



Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2012

Contact: Lindsay Murphy, 503-896-5700, lmurphy@mercycorps.org

USAID AND MERCY CORPS EXPAND IMPACT OF ALLIANCE TO HELP GUATEMALAN FARMERS EARN MORE, IMPROVE NUTRITION

New funding from Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. and Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung expands successful four-year program by reaching rural coffee producers in Western Highland departments

PORTLAND, Ore. – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the global humanitarian agency Mercy Corps are pleased to announce the addition of Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. (GMCR) and Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) in an alliance to improve the lives of small-scale farmers and their families in Guatemala. The alliance, known as the Inclusive Market Alliance for Rural Entrepreneurs (IMARE), is part of the U.S. Government’s Feed the Future Presidential Initiative that supports Guatemala’s “Zero Hunger Pact” to significantly reduce the high rates of poverty and chronic malnutrition that characterize the Western Highland region of the country.

The public-private alliance supports community-based interventions that allow rural agriculture producers to overcome barriers and access larger commercial markets. Evidence demonstrates that this support enables small scale farmers to increase their household food and nutritional security.

“We have seen the power of this alliance create tremendous opportunities for small-scale farmers to become productive and prosperous entrepreneurs,” said Peter Loach, Mercy Corps Country Director for Guatemala. “We are thrilled to be able to expand this project to now meet the needs of vulnerable coffee producers and their families in the region.”

According to a United Nations World Food Program study, Guatemala has the highest rate of chronic malnutrition in Latin America and the fourth highest in the world. Rural small-scale farmers in Guatemala face multiple obstacles to access profitable markets for their products and often lack the tools and knowledge to improve their family’s nutrition. This alliance uses a multi-pronged approach that not only tackles rural poverty but also raises community awareness around the importance of a diversified diet and good nutrition practices.

“GMCR is a believer in the power of public-private partnerships and their ability to enlist needed resources to overcome some of the developing world’s greatest challenges. We are pleased to join USAID in supporting this Mercy Corps project in Guatemala that seeks to provide small-

scale coffee farmers with better market access as they attempt to diversify their sources of income,” said Rick Peyser, GMCR’s Director of Social Advocacy and Supply Chain Community Outreach.

The three-year grant from GMCR will expand the alliance to work with 500 coffee farming families to improve nutrition as well as agricultural production and business management techniques. Farmers will participate in tailored educational sessions on safe handling of pesticides, use of new varieties, seed spacing, water and soil conservation, and best practices for storage and handling. They will also receive training and technical assistance in nutrition, climate change and gender balance as a best practice.

GMCR’s financial support also helps leverage matching funds from USAID’s Global Development Alliance for public-private partnerships. According to Mark Visocky, Director of the Office of Economic Growth at USAID Guatemala, “the alliance with GMCR brings substantial resources to bear in Guatemala for the Feed the Future Initiative and brings us all closer to the goal of reducing chronic malnutrition and poverty in the Western Highlands. USAID Guatemala welcomes and encourages new alliances with the private sector to assist the people of the Western Highlands escape the cycle of poverty and malnutrition that has plagued the region for decades.”

Mercy Corps will also work in close coordination with HRNS, an expert implementer in the coffee value chain, to improve the principal livelihood activity of coffee farmers in an efficient and sustainable way. Through matching funds from HRNS the alliance will support an additional 300 coffee-producing families to improve production, natural resource management, and economic returns in their coffee systems. Trainings aim to provide the tools necessary to help farmers increase profitable sales and lift themselves out of poverty.

“Coffee makes up a significant share of family income in these communities,” says Verena Fischersworing from HRNS. Her colleague Mauro García adds “Improving the returns to coffee farming – especially in combination with improved on-farm food production and household nutrition – thus forms an essential component of any strategy to improve food security.”

In 2008, Mercy Corps joined USAID’s support to rural, poor and subsistence farmers to compete in the larger commercial markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. In the past, USAID and Mercy Corps have partnered with Wal-Mart and Vibrant Villages as well as other private sector entities, which benefited 1,800 farmers in one of the poorest areas of Central America. Through this alliance, nearly 900 new jobs were created and a strong foundation was built for women to contribute to their households and communities. Of the new jobs created during the program’s first three years, 25% were held by women. After the first three years, producer groups increased their net earnings by an average of 59% and boosted their sales to formal markets by \$1.2 million.

###

About Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. (NASDAQ: GMCR)

As a leader in specialty coffee and coffee makers, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. (NASDAQ: GMCR) is recognized for its award-winning coffees, innovative brewing technology, and socially responsible business practices. GMCR supports local and global communities by offsetting 100% of its direct greenhouse gas emissions, investing in sustainably-grown coffee, and allocating a portion of its pre-tax profits to socially and environmentally responsible initiatives.

About Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS)

Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) is a not-for-profit foundation based in Hamburg, Germany that was founded by the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG) and the Neumann family, one of the largest coffee trading companies in the world. HRNS is an implementing foundation that partners with private coffee and cocoa companies and donor institutions to implement sustainable economic development projects to benefit smallholder coffee and cocoa producers. HRNS currently implements 24 projects in 14 different countries that reach upwards of 100,000 coffee and cocoa farmers and their families.

About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps helps people turn the crises they confront into the opportunities they deserve. Driven by local needs, our programs provide communities in the world's toughest places with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives. Our worldwide team in 41 countries is improving the lives of 19 million people. For more information, see mercy Corps.org.

About USAID

Since 1961, the United States Agency for International Development has provided economic and humanitarian assistance through its development programs in every region of the world and currently works with government, private sector and civil society in more than 80 countries around the world. See: www.usaid.gov for more information on our programs and development partners.