Geographical Indications

Use of geographical indications: various experiences

- Colombia: Mr Gabriel Silva, General Manager, National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia
- Ethiopia: Mr Mesfin Gebramarian, First Secretary, Embassy of Ethiopia, London (standing in for Mr Getachew Mengistie, Director General, Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office)
- Indonesia: Mr Surip Mawardi, Researcher, Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Institute
- Italy: Minister Plenipotentiary Pier Benedetto Francese, Directorate General for Economic Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Italy

Issues of labelling, traceability and certification

- Mrs Paola Rizo, Senior Legal Officer, Law and International Classifications Division, Sector of Trade Marks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications, World Intellectual Property Organization

Current legal issues relating to geographical indications

- Ms Amy Cotton, Attorney-Advisor, Office of Intellectual Property Policy and Enforcement, United States Patent and Trademark Office
- Mr Enzo Barattini, Directorate General for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States, European Commission (standing in for Ms Isabelle Peutz, Adviser for International Affairs, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission)

Conclusions

1. GIs and other forms of intellectual property (IP) protection (trademarks, certification marks etc.) are not a magic solution for the world coffee economy. Nevertheless, they are unique and powerful tools that can potentially offer considerable benefits.
2. GIs should be seen as complementary to trademarks, rather than as substitutes. They are one more tool in a range of options for coffee marketing strategies based on origin differentiation.
3. A successful GI strategy requires the long-term commitment of resources, with the prospect of benefits also only in the long-term. This must be taken into consideration when considering embarking on a GI-type strategy.
4. The country presentations showed that there is already a considerable wealth of practical experience and knowledge in this area. These countries are acutely aware of the pros and cons of GIs and other IP protection tools; they made a careful cost-benefit analysis at the outset, evaluated all the possible options and each chose an innovative and well-thought out approach, taking into account their level of development and their administrative and marketing capacities.
5. The Seminar also facilitated a useful and civilized exchange about how GIs and other IP protection tools are dealt with at the international level.
6. For the benefit of future seminars, it would be worthwhile allocating some time to review practical aspects of the organization of the seminar. One weakness was that there was insufficient time for discussion and debate.
7. The ICO, with its unique comparative advantage as the established neutral forum on world coffee matters, can make a difference by encouraging more Member and non-member countries to share their practical experiences with GIs and other IP protection tools, thus contributing to its aim of achieving greater market transparency.

Thanks

8. I would like to thank all the distinguished presenters, especially Mr Mesfin Gebramarian, of Ethiopia, and Mr Enzo Barattini, of the EC, who on very short notice had to stand in for their colleagues who were prevented from attending at the last minute. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for its excellent preparation and organization of the Seminar, as well as for the choice of such outstanding speakers.
9. Finally, I would like to congratulate the Council for having had the courage to choose this sensitive but relevant subject as the theme for this year's Seminar.