



Wednesday 20 February 2008

## Distillers call for duty freeze on Budget day

The importance of a continued freeze for whisky duty in this year's Budget will be stressed at the Treasury today when The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) meets the Exchequer Secretary, Angela Eagle MP.

Speaking before the meeting, Gavin Hewitt, SWA Chief Executive, said:

"The Government has recognised the benefits of a fairer alcohol duty policy in recent years and we will be urging the Minister to maintain that welcome policy by freezing spirits duty in the March Budget.

"The Budget is always a pivotal date in our calendar but this year's Budget comes at a time when the industry is facing rising input and energy costs. Spirits duty stability boosts competitiveness and has helped distillers to invest heavily in their operations and supply chain across Scotland, benefiting the wider economy and ensuring Scotch Whisky is well placed as new opportunities develop in the highly competitive international market.

"Calls for higher duties to tackle alcohol misuse are misplaced. We are working with government to promote responsible attitudes to alcohol and agree with the Treasury's long held view, repeated at the weekend, that duty rises are not the way to tackle a minority's irresponsible drinking."

- ENDS -

### Note to Editors:

1. Excise duty accounts for c. 72% of the retail price of a typical bottle of Blended Scotch Whisky. Scotch continues to face a competitive disadvantage in the UK market, with the alcohol content of Scotch Whisky still taxed 1.23 times more heavily than the same amount of alcohol served as wine, and 1.43 times more than beer.
2. A half pint of beer (4.93% vol.), a 125ml glass of wine (11.2% vol.), and a 35ml measure of Scotch Whisky (40% vol.) all contain about the same amount of alcohol. However, the tax on the beer serving would be 19.2p, on wine 22.25p and on Scotch Whisky would be 27.38p.



3. For further information, please contact Campbell Evans (020 7629 4384 or 07768 002 262) or David Williamson (020 7629 4384 or 07730 496 151).