



PRESS RELEASE

Sri Lanka Tourism Sector Embraces Human Rights with Launch of Mother and Child-Friendly Seal



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Colombo, Sri Lanka - September 27, 2024: According to a recent [assessment](#), on child rights risks in Sri Lanka's tourism by The Centre for Child Rights and Business (The Centre) in partnership with Save the Children, children in the tourism supply chain are at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, child labour and disruptions to their education. These risks are primarily driven by inadequate regulations for supplementary accommodations, particularly in guesthouses and homestays, the absence of child safeguarding protocols among tourism service providers, and the lack of formal young worker programmes connecting youth to decent work opportunities.

To help tourism businesses address these challenges, The Centre is officially launching the Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business in Sri Lanka's tourism sector on World Tourism Day in Colombo. This expansion follows the Seal's successful implementation in the tea industry. The launch comes as Sri Lanka is poised to welcome over 3 million tourist arrivals by 2025, making it a key time for the tourism industry to align with human rights due diligence.

A Dynamic and Transparent Initiative

The Seal aims to create long-term positive change by breaking away from traditional audit-based approaches that the private sector and state bodies adopt and instead offering a dynamic action-based framework rooted in ongoing commitment and continuous improvement. Businesses are evaluated against their own baselines and must actively work towards enhancing their mother- and child-friendly practices. After taking a pledge, each company creates an action plan to strengthen initiatives for women and children in the communities they touch. The Seal's foundation is built on human rights, transparency, gender equity, and participation.

The initiative also creates opportunities for public-private partnerships and will strengthen the capacity of tourism businesses to build a family-friendly supply chain where women and children's rights are safeguarded.

"The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business in the tourism sector holds immense potential to drive positive change and transform lives for the better. To truly unlock its impact, it is crucial to secure the full support and commitment of the industry and key stakeholders who are ready to be change-makers. Together, we can build a future where businesses within the tourism space thrive as champions of women's and children's wellbeing," said Ines Kaempfer, CEO of The Centre for Child Rights and Business.

Recognition for Businesses Leading Change

Tourism businesses, including hotels, guesthouses, homestays, as well as travel agencies and international tour operators, can participate in this initiative. The Seal consists of four performance-based levels: Explorer, Pathfinder, Trailblazer, and Changemaker, with the highest level awarded to companies that demonstrate significant progress through self-assessment and a journey of improvement. Earning the Seal signifies a company's strong commitment to human rights, helps meet human rights due diligence requirements, and elevates the company's reputation as an ethical leader in the tourism industry. Most importantly, the Seal initiative is designed to drive real, lasting change for women, children, and families linked to the tourism sector.

For more information about the Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business, visit srilanka-motherandchildseal.org or contact info.SL@childrights-business.org.

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Notes to Editor

The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business was first launched in the tea sector in 2022, where it has successfully encouraged business entities (smallholders, large to medium-sized estates and plantations, tea brokers and export companies) to continuously improve their support for families in tea communities. Numerous groundbreaking initiatives were launched as a result, including the first-ever female supervisors on plantations and the first business-driven child benefit initiative for families, among others. This proven model is now being piloted in Sri Lanka's tourism industry and offers a framework that can be adopted globally by businesses seeking to address human rights due diligence while driving meaningful change.

About The Centre for Child Rights and Business

The Centre for Child Rights and Business is a social enterprise that supports companies in child rights, ESG, and human rights due diligence, including compliance with the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), to deliver sustainable improvements within their supply chains and yield positive business outcomes. Our mission is to promote supply chain transparency, enhance corporate practices, and improve the lives of children, youth and families by helping companies identify, prevent, and mitigate the adverse impacts of their operations on children's rights. We believe businesses can be a force for good, and we are committed to supporting them every step of the way.

For more information, please visit www.childrights-business.org.

About the Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business Initiative

The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business aims establish a uniform, transparent, and rights-based framework to assess and promote mother and child-friendly practices across the tourism supply chain. This includes accommodation establishments such as hotels, guesthouses, and homestays, as well as travel agencies and international tour operators.

Its core objectives are to:

- Strengthen the commitment and capacity of business entities in the tourism sector to create a family-friendly supply chain where children and their mothers can fully enjoy their human rights
- Encourage business entities in the tourism supply chain to make sustainable, meaningful investments in initiatives that enhance the well-being of children and women in tourism hotspots
- Enhance public-private partnerships between government agencies and businesses to improve key services such as education, healthcare, and social protection in tourism areas
- Create added value and market differentiation for Sri Lankan tourism by showcasing its transformation towards a family-friendly supply chain, thus promoting long-term sustainability

The Seal is a marker for a business entity's commitment and investment in mother and child-friendly practices in its supply chain, evaluated against transparent, rights-based criteria with progressive improvement pathways. The Seal complements existing initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental and social standards by addressing the child rights gap in social impact assessments. It takes a broader view of children's rights, going beyond labour standards and promoting responsible practices that extend beyond compliance-driven targets.

For more information, please visit www.srilanka-motherandchildseal.org.