



Travelers' Philanthropy Conference Arusha, Tanzania December 3-5, 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Travelers' Philanthropy Conference in Tanzania Exceeds Expectations ~ Organizers Announce Outcomes & Follow Ups ~

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Over 225 delegates attended the 2008 Travelers' Philanthropy Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania, making it the largest and most diverse conference ever held on this theme.

The 3-day conference, at which Nobel Laureate Dr. Wangari Maathai, founder and leader of Kenya's Green Belt Movement, gave the opening keynote address, also marked the first time that travelers' philanthropy had been addressed in Africa.

Travelers' philanthropy is a relatively new concept, but it is rapidly growing into a worldwide movement and becoming part of the definition of responsible travel. At its core, travelers' philanthropy is about tourism businesses and travelers 'giving back' to tourism destinations by providing financial support, expertise, and material contributions to local projects and community initiatives. Tourism frequently takes place in biodiversity and culturally rich but economically poor regions of the world.

"We are thrilled with the results of the conference. Not only did more delegates attend than we had expected, but the conference is also generating a number of new educational materials that will help to strengthen travelers' philanthropy initiatives," says Martha Honey, Co-Director of the Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) that organized the conference and runs the Travelers' Philanthropy Program. "These materials will help provide, for the first time, the tools to help tourism businesses and host communities initiate and effectively carry out travelers' philanthropy projects."

In the wake of the conference, CESD plans to:

- Produce a new handbook ("How to Create a Travelers' Philanthropy Program") based on a 'short course' given at the conference. This handbook, which is being produced together with the Basecamp Foundation, will be launched in March at the ITB Berlin, the world's major travel show.
- Create a CD with the conference proceedings, presentations, photos, and other documents, as well as post them online.
- Promote and distribute the first ever documentary on travelers' philanthropy ("Giving Time, Talent, and Treasure") which was premiered at the conference.
- Launch a new discussion board and blog for conference participants and others interested in travelers' philanthropy.
- Expand the Experts Bureau to include more professionals who can work with companies, community organizations, NGOs, and others to develop travelers' philanthropy projects.
- Develop a list of 'best practices' for both tourism businesses and travelers involved in supporting projects in the host communities.
- Incorporate additional companies and their travelers' philanthropy projects into the Travelers' Philanthropy website which has the capacity to receive online, tax deductible donations.

Participants to the conference, which was held December 3-5, 2008 at the Ngurdoto Mountain Lodge, came

from over 20 countries. Nearly half received full or partial scholarships to attend, thanks to funds provided by the Ford Foundation, USAID, the United Nations Foundation, and the United States Institute for Peace.

“The conference provided an important opportunity for the east African tourism industry and local community-based enterprises to engage with developments related to responsible and sustainable forms of tourism, with roughly half of all participants coming from Kenya and Tanzania,” says Fred Nelson, the lead local organizer for the conference.

The conference included 18 workshops on topics such as serving local development priorities through travelers’ philanthropy; the responsibility and response of the travel industry to climate change; moving travelers’ philanthropy from a charity model to social empowerment and entrepreneurship; and bad practices and best practices for engaging travelers.

In addition, the conference examined several issues critical to Africa, including the failure of many tourism businesses to adequately address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. At the conference, several delegates pledged that their companies would, within the next year, develop HIV/AIDS policies and programs for staff and visitor education, as well as initiate travelers’ philanthropy projects to support HIV/AIDS clinics, orphanages, education and other types of programs in the host communities.

In his keynote address at the conference, Dr. David Western, founder of the Africa Conservation Centre and former director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, described travelers’ philanthropy as an effort to “martial the well intentioned impulses of the traveler” to support needs in the local community. He said it derives from the concept of the Good Samaritan, “the wayfarer who helped even those who he did not know.” He added that “Africa wants trade, not aid,” and “tourism represents the largest transfer of wealth from the North to the South.”

The conference was endorsed and supported by a wide range of sponsors. These include 31 companies, organizations, and development agencies. In addition to CESD, the leading partners in organizing the conference were the Honeyguide Foundation in Tanzania, Basecamp Foundation in Kenya, and the African Safari Lodge Foundation in South Africa.

We thank all of our sponsors for their support of the 2008 Travelers' Philanthropy Conference!

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