

## PATA's CEO Challenge 2008 Confronts Climate Change

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The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is challenging influential and passionate travel industry leaders to agree and sign on to a truly cross-sectoral industry response to climate change, one of the greatest global threats to travel and tourism.

Hosted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and organised in partnership with the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) and the Burma Hotel Network (BHN), PATA's 'CEO Challenge 2008: Confronting Climate Change' will take place in Bangkok on April 29-30, 2008.

PATA President and CEO Mr Peter de Jong said that the ambitious goal for the CEO Challenge is to create a single platform and action plan, fully engaging tourism ministers and heads of tourist boards, CEOs of airlines and airports, CEOs of leading international hotel groups, major tour operators and other key industry stakeholders.

The agenda will be focused, relevant and actionable. Decision-makers from the public and private sectors of the travel industry will be challenged over a day and a half of interactive discussions to agree and commit to action.

Several important debates will lead up to the CEO Challenge. UNWTO is convening the second Climate Change and Tourism conference in Davos in early October this year, while in November a tourism ministerial meeting will address the theme in London. Next year on April 22-23, the airline community will convene its third Aviation and Environment Summit in Geneva.

"We strongly support these initiatives and intend to incorporate their conclusions and recommendations into our CEO Challenge", Mr de Jong said.

He added: 'We cannot achieve a meaningful response to climate change by acting alone. No one can. No single organisation. No single sector. Only by working together - as a united travel and tourism force - can we make a difference.'

Leading industry personalities have begun to voice their support for the CEO Challenge.

"This is a critical issue for the aviation and tourism industries to confront together," said Qantas Airways CEO Mr Geoff Dixon. 'The timing is perfect and PATA is ideally placed to assist in their efforts. I thoroughly support the CEO Challenge,' he added.

"The CEO Challenge 2008 is a timely initiative that will bring together public and private sector leaders to focus on practical steps we can take, as an industry, to address the important issue of climate change," said Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) Director General Mr Andrew Herdman.

'Economic and social development must go hand in hand with environmental responsibility," he said, adding that he believes Asia Pacific is pivotal in the sustainable development of the global aviation, travel and tourism industries.

Accor Asia Pacific Chairman Mr David Baffsky said the health of the world's environment is fundamental and climate is a crucial component to all sectors of the tourism industry.

"Our industry must not be marginalised so it is very important for CEOs to participate in the CEO Challenge on climate change," he said. 'It will facilitate the industry having a real voice and making a positive contribution to a fully informed debate to allow a proper understanding of the impact of our sector on our planet', he added.

Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping said the event could not be timelier.

"The travel industry, because of its diversity, has not been able to come to grips with the dimensions and implications of climate change, nor to even understand how culpable we truly are as negative contributors to climate change, nor how we can mobilise our enormous resources to provide positive leadership," he said.

"This is an important conference, which I hope to be able to participate in," said Mr Ho.

The 'PATA CEO Challenge' is a new annual event which PATA organises in lieu of the previous PATA Annual Conference. For the full release and testimonials, and to register your interest, please visit [www.PATA.org/ceochallenge](http://www.PATA.org/ceochallenge).

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