

Press release

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Accor Greater China sustainable CSR program honored by UNWTO/UN Women

Accor, the world's leading hotel operator and market leader in Europe, is honored to announce today that "Empowerment Builds the Future," an ongoing sustainable CSR program initiated by Accor Greater China and supported by Accor Foundation, has been selected as a case study in the upcoming 2010 Global Report on Women in Tourism due to its recognized achievement in reshaping the future of HIV/Aids affected women and children in China.

The Global Report, scheduled to be released in Berlin on March 11 as the first directly visible result of a close collaboration between UNWTO and UN Women, is defined a landmark study in the field of tourism and gender as well as the first worldwide attempt to map the participation of women in the tourism industry.

"In line with our mission of linking cultures and providing support for the development of individuals and their integration into the community, Accor's innovative CSR program in Greater China gives a perfect demonstration that tourism can act as a vehicle for the economic empowerment of women by offering them a wide range of opportunities," said Marie-Caroline Bizet, Foundation Delegate-General of Accor Foundation, which has contributed 20,000 euros to the first year operation of the program. "Accor Foundation is very proud to sponsor this innovative and sustainable program aimed to benefit HIV/AIDS affected families in China where Accor is actively present."

Unveiled by Accor Greater China in partnership with Chi Heng Foundation in November 2009, the three-year charity program has made notable achievement by drawing continuously growing public attention to the plight of HIV/AIDS affect families via Accor's extensive hotel network in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau.

More than 45,000 euros has been raised so far through the sale of some 20,000 eco-friendly shopping bags produced by women in central China's Henan Province whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS and all proceeds have been used to expand the production as well as to provide educational opportunities and scholarships for children from the affected households.

"Statistics provide us with part of the picture while stories provide us with the other," noted Dr. Louise Twining-Ward, Author and Coordinating Editor of the Global Report. "The personal stories of women who have been empowered by tourism clearly demonstrate the power of the industry to change lives, build communities, and lift women out of poverty."

UNWTO and UN women have worked in partnership since 2008 under the aim to bring gender issues to the forefront of the tourism industry, promote gender equality, women's empowerment and the mainstreaming of gender issues in national tourism policies.

Focusing on five main areas of Employment, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Education and Community, the Global Report has concluded with findings that women make up a large proportion of the tourism sector worldwide, and are more likely to be business owners, business leaders, and self-employed in tourism than in any other area of work. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go. Women are still paid less, are less likely to be at managerial level than men, and are more likely to be exploited than men. Dr Twining-Ward noted in her concluding remarks, "If tourism is to be an effective stepping-stone for women we need to clear the path of obstacles and make the way easier and more productive for women." UNWTO and UN Women suggest an agenda for action in empowering women through monitoring and implementation of the UN Empowerment Principles. They invite Governments, NGOs, and business to join in the journey.

Women with higher levels of training and greater opportunities to develop their businesses are able to contribute to exponential quality improvements in all areas of tourism activity.

To make its aim of "linking cultures" a reality, the **Accor Foundation** provides technical and financial assistance for outreach initiatives developed by employees in countries where the Group is active. Since it was created in 2008 and thanks to the mobilization of over 3000 employees in 28 countries, it has supported 83 projects contributing to the development of individuals and their integration into the community.

The Foundation has chosen four fields of intervention:

- **Local know-how**: Support socio-economic initiatives highlighting traditional crafts and techniques
- **Training & Insertion**: Encourage integration and insertion of young people in difficulty aged 15 to 30.
- **Culture & Heritage**: Contribute to the influence of the culture of the countries where the Group is present.
- **Humanitarian & Emergency**: Help populations in great difficulty and answer to humanitarian disasters.

For more information, visit www.fondation-accor.com.

Accor, the world's leading hotel operator and market leader in Europe, is present in 90 countries with 4,200 hotels and more than 500,000 rooms.

Accor's broad portfolio of hotel brands - **Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Novotel, Suite Novotel, Mercure, Adagio, ibis, all seasons, Etap Hotel, Formule 1, hotelF1 and Motel 6**, and its related activities, **Thalassa sea & spa** and **Lenôtre** - provide an extensive offer from luxury to budget. With **145,000 employees** worldwide, the Group offers to its **clients and partners** nearly 45 years of know-how and expertise.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Accor Greater China

Mabel Liu
Communications Director
86(0) 21 6119 9833
Mabel.Liu@accor.com

Accor Greater China

April Ling
Communications Executive
86(0) 21 6119 9839
April.Ling@accor.com