



Sunday 29 March 2009

## SWA calls for Colombian trade deal

Scotch Whisky Association Chief Executive, Gavin Hewitt, will meet senior Colombian Government representatives this week to discuss the prospects for improved market access for Scotch Whisky.

The visit to Bogota follows the recent welcome launch of negotiations between the EU and Colombia on an ambitious Free Trade Agreement. In meetings with the Colombian Ministers of Finance and Trade, Mr Hewitt will outline the industry's key priorities for fair market access to what is an important emerging market for Scotch Whisky.

Priorities include elimination of a 20% import tariff on Scotch Whisky, discriminatory excise tax arrangements that tax Scotch at nearly double the rate of aguardiente (a Colombian spirit drink), and reform of a number of anti-competitive practices in state alcohol monopolies (the Licoreras).

### **Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of The Scotch Whisky Association, said:**

"The recent launch of free trade talks by the EU and Colombia was very welcome. Colombia has the potential to become an increasingly important and dynamic market for Scotch Whisky and I look to use the opportunity to speak directly to the Ministers of Finance and Trade to highlight the mutual benefits of tariff and tax reform.

"Tariff elimination and non-discriminatory taxes would support higher tax revenues for the Colombian Government, greater choice for local consumers, and fair market access for Scotch Whisky and other imported spirits."

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### Note to Editors:

1. Scotch Whisky exports to Colombia were valued at £17 million in 2007. The market has grown steadily over the last decade (exports were £7 million in 1998). Colombia is the 30<sup>th</sup> largest export market for Scotch Whisky.
2. The EU and Colombia launched negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement in late 2008.
3. For further information, please contact David Williamson (0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151).