



Tuesday 10 May 2011

SCOTCH WHISKY ASSOCIATION'S AGM HIGHLIGHTS FACTORS IN SUCCESS

Today's (10 May 2011) Annual General Meeting of the Scotch Whisky Association emphasised the need for the industry to continue to expand overseas, promote responsible alcohol consumption and press for fairer taxation and open trade.

Addressing around 200 members and guests at the Sheraton Hotel in Edinburgh, Ian Curle, SWA Vice Chairman, discussed the factors required for the Scotch Whisky industry to maintain its success. In 2010, the industry delivered £3.45 billion of exports to the UK economy, 10% greater than 2009, and a 60% increase on exports ten years ago.

Mr Curle said: "In delivering six years of record breaking results we have learned the importance of three factors in achieving that success: the internationalisation of our industry, the need for a fair framework in which to compete and, increasingly, the ability to work collaboratively with others to promote responsible consumption."

He added: "Whilst it is true that recession gripped weak economies in Europe we capitalized on better conditions to the east and west."

Mr Curle also highlighted how the duty taxation burden in the UK is unfair and discriminates in favour of imported categories of alcohol. And he explained how the SWA will increase its efforts to work with producers, retailers and public health experts to encourage responsible drinking.

Also speaking at the AGM, Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of the SWA, provided an insight into the Association's work for members in the past year. He explained the progress made on the industry's environmental profile following the launch of its strategy in 2009 and its commitment to energy efficiency, a commitment that matches the environment ambitions of the new Scottish Government.

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Mr Hewitt referred to the need for the industry to have better market access. “Our success overseas depends on our zeal in keeping markets open and reducing the barriers to open and fair trade.”

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