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WTAAA Holds Meeting in Washington, DC, Joins Open Allies, Inducts New Member from Brazil and Elects New Board

Washington, DC, Sept. 18, 2012 – The World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) held its bi-annual board meeting and annual general assembly at the St. Regis Hotel in Washington, D.C., Sept. 11-12, 2012. WTAAA meets twice a year to discuss the management of issues that affect travel industry professionals across the world and to share common problem-solving strategies.

“This meeting was one of our most important meetings since we charted the organization in 2008,” said Peter Barlow, outgoing WTAAA chair. “There are many global issues impacting our members and their customers, from slow visa facilitation to the slowly rebounding global economy. Yet, of all the issues, the one that clearly stands out is the need for full transparency to buyers of fares, fees and content. This is not just a U.S. issue. All travel professionals, regardless of where they are located, must be presented with an accurate view of the full cost of transportation so that full transparency and transactability can be provided to buyers. This is why the WTAAA board unanimously agreed to support the Open Allies for Airfare Transparency coalition.”

During its two-day meeting, WTAAA:

- met with Mike Premo, CEO and president of the Airlines Reporting Corp. (ARC);
- met with Chris Austin, vice president of Global Retail, Leisure and Luxury Sales at Starwood;
- met with and joined the Open Allies for Airfare Transparency coalition;
- elected a new chair, Lars Thykier of the European Travel Agents and Tour Operators Associations (ECTAA)
- elected a new vice-chair, Dave McCaig of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA);
- re-elected Jayson Westbury of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) as treasurer;
- thanked Peter Barlow of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) for his tireless service as outgoing WTAAA chair;

- welcomed Leonel Rossi of the Association of Brazilian Travel Agencies (ABAV) as WTAAA's newest association member;
- selected Sao Paolo, Brazil as the location of the next WTAAA meeting in March, 2013;
- thanked Robyn Christie of the Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA) for her tenure on the board; and,
- welcomed new board directors, Nina Meyer of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) and Praveen Chugh of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI).

The WTAAA board would like to thank Starwood Hotels and Resorts for sponsoring the meeting at the St. Regis in Washington, DC, and offer a special thanks to Chris Austin for his support of the travel professional community.

ABOUT WTAAA

The mission of the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) is to act as the global travel agency voice through the exchange of ideas and information. WTAAA members include the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA), Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA), Association of Brazilian Travel Agents (ABAV), European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA), Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA), Travel Agency Federation of India (TAFI) and Travel Agents' Association of New Zealand (TAANZ).