



## NEWS RELEASE



### Coffee Lifeline Project in Rwanda Wins SCAA Sustainability Award

**London, 19 April 2010** -- Lifeline Energy, formerly known as the Freeplay Foundation, and Coffee Lifeline International announced today that their groundbreaking Coffee Lifeline project for farmers in Rwanda has been awarded the Specialty Coffee Association of America's (SCAA) 2010 Sustainability Award.

The project uses Lifeline Energy's wind-up and solar-powered Lifeline radios to provide Rwandan coffee farmers with access to important coffee-growing, health, weather and market price information even in the remote hills of the country's coffee growing regions. Additionally, Coffee Lifeline produces a coffee-specific, agricultural extension radio programme, *Imbere Heza*, ("Bright Future") with strong support from USAID's SPREAD project, which is broadcast nationwide by the National University of Rwanda's *Radio Salus* station. Approximately 200,000 coffee farmers listen to *Imbere Heza* each month.

Coffee Lifeline is the brainchild of coffee trader Peter Kettler, who approached Lifeline Energy after discovering that most rural coffee farmers did not know the price of coffee beans on the world market. Coffee is the second-most traded commodity in the world, after crude oil.

"Years ago, sustainability was identified primarily as concern for the environment," said Mr. Kettler. "We now think of sustainability as it addresses a whole range of issues facing not only the farmer, but also his family and the community in which he lives. Coffee Lifeline can address numerous aspects of sustainability including food security, economic stability, health and education, as well as clean water and healthy soil."

Worldwide, education and accurate information are key to escaping poverty and achieving economic progress. In sub-Saharan Africa, radio remains the primary means of mass communication. However, the World Bank states that only 1% of the rural population in Rwanda has access to electricity. Most farm families earn less than \$300 per year and cannot afford to purchase transistor radio batteries on an ongoing basis. Self-powered Lifeline radios solve the problem by providing access on demand.

"Coffee farmers have told us that the growing techniques and advice they learn from the radio have helped them grow higher-quality coffee beans, which in turn will increase income and enable more farm families to send their children to school," said Michelle Riley, external affairs director of Lifeline Energy. "We are grateful to SCAA for honouring Coffee Lifeline with the 2010 Sustainability Award, and we accept it on behalf of the thousands of coffee farmers in Rwanda who are working to make their coffee the best in the world."

#### **SCAA Sustainability Award**

In 2003, the SCAA's Sustainability Council created the annual Sustainability Award to promote, encourage and honour the efforts of those serving as role models in the field of sustainability. Projects must expand and promote sustainable practices while achieving one or more of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which focus on tackling the worldwide

battle against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, child and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation.

"We reviewed 27 applications for the sustainability award this year," said Karyn Lee-Thomas, vice-chair of the SCAA Sustainability Council. "Coffee Lifeline was exactly the kind of project that we were looking for. It's innovative. It addresses many of the millennium development goals and it has the potential to be replicated throughout the entire coffee growing world. This is a perfect vehicle to effect positive change and make a difference."

### **Tom Hanks supports the Coffee Lifeline project**

Two-time Academy Award winning actor Tom Hanks serves as Lifeline Energy's American Ambassador and has provided generous support to the Coffee Lifeline project since its inception in 2005. Most recently, Mr. Hanks served as the primary funder for Lifeline Energy's new wind-up and solar-powered Lifelight portable light source, launched in Kenya in 2009.

### **About Lifeline Energy ([www.lifelineenergy.org](http://www.lifelineenergy.org))**

Working in more than a dozen countries, primarily in Africa, Lifeline Energy focuses on reducing energy poverty for the extremely poor. Lifeline Energy fully engages the community, working with vulnerable communities to form listening groups, maximise product benefits and design renewable products they need in their day-to-day lives, which also can be used in microenterprises. Lifeline Energy administers the Coffee Lifeline project and is a registered 501 (c)(3) charity in the USA, a registered charity in the UK and is a Section 18A and 21 non-profit in South Africa.

### **About Coffee Lifeline International ([www.coffeelifeline.org](http://www.coffeelifeline.org))**

Led by Peter Kettler, Coffee Lifeline International is a sustainable initiative that provides coffee farmers with a vital tool – radio – that empowers, as opposed to linking the farmers to charitable revenue streams that often come with limited lifespans. The long-term goal of Coffee Lifeline International is to connect coffee farmers around the world through sustainable, self-powered technology and broadcast of a globally transmitted, weekly "World Café" show that will offer isolated communities the ability to share technical expertise.

### **About the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) ([www.scaa.org](http://www.scaa.org))**

Established in 1982, the Specialty Coffee Association of America is the world's largest coffee trade association, with members representing more than 40 countries and every segment of the specialty coffee industry, from growers to roasters and retailers. The SCAA has been at the forefront of developing and promoting specialty coffee by setting and maintaining industry standards, expanding professional certification programmes and conducting industry-specific research.

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