



Light Years IP

Engaging Intellectual Property to Increase
Poverty Alleviating Trade

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TANZANIA COMMITS TO NATIONWIDE ADOPTION OF METHOD FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT

April 18-20, 2011:

Tanzanian Minister of Industry and Trade, Dr. Cyril Chami, personally promised to learn a new business method for increasing export income and committed to a nationwide education and training programme. Opening a workshop on April 18, Dr. Chami said the new method, IP Value Capture, opened his eyes to how little African exporters share in the high value of their products in foreign retail stores.

The workshop was co-sponsored by BRELA and the Washington, DC-based NGO Light Years IP, drawing exporters, producers and government agencies aiming to support export income.

Ron Layton, Chief Executive of Light Years IP, said his group had estimated that every year, Africans lose billions of dollars of their assets to foreign markets. This is not due to war and conflict but to the inability to capitalize on the value of those IP assets in foreign markets. For example, according to a study by Light Years, Africans are receiving between 3-5% of the retail value of distinctive products – those products that have genuine intellectual property value.

In a successful intervention, Light Years IP found that Ethiopian coffee farmers were receiving only 5% from the retail value of their fine coffee brands. Working with the Ethiopian IP office, Light Years designed a strategy combining trademarks and licensing which returned over \$US 101m to Ethiopian coffee exporters in its first year. Similar strategies are possible for many African exports in general and Tanzania in particular.

Across the three years of the training initiative, which is funded by the US Government, Light Years IP will be conducting further workshops and project-based training, including developing local trainers.