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**3<sup>rd</sup> International Travelers' Philanthropy Conference**  
**July 20-23, 2011 ~ Costa Rica**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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***Upcoming International Travelers' Philanthropy Conference Attracts New Sponsors & High Profile Speakers***

***Pellas Development Group to Sponsor Opening Banquet***

With less than two months to go before the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Travelers' Philanthropy Conference takes place in Costa Rica, a growing number of leading sustainable tourism companies and prominent individuals have announced their participation and support of this event. The conference, which is organized and hosted by the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) and the Monteverde Institute, will showcase the growing trend in the tourism industry to provide financial and material support as well as volunteer expertise for community and conservation projects in tourism destinations.

The Pellas Development Group, a major international company headquartered in Costa Rica, is the latest to announce its active role in the conference, including sponsorship of the opening reception and banquet to be held July 20, 2011 at the Hotel Ramada Herradura in San Jose. The evenings' keynote speaker is Costa Rican lawyer Erika Harms who is Executive Director of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and Senior Advisor on Tourism at the United Nations Foundation.

The Pellas Group, which has ownership interests in sugar, ethanol, power generation, rum (Nicargua's famous "Flor de Caña" brand), health care, and consumer goods, has recently expanded into real estate and coastal tourism projects in Nicaragua and Costa Rica with a strong commitment to both environmentally sensitive design and community development. In explaining his company's vision, founder and Chair, Carlos F. Pellas, who is among the guests invited to attend the opening banquet, stated, "We must not look at the world as an inheritance from our parents, but rather as a loan from our children." Several members of the Pellas Group, including its CEO Carlos Hernandez, will participate and speak at the conference.

Other featured participants and speakers attending the conference include:

- **Margarita Penon**, former first lady of Costa Rica and ex-member of parliament;
- **Dorinda (Dinda) Elliott**, Deputy Editor of *CondeNast Traveler* magazine and head of their World Savers sustainable tourism awards program;
- **Dr. Toni Neubauer**, founder and President of Myths & Mountains whose READ Nepal program won the Access to Learning Award from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2006) ;
- **Jane Crouch**, Responsible Travel Manager for Intrepid Travel, winner, 2011 Tourism for Tomorrow's "Global Tourism Business Award";
- **Lars Lindkvist**, Chair of the Board and Judy Kepher-Gona, CEO, Basecamp Explorer (Kenya ), winner of "The Responsible Tourism Award" at the World Travel Market in London (2009);
- **Bruce Beckham**, Executive Director, Tourism Cares;
- **Eduardo Villafranca**, CEO & President of Responsible Business Alliance;
- **Ronald Sanabria**, Vice President and Sustainable Tourism Director, Rainforest Alliance;
- **Manuel E. Ardon**, Senior Operations Director, Peninsula Papagayo, Costa Rica;
- **Julie Klein**, Corporate Director of Environmental Affairs, Vail Resorts and RockResorts;
- **Gustavo Segura**, General Manager, Hotel Ramada Herradura Hotel, Costa Rica's first urban hotel to earn 5 green leaves under the country's rigorous Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) program;
- **Paula Vlamings**, Associate Director, Planeterra Foundation, Gap Adventures;
- **Doris Welsh**, Director of Sales and Marketing, Ecoventura and Galapagos Network;
- **Maria Barquero**, Responsible Tourism Outreach Manager and **Carlos Bolanos**, General Manager, Hotel Punta Islita Resort, named the "Best Accommodation for Local Communities" by Virgin Airlines' Responsible Tourism Awards (2010);
- **Maximiliano Brandt**, Member Society Development Manager for the Regional Office of WSPA;

In addition, Costa Rica's Minister of Culture, Manuel Obregon will host the closing banquet and a musical concert in Monteverde, on Saturday, July 23, together with Chris Blackwell, owner of Island Outpost in Jamaica, founder of Island Records, and a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Other companies and organizations that have recently signed up as sponsors and participants in the conference are the Tabacon Grand Spa Resort, Hotel Belmar in Monteverde, Institute at the Golden Gate, and the Inter-American Foundation.

The bilingual (English and Spanish) conference, which opens in San Jose and then moves to Monteverde, a mountain top community renowned for its cloud forest reserve and locally owned tourism businesses, will feature 21 workshops divided into three streams, a 4-hour Short Course tutorial on the nuts and bolts of travelers' philanthropy, other activities, plus a range of pre- and post-conference tours with leading Costa Rica responsible tourism companies.

For conference registration, other details, and updates visit: [www.travelersphilanthropy.org/conference](http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org/conference)

**Conference website: [www.travelersphilanthropy.org/conference](http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org/conference)**

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