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For immediate release

**STARS SUPPORT CHARITY’S “WORLD TEA PARTY”**

* Actors Dame Judi Dench, Celia Imrie and Joanna Lumley, and author Alexander McCall Smith, get behind animal charity SPANA’s world-themed summer tea party
* New Indian and Botswanan-themed parties launched this year with exclusive recipes

Actors Dame Judi Dench, Celia Imrie and Joanna Lumley, and author Alexander McCall Smith, are lending their support to international animal charity SPANA’s summer fundraising event, the “SPANA World Tea Party”.

SPANA is asking everyone to host a world-themed tea party this summer to support the charity and raise funds for sick and injured working animals in the world’s poorest communities. The free fundraising pack contains recipes ideas and tips for hosting a traditional British Afternoon Tea Party, a Moroccan Mint Tea Party, an Ethiopian Coffee Morning – and new for 2016 – an Indian Chai Tea Party and a Botswanan Rooibos Tea Party.

Actress **Dame Judi Dench** spent time in India while working on *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* films and is encouraging everyone to host an Indian-themed party, using SPANA’s recipe for chai tea.

Dame Judi said: “I’m delighted to lend my support to the SPANA World Tea Party. I fell in love with India while filming there and one of my favourite discoveries was the sweet and spicy taste of a cup of authentic chai tea. Everyone should give this delicious recipe a go and host their very own Indian chai tea party to help working animals. I saw first-hand just how important these animals are to the families that rely on them for the small income that they provide, and SPANA’s work to care for and protect them is both inspiring and essential.”

Another star of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* films, **Celia Imrie**, is a particular fan of SPANA’s recipe for coconut ladoos.

Celia said: “I am very proud to support the SPANA World Tea Party and would encourage everyone to have a go at trying out this delicious recipe for coconut ladoos. It’s one of my absolute favourite treats from India and it goes perfectly with a cup of chai tea! Hosting an Indian tea party or another world-themed party is a great excuse to get together with friends and family, try out new recipes, and raise much-needed money to help give medical care, respite and nutrition to these amazing tirelessly hard working animals I have witnessed day by day supporting the world’s poorest communities.”

Author **Alexander McCall Smith**, who wrote *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series, which is set in Botswana, is hoping people will be inspired to hold a Botswana-themed party.

Alexander said: “It’s wonderful to support the SPANA World Tea Party, and to give a helping hand to working animals in Botswana and elsewhere. I hope that many people will decide to hold a Botswana-themed tea party. Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi would certainly approve. “Mind you,” says Mma Ramotswe, “no small portions please." This is a great excuse to try out some new recipes, while also raising vital funds to help sick and injured working animals and those that depend on them.”

Actress **Joanna Lumley** is also supporting the campaign saying: “I’m thrilled to be supporting the SPANA World Tea Party – a tea party with a difference! Whether you’re inspired to hold a Moroccan mint tea party, an Ethiopian coffee morning or another global destination takes your fancy, amaze your friends and family with your own world-themed tea party and let the exotic colours and flavours whisk you away. All the funds raised will enable SPANA to give free veterinary treatment to sick and injured working animals in the world’s poorest countries, helping both animals and the families that depend on them.”

The funds raised from donations will help SPANA provide more free veterinary treatment to working animals in developing countries across the world, including Morocco, Ethiopia, India and Botswana. Many of the world’s poorest people rely entirely on these animals for their livelihoods, but without SPANA they often have no access to veterinary care, or the means to pay for it.

The “SPANA World Tea Party” fundraising pack is available to download and order by visiting [www.spana.org/teaparty](http://www.spana.org/teaparty) or by calling 020 7831 3999.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors**

**SPANA World Tea Party**

* The ‘SPANA World Tea Party’ was launched in 2015.
* The ‘SPANA World Tea Party’ fundraising pack contains suggestions for recipes including Moroccan orange cake, Ethiopian giant bread, Victoria sponge cake - and new for 2016 –Indian coconut ladoos, Indian chai tea (available in the online pack only), and Botswanan fruit cake (available in the online pack only).
* The fundraising pack also contains plenty of tips for how to theme your party and raise funds.
* Saturday, 9 July is a suggested date for people to hold their tea party, but parties can be held at any time.

**About SPANA (the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad)**

SPANA has been the charity for the working animals of the world since 1923, providing free veterinary care to horses, donkeys, mules and camels in some of the world’s poorest countries. The charity improves the welfare of working animals in three ways: free veterinary treatment, education and training, and emergency and outreach projects. Please see the charity’s website, [www.spana.org](http://www.spana.org) for more information.

**About working animals worldwide**

It is estimated that there are around 200 million working animals worldwide that do the jobs of trucks, tractors and taxis, many of which work to support impoverished communities in developing countries.