

ECPAT-USA news

October 2007



Dear Friends of ECPAT-USA:

Thank you for helping the campaign to end child sex tourism!

Many of you responded to our request to write letters to the Chief Executive Officers of four large US hotel companies asking them to sign the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.

ECPAT-USA has been engaging the travel and tourism industry in efforts to end the abhorrent practice of child sex tourism, defined as traveling away from one's home country or region to sexually exploit children. The legitimate travel industry does not promote child sex tourism, but their facilities are used by sex tourists to get to places with vulnerable children. Thus the industry is in a position to help us.

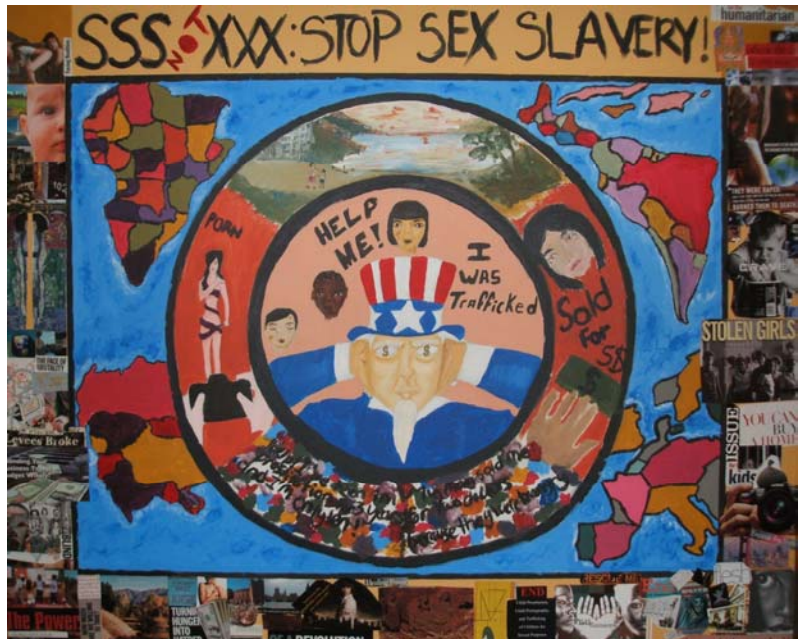
ACTION SO FAR

We targeted Choice, Hilton, Hyatt and Starwood in our campaign. Thanks to you, thousands of letters were written to the CEOs of these companies asking them to sign the Code of Conduct. In addition:

Twenty-one members of Congress wrote letters to them;

The ECPAT-USA Youth Committee designed and painted a mural about child sex tourism and child trafficking and produced 1,000 postcards with a picture of the mural. The postcards, addressed to the CEOs, were distributed for signatures one evening in May in New York City's Union Square, and mailed as part of the youth outreach activities. For more information about this project:

<http://ecpatusa.org/newsletter.asp?id=12>



This mural was designed and painted by ECPAT-USA Youth

Special Announcement!

ECPAT-USA is pleased to announce funding from the U.S. State Department for the Protect Children in Tourism Project in the Riviera Maya, Mexico. Under this two year grant ECPAT-USA will continue to work with the travel industry and local authorities in this rapidly expanding tourism region. The project will prevent child sex tourism by promoting the Code of Conduct.

RESULTS TO DATE

1) **Choice Hotels:** In a conference call with responsible investor groups, a company representative expressed interest in the Code of Conduct or other steps to protect children.

2) **Hilton Hotels:** The VP for Corporate Communications wrote in response to our campaign: “Our soon to be issued Global Code of Conduct will specifically address issues of child exploitation.” While the letter was encouraging in some ways, they have not offered to enter into a dialog with us about what steps they should take.

3) **Hyatt.** No response.

4) **Starwood.** In response to a shareholder resolution led by the Episcopal Church and including other faith-based responsible investor groups, Starwood agreed to several steps to protect children from sexual exploitation, and to include ECPAT-USA in a meeting on this topic. We hope this will be a productive meeting and we will keep you posted.

