

# Hotels gear up to curb human trafficking

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**W**ith the World Cup on our doorstep, city hotels are gearing up to curb human trafficking.

On Wednesday (June 9) several hotels signed the Tourism Child-Protection Code, which stipulates that hotel staff will be trained to identify when children could be in danger.

Tourism NGO Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) launched the code with Cape Town Tourism.

Cape Town Tourism chief executive Mariette duToit-Helmbold said the tourism industry viewed sex tourism and human trafficking very seriously and said it would not be condoned.

“We cannot turn a blind eye and just focus on the pretty postcard pictures of a destination.

“There is a dark underbelly in tourism, whether we like it or not. And that underbelly needs to be exposed and proactively dealt with.

“When people travel with the intention of exploiting women and children, it becomes a matter of interest not just for tourism but also for society and the law.

“Exploitation of this sort is a global problem, but it often goes hand-in-hand with developing societies such as ours and should be a concern for anyone involved in the tourism industry.

“Our message is simple: ‘If you are going to make yourself guilty of irresponsible behaviour, you are not welcome.’

“We now have the South African government, Fair Trade in Tourism, as well as members behind this message, not just for June and July 2010, but increasingly going forward.”

Jacqui Booyzen, general manager of the Coral International Hotel in Buitengracht Street, one of the establishments to sign the code, said: “We are committed to responsible tourism, tourism that is not harmful to our local community or

**Continued on page 3**





# Hotels to report back

## From page 1

“the people of South Africa but that contributes to job creation and a better life for all in the country. It is in this spirit that we took the decision to commit to and participate in the signing of the code,” Ms Boozyzen said.

She said the hotel was currently working on an internal policy that included staff awareness and education, aimed at empowering them to act responsibly whenever the need arises. She said staff would be given information on human trafficking, tips on what to look out for, what to do, and the necessary contact numbers.

“We fully support the actions taken by Cape Town Tourism as well as the introduction of the code in South Africa by Fair Trade Tourism South Africa, which is why we are proud to be one of the first hotels in Cape Town to sign the code,” Ms Boozyzen said.

The code requires establishments to provide staff with information and training and to compile an annual report on progress. There are approximately 10 establishments across the city, including Winchester Mansions, the Cape Grace Hotel and the Taj Hotel that have signed the code.

City Sightseeing chief executive Claus Tworeck said the tour bus company also signed the code.

“Cape Town Tourism has taken this campaign to heart and is lobbying for its support among their stakeholders. It is a matter dear to our company’s heart so we had no hesitation in signing this code of conduct as it falls in line with our own company’s philosophy,” Mr Tworeck said.

He said the staff training would begin this week. “More detailed training will form part of our longer term strategy and it will take a few weeks to ensure proper training is correctly sourced and implemented, so it can properly serve the purpose it’s designed for.

“We agree with CTT’s simple message: ‘If you are going to make yourself guilty of irresponsible behaviour you are not welcome’. Our drivers and guides are ambassadors for Cape Town, and so, are our eyes and ears as they drive through the city,” Mr Tworeck said.

Mayco member for Safety and Security, Alderman JP Smith, said during the World Cup, the Vice Squad and police wanted to ensure the city was safe for locals and tourists.

He said the Vice Squad will continue to watch out for the threat of human trafficking as well as child prostitution and raid brothels.

Mr Smith said there are fewer prostitutes on the streets but there has been an increase in the number of brothels, particularly in the Table View, Bellville and Boston areas. Of the 398 prostitutes profiled since the Vice Squad was launched last year, only six per cent were foreigners, of which nine cases could be classified as human trafficking, he said.

