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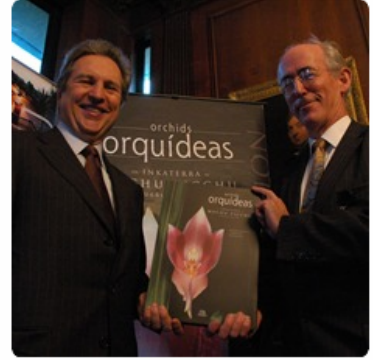
Blooming marvellous: Inkaterra promotes nature conservation with orchid trail

By Salina Christmas

Last updated 10/31/2008 8:27:23 PM

Money generated by tourism can fund conservation efforts designed to increase the travellers' awareness in the social and environmental functions of a land.

This is the philosophy that underlines the commercial moves by the **Inkaterra Association** (ITA), a Peruvian non-governmental organisation (NGO), in protecting the country's natural environment and its cultural resources.



Jose Koechlin von Stein (left) and Dr Henry Oakeley champion the Inkaterra cause. Photos © Salina Christmas

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orchid species in Machu Picchu's cloud forest.

Although ecotourism is not without its environmental implications, Koechlin believes it can be used to educate travellers about the ecosystem.

R&D is necessary to identify and classify the inventory of the conservation area. The data gathered is essential in helping the ITA make informed and accurate decisions on its environmental strategies. However, money is needed to fund R&D.

It's a challenge faced not just by Inkaterra, but by many scientific or academic bodies across various fields.

"You need R&D to identify which species to protect, and what to do with it," Koechlin said. "And then you can take the appropriate action and channel the efforts to the right direction."

And that's where the Inkaterra commercial efforts come in.

The book launch, which took place at the Royal College of Surgeons, London, was also in conjunction with the launch of three new special interest tours by the NGO.

The **Bird Watching Tour** offers guests guided excursions in the diverse habitats of the Amazon Basin, Machu Picchu cloud forest and the surrounding Andean highland areas of Cusco, complemented with stays at Inkaterra's luxury properties.

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