

# GI status for Scotch in China

First Minister Alex Salmond hailed China's announcement today that Scotch Whisky is to be given new legal protection with Geographical Indication of Origin (GI) status.

The deal means that any product labelled as 'Scotch Whisky' in China must come from Scotland.

The FM toasted the announcement at Glenglassaugh Distillery in Portsoy with Madam Tan Xiutian, Consul General for the People's Republic of China in Scotland, and distillery managing director Stuart Nickerson.

The FM and Madam Tan signed a small cask (an Octave) of commemorative whisky for bottling in five years with the final sale proceeds going to charity.

Mr Salmond said:-"This is a long-awaited and very welcome announcement from China. It provides a great boost for our world-renowned whisky industry, strengthening efforts both to increase exports in a key market and to secure jobs across Scotland. I'm grateful to the Chinese Government for working with the SWA and the Scottish and UK Governments to deliver the designation, which provides discerning Chinese consumers with confidence that when they buy Scotch Whisky they're buying a high-quality product from Scotland."

Mr Nickerson said:-"China is a key target market for Glenglassaugh and today's announcement means that we can re-focus our efforts with renewed confidence, knowing that our products and customers will be protected. I'm delighted that the First Minister and Consul General are marking this important day at Glenglassaugh."

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) applied to the Chinese Government for GI status in 2007 and last year Mr Salmond led a delegation with the SWA, Scottish Enterprise and UK

Ambassador to progress the application with China's Minister of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Mr Wang Yong.

During a further visit to China in July this year the FM discussed the application again with AQSIQ Minister Mr Zhi Shuping to help secure the designation.

SWA Chief Executive Gavin Hewitt said:-“Today's registration of Scotch Whisky as a geographical indication in China is an important milestone. It will support growth in this key market, protecting Scotch Whisky and consumers from fake products. The Association is grateful to the Scottish and UK Governments for working with us to secure this welcome protection.”

More than 10,000 people are employed in Scotland's whisky industry, which supports a further 25,000 jobs indirectly – 20 per cent of them in rural areas.

Direct shipments of Scotch Whisky to China in 2009 were valued at £44 million pounds.

Once indirect shipments via regional distribution centres are taken into account, export value to China was estimated at around 80 million pounds. In the same year global exports reached a record £3.13 billion in value – underlining the export growth potential for protected Scotch Whisky in the world's second largest economy.