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**Ocean Conservation and Tourism Alliance**  
*International Council of Cruise Lines and Conservation International*  
**Announce Joint Initiative**

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Washington, DC—December 10, 2003— The International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL) and Conservation International (CI) today announced a joint initiative to protect biodiversity in top cruise destinations and promote industry practices that minimize the cruise industry’s environmental impact.

The Ocean Conservation and Tourism Alliance sets up four initial priority areas including:

- *Best Practices for Wastewater Management:* improved shipboard technology, specifically accelerating and adopting Advanced Wastewater Purification (AWP) systems.
- *Establishing Destination Partnerships:* working with local governments and communities to maintain high-quality travel experiences by protecting the natural and cultural assets of cruise destinations.
- *Promoting Environmental Education:* raising guest and crew awareness of and support for critical conservation issues.
- *Promoting Vendor Environmental Education:* lessening the environmental impacts of suppliers.

The initiative’s first step will be to establish a science panel of experts in conservation, environmental technologies, and cruise industry environmental practices. The science panel will independently review core environmental issues facing the cruise industry and provide advice as to the best course of action to deal with those critical challenges. The ICCL and CI have committed to having the science panel established and initial assessments ready for presentation at the Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention in March 2004.

“We could not have a better partner. Conservation International has a long history of working with business to pioneer conservation solutions that are scientifically, economically and culturally sound,” said Michael Crye, president of ICCL.

“Our vision is to work with leaders in the tourism industry and demonstrate how the industry and conservation community can work together to produce mutually beneficial results. The goal is to not only protect the places tourists visit but also maximize positive contributions to conservation in high biodiversity areas where the cruise industry operates,” said Glenn Prickett, senior vice president of Conservation International and executive director of the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business. “We are encouraged the industry shares our vision.”

The ICCL, which represents fifteen of the world's leading cruise lines, has committed \$850,000 to the initiative and its supporting projects. Conservation International has matched this contribution with an investment of \$250,000.

Of the initial areas of work, AWP research and development has been a strong focus for the industry for several years. Combined efforts have resulted in rapid technological advancements and the installation of several prototypes on more than 20 ships—at a cost of \$50 million. These systems, while capable of meeting high standards for treatment, are still in the early stages of application for general use. The industry is committed to continuing to invest in improved AWP systems, and installing those systems on its ships. CI will work with the industry and system manufacturers to expedite the process.

The Alliance's focus on tourism and biodiversity issues is important because approximately 70 percent of cruise destinations are in the biodiversity hotspots, including the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, Mexico, the Panama Canal Zone, and the South Pacific. A preponderance of species diversity is found exclusively within the earth's 25 biodiversity hotspots, which combined cover a very small percentage of the Earth's land surface. Each biodiversity hotspot has already lost the majority of its original species habitat, and the remainder faces imminent threat of further destruction.

Today's partnership formalizes a relationship that began two years ago. In 2001, CI began working with member lines when it was researching the industry's overall performance and its past and future challenges. CI released its interim report, *A Shifting Tide: Environmental Challenges and Cruise Industry Responses*, in 2003.

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*About the organizations:*

ICCL represents the interests of 15 passenger cruise lines that call on major ports in the United States and abroad. Member lines include Carnival Cruise Lines, Celebrity Cruises, Costa Cruise Line N.V., Crystal Cruises, Cunard Line Ltd., Disney Cruise Line, Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line, Orient Lines, Princess Cruises, Radisson Seven Seas Cruises, Royal Caribbean International, Royal Olympia Cruises, Seabourn Cruise Line and Windstar Cruises. These vessels account for approximately 90 percent of the North American cruise line industry.

Conservation International works on projects in close to 40 countries on four continents to protect global biodiversity and demonstrate that human societies can live harmoniously with nature. CI develops scientific, policy and economic solutions to protect threatened natural ecosystems that are rich in biodiversity.