



    | @mpahtCanada

mpaht.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2018

Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking Sign *The Code* to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation

Conference and event planners, hotel sales and audio visual professionals take a leadership role in raising awareness of human trafficking in Canada

Toronto, ON – Today, Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking (MPAHT) marked the *United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons* by becoming a signatory to *The Code*. *The Code*, short for “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism” is an industry-driven initiative to provide awareness, tools and support to combat the sexual exploitation of children.

For many Canadians, human trafficking evokes images of distant countries and people smuggled across borders, but human trafficking is actively happening every day in cities across Canada. As conference and event planners, hotel sales and audio visual professionals, the members of MPAHT recognize the important role they can play in drawing attention to this important issue for their industry.

MPAHT’s signing of *The Code*, led by the volunteer organization’s founder Sandy Biback, underscores the group’s commitment to educating and advancing awareness of the violence against children that is happening in every country, and across all social groups.

“MPAHT was formed in 2017 to work with conference and event planners and venues to help understand exploitation and what we as meeting professionals can do to help stem the tide. We have formed coalitions with other groups, have helped spread awareness and education to the world of conferences and events, and know that we are making a difference, with a much longer road in front of us, says Sandy Biback, Founder of Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking. “By signing *The Code* agreement, MPAHT is honouring our mission to work collaboratively to help stem the tide of human slavery.”

Member representatives of MPAHT, including the event sponsor Hilton Hotels, were joined by Nicole Merrick, President of Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada, the Canadian representative of ECPAT International who established *The Code* in 1996.

Together we can help stop human trafficking in our industry.

“The unfortunate reality is that human trafficking is often linked to travel and tourism. As the Canadian representative of *The Code*, Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada is incredibly pleased that Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking has chosen to become a signatory to *The Code*, and to join other industry leaders in implementing a Code of Conduct aimed at protecting children from sex tourism,” says Nicole Merrick, President of Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada. “This dedicated group of professionals, with members comprised of conference and event planners, hotel sales professionals and audio visual professionals, Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking is perfectly positioned to make a real and effective difference in the fight against child sexual exploitation.”

As a member of *The Code*, MPAHT’s mandate includes:

- Educating meeting planners, venues and suppliers about human trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Providing tools and training on how to recognize the signs of human trafficking and how to appropriately handle these situations
- Encouraging the inclusion of a clause in contracts stating a zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children

About Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking

Meeting Professionals Against Human Trafficking (MPAHT) is a Toronto-based organization formed to create awareness and dispel the myths surrounding human trafficking in Canada in the event industry. Focusing on collaboration and education, MPAHT is driving the conversation on human trafficking that may be taking place at events and through allied partners including hotels and airlines. The ultimate aim for the volunteer-based organization is to provide awareness and resources for the meetings and conference industry at large.

For more information, visit www.mpaht.com and follow us on Twitter (@MPAHTCanada) and Facebook (@MeetingProfessionalsAgainstHumanTrafficking).

About Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada

Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada is a bilingual national advocacy organization advancing the rights of children everywhere to be free from sexual abuse and exploitation and is a registered charity without political or religious affiliation. Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada is the Canadian representative of ECPAT International, a global network in more than 80 countries dedicated to ending child prostitution, child sexual imagery and SECCT - the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. www.beyondborders.org.

-30-

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Stephanie Chiang
mpahtcontact@gmail.com
647-984-8800