

FACT SHEET

Support Socially Responsible Tourism

For more than ten years ECPAT International and its affiliates have reached out to partners in the tourism industry in an effort to eradicate child sex tourism. While the legitimate travel industry is not promoting child sex tourism, their facilities and services are used by sex tourists to get to and stay in destinations where they can find vulnerable children.

Tourism professionals are in a position to help combat child sex tourism. For that reason ECPAT-Sweden developed a Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (www.thecode.org). This global effort now has more than 970 companies participating with ethical and socially responsible corporate policies that address the issue of child sex tourism. In October 2007, Incursion Voyage of Quebec became the first Canadian company to sign on to the Code. The Association of Canadian Travel Agencies became the second Canadian signatory in 2008.

It is not known how many sex tourists abusing children around the world are Canadian. In 2005 a Canadian was sentenced to ten years in prison for crimes committed against children in Cambodia. In July 2010, a Canadian was sentenced in Canada to 11 years in prison for crimes committed against children in Colombia, Cambodia, and The Philippines. UNICEF estimates that more than **two million children** in the world are annually forced into commercial sexual practices.

The scope of this crime is enormous and requires a concerted effort by many – governments, the tourism industry, social agencies and travellers.

Here is what you can do:

- Be vigilant when you travel to high risk countries. Avoid bars and hotels and other places where you suspect child sexual exploitation might be happening.
- Don't visit red light districts. This encourages the proliferation of child sexual exploitation. Even the most innocent of purchases provides indirect financial support for this crime.
- If you suspect child sex tourism when you are abroad, report it to the local police, inform the nearest Canadian embassy, or access www.cybertip.ca to report it. Tell your tour guide and hoteliers. Encourage them to inform tourists that sex tourism is a crime.
- When you return home, let your travel agent and tour operator know of your observations and encourage them to take action.
- Patronize Code of Conduct companies when you travel for leisure or business. You might also want to let them know that the reason you are patronizing them is because they have signed the Code of Conduct. For a list of companies that have signed visit: <http://www.thecode.org/dokument/documents/revised-list-signatories-2010.pdf>
- Encourage the company you work for to get involved. If you work for a company that has an in-house travel department, ask them to adopt an ethical policy on child sex tourism, such as the one in the Code of Conduct and to book company travel with companies that have signed the Code.

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Adapted from ECPAT USA and ECPAT New Zealand.