



## Origin Notes

**Parent cooperative:** Bwishaza cooperative (596 members). Founded in 2014.

**Women's group: KUNGAHARA** – means “be rich” in Kinyarwanda.

**Region:** Western province, Rutsiro district, Gihango sector. The washing station is in a secluded, mountainous area, accessible by miles of dirt-track roads.

**Economic importance of coffee:** Coffee is Rwanda's second largest foreign exchange earning sector, (first is tea), (Export.gov, 2017).

### Historical Context:

- The historical, legal and cultural context for female coffee producers in Rwanda may be unlike that of any other country. The 1994 genocide had two long-lasting effects relevant to coffee today. First, it left a large percentage of Rwandan households headed by single women because the male spouse was either killed or in prison. Many widows never re-married, as evidenced by the fact that 14 percent of the total coffee farmer population is made up of widow heads of household, (AGLC, 2016; NAEB, 2015).
- Secondly, in the wake of the genocide, women made up about 65 percent of the surviving population. They had little choice but to fill the roles once occupied by men. As civil society was being re-established, government leaders had the foresight and knowledge to constitutionalize strong participation of women. The Rwandan constitution requires 30% of all elected bodies to be women. Consequently, today 61% of the current national parliament is female, the highest female representation in a national-level parliament in the world, (WEF, 2017).
- Further notable context is the fact that Rwanda's National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) is actively working to promote Rwandan coffee. This, combined with the government's recognition of the importance of women's empowerment, has helped to bring together resources for women in coffee..

**Contact: Artisan Coffee Imports**  
**Ruth Ann Church, Tel: 734-717-6278**  
[rachurch@artisancoffeeimports.com](mailto:rachurch@artisancoffeeimports.com),  
[www.artisancoffeeimports.com](http://www.artisancoffeeimports.com)