

**SIERRA LEONE HONORS DR. JANE GOODALL (DBE) DURING
THREE-DAY ANNIVERSARY TOUR SETTING STAGE FOR TOURISM DEBUT**

Major Announcement Expected Impacting Sierra Leone's Conservation and Tourism Efforts

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Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 21, 2019 – Sierra Leone will welcome Dr. Jane Goodall (DBE, anthropologist and UN Messenger of Peace), the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees, during her three-day visit to the country, February 27 to March 1st where, 27 years ago, she was instrumental in the founding of the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. The three-day visit highlights the emerging conservation movement in Sierra Leone as well as the country's re-emergence on the world stage as a sustainable tourism destination.

Tacugama, Sierra Leone's first and only sanctuary, plays a critical role in protecting the country's rich biodiversity, two of Freetown's main water catchments and the critically endangered chimpanzees. Since its establishment, the sanctuary has become internationally recognized, benefiting Sierra Leone's people through jobs, wildlife protection, environmental education, ecotourism, research and health initiatives. Dr Goodall continues to provide inspiration to Tacugama by guiding and inspiring the Sanctuary's future.

"We look forward to welcoming back Dr. Jane Goodall," said Her Excellency Fatima Bio, the First Lady of Sierra Leone. "Her visit allows us to share Sierra Leone's story with the world and to revitalize the international image of our country, which is critical for the development of sustainable tourism, conservation, and economic development. The beauty of our natural diversity, wildlife and culture is also a story that we want to share."

Dr. Goodall's visit comes at a time when wildlife tourism, conservation, and sustainability are taking top billing on the global tourism stage. Her stature as a world-leading-conservationist, provides an important global platform for Sierra Leone's growth as a new tourism destination. The visit will showcase the country's sustainable tourism offerings and increase awareness of the need for conservation of these critically endangered species. It will also highlight the clear link between conservation and sustainable tourism.

Dr. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute, commented regarding her upcoming visit, "I'm looking forward to my visit to Sierra Leone and proud of the impact the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary has had on saving the country's remaining chimpanzees while providing needed jobs for local people. I am particularly excited to meet the children of Sierra Leone and share with them my Roots and Shoots program. They are our future hope."

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The three-day program in Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, is as follows:

- **Wednesday, February 27th** - Morning – Dr. Jane Goodall tours the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, press interview.
- **Wednesday, February 27th** - Evening - State Dinner hosted by Her Excellency Fatima Bio, the First Lady of Sierra Leone.
- **Thursday, February 28th** – 6:00 pm. - Dr. Jane Goodall Speaking Engagement hosted by Ministry of Tourism and attended by Her Excellency Fatima Bio, the First Lady of Sierra Leone - Bintumani Conference Hall.
- **Friday, March 1st** - Children’s March - 300 children will march from the Youyi Building to the Cotton Tree and then onwards to the British Council where Dr. Jane Goodall will address the children and talk about her Roots and Shoots program. Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer will speak at this event.

Setting stage for tourism

Jane’s visit to Sierra Leone (a country known in Creole as *Salone*) comes at the perfect time as the destination prepares to reintroduce itself on the world tourism stage. Most people continue to associate Sierra Leone with its troubled past, so the goal now is to propel the destination into the future, showcasing the results of its transformation into the next “must visit” location for both leisure and business travelers.

“We are excited to show our “only-in-Sierra Leone” offerings, many of which will surprise world travelers,” said Mrs. Memunatu Pratt, Minister of Tourism, Sierra Leone. “Sierra Leone offers world class beaches, stunning endemic wildlife, rich culture and historical sites, adventure travel, exquisite local cuisine, and a warm and welcoming people, that make our country one of Africa’s most promising new tourism destinations.”

Sierra Leone has one of the highest densities of chimpanzees in the wild anywhere in the world. Adventure travelers can also find little-seen wildlife such as the endangered Diana monkey in the forests of Tiwai Island on the Moa river, three types of colobus monkeys, rare birds and pygmy hippos.

Sierra Leone recently opened a new Tourist Information Office in the capital city of Freetown, near the historic Cotton Tree, the oldest cotton tree in Freetown or possibly in the world and synonymous with freedom of the earlier settlers. That and the launch of a new Tourism In-Flight Traveltainment Magazine and investment in infrastructure are seen as important steps forward for the sector.

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Sharing tourism assets

To begin to showcase all this incredible country has to offer to the world, Michaela Guzy, Executive Producer, Director, Writer, Influencer and On-Air Talent for OTPYM (Oh The People You Meet), and David DiGregorio, founder of CornerSun Destination Marketing, will be in Sierra Leone to cover the series of Jane Goodall events. Michaela will capture on film, the wildlife, beaches, people and natural offerings of this relatively undiscovered country. The film will be shown at a special screening in New York City in early spring, to set the stage for Sierra Leone's tourism renewal in 2020.

"The Jane Goodall visit, and announcement provides us with an amazing first-hand opportunity to show the combination of a rich conservation history and unknown adventure experiences visitors can eventually enjoy," said Guzy. "We are *sierraously* excited to share the secrets of Sierra Leone with the world, and who better to introduce Sierra Leone as a sustainable tourism destination than Jane Goodall?"

For more information, contact: The National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone
info@sierraleonenationaltouristboard.gov.sl or info@ntb.gov.sl.

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About Sierra Leone

With its palm-fringed beaches, breathtaking mountains, tropical rain forests and vibrant culture, *Salone* is one of West Africa's most alluring destinations.

About Jane Goodall Institute

The Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) is a global community conservation organization that advances the vision and work of Dr. Jane Goodall. By protecting chimpanzees and inspiring action to conserve the natural world. JGI improves the lives of people, animals and the environment. Founded in 1977 by Dr. Goodall, JGI makes a difference through community-centered conservation and the innovative use of science and technology. JGI works closely with local communities around the world, inspiring hope through the collective power of individual action. Through Roots & Shoots, JGI's youth-led community action and learning program, young people in nearly 80 countries are acquiring the knowledge and skills to become compassionate conservation leaders in their own backyards.

About the Chimpanzees

Chimpanzees are flagship species for tropical forests and woodland areas and play a key role in maintaining the health and diversity of their ecosystems, and their decline and potential extinction may precipitate the decline of other culturally, economically and or ecologically important species.

Media Contact:

Elisa Fershtadt, Public Relations
CornerSun Destination Marketing LLC
Email: elisa@cornersun.com/Telephone: +1 917-88-6554

www.cornersun.com