

COMMON FUND FOR COMMODITIES

Press Release

April 2007

COMMON FUND TO DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL FOR GOURMET ROBUSTA COFFEE MARKET FOR GABON AND TOGO

The Executive Board of the Common Fund for Commodities, an intergovernmental financial institution established by the United Nations, approved a project on “Developing the Potential of the Gourmet Robusta Coffee Market for Gabon and Togo”. The Common Fund in co-operation with (C.C.F.C.C.) of Togo and Caisses de Stabilisation et de Perequation, (Caistab) of Gabon seeks to improve the quality of coffee produced in the two countries. This will be done through improved husbandry, harvesting, and processing by farmers through groups and associations, with a view to marketing top quality robusta coffee to the gourmet markets.

The main objective of the project is to improve livelihoods of small holder farmers in Gabon and Togo through improved income. Improving production and marketing of gourmet robusta coffee and improving the productivity of existing coffee plantations. The project aims to enhance productivity of coffee at small-holder level, to ensure that the foundation for gourmet quality production is properly laid. This will include working through extension staff with small farmers on issues of crop husbandry, use of pruning techniques and inputs. It will then focus on harvesting and the primary processing, whether by sun-drying or washing, through the secondary processing for export preparation, and to the quality evaluation (liquoring and grading), and marketing.

The following key activities will be carried out. (a) Identifying the zones and then the farmer groups to work on this project, and training extension workers to assist farmers with crop husbandry. (b) Making available to farmers seedlings of improved planting material with a view to enhancing quality and productivity, and the establishment of demonstration plots. (c) Improved processing of sun-dried robusta coffee targeting certain specialist buyers of fine quality sun-dried robustas. (d) Installation of washing equipment to produce washed robusta coffee, including the secondary processing equipment required, and training of farmers in the production of washed coffee. (e) Liquoring training for quality evaluation, and marketing and promotion activities to ensure premium prices are obtained.

The total cost of the project is USD 2,526,694 of which the Common Fund will directly contribute USD 1,782,113 as a grant. The Governments of Gabon – USD 368,625 and Togo – USD 228,000 are providing counterpart finance to support the project. The immediate beneficiaries of the project are the 1,500 coffee producers who are going to directly participate in this project. The Project will be implemented by CIRAD that will also contribute USD 112,500 to the project implementation. The International Coffee Organization as the project sponsor will be the Supervisory Body for this project.

Note to the Editor: The Common Fund for Commodities is an intergovernmental financial institution established by the United Nations. Its main objective is to assist Developing Countries, which are dependent on the production of primary commodities. The projects of the Common Fund are small to medium sized (USD 1 to 5 million) and are mainly grant financed, supplemented by loan financing. The main target groups are commodity producers in Least Developed Countries and the poorer strata of the population in other Developing Countries. The Common Fund is headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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