The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) has become an important leader in asking travel and tourism companies to take a responsible stand against child sex tourism by signing the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. Letter writing and shareholder resolutions by ICCR members who own stock in travel companies have focused travel companies' attention on child exploitation. For more information see www.iccr.org.

NEXT STEPS

We are delighted to have the attention of some of these companies and we hope it will pay off in concrete proposals for combating child sex tourism. We will keep you posted about progress with these companies.

In the meantime, **please continue to send letters to the CEO of Hyatt (sample letter attached)**. Other upcoming campaign activities include: 1) letters aimed at U.S. airlines, 2) public awareness in U.S. airports and 3) asking companies, government agencies and churches to endeavor to use companies that sign the Code of Conduct for official corporate travel.

OTHER NEWS ABOUT THE CODE

Thanks to The Body Shop Foundation, ECPAT-USA's Protect Children in Tourism Project continued over the summer in the Riviera Maya section of Mexico. The travel industry, local partners and political leaders from the city of Playa del Carmen and the state of Quintana Roo have embraced the Code. The region has also begun its own child protection public awareness campaign in conjunction with ECPAT-USA.



Signing ceremony for the Code of Conduct in the Riviera Maya, Mexico Sept. 7, 2007. From left: President of the municipal agency for women and children's issues and wife of the Mayor of Playa Del Carmen; President of the state agency for women's and children's issues and wife of the Governor of Quintana Roo; Mayor of Playa del Carmen; Executive Director of ECPAT-USA. Note the banner depicting the local child protection campaign

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ECPAT-USA welcomes new interns, Sunitha Menon and Srividya Sheshadri. Both Sunitha and Srividya are students at Columbia University School of Social Work in New York City.

A PUBLICATION OF

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Churches are invited to join the ECPAT-USA New Underground Railroad to help educate others and to become leaders in their own communities against human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

See <http://ecpatusa.org/thenewundergroundrailroad.htm> for more information

Please join us in our efforts to end the sexual exploitation of children by:

- sharing our news with others in your network,
- checking our website from time to time for updates (www.ecpatusa.org) and

Help us continue our important work. You can donate through Network for Good on our website: <http://ecpatusa.org/donations.asp> or by sending a check to ECPAT-USA.

ECPAT-USA depends on individuals like you to keep our campaign strong. Thanks!

Name _____ Email Address _____

Telephone _____ Enclosed is my donation of \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$100 ___ Other _____

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

***** To report suspected cases of child sex tourism, go to: www.cybertipline.com or let us know at ECPAT-USA*****

Sample Letter to Hyatt Hotels

Mark Hoplamazian
President
Global Hyatt Corp.
71 South Wacker Dr.
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Hoplamazian:

Millions of children around the world are falling prey to sex tourists. Sex tourists are people who believe it is legal and culturally acceptable to sexually exploit children in other countries. They even believe they are helping children because they pay them. This outrage has to be stopped. According to ECPAT-USA, as many as 25% of the world's sex tourists may be Americans. ECPAT-USA is a non-profit organization that has been working for more than 15 years to end the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (www.ecpatusa.org).

Your company must take a principled position to help eliminate this practice. Please sign the ECPAT Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children From Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Under this voluntary Code, a company agrees to:

1. Establish an ethical policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children
2. Train the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations.
3. Introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating the common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children.
4. Provide information to travelers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips, web-sites, etc.
5. Provide information to local "key persons" at the destinations.
6. Report annually.

More than 500 companies around the world, including Carlson Companies in the United States, have signed the Code of Conduct. Companies like yours are not responsible for the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, but they are in a position to do something to fight it.

More information about the ECPAT Code is available at www.thecode.org. Please contact ECPAT-USA at ecpat@ecpatusa.org to become a part of the solution.

Sincerely,

name

address
