

Expanded market for Jamaican coffee in China

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Coffee Industry Board on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with Hangzhou Coffee and Western Food Association from China, which will create another market for the distribution of premium Jamaican coffee.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr Christopher Tufton in his remarks, noted that under the agreement, the Hangzhou Coffee and Western Food Association will be the exclusive importer of Jamaican coffee into China for a period of two years.

"The association will work with the Coffee Industry Board in the first instance to develop a critical marketing and distribution strategy to expand and promote as a premium product, the Jamaican coffee and blue mountain coffee brand within the Chinese marketplace," Tufton said.

He further noted that the MoU will also facilitate the purchase, over a 12-month period through the Coffee Industry Board, of 7,000 kilograms of coffee valued at some US\$1.7 million. Tufton added that there will also be the establishment of a special entity within China, owned by the association, to carry out the agreements of the MoU.

The Minister pointed out that a Jamaican would be appointed, to be based in the Jamaican embassy in China, and funded jointly by the association and the Coffee Industry Board and its dealers, who would commit to working with the association towards promoting the development of the brand in the marketplace in China.

Tufton also stated that a programme would be developed to protect the Jamaican brand and the Blue Mountain coffee brand within the Chinese market against any illicit activities that could compromise or undermine the integrity of the brand.

"We believe we have an excellent partner. The Hangzhou Coffee and Western Food Association represent over 800 cafes, coffee roasters and specialists within China and have built up a tremendous reputation over the past 10 to 15 years as a pioneer and premier set of organisations in the Chinese marketplace," Dr. Tufton said.

In his remarks, Director General of the Coffee Industry Board, Christopher Gentles noted that Jamaica has, for the first time, made a decision to relax its policy of restriction of the export of green beans to China.

"We have done so because we are satisfied that we have a relationship with this association that we can have confidence in, that they will support the integrity of the brand of our Jamaican coffee," he said.