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A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



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For immediate release – Wednesday, June 10, 2009

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San Francisco Launches Global Sustainable Tourism Initiative in U.S.

Mayor Newsom to introduce resolution at US Conference of Mayors

San Francisco- San Francisco, the birthplace of the United Nations, will be the lead US city to partner with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria Partnership, a coalition of more than 40 international conservation, development, and travel industry organizations to implement sustainable tourism principles. The City will work with the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau to encourage and promote local businesses that protect cultural heritage and the environment.

“San Francisco is proud to support sustainable tourism here and abroad. As a city at the forefront of the environmental movement, we understand the need for tourism that brings economic benefits to communities without damaging the environment or harming local culture,” said San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who will introduce a resolution, with the support of Miami and Baltimore, encouraging member cities to endorse the Criteria at the US Conference of Mayors this weekend. Miami and Baltimore, in addition to San Francisco, have committed to adopt the criteria for use in their respective cities.

"The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is pleased that San Francisco has taken the lead in moving the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria to the next level. This initiative will help to ensure that tourism will benefit, not harm, the environment and local communities", said Amy Fraenkel, Director of UNEP's Regional Office for North America. "We are hopeful that cities across the U.S. will join in this effort by signing onto the resolution and adopting the criteria."

The Partnership, initiated by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Foundation, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), spent 15 months developing 37 Criteria, with the aim of harmonizing elements from more than 60 existing sustainable tourism certification systems from around the world. Sustainable tourism, in contrast to “green” or “eco” tourism, addresses cultural and socio-economic impacts of tourism in addition to environmental ones.

"We commend Mayor Newsom and San Francisco for leading the way in sustainable tourism," said Erika Harms, Executive Director of Sustainable Development for the UN Foundation. "It is exciting to see how cities are utilizing the criteria and we encourage other cities to follow the lead of San Francisco, Miami, and Baltimore to help us preserve unique city destinations for future communities and travelers to enjoy."

More than 25 restaurants, bars, and hotels have been recognized as San Francisco Green Businesses for meeting the City's rigorous environmental standards for waste reduction, pollution prevention, and energy and water conservation. Tourism businesses which implement the Criteria and are recognized San Francisco Green Businesses or are Greenopia-rated will be listed as participating in an upcoming Sustainable Tourism Program in San Francisco.

“San Francisco's 16.4 million visitors last year spent \$8.52 billion -- generating over \$527 million in taxes for the City of San Francisco. The San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau looks forward to promoting this endorsement and encouraging our members to support the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria,” according to Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria Partnership: www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org

Resolution introduced at the US Conference of Mayors: <http://usmayors.org/>

San Francisco Green Business Program: www.SFGreenbiz.org

San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau: <http://www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com/green/>

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