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Date: August 12, 2006

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourism Rebounding in Tsunami Ravaged Indonesia Thanks to IFC and WorldHotel-Link.com

BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA – It was a little over eighteen months ago that one of the deadliest natural disasters in history occurred off of the coast of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean. The 2006 tsunami destroyed the coastlines of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand. With hundreds of thousands killed or displaced in one of the poorest regions of the world, the international community began massive campaigns to rebuild this area.

One region that suffered devastating losses was Banda Aceh, Indonesia, simply known as Aceh (pronounced AH-CHAY). Aceh is now showing signs of economic recovery through the assistance of numerous development projects. One such project is the tourism development



project undertaken by the International Finance Corporation's Private Enterprise Participation for Aceh and Nias (PEP Aceh and Nias), WorldHotel-Link.com (WHL) and Banda Perdana (BP) Travel. Today, these three organisations cooperatively launched an online accommodation booking portal for Aceh: www.aceh-hotels.com to promote tourism.

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Aceh-Hotels.com is part of the WorldHotel-Link network of online booking portals. Worldhotel-link.com (WHL) started in early 2002 as a World Bank/IFC funded development project to assist small travel service companies, especially accommodation providers, in the developing world to use the Internet to market and sell their local properties and services online. WHL is the only commercial online booking site with a focus on development in emerging markets. Designed expressly for local tour operators to compete on a global level while keeping the economic opportunity in their community, WHL is a one-of-kind business model and the site in Aceh is 37th destination in the network to go live.

"Tourism in Aceh has been hampered for many years as a destination. We have enormous potential and are strategically located in that we are so close to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Our e-marketplace, www.aceh-hotels.com, will help Aceh tourism and smaller accommodations gain visibility in the global market. Not only that, the portal will allow travelers from all over the world to book online even the smallest guesthouse in the remotest parts of Aceh without the guesthouse being connected to the internet. I am proud to be part of that bridge. " - States Mr. Totok Julianto of Banda Perdana (BP) Travel and the WorldHotel-link e-Marketplace Operator for Aceh.

Aceh is a territory of Indonesia located on the northern tip of the Island of Sumatra. Arab, Chinese, European and Indian influences were the dominant foreign factors that helped shape modern Aceh. One of the most stunning regions of the world, Indonesia has become a favorite tourist destination for many independent travellers seeking remote locations, pristine beaches and exotic cultures.

"The IFC and WHL have been very supportive in the portal development and I am honored that they have put their trust in me to run the e-marketplace. I have been in the travel agency business but running a tourism e-marketplace is new to me," Mr. Julianto said. "Again, IFC and WHL have been very helpful in getting me up to speed with the business model and how the system works, which is very user-friendly. I am really looking

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forward to this new opportunity that will assist tourism development in Aceh"

PEP Aceh & Nias is a multi-donor funded facility managed and operated by the IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group. It is funded by the IFC and the Australian Government with the mission to support and grow private enterprises in the areas affected by the 2004 tsunami. More information is available at www.ifc.org

Worldhotel-link.com (WHL) is an online travel services network for the developing world. WHL was pioneered by IFC's Mekong Private Sector Development Facility and was spun off as a separate company by IFC in March 2006. Offering an array of small and interesting accommodations and tours not found on other travel sites. Through a worldwide network of franchise operators in each destination, WHL offers local knowledge and contributes to local economies. The WHL network also promotes "Caring for the Destination" - the first traveller-driven, sustainable tourism ratings program designed with small accommodation providers in mind. For more information on WorldHotel-Link (WHL), please visit www.worldhotel-link.com.

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