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ITTFA Supports UNWTO in Relaunch of Protect Children Campaign

The World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, is strengthening its efforts to encourage the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and within this framework is relaunching its “Protect Children Campaign.” International Tourism Trade Fairs Association, ITTFA, has recently confirmed its support of the campaign and will be encouraging members to promote the cause and help raise awareness around the globe.

The campaign is a renewed endeavour to raise awareness across the globe, **emphasising** that it is unacceptable for the tourism trade and travelling public to tolerate child exploitation in all its forms.

Through this campaign, the World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, hopes to help eradicate child labour and sexual exploitation in the global travel industry. According to an estimate by the International Labour Organization, 246 million children are engaged in child labour, while millions are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

There is little doubt that there is a strong link between the tourism industry and child exploitation in some areas, especially in countries where economic growth has created an enormous demand for child labour. UNWTO is also concerned about the spiralling growth of sexual exploitation of minors which is often associated to travel and tourism.

UNWTO is currently designing a new logo, documents and video that will be launched at World Travel Market in London in early November. The full campaign will take effect on Universal Children’s Day – November 20, 2008. ITTFA meanwhile will ensure that the campaign logo and related documents will be distributed via their member show stands as well as in their own quarterly newsletter and relevant marketing materials.

“ITTFA and its members fully support this worthy project, “ states Tom Nutley, ITTFA Chairman, “ and we encourage other tourism industry bodies, companies and related suppliers to join us in

working towards a successful implementation of these basic principles. As responsible industry leaders, it is the duty of us all to educate new and growing markets and help show the way forward in all aspects of the industry.”

In today’s busy and competitive environment, trade associations offer members a secure and comfortable environment in which they can gain knowledge and exchange ideas. Instead of going it alone, the power and voice of a group gets faster results and carries more weight. It is within this domain that ITTFA feel they can add weight to this worthy campaign.

Johan F Lundberg, current President of ITTFA is particularly concerned that the tourism industry take a more active role in social issues. “I would like to see the industry in general take on more responsibility for the environment and sit down to discuss the various global issues that affect us all, such as exploitation of children. Events are slowly becoming more socially aware and some, such as our ITTFA member show, WTM, now run their own charities and support various social projects. I do feel that we should be taking the lead rather than just a part in such issues which are common to the global community. Travel is a part of most people’s lives these days and as an industry we hold a unique position as travel trade shows to reach millions of people on a regular basis.”

UNWTO and ITTFA hope that this renewed campaign will put the issue of child exploitation in tourism firmly back on the international human rights agenda. The project is being led by Alla Peressolova, Fairs and Communications Assistance at UNWTO (aperessolova@unwto.org) together with the International Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism.

For more information on ITTFA, view www.ittfa.org

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