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**BEYOND BORDERS CALLS ON TOURISM INDUSTRY TO HELP ERADICATE
CHILD SEX TOURISM**

- The WTO Task Force to meet at ITB, Berlin -

TORONTO, February 20, 2006 – Partners in Canada’s tourism industry can join a global effort to eradicate child sex tourism by signing on to a Code of Conduct. The Code is an initiative of ECPAT International (www.ecpat.net), the World Tourism Organization (WTO), and UNICEF. ECPAT is headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand and is a network of non-governmental organizations fighting cross border crimes including child sex tourism and Internet sex crimes.

The eighteenth meeting of the WTO Task Force will be held this year in conjunction with ITB, Berlin, March 10th. Guidelines for developing Code of Conduct campaign actions and a report on actions taken by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, tour operators, travel agencies and hotels will be discussed.

“The Code supports ethical and socially responsible tourism and we urge companies to embrace it as part of their sustainable tourism initiatives” says Rosalind Prober, President and co-founder of Beyond Borders, the Canadian affiliate of ECPAT. The issues relating to sex tourism vary among countries and Canada is not exempt. In 2005, Donald Bakker, a 41 year old Canadian was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to travelling to Cambodia and sexually exploiting a number of young girls. He is the first person to be charged under Canada’s sex tourism legislation. The crime of child sex tourism extends to inbound as well as outbound travel and is facilitated by the internet. Police report a growing concern about cross-border investigations of men traveling to hotels and motels in Canada to meet young kids they’ve lured through internet chat rooms for the purpose of sex.

Those working in the tourism industry can support the campaign to end commercial sexual exploitation of children by raising awareness of the crime amongst those who work in tourism and by promoting ethical and responsible behaviour to those travelling. To make it easy for stakeholders to implement the Code within their own organizations, comprehensive information and a training guide are available on line at www.thecode.org and in print and CD ROM format. Registration is through the Code Secretariat with assistance from Beyond Borders on development of an action plan.

Beyond Borders, a non-governmental organization created in 1996 to bring global justice to children everywhere, is building a Legal Defence Fund to help children impacted by sex tourism. The volunteer organization works to ensure that Canada’s 1997 sex tourism legislation is implemented and fully enforced. Beyond Borders campaigns with its ECPAT partners to ensure that Canada does not provide a safe haven for perpetrators of this cross-jurisdictional crime. Ms. Prober is the North American representative on the ECPAT International Board of Directors and another Beyond Borders member, David Butt, is the Secretary of ECPAT.