



For Immediate Release – July 26, 2018

## **LEADERS OF GLOBAL WHISKEY GROUPS UNITE IN KENTUCKY, CALL ON WORLD LEADERS TO COME TOGETHER AND RESTORE OPEN AND FAIR TRADE OF SPIRITS**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Executives with the world's top whiskey associations today called upon global leaders to engage in timely dialogue that results in the prompt removal of recent tariffs between long-time friends and allies, particularly those imposed on spirits exports.

At the “W9 – Spirit of Collaboration Summit,” hosted by the Kentucky Distillers' Association, representatives from nine international whiskey and distilled spirits organizations joined together to speak with a united voice.

KDA President Eric Gregory said the group unanimously approved a resolution declaring open and fair trade to be essential for the future of the iconic industry – even though they couldn't agree on who makes the best whiskey, or whether it's spelled “whiskey” or “whisky.”

The resolution also welcomes the commitment announced yesterday by the U.S. and the EU to de-escalate the current trade dispute and address tariff issues, and calls for the removal of tariffs.

“In Kentucky, we like to say that Bourbon brings people together,” he said. “It's actually a lesson that our legendary industry learned long ago – that we can accomplish more by working together than standing apart. The global whiskey industry has been built on centuries of friendship, partnership and kinship.

“Today, we call on world leaders to likewise work together, over a glass of whiskey or their favorite non-alcoholic beverage. All nine members of this historic summit stand ready to assist and reach a solution.”

The gathering marked the first time these nine associations have come together to discuss collaborative solutions to recent trade policy decisions that could have long-term economic impacts on each of the country's distilled spirits industries and negatively affect consumers worldwide.



**Spirit of Collaboration Summit**  
July 25-26, 2018 | Louisville, Kentucky

Participating trade associations include:

- American Craft Spirits Association
- Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.
- Irish Whiskey & Spirits Associations
- Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association
- Kentucky Distillers' Association
- Scotch Whisky Association
- Spirits Canada
- spiritsEUROPE
- The Presidents' Forum

Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE, said, "Spirit drinks are appreciated around the world. Wherever local economies grow and markets open, we see a rising demand for our whiskies, vodkas, Cognacs or gins.

"As true champion of open and fair trade, we very much value any efforts by public authorities to negotiate tariff removal and the elimination of non-tariff barriers. This helps our spirits companies, large and small, to be commercially successful abroad. The benefits are manifold and substantial – and go well beyond our sector, including our suppliers, distributors, and customers around the globe."

Distilled Spirits Council Interim President and CEO Clarkson Hine said, "The Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. is joining with our counterpart organizations from around the world to send a strong message of support for free and fair trade of distilled spirits.

"We welcome the announcement made yesterday by the President and the EU as an important step in the right direction," Hine said.

"U.S. whiskey exports are a great American success story, and these trade disputes threaten the global competitiveness of American-made whiskeys that create jobs throughout the entire supply chain, from farmers to distillers to the retail market and consumers.

"We stand side-by-side with our domestic and international colleagues to urge continued dialogue that restores the tariff-free market access that has benefited producers and consumers for the past two decades."

According to the Distilled Spirits Council, global U.S. spirits exports set a new record in 2017, reaching \$1.64 billion. American whiskeys, specifically Bourbon, Tennessee Whiskey, and American Rye Whiskeys accounted for nearly 70 percent of the total, and thus are the key drivers of this export success.

The summit concluded with a ceremonial planting of a white oak tree on Whiskey Row in front of the Frazier History Museum, home to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail® Welcome Center™ opening at the end of August as the official starting point of the KDA's world-famous KBT tours.

According to U.S. guidelines, Bourbon whiskey must be stored in new, charred oak containers, many of which are shipped overseas for use in crafting other whiskies. “Oak is a tie that binds all our whiskies,” Gregory said.

Gregory praised the energy and insight each of the members brought to the two-day gathering, and said the group hopes to formalize its partnership and meet annually. “It only makes sense, as we share so many common issues, interest and opportunities.

“It was an honor to host such a distinguished group of global citizens here in Kentucky,” he said. “To welcome our extended whiskey family to the Birthplace of Bourbon in order to work together for the greater good of all is an extraordinary privilege. We look forward to the next family reunion.”

-30-

For more information, contact KDA President Eric Gregory: (502) 875-9351