



End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT)

The USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services Department handles a myriad of child safety issues. One that has come to our attention in the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and one in which we think we can help 'spread the word' concerns child exploitation in the travel and tourism industry.

As you are sadly aware, all over the world children are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Demand has increased, resulting in increased supply. According to UNICEF over 2 million children in the world are annually forced into commercial sexual practices. This exploitation occurs in all countries, to include right here in the United States. No state or town is excluded. In fact, the Western world accounts for the greatest demand for child sex.

To combat this, the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (the Code) was developed. The Code is a project initiated and developed by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT), co-funded by UNICEF, and supported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The Code is currently implemented globally by over 240 tour operators, hotels, travel agents and these associations, tourism workers unions from 21 countries in Europe, Asia, North America, Central and Latin America.

The Code is an industry driven multi-stake holder initiative which seeks to increase protection of children from sex tourism. The companies (tour operators, hotels, travel agents, etc which sign the Code), commit themselves to implement the following measures in the destinations:

1. To establish an ethical policy regarding commercial exploitation of children
2. To train the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations
3. To introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children
4. To provide information to travelers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips, home pages, etc
5. To provide information to local "key persons" at the destinations.

Some of those organizations that do business in the United States include:

British Airways
Carlson Wagonlit Travel
Radisson Hotels
Regent Hotels and Resorts
Four Points by Sheraton
Clarion Hotels

Park Suites
Quality
Comfort Suites
Park Inn
Country Inn & Suites
Comfort

Sleep Inn
Motel 6
Go Inn.
Restaurants include TGI
Fridays and Pick Up Stix.

For more information on what organizations have signed the Code you can go to www.thecode.org.

Everyone wants to stop the exploitation of children; not everyone is sure how to do that. Perhaps one of the first steps we can take is to use the businesses that sign The Code and to let them know that is why we are using them. It can make a difference. It is worth our efforts.