

## **itmustbeNOW.com LAUNCHES A NEW 'FORCE FOR GOOD' RAISING THE BAR ON SUSTAINABILITY IN HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL**

April 2017 : NOW, a new initiative calling for accountability around sustainability in travel has been launched on Earth Day (22 April 2017). Working as a 'Force for Good', NOW's mission is to create a global community of consumers who are passionate about travel and want to help tackle the environmental and social challenges facing our planet.

NOW Transforming Hospitality is a legacy project created by industry stalwarts Onno and Alexa Poortier. Using their own extensive influence and working in alliance with travel, hospitality and sustainability thought leaders and advisory groups, their long-term mission is to achieve a paradigm shift in the hospitality industry, to ensure it thrives but not at the expense of the planet and its people.

Offering a portal for discussion, innovation and research, the NOW website and themed digital content will provide information on how to travel more responsibly. It is the beginning of a very long and complex journey, but from day one, travellers can discover inspiring and responsible hotels and resorts around the world, many of which have been benchmarked and certified by strategic partner EarthCheck, an award winning global business advisory group specialising in sustainability. A forum will encourage two-way discussions, where consumers can share ideas and make recommendations, with the aim to educate and inspire.

"Our purpose is to create a global pressure group demanding sustainability from the hospitality industry" explains Onno Poortier, Founder, Chairman and CEO of NOW. "The effect of climate change is the most urgent issue of our time. Operating business in a safe, sustainable and socially responsible manner is the biggest challenge. Many hotels are doing excellent work, but many are not visibly transparent with their guests for various reasons. Others are not yet convinced that it is an important topic to today's traveller."

He adds, "Transparency, what hotels do to improve lives and help our planet, and credible sustainability certifications with independent audits are crucial to gain wide support from travellers and for this responsible form of hospitality to be commercially successful. NOW will strengthen reputations by inviting them to join the NOW Force for Good Alliance and include them in the NOW Good Hotel Tracker, a simple and transparent tool for travellers to track sustainability performance, certification and annual progress in a creative one page

scorecard. This will be linked to a NOW Booker so travellers can also book directly and hotels will not be charged commissions.

Founder Alexa Poortier added, "We are entrusted to protect our natural heritage and safeguard the future of our children's children, and we all share this responsibility. The next biggest generations of travelers and hotel staff – Gen Y & Z – are critically aware that there is a direct link between sustainable business, the environment and people's lives. They like to continue their sustainable lives when they travel at the hotels they stay at and are globally connected to share their experience. They believe that work should reflect or be part of a larger societal concern with emphasis on corporate social responsibility, ethical causes and greater protection for the environment which makes it important to embed sustainability in the hospitality industry to attract future talents."

She adds, "As the travel industry continues to enjoy positive growth, the negative environmental and social impacts can be felt worldwide. We are at a defining moment for our planet and have a collective responsibility to change the way we travel. Doing nothing is no longer acceptable. We want to ignite global consciousness about the urgency and the need for responsibility, creative solutions and action."

After a lifetime in hospitality, the Poortiers recognise the need for the industry to address the environmental and social responsibility challenges facing the planet. With no single governing body to monitor the situation, their aim through the NOW project is to create a positive vehicle for urgent change; a movement to generate reaction and action within the hospitality industry.

**Be Inspired: [watch this](#). Sign up at [www.itmustbenow.com](http://www.itmustbenow.com) (launch 22 April 2017)  
Follow on Twitter: @itmustbeNOW, Instagram: NOWTransformingHospitality and  
Facebook: ItMustBeNow**

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## **Notes to editors**

### **About ONNO POORTIER, Founder, Chairman and CEO of NOW Transforming Hospitality GmbH**

A respected hotelier and professional, O. Poortier's extensive international hotel consultancy, asset management, business development, corporate organisation, marketing and operational management experience spanned 5 decades with luxury deluxe hotel brands in Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East and USA. As Chairman, Board Director and Board Advisor of numerous luxury deluxe hotels and marketing alliances for over 30 years, he travels worldwide and maintains an active and leading role in the industry.

O. Poortier founded REMbrandT Management Services Limited in 2000 to advise and develop unique luxury hotel brands and managed assets. During his 24 year hotel career with the prestigious Peninsula Hotels (1979-2003), he led the group's negotiations, expansion and development into the USA, Asia Pacific and Europe for 15 years (Vice President 1985-1987, Executive Vice President 1987-1992, President 1992-2000), and served as Board Director. His early management career in Switzerland with the Beau Rivage Palace Lausanne focused on refined service and the luxury hotel experience for discerning travellers.

At this most urgent of times, O. Poortier believes that travellers will increasingly expect hotel companies worldwide to be more responsible and credibly proven to be sustainable; and that sustainability presents the hospitality industry with an enormous opportunity to collaborate and make more good things happen, to positively impact many lives and to help the industry thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

### **About ALEXA POORTIER, Founder of NOW Transforming Hospitality GmbH**

An energetic and highly motivated professional with over 35 years international business development, marketing, brand communications and hotel operations experience, Alexa had the privilege to reside in many countries and travel worldwide with her family, experience extraordinary cultures and destinations, and develop global connections and friendships.

Alexa co-founded REMbrandT Management Services Limited in 2000, and provided marketing and brand communications advice to launch and create global awareness of luxury hotel brands. A creative and strategic problem solver, Alexa led an international team as VP, Business Development and Marketing to distribute channels and negotiate joint ventures for media networks NewsCorp/Star TV, Sumitomo/JetTV and CNBC/ABN in Asia Pacific, E.Europe, Middle East and S.America for a decade. As Group Director with O&M/JMA PR, Alexa launched and managed brand communication campaigns for global consumer and luxury brands in Taiwan, China and HK. Her early middle management career experience in Front Office and PR were with luxury hotels in Canada and Hong Kong.

At this most urgent of times, Alexa believes that each of us has the responsibility to act NOW to help keep our planet healthy for us and future generations. Having seen how travel drives

economies and growth, as well as the shocking negative impacts created by people and companies in many destinations, Alexa believes that each of the billion people who travel today has enormous power to drive global change by choosing to only support companies which are credibly sustainable, socially responsible and visibly transparent about their principled business practice.

**The NOW founders are supported by strategic advisors and partners**

Mr. Stewart Moore, Founder and CEO of EarthCheck, an Australian headquartered environmental management and advisory company which operates in over 70 countries across 32 industries. Its flagship product, EarthCheck Certified, is the world's leading scientific benchmarking and certification program for the Travel & Tourism industry. ([www.earthcheck.org](http://www.earthcheck.org))

Mr. Yateendra Sinh, CEO of Lausanne Hospitality Consulting SA, a Swiss knowledge development and management advisory company, the consulting and executive education division of Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. ([www.lhconsulting.com](http://www.lhconsulting.com) / [www.ehl.ch](http://www.ehl.ch) )

