



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Travelers Unite to Stop Child Sex Trafficking

Letter-writing Campaign Seeks to Pressure Cambodian Government to Pass and Enforce Laws

(Berkeley, USA) Along with its unique culture and magnificent Khmer ruins, Cambodia has become notorious for a much darker attraction. The country is a source, destination, and transit point for modern day slaves: men, women, and children sold into the sex trade.

A coalition of four non-profit groups has launched a campaign to highlight the plight of children in Cambodia's sex trade. The effort, spearheaded by Berkeley-based Ethical Traveler, will arrange to send letters from travelers to Cambodia's Minister of Tourism, urging him to use his influence to end child sex slavery in that country.

“Cambodia relies on tourist dollars for much-needed foreign exchange,” says Jeff Greenwald, Ethical Traveler’s Executive Director. “Child sex tourism is a threat to the future of this developing nation, and to its appeal as a legitimate travel destination.”

Attitudes and laws in Cambodia must change in order to protect victims and punish sex slaveholders. Currently, officials often treat sex slaves as "illegal immigrants" and send them to prison, while their traffickers go free.

Sex tourism is a thriving industry in Cambodia, with male tourists paying high premiums for sex with children. NGOs like UNICEF and Save the Children estimate that 50,000 to 100,000 women and children are at risk.

“We have created a simple, easy, and direct way for concerned people from around the world to write the government of Cambodia, urging it to take action to stop child prostitution,” says Greenwald. “Tourism is a major economic force in Cambodia. By joining together, travelers can influence Cambodia to protect vulnerable children even as it protects its reputation as a world-class tourist destination.”

Ethical Traveler's campaign against child sex trafficking in Cambodia is being waged in association with Global Exchange, Not For Sale Campaign, and ECPAT—Cambodia. For more information on this campaign, or to send a letter to the Cambodian Minister of Tourism, please visit <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/cambodia>.

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia, and is bordered by Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.

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Note to Editors: Photos and follow-up interviews available upon request.

Additional Resources:

End Child Prostitution, Abuse and Trafficking in Cambodia (ECPAT Cambodia)

<http://www.ecpatcambodia.org>

Ethical Traveler: using the power of tourism to protect human rights and the environment

<http://ethicaltraveler.org>

Global Exchange: building people-to-people ties

<http://globalexchange.org/>

Not For Sale Campaign: working to end slavery in our lifetime

<http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/>