



WIRSPA TAKING ON THE BIG RUM PRODUCERS IN NORTH AMERICA

- *Rum is vital to the social and economic infrastructure of Caribbean economies*
- *Eighteen CARIFORUM rum producers, mostly smaller niche (artisan) brands, are to take on the big global players*
- *WIRSPA to roll out Authentic Caribbean Campaign to Canada and the USA*

April 2015 – Rum is now recognised to be one of the last remaining high added value sectors in the Caribbean offering sustainable employment and income-generation. As the regions largest agriculture based export, over 60% of rum production is exported. Rum therefore generates vital foreign exchange revenues and taxes paid by WIRSPA producers to regional governments exceed US \$250 million per annum.

Dr. Frank Ward, Chairman of West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers' Association (WIRSPA) said "The ACR campaign is far more than a marketing exercise. Rum is vital for the long-term economic well-being of the Caribbean - over 100,000 people, many in rural local communities, depend on the rum industry for their livelihoods".

"WIRSPA members include many smaller brands who would otherwise struggle to get their voice heard in the face of competition from huge global producers. The sales figures of some of these companies are higher than the entire GDP of several CARIFORUM countries combined", explains Dr Ward.

Following its successful launch in Europe, WIRSPA is taking its campaign to promote the Authentic Caribbean Rum (ACR) Marque to the trade in Canada and the US in 2015 as well as expanding into Denmark, Portugal and Ireland.

The ACR Marque is a symbol of authenticity, provenance and quality for rums produced in 13 CARIFORUM countries that have agreed to adhere to its quality control and production standards. The EU/CARIFORUM funded programme to promote the marque has provided the opportunity for Caribbean rum brands ranging in size from the boutique to medium sized, to take their place on the global rum stage.

To date the campaign has trained almost 4,000 top bartenders throughout Europe and aims for almost 1,000 more in North America in 2015 alone.

Dr Ward added "We can't overstate the importance of extending the campaign into North America. Rum producers in outlying US territories receive massive subsidies that exceed their cost of production and make our own brands uncompetitive. Selling into the US from the Caribbean remains incredibly difficult and so it's crucial both socially and economically that WIRSPA tackles some of these challenges with its awareness campaign."

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About the ACR Marque



This project is funded by
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The Authentic Caribbean Rum (ACR) Marque was developed as a symbol of authenticity, provenance and quality for rums within the WIRSPA family. As usage of the Marque grows it will act as a visual symbol to help trade customers and consumers identify ACR brands, but in the short-term it will be used to promote the development of Authentic Caribbean Rum as a distinct sector within the drinks industry.

For more information visit www.wirspa.com; www.acr-rum.com

About WIRSPA

The West Indies Rum and Spirits Producers' Association (WIRSPA) is an 'association of associations' in that it represents distillers associations from across the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM)*. The current Chairman is Dr. Frank Ward from Barbados.

WIRSPA implements, on behalf of the CARIFORUM group of countries, projects co-funded by the EU¹ to improve the international competitiveness of the rum industry in the region. One of the outcomes of these initiatives was the creation of the Authentic Caribbean Rum Marque.

¹ European Commission is the EU's executive body.

"The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".



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