



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION DES HÔTELS DU CANADA

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

HAC Joins the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

Partnership initiated by the United Nations Foundation, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations World Tourism Organization, and the Rainforest Alliance

April 2, 2009, Ottawa, ON -- The Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) is pleased to announce that it has been confirmed as a network member of the United Nations backed Partnership for the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Partnership).

The GSTC are a set of 37 criteria organized around the four pillars of sustainable tourism: effective sustainability planning; maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community; reduction of negative impacts to cultural heritage; and reduction of negative impacts to environmental heritage.

The HAC, whose Green Key Eco-Rating Program embraces these criteria, will take an active role in the GSTC partnership by participating in various working committees designed to create awareness, develop new projects and educational tools in support of the criteria.

In addition to the GSTC partnership, HAC has also pledged itself as a charter supporter of the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC), a collaborative project of the Rainforest Alliance, UN agencies, major tourism businesses, national and regional sustainable tourism certification programs and a wide array of national and international social and environmental NGOs. Operating as an umbrella organization, the STSC will use the GSTC as a foundation to accredit sustainable tourism certification programs, with the ultimate goal of increasing worldwide recognition and providing credibility for these labels.

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“The HAC is excited to lend its support to these initiatives,” stated Tony Pollard, HAC President. “It is our hope that by working alongside the global leaders responsible for the creation of these initiatives, we will be able to make sustainable practices a key element of the global travel and tourism industry.”

"The GSTC Partnership welcomes HAC as a new network member of the initiative and commends HAC for their longstanding dedication to sustainable tourism," said Kate Dodson, deputy director of sustainable development at the UN Foundation. "Together, we are helping to preserve destinations for future generations to experience and enjoy."

The Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Partnership) is a coalition of 27 organizations working together to foster increased understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles. The Partnership was initiated by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Foundation, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The criteria will be the minimum standard that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. To learn more, visit www.SustainableTourismCriteria.org.

The Hotel Association of Canada is the national organization representing the lodging industry in Canada. Our membership encompasses the provincial and territorial hotel associations, the corporate hotel chains, independent hotels, motels and resorts and the many suppliers to the hotel industry. Our objective is to assist both our national and international members as they endeavour to enhance their competitiveness and achieve their bottom line.

The Green Key Eco-Rating Program is a graduated rating system designed to recognize hotels, motels and resorts that are committed to improving their environmental performance. Based on the results of a comprehensive environmental audit, hoteliers are awarded a one to five Green Key rating. Currently 1,076 Canadian and U.S. lodging properties are enrolled in the program. For more information, or to find a list of rated hotels, visit www.greenkeyglobal.com.