

# *New U.S. Group Seeks to Promote Responsible Ethical Travel to Cuba*

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Washington, December 13 (RHC)-- A group of some 100 U.S. organizations and tour operators involved in Cuba travel has launched RESPECT, a new entity that they say will promote responsible and ethical trips to the Caribbean island.

Bob Guild, Vice President of the travel company Marazul and one of RESPECT's initiators, said the new organization hopes to increase awareness among U.S. travelers regarding the need to protect Cuba's cultural heritage and environment, as well as to support the local economy. The aim, he said, is to make U.S. travel to Cuba responsible and ethical while supporting Cuba's efforts to turn itself into a sustainable destination.

In a press release, the new organization called the growing number of U.S. visitors to Cuba "a virtual tsunami" and said it has put a strain on existing Cuban infrastructure.

It said the principles guiding RESPECT have been adopted by all member entities, which include travel agencies, environmental, artistic, musical, academic, legal, medical, religious and social justice organizations, as well as sister-city and Cuban-American groups. The principles, a total of 17, commit

travelers to, among other considerations, “respect all Cubans, without regard to skin color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, political persuasion, abilities or economic status.”

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